

Canada Tries to Eliminate Moratorium Request on Genetically Engineered Trees

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Sharratt<info@cban.ca><p>United Nations meeting fight over the future of GE trees</p><p>4:00 EST May 22 Thursday</p><p>Bonn Germany-

Today, Canada has intervened to directly eliminate an African request for a United Nations moratorium on genetically engineered (GE) trees. </p><p>The proposal by Africa to establish a moratorium on releases of GE trees was saved by Switzerland who intervened to support the African countries, represented here by a representative from the Government of Liberia. </p><p>"Canada has boldly ignored the African moratorium proposal and ignored our concerns here in Canada," says Lucy Sharratt, Coordinator of the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, who is in Bonn Germany for the UN meetings. On Tuesday, 47 groups in Canada released their letter to the Minister of the Environment demanding that Canada support a moratorium at the major meeting (COP9) of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity which is meeting until May 31. </p><p>The moratorium remains on the table-

for now. But the proposal to "suspend any releases of genetically engineered trees" now moves to the next round of negotiations and needs to be supported by more countries if it is to succeed. </p><p>"Canada put forward an entirely different proposal that totally ignored the African request for a moratorium," said Lucy Sharratt who was in the room at the time, "Liberia strongly reiterated their position for a moratorium on GE trees but Canada spoke directly after this to make a proposal that eliminated the moratorium and ignored Africa's demand." </p><p>"Pollen and seeds from GE trees will cross national boundaries and contaminate global forests," said Sharratt, "African countries recognize these serious risks of GE trees and are standing strong to protect forests from irreversible contamination." </p><p>"Canada must act responsibly or we will all see the dire consequences and it will be too late," said Sharratt. </p><p>Updates are posted on a daily blog at www.cban.ca/trees </p><p>For more information: Lucy Sharratt, Coordinator, Canadian Biotechnology Action Network cell in Germany: 01 149 15112 272774 coordinator@cban.ca www.cban.ca/trees </p>