



PRRI COP-MOP5 Closing Statement

Mr. Chairman,

I speak on behalf of the Public Research and Regulation Initiative, PRRI.

Mr Chairman, we - public sector scientists working in modern biotechnology - consider the Cartagena Protocol an important instrument, because it offers countries that do not yet have biosafety regulations, a mechanism for informed decision making on LMOs, and thereby a way to participate in the benefits of modern biotechnology. International sharing of the benefits of modern biotechnology is something to which Parties have agreed in article 19 of the Convention on Biodiversity. That same article 19 is the legal basis of the Cartagena Protocol.

Having said that, we also recognise that to date hardly any country that does not yet have domestic regulations, has made use of the AIA procedure. This is a tragedy, because it means that those countries do not participate in the benefits of modern biotechnology.

There is obviously more work needed to make the Cartagena Protocol function as it was intended, and PRRI commends the negotiating Parties for their hard work this week.

Mr. Chairman, looking ahead at the national implementation and indeed at MOP6, PRRI offers the following take home messages.

First, modern biotechnology offers substantial benefits to human well-being, in particular in developing countries. Genetic modification can address challenges that are difficult or impossible to solve through conventional breeding.

Second, there is a misperception that GM crops only come from multinational corporations in industrialised countries to be sold in developing countries. Many GM crop varieties are being generated by public institutions in developing countries, tailored to local needs.

Third, there also the misperception that there are actually demonstrated cases of adverse effects to the environment or human health, caused by LMOs. This is incorrect.

Fourth, regulatory hurdles that have no scientific basis jeopardise the ability of public research to contribute to food security, social welfare and protection of the environment.

Fifth and last, Parties should constantly assess how the implementation of the Protocol will affect crucially important research for the public good. Please involve your own public sector scientists in every step of the implementation process, including in education and public awareness campaigns.

Thank you Mr. Chairman