



Roundtable on Access to genetic resources, benefit-sharing and the Convention on Biological Diversity

2 April 2002, 10h30 - 12h30

Meeting Room 3, International Environment House

Building an international regime for access and benefit sharing will be high on the agenda when the 180-plus Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity meet in The Hague from 8 to 19 April. Central to the discussion will be a set of draft guidelines negotiated last year. These guidelines aim to help governments develop national legislation and measures for the equitable distribution of the benefits from biotechnology and genetic resources.

The importance of benefit sharing is that it provides an incentive for countries rich in genetic resources to conserve and use biodiversity sustainably. The idea is that by granting an international company or other organization access to its genetic resources (such as plants that can be used to produce new pharmaceuticals or fragrances), a country or local community will in return receive a fair share of the profits or other benefits.

This Roundtable will assess where the debate stands today and how the international community could move forward to an effective access and benefit-sharing regime. The programme is provided below.

Programme

10:00 Coffee

10:30 Introduction by the moderator, Frits Schlingemann, Director,
Regional Office for Europe, United Nations Environment Programme

10:45 Panel of experts:

- Martha Chouchena-Rojas, Acting Head, Policy, Biodiversity and International Agreements Unit, IUCN - The World Conservation Union
- Graham Dutfield, Senior Research Associate, International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD)
- Francis Gurry, Assistant Director General and Legal Counsel, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
- Olivier Jalbert, Principal Officer, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

11:35 Discussion with panelists and participants

12:25 Wrap-up by moderator

12:30 End