



Precaution in environmental policy-making
16 May 2002, 14h00 - 17h15
International Environment House, Meeting Room 3

Precaution is a fundamental concept in international environmental law and policy. Its central position was confirmed in 1992 when the Rio Earth Summit defined it in Principle 15, stipulating that "Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation". Precaution has since been invoked in many core environmental discussions, including biosafety, climate change and chemicals.

The roundtable, organized jointly by the Geneva Environment Network and the Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL), will examine Principle 15, how precaution has been applied since Rio and why it remains so important for the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).

Programme

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| 14:00 | Welcome and introduction, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) |
| 14:10 | <i>The Precautionary Principle and Rio</i> , Laurence Boisson de Chazournes, Professor of international law and Director of the Department of Public International Law and International Organization, Law Faculty, University of Geneva |
| 14:25 | <i>The Precautionary Principle since Rio</i>
- Biotechnology and the Cartagena Protocol, Carolina Lasén Diaz, Staff Lawyer, Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development (FIELD)
- Precaution and the Stockholm Convention, UNEP Chemicals
- International trade, Gabriele Marceau, Counsellor, World Trade Organization (WTO)
- International decisions, Philippe Sands, Professor of Laws and Director, Centre for International Courts and Tribunals, University College London; Global Professor of Law, New York University |
| 15:25 | Coffee |
| 15:45 | <i>Johannesburg and beyond</i> : Introduction and general debate, Laurence Boisson de Chazournes, Professor of international law and Director of the Department of Public International Law and International Organization, Law Faculty, University of Geneva |
| 16:00 | Discussion with panelists and participants |
| 17:00 | Summing up and closure of the meeting, Dr. Franz Perrez, Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL) |
| 17:15 | Refreshments |
| 18:00 | End |