

PRESS RELEASE

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International agreement on access to genetic resources

Better legal certainty for biotech companies through the Nagoya Protocol

The German Association of Biotechnology Industries (DIB) welcomes last Sunday's entry into force of the so-called "Nagoya Protocol". This agreement of the international community on access to genetic resources and the sharing of benefits aims to contribute to the global preservation of biodiversity. As the next step, the Nagoya Protocol needs to be implemented into national law. DIB executive director Dr. Ricardo Gent states: "German and European biotechnology companies support the goals of the Nagoya Protocol. The agreement can make a contribution to a more sustainable use of genetic resources and to a fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from this."

The provisions of the Nagoya Protocol potentially apply to all industries that are engaged in value creation with biotechnological processes or products. The agreement can bring better legal certainty and enable more reliable planning and investments for these companies. Gent: "For this purpose, the EU member states need to enact internationally competitive and workable legislation when they implement the Nagoya Protocol. Such new legislation should drive forward and encourage research and the creation of value and benefits from genetic resources. Another important point is that the new provisions can be fulfilled without additional bureaucracy also by small and mid-sized enterprises."

The easier the access rules in a country, the higher the chances of benefiting from the sustainable use of the national pool of genetic resources: by achieving extra income. Then, the countries could invest this extra income in preserving their biodiversity. Gent explains: "Every gram of arable soil contains as many bacterial cells as there are human beings on our planet. This unimaginably huge variety of genetic material holds countless more treasures for science. Politicians can support biotechnology companies by implementing the Nagoya Protocol in a

workable manner. A fair and equitable sharing of benefits is in the interest of both stakeholders.”

German chemical and biotechnological industries have been using genetic resources for decades, in order to develop new products and processes. Today, the production of bio-based products would be near-inconceivable without genetic resources. These products include, for example, food and feedstuffs, chemicals, bio-fuels from renewables, pharmaceuticals, vaccines, diagnostic agents, veterinary medicines, cosmetics, textiles and bio-polymers.

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