



GE Free New Zealand

In Food And Environment Inc.

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18 July 2021-07-18

Tena koe Hon Minister Nania Mahuta,

We noticed New Zealand was mentioned in social media comments following the UN GMO CBD discussions and we are writing to raise our concerns and request further information under the OIA. One mention included:

#SBSTTA24 Many unresolved issues also in CRPs regarding #genedrive in streams such as #syntheticbiology and #riskassessment. Brazil, Argentina, Columbia and New Zealand are mainly to blame. EU delegations have been too timid in defending & reaffirming the precautionary principle

We sought clarification from our colleagues overseas who advised the conversations at the event were not for public release but noted in the discussions that impressions were New Zealand delegates appeared to actively oppose civil society proposals, E.g

- To include socio-economic + ethical impacts in the (horizon scanning, monitoring &) assessment of synthetic biology (and gene drives)
- Opposed helpful suggestions on concrete working steps by the EU on how to set up a multidisciplinary working group to perform the horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment of synthetic biology (including gene drives)
- Opposed the establishment of general guidance materials (that covers all types of gene drives and associated risks) for gene drive risk assessment and only wanted guidance to focus on mosquitoes (most immediate gene drive application)
- Worried about the inclusion of indigenous peoples into the drafting group (AHTEG) for guidance on risk assessment of gene drive organisms
- Often supported statements by pro-GM countries like Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina or UK, who completely blocked the discussions.

We have, however, made a comprehensive research into the NZ delegate presentations and these reports do not reflect the verbal discussions as stated.

To this end we are extremely concerned that the government delegates are telling NZ civil society one thing but promoting a different agenda in meetings.

Please may we have all written and audio communication documents that relate to the UN SBSTTA24 synthetic biology and gene drive meetings from January 20th 2019 to July 17 2021.

May we have this under the Official Information Act,

Sincerely,

Jon Muller

Secretary GE Free NZ.