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PRRI MOP4 Statement on Socioeconomic Considerations

Thank you, Mme. Chair, I speak on behalf of the Public Research and Regulation Initiative. PRRI believes that article 26 of the Protocol is very important, because it defines which socio-economic considerations Parties can take into account when making a decision on the import of an LMO.

Article 26 is limited to taking into account socio economic considerations arising from the impact of living modified organisms on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

Obviously, impacts on biodiversity can include potential beneficial as well as potential negative impacts.

As PRRI outlined in its submission, there are many published studies on the potential and proven environmental and socio-economic benefits of the use of LMOs.

To give just some examples from agricultural applications of LMOs:

- Increase of yield resulting from insect and disease resistant crop plants has great socio-economic importance in the context of a growing global population.
- The reduction of insecticide use resulting from insect resistant plants with the resulting benefits for non-target organisms; the replacement of certain herbicides by safer, less persistent herbicides due to herbicide tolerant crop plants; reduction of soil erosion and pesticide run-off resulting from herbicide tolerant crop plants, and the reduction in the use of fossil-fuels due to herbicide tolerant crop plants are all beneficial to the environment and biodiversity.
- Reduction of pesticide use is not only good for the environment, but can also have direct health benefits for farmers in developing countries who are currently exposed to the pesticides which they often spray manually.
- The use of Bt maize can lead to the reduction of pesticide residues and of cancer causing mycotoxins, which has direct health effects for consumers and livestock.

These are just a few examples related to mainly four genetically modified crops with herbicide tolerance and insect resistance, developed by the private sector.

The public research sector is working hard on achieving similar environmental and socio-economic benefits by bringing a larger variety of critical traits in a larger number of crops important for developing countries.

Mme Chair, in case the MOP decides to convene a group of experts to explore both the positive and negative impacts of LMOs, PRRI will be very much prepared to actively contribute to the work of such a group.

Thank you Mme. Chair.