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## **PRRI Statement on GM Trees – 26 May**

Madam Chair,

I speak on behalf of the Public Research and Regulation Initiative. As public scientists, we are committed to sustaining biodiversity and support ongoing research to protect forest biodiversity including use of tools such as biotechnology. We believe that controlled field release of GM trees is essential for meaningful public research on trees regarding the environment.

We strongly support paragraph 2 of 1 (r) as it correctly refers to the precautionary APPROACH of principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development instead of the precautionary principle. Accordingly, we propose deleting the text in brackets [as set out in the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety]. This paragraph would allow the controlled field release of GM trees and field trials, which we believe is the ONLY way to properly evaluate the societal and environmental risks and benefits of GM trees.

We also suggest deleting the text after the semi colon following “trees”, specifically “and collaborate with relevant organizations and protocols for risk assessment of transgenic trees, and for guidance addressing environmental, socio-economic and cultural risks and benefits associated with the use of genetically modified trees”. This is redundant with previous text about the establishment of an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group.

Thank you Madam Chair.