

## **The European Seed Industry and Biodiversity**

The [9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties \(COP\)](#) in the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will be held in Bonn, Germany, from 19 to 30 May 2008. It also coincides with the International Biodiversity Day to be celebrated on 22 May 2008.

The conference takes place two years before the deadline for achieving the 2010 biodiversity target adopted in 2002 by more than 100 Heads of State and Government. According to this target, signatories to the CBD pledged to significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010; they also agreed to set rules for accessing genetic resources and for the sharing of benefits deriving from their use.

Together with the [International Seed Federation \(ISF\)](#) and [BDP](#), the German national seed organisation, ESA has worked for a coordinated representation of the seed industry at the Bonn conference as well as for a proper presentation of its views and concerns, both within the international business representation [ICC \(International Chamber of Commerce\)](#) and during seed industry specific side events (see links below).

“The seed industry plays a significant role in the preservation of biodiversity already today” underlines Garlich von Essen, Secretary General of ESA. “Seed companies have long standing experience, high level expertise and spend considerable financial resources on this every day as genetic resources are truly the lifeblood of their continuous research and development work for ever better plant varieties.”

In a short flyer (see link below), ESA has put together the main issues and demands of the seed industry and explains the links between the preservation of biodiversity and the issue of access and use of genetic resources.

“Without access to and utilization of genetic resources, plant breeders will no longer be able to develop the new plant varieties the world will need to safeguard food security and to deal with climate change.” von Essen points out. “Only if we bring new varieties to the market will we create the benefits that can be shared with those that have supplied the genetic resources. Access is the precondition for everything that the CBD wishes to see following, i.e. preservation, use and benefit sharing.”

ESA\_08.0342

Further information on seed industry and biodiversity and on the COP 9 meeting in Bonn:

- “The European Seed Industry and Biodiversity” (ESA flyer)  
[ESA\\_08.0317](#)
- Seed industry side event at COP 9 on 19.05.2008 [ESA\\_08.0318](#)
- Seed industry side event at COP 9 on 20.05.2008 [ESA\\_08.0319](#)
- ICC side event “Integrating biodiversity conservation into agricultural production”  
([http://www.iccwbo.org/uploadedFiles/ICC\\_Side\\_Event\\_COP9\\_22\\_05.pdf](http://www.iccwbo.org/uploadedFiles/ICC_Side_Event_COP9_22_05.pdf))
- ICC submission to COP9 on Access and Benefit Sharing: General Observations and Positions [esa\\_08.0320](#)