

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): BIO action plan

The UNFCCC is a legally non-binding Convention body born out of the 1992 Rio summit. The chief goal of the initial Convention was to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. To accomplish this goal, provisions were set which would allow for mandatory emissions reductions. The Kyoto protocol is one such provision. However, the protocol, ratified in 1997, has fallen short of its aims. As it nears expiration, parties to the UNFCCC are negotiating a new treaty, a Long term Cooperative Action (LCA). It is the goal of the Convention to announce the final version of this treaty at the UNFCCC meeting in Copenhagen this December, with the United States as a signatory. Expected attendance should exceed 12,000 government delegates, observers, and media. Although the prospects for a new treaty in December are highly questionable, BIO and its members have significant interests in engaging over the next several months to ensure any treaty text does not harm the biotechnology industry, and potentially supports innovation.

Threats to biotech in the LCA:

- Dangerous IP issues
- Damaging IP language on the use of genetically engineered organisms
- Potential for annexes ranging “best” to “worst” technologies (worry that biofuels, bio based products, and bio processes will be perceived negatively)

Major opportunities for biotech in the LCA:

- Potential for grants and funding to biotechnology providers
- Government incentives for international biotechnology deployment

Biotechnology provides key solutions to mitigating climate change. This is our opportunity to make those solutions more widely known, while protecting the ability of innovators to maintain intellectual property rights!

BIO objectives:

1. Policy shaping
2. Increasing worldwide industry visibility and allaying false messaging

Issues raised within the UNFCCC negotiations affect several BIO sections, including Intellectual Property, Industrial and Environmental, and Food and Agriculture. A staff level team representing these Sections is in place to coordinate actions.

Key actions leading up to Copenhagen:

- Coordinate closely with the United States government and friendly international governments

- As part of ongoing discussions with the US delegation, invite Todd Stern, Special Climate Envoy to the US, to speak to the BIO governing board in September
- Coordinate with the US Chamber of Commerce, Crop Life International, and other like-minded organizations and coalitions on IP related issues
- Prepare a proactive communications plan and materials to ensure industry visibility
- Form a taskforce of interested member companies, as well as key international biotech networks (i.e. Heads of associations)
 - Utilize the taskforce to create an international industry delegation to Copenhagen, each with clear targets for the meeting (seeking out delegates to discuss IP, IES issues, and Ag biotech).
- Potentially organize an independent workshop at the Copenhagen meeting
 - EuropaBio, Genencor, and Novozymes have expressed interest in forming a high level panel of industry CEOs, moderated by the World Wildlife Federation. If possible, they wish to secure an influential keynote speaker as well (EU Swedish presidency?). The event would address the biobased economy from feedstock to end product and would target policy makers, industry, and NGO's.