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世界自然基金會
香港分會

WWF Hong Kong

香港中環纜車徑一號
No.1 Tramway Path,
Central, Hong Kong

電話 Tel: +852 2526 1011
傳真 Fax: +852 2845 2764
wwf@wwf.org.hk
wwf.org.hk

Bills Committee on Genetically Modified Organisms (Control of Release) Bill

Meeting on 8 October 2009

WWF's view on the proposed legislation for the implementation of the Biosafety Protocol

1. WWF welcomes and supports the extension of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the CBD (the Protocol) into Hong Kong. We consider that the extension would help the Hong Kong Government enhance its current work in protecting local biodiversity following international standards, as well as demonstrate Hong Kong as a responsible city committed to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
2. With reference to the proposed implementation of the Protocol in Hong Kong, WWF asks the Government to adopt a strong precautionary approach to avoid negative impacts to the environment from the release of Living Modified Organisms (LMOs). The use and release of LMOs should be regulated through a rigorous approval process.
3. According to Article 23(2) of the Protocol, the public should be consulted in the decision-making process regarding LMOs. We welcome the establishment of an advisory expert group. However, we recommend the Government to extend the consultation process to the **wider public** so as to allow the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation to make reference to the citizens' comments in, for instance, deciding whether an application for import of an LMO for release to the environment should be approved.
4. After the extension of the CBD to Hong Kong, WWF encourages the Government to:
 - a. set up a clear biodiversity goal for Hong Kong, followed by the establishment of a comprehensive biodiversity action plan to meet the requirements of Article 6 of the CBD¹;
 - b. initiate and enhance closer cooperation with the conservation authorities of South China in order to tackle effectively various cross-border conservation issues, such as the impact of climate change on biodiversity and the conservation of Chinese white dolphin in the Pearl River Delta (PRD) (Article 5 Cooperation of the CBD refers);
 - c. adopt unified standards in addressing the environmental impact of cross-border infrastructure development projects, which are currently on a rise and likely to have long-term implications on the biodiversity in Hong Kong and the PRD region. Article 14

¹ Our detailed thoughts on such an action plan were submitted to the Government during the 2004 Review of the Nature Conservation Policy and can be found at:

http://www.wwf.org.hk/conservation/env_policy/green_policies/cshk.php

贊助人：香港特區行政長官
曾蔭權先生, GBM
會長：邵在錫先生
副會長：鍾逸傑爵士
楊成漢先生
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of the CBD provides recommendations for the Hong Kong and mainland Chinese government authorities to follow and achieve bilateral, regional and/or multilateral agreements²; and

- d. report regularly the HKSAR Government's work to the Secretariat of the CBD to allow assessment of implementation effectiveness, as required by Article 26 of the CBD.

² For instance, according to page 151 of China's Third National Report on Implementation of The Convention, the mainland Government and some of its neighboring countries signed agreements to "... *conduct cooperation in the field of environmental impact assessment*". The mainland Government also summarised its experience in dealing with the environmental impact of cross-border developments: "... *because of the lack of operable transboundary environmental impact assessment system and exchange mechanism, the transboundary environmental impact assessment is not very satisfying, especially those transboundary environmental impact assessment activities that may cause significant adverse impact upon biodiversity*".