



UCCSNAL – UNIÓN DE CIENTÍFICOS  
COMPROMETIDOS CON LA SOCIEDAD  
Y LA NATURALEZA DE AMÉRICA LATINA

TWN  
Third World Network



# **Scientific Conference 2016**

## **TAKING STOCK - 20 YEARS OF GM CROPS - 40 YEARS OF 'GENETIC ENGINEERING'**

**Unión de Científicos Comprometidos con la Sociedad (UCCS)**

**Unión de Científicos Comprometidos con la Sociedad y la Naturaleza de  
América Latina (UCCSNAL)**

**European Network of Scientists for Social and Environmental  
Responsibility (ENSSER)**

**Third World Network (TWN)**

**1 – 2 December 2016**

**Mexico City – Mexico**



Forty years of genetic engineering (GE) have led to a host of new products and a recent surge in new techniques, but in agriculture and various other fields of application the level of insight into the effects of GE on organisms and ecosystems has progressed much less. The claims about the potential benefits and possibilities of the new techniques sound very much like those made for the current techniques invented in the 1970s and 80s and are equally badly substantiated. However, it is deeply alarming that these claims, as before, still neglect the root causes of the serious problems in agriculture, to which GE offers no solutions. Moreover, the undesired effects of the old and new GE techniques continue to be largely ignored in the commercial projects and applications. The sciences of genetics, evolution and ecology, meanwhile, have progressed to show an amazing network of interlinked and finely tuned molecular, physiological and ecological processes sustaining life on all levels. The insights into these processes show the founding assumption of genetic engineering, that there would be a simple, linear relationship between a deliberate DNA modification and a change in a property of the organism or even a newly created property, to be unreliable and unfit for practical application. Yet the application of GE to agriculture and food continues to be pushed relentlessly by commercial interests and like-minded, affiliated scientists and politicians.

This conference, preceding (as happened in the past) the biennial Meeting of the Parties (MOP) to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, will present scientific analysis and evaluation of the current state of knowledge on genetically modified organisms (GMOs), including their impacts on farmers, communities and the environment, also highlighting the uncontrolled spread of transgenes and GMOs. Special attention will be paid to the latest developments of genetic engineering, like genome editing, CRISPR/Cas and gene drives. The necessity, now more than ever, to take the precautionary principle as a guiding principle in GE developments, will pervade the conference.

"Taking Stock - 20 Years of GM Crops - 40 Years of 'Genetic Engineering'" is an eminent chance for everyone concerned, notably those who are going to attend MOP8, to have a high caliber review and analysis of GM crops and to learn what is going on and what is about to happen in this field.

Details for registering your participation in the conference will follow shortly.

The programme below may be subject to changes.



**Scientific Conference - 20 years of GM crops**  
 Thursday, 1. December 2016

Opening	
08:03	Registration
09:00	Elena Alvarez-Buylla      UCCS Hartmut Meyer              ENSSER Lim Li Ching                  Third World Network Introductions
Session I. The state of affairs in biosafety & risk assessment - Taking stock	
09:30	Current state of human health assessment of Glyphosate Chris Portier, former IARC WHO, working group on Glyphosate (confirmed)
10:00	Genotoxicity of Glyphosate in human populations in the 'sprayed areas' of Cordoba, Argentina Delia Aiassa, Universidad de Rio Cuarto, Argentina (confirmed)
10:30	Human cost of GM crops in South America Medardo Avila Vazquez, University Network for Environment and Health - Doctors of fumigated towns, Argentina and UCCSNAL (confirmed)
11:00	<b>BREAK</b>
11:30	Environmental impact of glyphosate use in Argentina Damián Marino, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina and UCSSNAL (confirmed)
12:00	How industrial agriculture threatens the existence of the symbiotic human, home and farm microbiome Jack Heinemann, University of Canterbury, New Zealand (confirmed)
12:30	Increased uncertainty around Bt toxins Angelika Hilbeck, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich, Switzerland (confirmed)
13:00	<b>WORKSHOP - GROUP REPORT TO MOP8</b>
13:30	<b>LUNCH</b>
Session II. Emerging and existing GE techniques and the concepts behind them	
14:30	Hypothetical benefits and unquestionable risks Ignacio Chapela, UC Berkeley, USA (invited)
15:00	Risks of new genetic engineering techniques Sarah Agapito, GenØk – Centre for Biosafety, Norway (invited)
15:30	CRISPR Gene Drives - the implication of extinction technologies and population-scale engineering Ricarda Steinbrecher, Federation of German Scientists and EcoNexus, UK (confirmed)
16:00	<b>BREAK</b>
16:30	RNAi and nontarget effects Jonathan Lundgren, Ecdysis Foundation and the Blue Dasher Farm Initiative, USA (formerly USDA) (confirmed)
17:00	Synthetic biology and its socio-economic impacts Silvia Ribeiro and Veronica Villa, ETC Group, Mexico (confirmed)
17:30	<b>WORKSHOP - GROUP REPORTS TO MOP8</b>
18:00	<b>End of day</b>





**Scientific Conference - 20 years GM crops**  
**Friday, 2. December 2016**

<b>Session III. ...and they do spread - About GMOs out of place</b>		
09:30	<b>When Invasion meets genetic engineering - Teosinte's fulminant appearance in Europe's Bt maize production area</b>	Rosa Binimelis, GenØk – Centre for Biosafety, Norway (& Angelika Hilbeck) (confirmed)
10:00	<b>Transgene flow and accumulation in native varieties: scientific controversy resolved</b>	Alma Piñeyro, UCCS (confirmed)
10:30	<b>Biocultural impacts of transgenic crop release at centers of origin and diversification: the case of maize in Mexico</b>	Antonio Turrent, Board of UCCS (confirmed)
11:00	<b>BREAK</b>	
11:30	<b>Out of control - the spread of transgenes and GM plants</b>	Christoph Then, ENSSER/Testbiotech (confirmed)
12:00	<b>Empowerment through detection - the ABRA device - participatory sciences</b>	Ignacio Chapela, UC Berkeley, USA (invited)
12:30	<b>WORKSHOP - GROUP REPORTS TO MOP8</b>	
13:00	<b>LUNCH</b>	
<b>Session IV. GMOs in developing countries</b>		
14:00	<b>The failure of Bt cotton in Burkina Faso</b>	Brian Dowd-Urbe, Dep International Studies, Univ of San Francisco (confirmed)
14:30	<b>WEMA and Bt maize - the business model</b>	Angelika Hilbeck, ETH Zurich, Switzerland (confirmed)
15:00	<b>GM crops East Africa</b>	Daniel Maingi, Growth Partners Africa, Kenya (confirmed)
15:30	<b>BREAK</b>	
16:00	<b>Philanthrocapitalism: The Gates Foundation's African Programs are not Charity</b>	Phil Bereano, Prof. em., Community Alliance for Global Justice--AGRA Watch Project, USA (confirmed)
16:30	<b>Policy structure analysis</b>	Mariam Mayet, African Centre for Biodiversity, Johannesburg, South Africa (confirmed)
17:00	<b>WORKSHOP - GROUP REPORTS TO MOP8</b>	
<b>Session V. REPORTS TO MOP8</b>		
17:45	<b>Reports for side events at MOP8 - session outcomes will be presented</b>	
18:30	<b>Closure</b>	



**Organisers**

- Unión de Científicos Comprometidos con la Sociedad (UCCS) <http://www.uccs.mx/>
- Unión de Científicos Comprometidos con la Sociedad y la Naturaleza de América Latina (UCCSNAL) <http://uccsnal.org/>
- European Network of Scientists for Social and Environmental Responsibility (ENSSER) <http://www.ensser.org/>
- Third World Network (TWN) <http://www.twn.my/>

**Date & Venue**

1-2 Dec 2016  
 Languages: Spanish & English

UNAM, Mexico City DF  
 Simultaneous translation will be provided

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