

## Moratorium on gene drives rejected at UN biodiversity meeting despite protests from environmentalists

World governments at a United Nations biodiversity meeting [on December 2016] rejected calls for a global moratorium on gene drives, a technology that can rapidly spread modified genes through populations and could be used to engineer entire species. But environmental activists' appeals for a freeze on gene-drive field trials, and on some lab research, are likely to resurface in the future.

"I'm very relieved," says Andrea Crisanti, a molecular parasitologist at Imperial College London...He and others worry that a moratorium would make research on the technology more difficult, scare away funders and prevent field tests.

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Environmental activists who proposed a moratorium on both lab research and field trials say the consequences of an accidental release are too severe for the work to proceed without having safeguards and international rules in place.

"Right now, given the state of the labs, we shouldn't do it," says Jaydee Hanson, a policy director at the International Center for Technology Assessment in Washington DC....

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But political scientist Kenneth Oye at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge says a moratorium would have hurt efforts to reign in gene drives as well as to understand their risks. "That's the research that is needed to inform judgement on whether and how to proceed," he says.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: ['Gene drive' moratorium shot down at UN biodiversity meeting](#)**