

African nations push back against proposed UN ban on gene drives

Africa has kicked against a proposed moratorium on the environmental release of organisms containing gene drives now under debate at the United Nation's biodiversity conference in Egypt.

Work is currently [ongoing in Burkina Faso](#) that could possibly lead to the deployment of the gene drive technology in the fight against malaria. That prospect mobilized some convention delegates to call for a moratorium on releasing organisms into the environment, even in limited field trials.

Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity are being asked to decide between two texts that would define the technology: "Apply the precautionary principle (with regards) to gene drives," or "apply the precautionary principle (and refrain from) releasing gene drive organisms." Adopting the latter will effectively mean a ban on the release of gene drive organisms into the environment in the more than 190 countries that are signatory to the convention.

During a working group meeting at the conference on Sunday, South Africa led the African group rejecting the text seeking a refrain. ...

That stance reflects the views of more than 100 scientists who [signed an open letter](#) opposing the proposed moratorium. "Closing the door on research by creating arbitrary barriers, high uncertainty, and open-ended delays will significantly limit our ability to provide answers to the questions policy-makers, regulators and the public are asking," the letter stated.

Read full, original post: [Africa kicks against proposed gene drive moratorium at UN Biodiversity Conference](#)