

UN: 'Unintended consequences' of CRISPR gene editing among top 5 'emerging' environmental concerns

Genetic engineering, the consequences of thawing permafrost soils and the fragmentation of animal and human habitats through gigantic construction projects are just some of the “emerging issues of environmental concern” The United Nations warns about in a new [report](#).

“All of these environmental phenomena have profound implications for our society, economy and ecosystems, ” the UN’s environmental experts write in their report, which was released [on March 4] shortly before the start of the UN Environmental Conference in Nairobi, Kenya.

....The modification of living organisms – through CRISPR gene-editing, for example – could benefit humanity, according to the UNEP report. However, the technology requires a comprehensive social debate and rules to control the “power to change, restrict or replace entire species.”

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The UN report also highlights nitrogen pollution as a major concern. Industry and agriculture, transport and the energy sector are increasingly emitting nitrogen oxides, causing increasing air pollution and a dwindling ozone layer. “This plague is one of the worst for humanity,” write the researchers.

[Editor’s note: This article was originally published in German. This summary was prepared with Google Translate and edited for clarity.]

Read full, original article: [UN report warns of five serious environmental hazards](#)