

NEWS RELEASE

THE CANADIAN BIOTECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE RELEASES CONSULTATION DOCUMENT ON BIOTECHNOLOGICAL INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND THE PATENTING OF HIGHER LIFE FORMS

(Ottawa, March 21, 2001) - The Canadian Biotechnology Advisory Committee (CBAC) released its Consultation Document today on Biotechnological Intellectual Property and the Patenting of Higher Life Forms.

The Consultation Document was distributed to an extensive list of interested stakeholders, public interest groups and experts, and is also available for public viewing and input on the CBAC web site at www.cbac-cccb.ca/IPConsult_eng.htm.

Aln establishing CBAC, the Government of Canada recognized the need for Canada to be internationally competitive while ensuring the incorporation of ethical and social considerations into Canada=s approach to biotechnology,@ said Dr. Arnold Naimark, Chair of the Canadian Biotechnology Advisory Committee. The purpose of our Consultation Document is to garner the views of stakeholders and the public concerning initiatives to enhance the ability of Canadians to protect and use biotechnological intellectual property in a socially responsible manner. In particular, we are soliciting views in relation to higher life forms as intellectual property.

CBAC has organized the Consultation Document around four themes, covering a range of topics and policy choices relating to biotechnological intellectual property. The four themes are: scope and definition of intellectual property; governance mechanisms; social and ethical issues; and, international obligations and competitiveness.

In early April, using the Consultation Document as a basis for dialogue, CBAC will be holding a series of Canada-wide roundtable discussions with stakeholders. Results of each roundtable will be summarized and made available to the public through the CBAC Web site.

The public is also invited to submit views on the issues addressed in the Consultation Document. CBAC welcomes all input on this Consultation Document **until Monday, May 14, 2001** via its toll free line, its interactive Web site or by written comment which can be sent to CBAC at 5th Floor, Room 570E, 240 Sparks Street, Ottawa, K1A 0H5.

Once CBAC has completed its multi-stakeholder roundtable discussions, and has received comments from the public, it will prepare a report to the Government of Canada on Biotechnological Intellectual Property and the Patenting of Higher Life Forms.

CBAC is an advisory committee of experts that was established in September 1999 to provide independent expert advice to the Government of Canada on biotechnology issues. It has a mandate to provide the Government of Canada with guidance on the ethical, social, regulatory, economic, scientific, environmental and health aspects of biotechnology. CBAC's members serve on a part-time, volunteer basis and have been drawn from such fields as science, business, nutrition, law, environment, philosophy, ethics and public advocacy.

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