

**c) Biodiversity**

Negotiations are underway for a global agreement on the safe transfer, handling, and use of living modified organisms. These negotiations are being conducted under the auspices of the Biodiversity Convention. The Parties are aiming to conclude the negotiations on a Biosafety Protocol by end of 1998. The negotiations are focused specifically on the transboundary movement of any living modified organism resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effect on the conservation and use of biological diversity.

**d) Convention on Prior Informed Consent**

Negotiations are underway under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to develop a legally binding instrument for the application of the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure for certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides in international trade. The fourth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee will be held from October 20-24, 1997. It is anticipated that negotiations will be completed by early to mid-1998.

Concerns about the growth of international trade in chemicals during the 1960's and 1970's led to the development of two voluntary codes of conduct, one under the FAO (dealing with the distribution and use of pesticides) and one under UNEP (dealing with chemicals international trade). These guidelines involve a PIC procedure, which is a formalized system used to obtain and disseminate decisions of countries regarding the import of chemicals covered by the procedure. The goal is to promote shared responsibility between exporting and importing countries with respect to the protection of human health and the environment from the harmful effects of certain chemicals and pesticides that are being traded internationally. The global convention under negotiation will be based on the existing voluntary codes and put into place a legally binding system for the application of the PIC procedure.

**e) United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN ECE)  
Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP):  
Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)**

A Protocol to the LRTAP Convention dealing with POPs is currently under negotiation by members of the UN ECE (Eastern and Western Europe, the U.S. and Canada). POPs are chemicals that, to varying degrees, persist in the environment, accumulate in fatty tissues and are able to move long distances through the atmosphere. This Protocol is designed to address the serious concerns that UN ECE countries have about the effects of POPs