



## Invitation to Press Conference

### Patent Hearing: Africans Challenging Patent Granted to German Company Regarding Pelargonium Medicinal Plant

Hosted by the Church Development Service (Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst, EED), Germany

**January 25, 2010; 7 pm; Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten in Munich/Germany**

During January 25- 26, 2010, a public hearing will be held at the European Patent Office in Munich Germany, concerning a challenge against a patent granted to German company, Schwabe Pharmaceuticals. The patent is in regard to the unlawful exploitation of two Pelargonium medicinal plants from South Africa and the traditional knowledge of South African rural communities.

The challenge has been launched by African Centre for Biosafety from South Africa, acting on behalf of a rural community and the Berne Declaration (Switzerland).

The EED, Berne Declaration and ACB invite you to attend a press conference on January 25 at 7 pm in the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten, Munich. Representatives from those opposing the patent, including from the affected rural community and their legal representative, Prof. Dolder from Switzerland, will address you.

The pharmaceutical company Schwabe extracts the roots of the Pelargonium-plants to produce the well known cough and cold syrup drug "Umckaloabo". Schwabe not only uses the chemical ingredients of the medicinal plants but also the traditional knowledge of South African communities. Schwabe plans to gain extensive monopoly rights on the use of Pelargonium through the patent. In the view of EED, Berne Declaration and ACB, the Pelargonium patent violates the provisions of the European Patent Convention as the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The European Patent Office has unjustifiedly protected Schwabe's extraction methods as inventions, as these have long since been documented in scientific literature and have been used since time immemorial by South African communities. Schwabe has been using the traditional knowledge of these communities without having asked for and received their prior consent and without sharing the benefits from this use equitably with them as required by the CBD. Such misappropriation is internationally denounced as "biopiracy" and is challenged as being contrary to public order under the European Patent Convention

The relevant documents will be made available in due course from the website of the ACB, EED and EvB in English and in German (<http://www.biosafetyafrica.org.za>, <http://www.eed.de>; <http://www.evb.ch>). Please visit our websites for background documentation to the patent challenge.

## **Internet-Links**

### **EED**

Biopiracy Project

<http://www.eed.de/en/en.col/en.col.d/en.sub.41/index.html>

Pelargonium Patents

<http://www.eed.de/en/en.col/en.col.d/en.sub.41/en.sub.news/en.news.25/index.html>

### **Berne Declaration**

Biopiracy Project & Pelargonium Patents

<http://www.evb.ch/en/f25001519.html>

### **ACB**

Biopiracy Project & Pelargonium Patents

<http://www.biosafetyafrica.org.za/index.php/20100115256/Pelargonium-Patent-Challenge-against-Dr.-Willmar-Schwabe/menu-id-100029.html>

<http://www.biosafetyafrica.org.za/index.php/Briefing-Papers/menu-id-100029.html>

<http://www.biosafetyafrica.org.za/index.php/Media-Releases/menu-id-100029.html>