GMO and US Public Perception: Near Term Impacts

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• The US has signed but not ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity

• The US has not signed or ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

• The US Department of Commerce initiative promoting industry-based standards to the World Trade Organization – March 2003

– In promoting the issue, Secretary Don Evans said that adoption of internationally accepted standards will ensure "we're all playing by the same set rules", and those rules should be industry-driven rather than government-driven. ("Commerce's New Standards Initiative", Washington Trade Daily (March 20, 2003), at p. 7.)

– There is also a view that the EU has used a strict precautionary principle to avoid both science-based risk assessment and the entry of GMO's and other US products into the EU markets (The National Foreign Trade Council, "Looking Behind the Curtain:The Growth of Trade Barriers that Ignore Sound Science",2003)

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• The US Department of Agriculture has taken a position of strong support on behalf of US agribusiness GMO trade with the rest of the world • More broadly in the last 3 years, the United States has taken a position with respect to environmental and economic regulation that relaxes existing costraints
• With respect to international frameworks, it has opted out of longstanding agreements, e.g. the Kyoto Accord on Climate Change, the Anti Ballistic Missile Treaty

In the near future, it is unlikely that the US Government will engage in a collaborative way to resolve either domestic or international issues surrounding the commercial development and use of GMO's.