

## **Bioeconomy Needs Sustainability Safeguards, Survey Finds** Respondents from 50 countries identify hope and concerns for the future

Minneapolis/Geneva - There is strong support for establishing international sustainability standards for the bioeconomy that ensure the environmental, economic and social benefits are reached, according to an informal survey of representatives from non-governmental organizations, government and businesses by the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.

The bioeconomy is a rapidly growing sector producing fuel, energy and other products from agricultural crops, grasses, and forest materials. The sector has exploded recently with the help of renewable fuel mandates and Wall Street investment. In early September, IATP conducted a survey of multiple networks it has developed over the years as part of its international trade, and domestic farm and environmental work. Nearly 300 people responded from over 50 different countries.

The survey was released prior to an international meeting this week in Bonn, Germany on “Sustainable Bioenergy - Challenges and Opportunities” sponsored by the UN Foundation.

In the survey, respondents were allowed to check more than one answer. The survey’s findings:

\* Potential positive outcomes for the bioeconomy included less reliance on oil (62 percent), more jobs for rural communities (57 percent), more opportunities for sustainable biomass (53 percent), less pollution (50 percent), and better prices for farmers (49 percent);

\* Potential negative outcomes included increased use of genetically engineered crops (63 percent), increased power for multinational agribusiness and energy companies (63 percent), more intensive industrialized agriculture (62 percent), depletion of water resources (56 percent), and damage to biodiversity (48 percent).

\* Respondents identified the impact on biodiversity (80 percent) as the top information gap in understanding the future of the bioeconomy, followed by the impact on market concentration (67 percent), impact on food security (65 percent), impact on pollution (62 percent) and impact on prices paid to farmers (53 percent).

\* There was strong support for the establishment of international standards that would ensure the positive benefits of the bioeconomy, and limit the potential negative outcomes. Sixty four percent of respondents agreed to participate in a process to set sustainable international standards.

Details of the survey can be found at: [www.iatp.org](http://www.iatp.org).

*The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy works globally to promote resilient family farms, communities and ecosystems through research and education, science and technology, and advocacy.*