**NESTLE ACCUSED OF BIOPIRACY**

Nestlé, the world’s largest food company, is facing allegations of biopiracy after it applied for patents involving two plants found in South Africa without having negotiated permission to use them with the South African government. At issue are two plants found in South Africa, rooibos and honeybush, both of which are commonly used to make herbal teas. Nestec, a Nestlé subsidiary, filed four international patent applications for using the plants or extracts from them to treat hair and skin conditions such as acne, wrinkles, and hair loss. A fifth application sought patent protection for using rooibos as an anti-inflammatory. The Berne Declaration, a Swiss non-governmental organization (NGO), and Natural Justice, a South African environmental law NGO, accused Nestlé of having violated the South African law implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity by failing to file for a permit to use rooibos and honeybush and to sign a benefit-sharing agreement.

**Links to further information**

[Berne declaration and Natural Justice press release](http://www.naturaljustice.org/images/naturaljustice/press%20release-rooibos%20robbery.pdf)

[Berne declaration and Natural Justice briefing paper: Dirty Business for Clean Skin: Nestlé’s Rooibos Robbery in South Africa](http://www.naturaljustice.org/images/naturaljustice/briefing%20paper-rooibos%20robbery.pdf)

[ICTSD Bridges Trade BioRes](http://ictsd.org/i/news/biores/76711/), 31 May 2010