



Press Release

UN meeting agrees on decisions to advance the implementation of the International Agreement on the safe use of living modified organisms

Pyeongchang/Montreal 3 October 2014. Governments attending a United Nations meeting on the safe use of living modified organisms have agreed on various actions to advance the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity as a global tool contributing to the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms (LMO) that may have negative effects on biodiversity.

Among the most significant outcomes was a decision inviting governments and other stakeholders to use the Guidance on Risk Assessment of Living Modified Organisms developed by an expert group that was established by governing body of the Protocol in actual cases of risk assessment and as a tool for capacity-building activities in risk assessment. A mechanism for revising and improving the Guidance was also agreed with a view to having an improved version of the Guidance by the eighth meeting of the Parties in 2016.

The Parties also agreed to continue to identify living modified organisms intended for direct use as food or feed, or for processing that are subject to transboundary movement, by incorporating the information identified in decision BS-III/10 into existing documentation accompanying living modified organisms.

Socioeconomic considerations were discussed extensively and a decision to re-convene a group of experts to further develop clarity on this issue and to develop an outline for guidance on this subject was adopted.

In a decision on improving the efficiency of structures and processes under the Convention and its Protocols, Parties agreed to hold subsequent meetings of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol concurrently with the other meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Protocols, and also agreed that any Subsidiary body on Implementation established by the Convention should also serve the Protocol.

Parties also called upon countries that had not yet done so to ratify the Nagoya Kuala-Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress, and called upon the Executive Secretary to produce materials that would expedite its entry into force.

Other decisions were reached on, inter alia, the Biosafety Clearinghouse, compliance, the financial mechanism and resources, monitoring and reporting, contained use of Living Modified Organisms and assessment and review of the effectiveness of the Protocol and the Protocol budget for the 2015 – 2016 biennium.

The meeting was closed by Mr. Lee In Ho, of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy of the Government of the Republic of Korea, and Acting President of COPMOP7. He said: “All efforts made by the delegates over the past 5 days will pave the way for the effective implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the Korean government will spare no effort for the development of the Protocol as the hosting country. In particular, the Republic of Korea has created the “Korea Biosafety Capacity Building Initiative” for the implementation of the Protocol and capacity building, and the initiative has been adopted by the agreement of the Parties. I am looking forward to the cooperation between Korea and all Parties for the achievement of the initiative.”

Braulio Dias, United Nations Assistant-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, said of the meeting: “I congratulate the Parties on their hard work, and their spirit of compromise that they demonstrated this week. Their work has advanced the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol, and in so doing, not only ensures biosafety, but also contributes to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its important role in the global agenda for sustainable development.”

The meeting was the first of a series of three meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity scheduled to take place in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea. The 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity opens on Monday 6 October 2014.

Notes for Editors

1. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is a supplementary agreement to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Its objective is to contribute to ensuring the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms that may have adverse effects on conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health.
2. The Protocol was adopted on 29 January 2000 in Montreal, Canada and entered into force on 11 September 2003. To date, 167 countries and the European Union have ratified or acceded to it.
3. The Protocol is named after the Colombian city of Cartagena where the final round of its negotiations was launched.

4. The governing body of the Protocol, known as the Conference of the Parties to Convention on Biological Diversity serving as meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (or COP-MOP, in short), has held six earlier meetings – in Kuala Lumpur in February 2004; in Montreal in June 2005; in Curitiba, in March 2006; in Bonn in May 2008; in Nagoya, in October 2010; and in Hyderabad, in October 2012.

5. Article 27 of the Protocol states that: “The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to this Protocol shall, at its first meeting, adopt a process with respect to the appropriate elaboration of international rules and procedures in the field of liability and redress for damage resulting from transboundary movements of living modified organisms, analysing and taking due account of the ongoing processes in international law on these matters, and shall endeavour to complete this process within four years.”

6. For additional information, please contact: Ms. Ulrika Nilsson at ulrika.nilsson@cbd.int or Mr. Charles Gbedemah at charles.gbedemah@cbd.int or, in Pyeongchang Mr. David Ainsworth at david.ainsworth@cbd.int

Additional information is available at the following websites: Protocol website: <http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/> MOP 7 website: <https://www.cbd.int/mop7/>
