



Convention on Biological Diversity

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SECOND SERIES OF REGIONAL REAL-TIME
ONLINE CONFERENCES ON RISK ASSESSMENT
AND RISK MANAGEMENT UNDER THE
CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY

Africa (2 February 2010)

Asia and the Pacific (4 February 2010)

WEOG and CEE (9 February 2010)

Latin America and the Caribbean (11 February 2010)

ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

INTRODUCTION

1. At their fourth meeting, the Parties to the Protocol, in decision BS-IV/11, established an Open-ended Online Expert Forum on Risk Assessment and Risk Management through the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) and an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Risk Assessment and Risk Management to address specific issues on risk assessment and risk management of living modified organisms (LMOs).
2. The Executive Secretary was requested to convene ad hoc online discussion groups, two AHTEG meetings and at least one real-time online conference per region prior to each of the two AHTEG meetings to take place prior to the fifth meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, in October 2010.
3. In order to implement a continuous process comprised of the above mentioned activities and allow the input from an open-ended group of experts into the work of the AHTEG, the Secretariat has carried out one round of eight ad hoc online discussion groups in November-December 2008 followed by a series of four regional real-time conferences in February 2009, prior to the first meeting of the AHTEG, which took place in Montreal from 20 to 24 April 2009.
4. At the first meeting of the AHTEG, in addition to the Roadmap for Risk Assessment as per the terms of reference of the AHTEG, three specific issues of risk assessment and risk management (i.e., living modified (LM) mosquitoes, LMOs with stacked genes or traits and LM crops with resistance to abiotic stress) were identified as priorities for the development of guidance documents. Subsequently, a total of ten ad hoc discussion groups were held in two rounds (June-July and November-December 2009) to gather input, among other things, for the preparation of the draft guidance documents by the AHTEG.
5. As a follow-up in the process, the second series of regional real-time online conferences on risk assessment and risk management, comprised of four regional conferences (Africa, 2 February 2010; Asia and the Pacific, 4 February; WEOG and CEE, 9 February; Latin America and the Caribbean, 11 February), will be held at http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/realtime_ra.shtml to address specific issues of risk assessment and risk management for input into the work of the of the AHTEG at its second meeting.

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In order to minimize the environmental impacts of the Secretariat's processes, and to contribute to the Secretary-General's initiative for a C-Neutral UN, this document is printed in limited numbers. Delegates are kindly requested to bring their copies to meetings and not to request additional copies.

6. Participation in the real-time online conferences is open to those who are registered in the opened online forum. Participants who had been nominated by Parties will be automatically registered in their respective regional conferences. Anglophone participants from the Caribbean subregion and observers will be invited to indicate one regional real-time online conference in which they may wish to participate.¹

7. The conferences will be publicly available to those wishing to follow the discussions in real-time.

8. The outcomes of the online discussion groups and real-time online conferences will serve as inputs for the deliberations by the AHTEG during its second meeting, to be held in Ljubljana from 19 to 23 April 2010.

ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

9. The conferences will be opened at 10 a.m. on 2 February 2009 for Africa, at 3 p.m. on 4 February 2009 for Asia and the Pacific, at 10 a.m. on 9 February 2009 for WEOG and CEE, and at 3 p.m. on 11 February 2009 for Latin America and the Caribbean (all times are indicated in UTC/GMT). Each conference will last for 3 to 4 hours. Any change to this schedule will be communicated to the participants and published in the BCH pages of the real-time online conferences.²

ITEM 2. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

2.1. Adoption of the agenda

10. The participants to the conferences will be invited to adopt the provisional agenda prepared by the Executive Secretary (document UNEP/CBD/BS/REGCONF-RA&RM/2/1) and derived from the terms of reference for the AHTEG by the Parties to the Protocol in the annex to decision BS-IV/11,³ as well from as topics identified by the AHTEG during its first meeting for the development of guidance documents.

11. The second series of regional real-time conferences will be chaired as follows: Ms. Hajara Yusuf Sadiq (Africa), Ms. Vilasini Pillai (Asia and the Pacific), Mr. Helmut Gaugitsch (WEOG and CEE) and Ms. Sol Ortiz García (Latin America and the Caribbean) as approved by the COP-MOP Bureau in the occasion of the first series of regional real-time online conferences.

2.2. Organization of work

12. The conferences for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and WEOG and CEE will be held in English. The conference for Latin America and the Caribbean will be held in Spanish.

13. The conferences will take place online in the form of a “chat room” where participants will be able to post written interventions. A list of all participants will be visible to all who are logged in to the conference. Participants will need to request the floor when they wish to make interventions. Participants will be able to consult with the Secretariat in case of technical difficulties through an online “Helpdesk” or by telephone. Prior to the conferences, participants will have the opportunity to test the conference system.

14. Participants are encouraged to prepare their initial interventions for each of the substantive issues in advance based on the following information.

¹ The deadline for indicating one of the conferences to be attended is 15 January 2010.

² Available at http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/realtime_ra.shtml .

³ Decision BS-IV/11: <http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/decisions/decision.shtml?decisionID=11690> .

ITEM 3. SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

3.1. *Comments on the draft guidance documents prepared by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Risk Assessment and Risk Management*

15. Under this agenda item, the participants to the Real-time Online Conferences will be invited to comment on the draft guidance documents prepared by the AHTEG Sub-working Groups.

16. In preparing for this agenda item, the participants to the Real-time Conferences are invited to consider the following documents:⁴

- (a) The report of the first meeting of the AHTEG;⁵
- (b) Latest versions of the draft guidance documents prepared by the AHTEG sub-working groups;⁶
- (c) Interventions made during previous online events under the open-ended online expert forum, i.e., three rounds of discussion groups (10 November-19 December 2008, 22 June-12 July 2009 and 23 November-14 December 2009⁷) and the first series of real-time online conferences (28 January-17 February 2009⁸); and
- (d) An analysis of the discussions under the open-ended online forum prepared by the Secretariat.⁹

17. The following guiding questions were formulated in consultation with the Chairs of the AHTEG sub-working groups to facilitate the discussions during the real-time conferences:

(i) *Roadmap for risk assessment of LMOs*

- (a) Does the draft “Roadmap for Risk Assessment of LMOs” provide a useful, complete and user-friendly tool to assist you in performing an LMO risk assessment? What amendments would you propose to increase its usefulness and user friendliness?
- (b) Is the draft Roadmap applicable to all types of LMOs and applications within the scope of the Protocol?
- (c) Are the concepts presented in the draft Roadmap clearly and accurately described? Please specify what concepts could be presented better, and what amendments you would advise.
- (d) Is there any issue or concept that is missing from the current draft Roadmap that should be included? If so, please propose a draft text to address the missing issue(s).

(ii) *Risk assessment and risk management of LM mosquitoes*

- (a) Is the structure of the draft guidance on “Risk Assessment and Risk Management of LM Mosquitoes” clear?
- (b) Are all relevant scientific issues properly addressed in the draft guidance document? If not, please specify what amendments you would advise.
- (c) Is there any other scientific issue that should be included in this guidance document? If so, please propose a draft text to address the missing issue(s).

⁴ All document listed that will be made available at http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/realtime_ra.shtml .

⁵ UNEP/CBD/BS/AHTEG-RA&RM/1/3.

⁶ To be circulated prior to the real-time conferences by the Chairs of the AHTEG sub-working groups.

⁷ Available at http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/archived_discussions_ra.shtml .

⁸ Available at http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/realtime_ra.shtml .

⁹ UNEP/CBD/BS/AHTEG-RA&RM/1/2.

(d) Could you please suggest bibliography on the biology, ecology and genetics of mosquitoes that are relevant to this guidance document?

(iii) Risk assessment and risk management of LM crops with resistance or tolerance to abiotic stress

(a) Is the structure of the draft guidance on “Risk Assessment and Risk Management of LM Crops with Resistance or Tolerance to Abiotic Stress” clear?

(b) Are all relevant scientific issues properly addressed in the draft guidance document? If not, please specify what amendments you would advise.

(c) Is there any other scientific issue that should be included in this guidance document? If so, please propose a draft text to address the missing issue(s).

(d) Do you think the definition of “abiotic stresses” shown in the draft guidance document is accurate? If not, please provide a draft text to improve it.

(e) Could you please suggest references to publications that are relevant to this guidance document?

(iv) Risk assessment and risk management of LMOs with stacked genes or traits

(a) Is the structure of the draft guidance on “Risk Assessment and Risk Management of LMOs with Stacked Genes or Traits” clear?

(b) Are all relevant scientific issues properly addressed in the draft guidance document? If not, please specify what amendments you would advise.

(c) Is there any other scientific issue that should be included in this guidance document? If so, please propose a draft text to address the missing issue(s).

(d) Do you think the definitions provided in the draft guidance document are accurate? If not, please provide a draft text to improve them.

(e) Could you please suggest references to publications that are relevant to this guidance document?

3.2. Modalities for cooperation in identifying living modified organisms or specific traits that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health

18. According to its mandate, set out by the Parties to the Protocol in decision BS-IV/11, the AHTEG at its second meeting should consider possible modalities for cooperation in identifying living modified organisms or specific traits that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health.

19. To assist the AHTEG in its deliberations, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol requested Parties and invited other Governments and relevant organizations to submit scientifically sound information available at that time, on the identification of LMOs or specific traits that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health. The Parties also requested the Executive Secretary to compile the information received and to prepare a synthesis report for consideration by the AHTEG and the Parties. The compiled information is available as a background document.¹⁰

20. Participants in the real-time online conferences will be invited to discuss possible modalities or potential mechanisms by which cooperation may be established by the Parties to the Protocol to identify

¹⁰ UNEP/CBD/BS/AHTEG-RA&RM/2/2.

LMOs or specific traits that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health.

21. The following guiding questions were prepared by the Secretariat and may assist the discussions during the real-time conferences:

(a) Which modalities (or mechanisms) would you like to recommend for cooperation in identifying living modified organisms or specific traits that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health?

(b) Who should be involved in this cooperation?

(c) What should be the terms of reference and timeline for this cooperation?

3.3. Need for further development of guidance on risk assessment and risk management of LMOs and the way forward

22. Similar to the practice during face-to-face expert meetings organized by the Convention Secretariat, the experts participating in the open-ended online forum may provide recommendations as to whether there is a need for follow-up activities for the development of guidance on LMO risk assessment and, if so, what kind of activities could these be.

23. Under this item, participants in the real-time conference will be invited to express their views as to whether and how the process of developing further guidance on risk assessment and risk management should continue.

24. Participants are also invited to consider the interventions made during the online Discussion Group on “The way forward for the development of further guidance on risk assessment and risk management of LMOs”.¹¹

25. The following guiding questions were prepared by the Secretariat to assist the discussions during the real-time conferences:

(a) Is there a need for further development of guidance on risk assessment and risk management of LMOs?

(b) If a need for further development of guidance exists, what kind of process(es) could be considered for addressing this need?

ITEM 4. OTHER MATTERS

26. Under this item, the participants in the conference may wish to consider other matters raised and accepted for discussion in accordance with the rules of procedure.

ITEM 5. CLOSURE OF THE CONFERENCE

27. It is expected that the conference will be closed by its Chair after three to four hours of discussion. The entire transcript of the conferences will be made publicly available through the Biosafety Clearing-House.

¹¹ -Available at http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/archived_discussions_ra.shtml .