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Overview of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and its Proposed Programme of Work on Public Awareness, Education and Participation

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Presentation Outline

Part I: Background to the Protocol

Part II: Provisions relating to PAEP

Part III: COP-MOP decisions on PAE&P

Part IV: Proposed Work Programme





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Overview of the Protocol

Facts and Figures:

- Negotiated under the CBD
- Adopted 29 January 2000 after 4 years of intense negotiations
- Entered into force on 9 September 2003
- 160 ratifications/ accessions
- 4 COP-MOP meetings; 60 substantive decisions
- COP-MOP 5 (11-15 Oct. 2010) in Nagoya





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Overview of the Protocol

Objective

Contribute to ensuring the safe transfer, handling and use of LMOs resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on the biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health



*In accordance with the precautionary approach



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Protocol provisions relating to public access to information and participation

Article 23 requires Parties to:

- Promote and facilitate PAE&P concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of LMOs; and to cooperate in doing so;
- Endeavour to ensure that PA&E encompass access to information on LMOs imported
- Consult the public in the decision-making process regarding LMOs and avail the results of such decisions to the public
- Endeavour to inform the public about the means of public access to the Biosafety Clearing-House



Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety





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PAE&P under the Protocol



- Article 23 includes a mix of mandatory and discretionary actions for Parties

Mandatory actions:

- **Promote & facilitate PAE&P:** Article 23(1)(a) obliges Parties to “promote and facilitate” public awareness, education and participation. However, it does not specify how this should be done. Parties can use any measures/ mechanisms deemed appropriate
- **Public participation:** Article 23(2) establishes an obligation to consult with the public, but leaves it up to the Parties to decide how this obligation should be implemented in accordance with their respective laws and regulations



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PAE&P under the Protocol



Discretionary actions

- ***Access to Information:*** Article 23(1)(b) does not explicitly require Parties to make specific information regarding LMOs available to the public. The word “endeavour” suggests that the Parties are only encouraged to attempt or strive to ensure access to information on imported LMOs (within their public awareness and education measures and mechanisms)
- ***Means of public access to the BCH:*** Article 23(3) only encourages Parties to endeavour to inform its public about the means of public access to the BCH.



Protocol provisions relating to public access to information

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- Overall, the Protocol emphasizes open and broad sharing of information
- It establishes an Advance Informed Agreement (AIA) procedure to ensure that Parties of import obtain all relevant information before taking a decision on import of LMOs (to be released into the environment)
- Article 20 of the Protocol establishes a Bios Clearing-House to, *inter alia*, facilitate the exchange of scientific, technical, environmental and legal information on, and experience with, LMOs – <http://bch.cbd.int>





Protocol provisions relating to public access to information

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- The BCH contains a wide range of information relevant to the public, e.g. biosafety laws, decisions taken regarding the importation/release of LMOs, registry of LMOs, etc
- BCH Biosafety Information Resource Centre (virtual library) - publications, awareness materials, audio-visuals, etc.
- BCH is freely accessible to all users. Anyone can subscribe to the Current Awareness Service at: <http://bch.cbd.int/resources/maillinglist.shtml> to receive regular updates on information posted





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Decisions taken by COP-MOP



- **COP-MOP 2 considered, “options for cooperation”**
- **Decision BS-II/6 - ES requested to intensify cooperation with the Aarhus Convention**
- **Decision BS-II/13, governments urged to:**
 - **Develop and implement national and regional PAEP programmes**
 - **Share information, awareness materials and case-studies**
 - **Maximize opportunities for cooperation provided by instruments such as the Aarhus Convention**
 - **Communicate their needs, gaps and priorities regarding PAE&P through the BCH.**

Decisions taken by COP-MOP

COP-MOP 4 :

- Agreed to consider a programme of work on PAEP at its next meeting; Requested:
 - Govts & orgs to submit views
 - ES to prepare a draft
- Invited Governments and relevant organizations to provide to available through the BCH information on opportunities for supporting PAE&P
- Endorsed an Outreach Strategy for the Protocol developed by CBD Secretariat





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Draft Programme of Work (2011–2015)

- **Part of the Protocol Strategic Plan (2011-2020)**
- **Programme Elements**
 1. Capacity-Building
 2. Public awareness and education
 3. Public access to Information
 4. Public Participation



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Components of the PoW

Each programme element includes:

- **Operational Objectives**
- **Expected Outcomes**
- **Indicators**
- **Suggested Activities**
- **Time Frame**
- **Actors**



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Capacity-Building

- **Enabling legal and/or policy frameworks and mechanisms**
- **Institutional mechanisms (e.g. administrative structures and arrangements, financing)**
- **Human resources development (Roster of experts, training programmes for biosafety educators and communicators, Training and guidance materials, professional exchanges)**
- **Strengthen use of media (media strategies and plans, media databases, media training)**
- **Collaboration/sharing of experiences & materials**



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Public awareness and education

- **Baseline surveys**
- **Awareness plans/programmes**
- **Biosafety awareness materials**
- **Awareness seminars and workshops**
- **Translation of materials into local languages**
- **Social communication strategies, e.g. art and culture.**
- **Integration of biosafety into curricula**
- **University biosafety courses**
- **Biosafety educational packages**
- **E-learning modules on biosafety**
- **Stocking biosafety materials in libraries**
- **Competitions in schools**



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Public access to information

- **Popularise public right to access information**
- **Improve access to BCH and its national nodes**
- **National websites**
- **Information alert systems**
- **Legal systems/procedures for access to biosafety information (Article 21, paragraph 6).**



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Public Participation

- **Legal frameworks for public participation**
- **Institutional and administrative mechanisms**
- **Mechanisms for notifications about planned public consultations**
- **Public participation strategies/action plans**
- **Operating procedures for government officials.**
- **Platforms (e.g. public hearings, e-forums, mailing lists)**
- **Mechanisms/bodies enforce public consultation/participation**
- **Training decision-makers on utilizing public inputs**
- **Resource materials/ case studies on PP**



Opportunities for Cooperation Between the Protocol and the Aarhus Convention

- **MOP decisions BS-II/6 and BS-II/13 and Aarhus Convention decision II/1 provide a good framework**
- **National Biosafety Frameworks – sub-national coop**
- **Proposed PoW – various opportunities**
- **The outcomes of this workshop will advance both the Protocol PoW and the Almaty Amendment**
 - ❖ **Future joint activities**
 - ❖ **Linking both Clearing-Houses**





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THANK YOU!

