



Public Awareness and Public Participation

(Paragraph 1, Article 23)

Background

The Protocol requires Parties, to cooperate with other States and international bodies, to promote and facilitate public awareness and education, including access to information, regarding the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms (LMOs). It also requires Parties to consult the public in the decision-making process, to make public the final decision taken and to inform public about the means of access to the Biosafety Clearing-House.

Some facts:

- According to the first national reports, many countries indicated that they set up websites and online databases such as registries on LMOs to facilitate public access to biosafety information

What is being done?

At the second meeting of the COP-MOP, the Parties considered, “options for cooperation between Parties, other States and relevant international bodies on the promotion and facilitation of public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms”. The second meeting of the COP-MOP encouraged countries to develop and implement national programmes, to make effective use of the media and to leverage opportunities for cooperation in the promotion of public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of LMOs. To date, many countries have experience in promoting public awareness, education and participation by for instance setting up national websites and issuing publications on biosafety issues.

The Secretariat has also made efforts for instance through establishing Outreach Strategy to regularly contact national focal points, update the website, set up databases and issue publications and press releases, offer side events, hold seminars and write articles for external publications.

What is expected at COP-MOP 4?

The meeting will consider an interim report on public awareness and participation progress and initiatives made by governments and organizations. This report includes for instance experiences gained and lessons learned, in promoting public awareness and participation in developing national biosafety frameworks. The COP-MOP will also consider challenges encountered by Parties and other Governments concerning public awareness and participation and consider the need for a global programme of work. Furthermore, the meeting is expected to review and endorse a new outreach strategy for the CBD Secretariat.



For more Information:

COP-MOP 4 website: <http://www.cbd.int/mop4/>

Protocol website: <http://www.cbd.int/biosafety>

Biosafety Clearing-House: <http://bch.cbd.int>

Frequently asked questions: <http://www.cbd.int/biosafety/faqs.asp>