



PRESS RELEASE

UN MEETING ON THE SAFE USE OF LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS OPENS IN KOREA

Pyeongchang / Montreal, 29 September 2014. The seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (or COP-MOP 7) opened today at the Alpensia Convention Center in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea. Delegates, including representatives from Government, civil society and industry, attended the opening session. The meeting is the first of three major biodiversity meetings being held in Pyeongchang.

The meeting is expected to adopt further decisions to ensure the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms (LMOs) that may have negative effects on biodiversity. It will also advance the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol through the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol (2011-2020). Delegates will, among others, discuss issues relating to the financial mechanism and resources for the implementation of Cartagena Protocol, the Nagoya – Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol; risk assessment and risk management; socio-economic considerations concerning LMOs; assessment and the review of the effectiveness of the Cartagena Protocol. The Parties will also convene a special session on the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol to integrate biosafety into relevant national development plans, other relevant national policies and programmes.

Mr. Shri Ashok Lavasa, Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forests of the Government of India, outlined the progress achieved during the last meeting of the Parties and in the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol over the last two years. He also noted: “India is committed to supporting any new initiatives taken up by Republic of Korea during their Presidency in furtherance of the objectives of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and implementation of the Strategic Plan.”

The meeting was opened by Mr. Sang-jick Yoon, Minister of Trade, Industry & Energy of the Government of the Republic of Korea said “As President of COP-MOP 7, I am confident that the next five days will provide an opportunity for the global biodiversity community to make progress on the safe transboundary movement of LMOs in the direction of lessening trade distortions while securing the biosafety of the Parties.”

Mr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity highlighted the main issues to be discussed by Parties during COP-MOP 7. He said: “The common denominator of our presence here is the theme for the meetings of the Convention and its Protocols - Biodiversity for Sustainable Development. Your discussions over the coming week will contribute to building a strong and vibrant Biosafety Protocol, which contributes to sustainable development.”

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, 166 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 five 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.”
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Additional information is available at the following websites:

Protocol website: <http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/>
MOP 7 website: <https://www.cbd.int/mop7/>
MOP 7 media website: <https://www.cbd.int/mop7/media.shtml>
Frequently asked questions: http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_faq.shtml