



# Convention on Biological Diversity

Distr.  
GENERAL

CBD/CP/LG/2020/1/2  
23 March 2020

ENGLISH ONLY

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## LIAISON GROUP ON THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY

Fourteenth meeting  
Montreal, Canada, 20-23 April 2020  
Item 3 of the provisional agenda\*

### **FOURTH ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW OF THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL AND FINAL EVALUATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL FOR THE PERIOD 2011-2020: OVERVIEW FOR THE LIAISON GROUP ON THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY**

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Article 35 of the Cartagena Protocol requires that the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol undertake a periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of the Protocol.
2. Through decision [BS-V/16](#), the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol adopted the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety for the period 2011-2020 and decided that a mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Plan would be conducted in conjunction with the third assessment and review of the effectiveness of the Protocol.
3. The third assessment and review of the Protocol and mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol was conducted in 2016, and the outcome of this process was reflected in decision [CP-VIII/15](#).
4. In its decision [CP-9/6](#), the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol decided that the fourth assessment and review of the Cartagena Protocol would be combined with the final evaluation of the Strategic Plan. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol requested the Executive Secretary to analyse and synthesize information on the implementation of the Protocol, using inter alia, the fourth national reports as a primary source, the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) and experience from capacity-building projects and the Compliance Committee, and to make this information available to the Liaison Group and, as appropriate, the Compliance Committee.
5. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol further requested the Liaison Group and the Compliance Committee to work in a complementary and non-duplicative manner, to contribute to the fourth assessment and review of the Protocol and the final evaluation of the Strategic Plan and to submit their conclusions for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at its third meeting.
6. At its sixteenth meeting, held from 29 to 31 May 2019, the Compliance Committee decided that the scope of its input to the fourth assessment and review of the Protocol and the final evaluation of the Strategic Plan would focus on operational objective 3.1 of the Strategic Plan, related to compliance, and on the experience the Committee had gained in implementing its supportive role of assisting Parties in

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\* CBD/CP/LG/2020/1/1.

complying with their obligations. Accordingly, the input of the Liaison Group would focus on the other operational objectives of the Strategic Plan.

7. The present document is meant to support the Liaison Group in providing its input to the fourth assessment and review of the Protocol and the final evaluation of the Strategic Plan. It provides, in section II, a summary of the status and trends in the implementation of the Protocol and the progress made towards achieving the operational objectives of the Strategic Plan. Section III provides some conclusions and suggestions for the consideration of the Liaison Group.

8. Section II is based on the information provided in document CBD/SBI/3/3/Add.1, which provides the full analysis of information for the assessment and review of the Protocol and final evaluation of the Strategic Plan. The document is being made available to the Liaison Group as an information document.

## **II. SUMMARY OF THE STATUS AND TRENDS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL AND PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

9. The Strategic Plan includes indicators for each of the operational objectives. For each of these indicators, a description of progress from the baseline is provided in CBD/SBI/3/3/Add.1, around 12 broad areas that each address related operational objectives. These descriptions are based on information provided in, among other things, the fourth national reports, as a primary source, the BCH and experience from capacity-building projects and the Compliance Committee, where appropriate.

10. A summary of the information on progress from the baseline towards the operational objectives for each of the 12 areas is provided in this section. The 12 areas are: (a) national biosafety frameworks; coordination and support; (b) risk assessment and risk management; (c) living modified organisms (LMOs) or traits that may have adverse effects; (d) liability and redress; (e) handling, transport, packaging and identification; (f) socioeconomic considerations; (g) transit, contained use, unintentional transboundary movements and emergency measures; (h) information sharing; (i) compliance and review; (j) public awareness and participation, biosafety education and training; and (k) outreach and cooperation.

11. In decision BS-VI/15, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol decided that the data obtained from the analysis of the second national reports and through a dedicated survey<sup>1</sup> would form the baseline for measuring progress in implementing the Protocol.

12. Where information in the present document is based on national reports, the information has been obtained from fourth national reports submitted by 15 January 2020 by those Parties that had also provided related information at the baseline (i.e. in their second national report or in the survey). This approach enables a consistent and comparable review of progress over time and follows the approach taken for the third assessment and review of the Protocol and mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Plan.<sup>2</sup>

13. Further information on methodological issues is provided in CBD/SBI.3.3Add.1, section II.

### **A. National biosafety framework (operational objectives 1.1 and 2.1)**

14. Some progress has been reported towards achieving operational objectives 1.1. and 2.1, related to having operational national biosafety frameworks in place.

15. Just over half of the Parties (55 per cent) reported having fully taken the necessary measures to implement the Protocol, which constitutes an increase of 8 per cent from the baseline. At the regional level,

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<sup>1</sup> A dedicated survey was carried out in 2013 to gather information corresponding to indicators in the Strategic Plan that could not be obtained from the second national reports or through other existing mechanisms. Results of the survey are available at <http://bch.cbd.int/database/reports/surveyonindicators.shtml>.

<sup>2</sup> At the cut-off date for the preparation of the comparative analysis of information for the third assessment and review of the Protocol and mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Plan, 105 Parties had submitted their third national report. A total of 102 of these Parties had also submitted a second national report and their reports were used for the development of the comparative analysis. See UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/4.

a minority of Parties reported having fully introduced the measures necessary for the implementation of the Protocol in the Latin American and Caribbean (8 per cent) and African (30 per cent) regions. However, advances made from the baseline in this respect are particularly notable in the African region (+10 per cent). A large number of Parties reported having partially taken the measures necessary to implement the Protocol (38 Parties or 39 per cent). A number of Parties indicated that legal instruments were being developed or were pending adoption. The increase in the number of Parties having fully taken the necessary measures to implement the Protocol (+8 per cent) is mainly attributable to increases reported in the third reporting cycle (+10 per cent), while a decrease (-2 per cent) was reported in the fourth reporting cycle. This indicates that the rate at which fully functional legal, administrative and other measures are being put in place is not improving.

16. A large majority of Parties reported having administrative rules and procedures for handling notifications and requests for the approval of imports of LMOs intended for direct use as food or feed, or for processing (LMOs-FFP), contained use or for introduction into the environment. An increase of 13 per cent from the baseline was reported in the number of Parties reporting to have adopted rules and procedures for imports of LMOs-FFP (83 per cent of Parties). A total of 80 per cent of the Parties reported regulating contained use, and 66 per cent of Parties reported having established legal requirements for exporters under their domestic framework to notify in writing the competent national authority of the Party of import prior to the intentional transboundary movement of an LMO that falls within the scope of the advance informed agreement (AIA) procedure – an increase of 5 per cent from the baseline.<sup>3</sup>

17. Progress has been reported in rendering administrative arrangements functional. Almost all Parties reported having permanent staff to administer biosafety functions, with important increases in certain regions, in particular in Africa (+17 per cent). However, only approximately half of the Parties indicated that the staffing levels are adequate. The percentage of Parties that reported having adequate institutional capacity remains moderate (65 per cent), although it has increased substantially (+20 per cent) from the baseline. More Parties reported having at least to some extent a mechanism for budgetary allocations towards biosafety (81 per cent of Parties), with important increases reported in the Asia-Pacific region (+25 per cent), Central and Eastern Europe (+24 per cent) and Africa (+13 per cent).

18. A number of Parties indicated that, although institutional frameworks had been established, the necessary capacities and staffing levels were still insufficient. Some Parties indicated that inter-agency cooperation needed to be improved. Some Parties mentioned that further strengthening of mandates through legislation was required.

### **B. Coordination and support (operational objective 1.2)**

19. There has been very limited overall progress from the baseline with respect to operational objective 1.2.

20. A total of 20 per cent of Parties (19 Parties) reported having no capacity-building needs, a slight increase of 2 per cent. While 83 per cent of Parties in the Western European and Others Group reported that their capacity-building needs had been met (-4 per cent), in other regions, the percentages were much lower (Africa: 0 per cent; Latin America and the Caribbean: 0 per cent; Asia and the Pacific: 13 per cent; Central and Eastern Europe: 13 per cent) with no change from the baseline, except for the Central and Eastern European region (+13 per cent).

21. Very limited progress was also reported in the number of Parties having developed a national biosafety capacity-building action plan (+2 per cent), bringing the total to 33 per cent (31 Parties).

22. Decreases were reported in:

(a) The number of Parties having assessed their capacity-building needs (-4 per cent), bringing the total to 45 per cent of Parties (42 Parties);

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<sup>3</sup> Information on the number of Parties that have taken decisions and have measures in place is provided in section III, Area J, indicator 3.1.4 of the analysis document (CBD/SBI/3/3/Add.1).

(b) Parties having in place a national coordination mechanism for biosafety capacity-building initiatives (-10 per cent), bringing the total to 44 per cent of Parties (31 Parties);

(c) Parties that reported having predictable and reliable funding for strengthening the capacities for implementing the Protocol (-7 per cent), bringing the total to 35 per cent of Parties (25 Parties);

(d) Parties that reported having access to additional financial resources beyond their national budgets (-30 per cent), bringing the total to 31 Parties.

23. Many Parties indicated that national funding was often insufficient to address their capacity-building needs. This is an important factor to consider, especially in view of the decreasing number of Parties having predictable and reliable funding, as well as the number of Parties having access to new and additional resources.

24. At the regional level, in the Asia-Pacific and African regions, consistent progress was reported on a large number of the indicators for operational objective 1.2, in particular in terms of the proportion of Parties having assessed their capacity-building needs (Africa +7 per cent; Asia-Pacific +19 per cent), developed a national biosafety capacity-building action plan (Africa +3 per cent; Asia-Pacific +31 per cent), having established a national capacity-building coordination mechanism (Africa +5 per cent; Asia-Pacific +22 per cent), and having access to predictable and reliable funding for strengthening their capacity for implementing the Protocol (Africa +21 per cent; Asia Pacific +11 per cent).

### **C. Risk assessment and risk management (operational objectives 1.3 and 2.2)**

25. A majority of Parties (61 per cent or 43 Parties) reported having undertaken risk assessments of LMOs pursuant to the Protocol in the current reporting period. This represents an increase of 9 per cent from the baseline. At the regional level, increases were reported in the Central and Eastern European region (+36 per cent); Asia and the Pacific (+22 per cent) and the European and Others Group (+6 per cent) in this respect.

26. There was a modest increase (+4 per cent) in Parties reporting that they had adopted or used guidance documents for the purpose of conducting risk assessment, or for evaluating risk assessment reports submitted by notifiers, bringing the total to 72 per cent of Parties (51 Parties). A total of 71 per cent of Parties (50 Parties) reported that they had adopted or used guidance documents for the purpose of conducting risk management, representing a +5 per cent increase from the baseline.

27. A larger increase was reported among Parties that had adopted common approaches to risk assessment and risk management (+13 per cent), bringing the total to 58 per cent of Parties (41 Parties).

28. While no or very small changes from the baseline are reported in this respect, a substantial number of Parties reported having trained people in relation to capacity-building activities to enable Parties to evaluate, apply, share and carry out risk assessments: 93 per cent of Parties reported having trained people on risk assessment (+1 per cent); 90 per cent of Parties reported having trained people on risk management (+2 per cent); and 87 per cent of Parties reported having trained people on monitoring of LMOs (no change from the baseline).

29. A total of 77 per cent of Parties (55 Parties) reported having the necessary infrastructure for monitoring or managing LMOs. There was no change from the baseline.

30. The ratio between risk assessment reports and the number of decisions on LMOs<sup>4</sup> in the BCH has increased from 83 per cent in January 2012 to 93 per cent in December 2015 and to 96 per cent in January 2020.

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<sup>4</sup> For this purpose, the decisions regarding transboundary movement of LMOs for intentional introduction into the environment (under Article 10 of the Protocol) and those related to import or domestic use of LMOs for direct use as food or feed, or for processing (under Article 11 of the Protocol, or under the domestic framework) were considered.

31. In their written contributions, several Parties mentioned that they still needed support for strengthening capacities on risk assessment and risk management, including on the use of available guidance documents.

#### **D. LMOs or traits that may have adverse effects (operational objective 1.4)**

32. Operational objective 1.4 focuses on the development of modalities for cooperation and guidance in identifying 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.

33. A total of 43 per cent of Parties reported having cooperated with other Parties with a view to identifying LMOs or specific traits that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, representing an increase of 6 per cent from the baseline.

34. The majority of Parties to the Protocol have the capacity to: detect (79 per cent or 78 Parties); identify (77 per cent or 55 Parties); assess (77 per cent or 54 Parties); or monitor (71 per cent or 50 Parties) LMOs or specific traits that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking into account risks to human health. In this respect, an increase was reported in the number of Parties with capacities to monitor (+5 per cent) and to detect (+1 per cent) such LMOs or traits, while a decrease was reported in the percentage of Parties with the capacity to identify such LMOs (-6 per cent), and there was no change from the baseline in the number of Parties with the capacity to assess such LMOs or traits. There are important regional differences, with the vast majority of Parties in the Western European and Others Group, Central and Eastern European region and Asia-Pacific regions reporting having the capacities in this regard, while fewer Parties in the African and the Latin Americana and Caribbean regions reported having these capacities (between 40 per cent and 65 per cent).

35. In their written contributions, a number of Parties indicated that they required access to laboratory facilities as well as support to strengthen their capacities in detection, identification and monitoring of LMOs.

#### **E. Liability and redress (operational objectives 1.5 and 2.4)**

36. The Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety entered into force on 5 March 2018. As of 16 January 2020, 47 countries and the European Union had ratified the Supplementary Protocol, an increase of 38 per cent since the third assessment and review. Of the 13 new ratifications received between 1 March 2016<sup>5</sup> and 15 January 2020, five (38 per cent) ratifications were from countries in Africa and eight from countries in other regions, divided equally in two ratifications (15 per cent) per region. A total of 57 per cent of Parties (32 Parties) to the Cartagena Protocol that had not yet ratified the Supplementary Protocol reported that they had a national process in place towards becoming a Party to the Supplementary Protocol.

37. A majority (60 per cent) of Parties to the Supplementary Protocol reported having measures fully in place for the implementation of the Supplementary Protocol.

38. In addition, a total of 66 per cent of Parties to the Cartagena Protocol that had not yet ratified the Supplementary Protocol reported having administrative or legal instruments that required response measures to be taken in case of damage resulting from LMOs, a 3 per cent decrease from the baseline. Furthermore, 62 per cent of Parties to the Cartagena Protocol that had not yet ratified the Supplementary Protocol reported having administrative or legal instruments that required response measures to be taken in case there was a sufficient likelihood that damage would result if response measures were not taken,<sup>6</sup> and

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<sup>5</sup> Information on the number of ratifications provided as part of the analysis prepared for the third assessment and review and mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Plan was based on the number of ratifications as of 1 March 2016. The actual number of ratifications received at that time was 34 and included the instrument of approval by the European Union, which was not counted for purposes of entry into force.

<sup>6</sup> This information was not provided in previous national reports.

just over half the Parties (55 per cent) reported having identified a competent authority for carrying out the functions set out in the Supplementary Protocol.

39. The entry into force of the Supplementary Protocol represented a major step towards achieving the operational objectives of the Strategic Plan related to liability and redress. Many Parties to the Supplementary Protocol have put in place the necessary measures for the implementation of the Supplementary Protocol, with more than half of the Parties reporting that measures for the implementation of the Supplementary Protocol are now fully in place. At the same time, however, less than a third of Parties to the Cartagena Protocol have ratified the Supplementary Protocol, and 43 per cent have reported that there is no national process in place towards becoming a Party to the Supplementary Protocol.

#### **F. Handling, transport, packaging and identification (operational objectives 1.6 and 2.3)**

40. The number of Parties that reported having introduced measures related to documentation requirements for LMOs-FFP in cases wherein the identity of the LMO is not known has increased by +11 per cent from the baseline (to a total of 55 per cent of Parties), and by +15 per cent (to a total of 62 per cent), in cases wherein the identity of the LMOs is known. A total of 63 per cent of Parties reported having introduced measures related to documentation requirements for LMOs that are destined for contained use, representing an increase of 9 per cent from the baseline.

41. Parties reported progress in having trained laboratory personnel and customs officers in the detection of LMOs. A total of 59 per cent of Parties (42 Parties) reported having trained customs officers, which represents a 6 per cent increase from the baseline. A total of 96 per cent of Parties (68 Parties) reported that laboratory personnel received training on LMO detection, an increase of 9 per cent from the baseline. Most Parties (87 per cent) reported having reliable access to laboratory facilities, representing an increase of 10 per cent from the baseline. A total of 68 per cent of Parties reported that at least one laboratory in their country is certified for LMO detection, with nearly all of these laboratories being operational.

42. In their written contributions, a number of Parties stated that they were still unable to detect or identify LMOs and mentioned a number of reasons, including lack of facilities, equipment and personnel and overall lack of capacity. Furthermore, a few Parties that do not have the necessary biosafety regulations to regulate LMO detection stated that they were in the process of developing such regulations. Some Parties mentioned that customs officers were not specifically trained in LMO detection and could benefit from further training. Other Parties mentioned the need to reinforce personnel and laboratory facilities to improve capacity in this area.

#### **G. Socio-economic considerations (operational objective 1.7)**

43. Progress towards the achievement of this operational objective, related to providing, on the basis of research and information exchange, relevant guidance on socio-economic considerations that may be taken into account in reaching decisions on the import of living modified organisms, has been moderate.

44. A total of 34 per cent of Parties reported that they had used peer-reviewed materials for the purpose of elaborating or determining national actions with regard to socio-economic considerations (-8 per cent from the baseline). A total of 52 per cent of Parties reported having specific approaches or requirements that facilitate how socioeconomic considerations should be taken into account in LMO decision-making (+10 per cent from the baseline). The percentage of Parties that reported having always, or in some cases, taken into account socio-economic considerations in their decision making on LMOs increased by 14 per cent, bringing the total to 65 per cent of Parties.

45. In their written contributions, some Parties elaborated on the national approaches for taking socio-economic considerations into account in decision-making. Some Parties reported that their domestic legislation regarding LMOs required socio-economic considerations to be fully taken into account in the decision-making process, while others reported that socio-economic considerations were taken into account for field trials or for commercial releases only.

46. In terms of challenges, Parties highlighted the scarcity of data and emphasized the need for more local studies and research to be conducted to enable the development of a methodological framework that would define appropriate socio-economic indicators and rules for data collection. Some Parties noted the ongoing discussions under the Cartagena Protocol on guidelines for socio-economic considerations and that these discussions would contribute to integrating socio-economic considerations into the national decision-making process. In its decision CP-9/14, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol took note of the “Guidance on the Assessment of Socio-Economic Considerations in the Context of Article 26 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety” (CBD/CP/MOP/9/10, annex).

47. Finally, a number of Parties indicated in their written contributions that legislation regarding socio-economic considerations was under development.

#### **H. Transit, contained use, unintentional transboundary movements and emergency measures (operational objective 1.8)**

48. Moderate progress against the baseline has been reported in achieving operational objective 1.8, which relates to developing tools and guidance that facilitate the implementation of the Protocol’s provisions on transit, contained use, unintentional transboundary movements and emergency measures.

49. Despite the moderate progress, the baseline was already quite high and as a result, most Parties have measures in place to regulate contained use and the transit of LMOs. A total of 80 per cent of Parties reported having measures in place to regulate the contained use of LMOs (+7 per cent from the baseline), while 70 per cent of Parties reported regulating LMOs in transit (+7 per cent). A total of 70 per cent of Parties reported having the capacity to take appropriate measures in case of unintentional transboundary movements of LMOs, which constitutes an increase of 4 per cent from the baseline.

50. Some Parties reported that they did not yet have legislation, or that draft legislation was pending finalization or adoption, to regulate transit and or contained use. The need for further capacity-building on contained use and the transit of LMOs was also mentioned. A few Parties mentioned that emergency response plans were under development

#### **I. Information sharing (operational objectives 2.6, 4.1 and 4.2)**

51. Overall, the analysis showed a positive trend in progress towards the achievement of the operational objectives related to the BCH and to information sharing.

52. The number of submissions to the BCH has seen a large increase, more than doubling from the baseline, which is attributable to both developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition, as well as developed country Parties.

53. Furthermore, a large increase was reported in the amount of traffic to the BCH from the baseline, both in terms of the number of visits (+64 per cent) and unique visitors (+75 per cent) from developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition. When including users from developed countries, these increases were 24 and 28 per cent, respectively. In addition, the number of referrals from social networks to the BCH significantly increased (+160 per cent), mainly attributable to referrals from Facebook.

54. The overall number of decisions<sup>7</sup> published in the BCH increased by 160 per cent. The ratio of risk assessment reports against the number of decisions on LMOs remained high (96 per cent), which is a 13 per cent increase from the baseline.

55. A total of 163 countries published biosafety-related laws or regulations in the BCH, representing a relatively small increase compared to the baseline (+4 per cent). The number of countries having registered

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<sup>7</sup> These decisions concern transboundary movement of LMOs for intentional introduction into the environment (under Article 10 of the Protocol) and decisions related to import or domestic use of LMOs for direct use as food or feed, or for processing (under Article 11 of the Protocol, or under the domestic framework).

national focal points for the Protocol and for the BCH increased to almost 100 per cent. Furthermore, there was a notable increase in the number of countries having registered their point of contact for receiving notifications under Article 17 of the Protocol (+31 per cent).

56. The BCH has also become a widely used tool for online discussions, as shown by an increase in the number of online forums established on the BCH (relating, for example, to the post-2020 implementation plan, and public participation, education and awareness), in the number of Parties having registered participants to online forums, and in the number of participants in online forums.

#### **J. Compliance and review (operational objectives 3.1 and 3.2)**

57. Information related to the implementation of the Protocol concerning progress made towards achieving operational objective 3.1 of the Strategic Plan is provided in document CBD/CP/CC/17/3 and will be considered by the Compliance Committee at its seventeenth meeting. Accordingly, this section focuses on operational objective 3.2, related to assessment and review.

58. Progress towards achieving operational objective 3.2 was measured in terms of the number of national reports received per reporting cycle that were included in the analysis prepared for the assessment and review of the effectiveness of the Protocol.

59. As at 15 January 2020, 99 Parties (58 per cent) had submitted a complete fourth national report, of the 171 Parties that had an obligation to do so. At a similar point in time following the submission deadline of second national reports, the submission rate was 89 per cent, while the submission rate of third national reports was 62 per cent at a comparable point in time after the submission deadline. The timeliness of national reports remains an issue and factors identified as having affected the submission rate of national reports relate, among other things, to the timely availability of funding to support Parties in preparing their national report. The Compliance Committee at its seventeenth meeting is expected to consider this issue further.

#### **K. Public awareness and participation, biosafety education and training (operational objectives 2.5, 2.7, 4.3)**

60. Some additional information relevant to these indicators was extracted from the survey on key indicators of the programme of work on public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms.<sup>8</sup>

61. Progress against the baseline towards the operational objectives 2.5, 2.7 and 4.3 has been moderate, although the overall status of achieving the operational objectives is relatively favourable.

62. A total of 62 per cent of Parties (58 Parties) reported having in place mechanisms for ensuring public participation in decision-making on LMOs, which constitutes an increase of 5 per cent from the baseline. A combined total of 80 per cent of Parties reported having informed the public about existing modalities for public participation in the decision-making process regarding LMOs, or to have done so to some extent, which represents a decrease of 4 per cent from the baseline.<sup>9</sup> A total of 68 per cent of Parties (63 Parties) reported having national websites and searchable databases in place to facilitate public access to information, an increase of 1 per cent from the baseline.

63. Furthermore, in the survey on the programme of work on Article 23, a majority of respondents indicated that the outcomes of public consultation processes that took place in the period 2016 to 2019 were taken into account, or were taken into account to some extent, in the decision-making process on LMOs. In their free-text comments, a number of respondents indicated that a number of the decision-making processes had not been finalized while others indicated that the regulatory basis for taking the outcomes into consideration was under development.

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<sup>8</sup> Programme of work on public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms (2011-2020) and its Priority Areas: [http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb\\_art23\\_pow.shtml](http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_art23_pow.shtml).

<sup>9</sup> The format for the survey (see note 1) did not provide the answer “Yes, to some extent”.

64. A total of 86 per cent of Parties (61 Parties) reported that academic institutions in their country offered biosafety education and training courses and programmes, which constitutes an increase of 11 per cent from the baseline. A total of 77 per cent of Parties (55 Parties) reported that educational materials and/or online modules on biosafety were available and accessible to the public in their country, which constitutes an increase of 15 per cent from the baseline.

65. While progress towards operational objective 4.3 (enhancing understanding of biosafety through information exchange mechanisms other than the BCH) has been modest, almost all Parties (92 per cent) reported having organized at least one biosafety-related event, representing an increase of 3 per cent from the baseline. The percentage of Parties having published biosafety-related publications (76 per cent), decreased with 5 per cent from the baseline.

#### **L. Outreach and cooperation (operational objectives 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3)**

##### *1. Operational objective 5.1: ratification of the Protocol*

66. As at 31 December 2011, 167 Parties to the Convention (86 per cent) had become Party to the Protocol.<sup>10</sup> As at 31 December 2019, the number of Parties to the Protocol had increased to 171 (87 per cent).<sup>11</sup>

##### *2. Operational objective 5.2: Cooperation*

67. The Secretariat has initiated and maintained a number of relationships with other conventions and organizations. Joint activities in collaboration with other conventions and intergovernmental organizations have also been carried out.

##### *3. Operational objective 5.3: Communication and outreach*

68. Progress on the operational objective 5.3 (communication and outreach) was minimal to moderate. A total of 54 per cent of Parties (38 Parties) reported having awareness and outreach programmes on biosafety, an increase of 3 per cent from the baseline. A total of 51 per cent of Parties (36 Parties) reported having in place a national communication strategy on biosafety. While this number has remained the same as at the baseline at the global level, there were important changes at the regional level, both increases (Africa: +16 per cent; Asia Pacific: +12 per cent; Central and Eastern Europe: +14 per cent) and decreases (Latin America and the Caribbean: -39 per cent; Western European and Others Group: -6 per cent). A total of 77 per cent of Parties reported that educational materials or online modules were available to the public in their countries, which represents an increase of 15 per cent.

69. In their written contributions, Parties indicated that their biosafety-related publications were made available in different ways, including on websites and in the form of newsletters, booklets, brochures and educational materials.

### **III. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE LIAISON GROUP**

70. The Strategic Plan, through its operational objectives and indicators, enables the systematic measuring of progress in implementing the Protocol. The progress from the baseline and the overall status of the implementation of the Protocol combined provide insight on the implementation of the Protocol. Parties have reported progress in a number of key areas, for example in: information exchange through the BCH; and the adoption and operationalization of national biosafety frameworks, in particular when considering key areas for which measures have been adopted, for example for handling notifications and requests for approval of imports of LMOs.

71. Progress seems to be lagging in other areas, for example in terms of coordination and support, wherein the large majority of Parties, with the exception of Parties in the Western European and Others

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<sup>10</sup> Of the 194 Parties to the Convention at the time.

<sup>11</sup> Of the 196 Parties to the Convention at the time.

Group, reported having capacity-building needs and challenges in accessing sufficient resources for biosafety.

72. The Liaison Group may wish to take note of the analysis of the information provided in CBD/SBI/3/3/Add.1 and consider the summary of information provided in section II, as a basis for providing its input to the fourth assessment and review of the Cartagena Protocol and the final evaluation of the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol for the period 2011-2020.

73. When providing its input, the Liaison Group may wish to draw its conclusions and develop its findings concerning each of the 12 areas relating to the various operational objectives of the Strategic Plan, outlined in section II above.

74. The Liaison Group may furthermore wish to provide advice on suggested actions in the light of its findings and conclusions.

75. The Liaison Group may wish to consider requesting the Executive Secretary to submit the input of the Liaison Group to the fourth assessment and review of the Cartagena Protocol and final evaluation of the Strategic Plan, for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at its third meeting.

76. In this context, the Liaison Group may also wish to consider whether, and, if so, how its findings, conclusions and suggested actions might need to be considered in the further development of the implementation plan for the Cartagena Protocol and capacity-building action plan (2021-2030).

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