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**REPORT OF THE LIAISON GROUP ON CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR BIOSAFETY  
ON ITS TWELFTH MEETING**

**Montreal, Canada, 5-7 September 2018**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. At its sixth meeting, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety adopted the Framework and Action Plan for Capacity-Building for the Effective Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (2012-2020), and requested the Executive Secretary to prepare, for consideration by the Parties at their regular meetings, reports on the status of implementation of the Framework and Action Plan, on the basis of the submissions made by Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations.<sup>1</sup>
2. In its recommendation [SBI-2/8](#), the Subsidiary Body on Implementation recommended that the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety at its ninth meeting request the Liaison Group on Capacity-Building for Biosafety to contribute to the development of the draft long-term strategic framework for capacity-building beyond 2020.
3. The Subsidiary Body also recommended, in its recommendation [SBI-2/12](#), that the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at its ninth meeting request the Liaison Group and the Compliance Committee, working in a complementary and non-duplicative manner, to contribute 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, and to submit their conclusions for consideration by the Subsidiary Body.
4. In its recommendation [SBI-2/19](#), the Subsidiary Body recommended that the Conference of the Parties at its fourteenth meeting adopt a preparatory process for the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. In the same recommendation, the Subsidiary Body noted a need for the Secretariat to promote, and plan for, the active engagement of the Protocols to the Convention, other biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements, relevant United Nations organizations, and other relevant organizations in the process to prepare the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to build synergy and create ownership. Furthermore, the Subsidiary Body recommended that the Parties to the Protocol at their ninth meeting decide to develop a specific follow-up to the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (2011-2020) that is complementary to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.
5. The twelfth meeting of the Liaison Group was convened to provide the Executive Secretary with advice on (a) the status of implementation of the Framework and Action Plan for Capacity-Building for consideration by the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol at their ninth meeting; (b) the planning for the fourth assessment and review of the Cartagena Protocol and final evaluation of the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol for the period 2011-2020; and (c) processes for the preparation of post-2020 strategies.
6. The meeting was attended by 15 members.<sup>2</sup> The complete list of participants is contained in the annex below.

<sup>1</sup> See decision BS-VI/3.

<sup>2</sup> Five other members were invited but were unable to attend the meeting.

**ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING**

7. The meeting was opened by Mr. Alexander Shestakov, Head of the Scientific and Policy Support Division, on behalf of the Executive Secretary, at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, 5 September 2018.

**ITEM 2. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS**

**2.1. Election of officers**

8. The Liaison Group elected Mr. Andreas Heissenberger and Mr. Eric Okoree as co-chairs of the meeting.

**2.2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work**

9. The Liaison Group adopted its agenda based on the provisional agenda prepared by the Secretariat (CBD/CP/LG-CB/12/1). The Liaison Group also adopted its organization of work as outlined in CBD/CP/LG-CB/12/1/Add.1.

**ITEM 3. REPORT ON THE STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK AND ACTION PLAN FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY**

10. Under this agenda item, the Liaison Group discussed the status of implementation of the Framework and Action Plan for Capacity-Building for the Effective Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, reported on in the note by the Executive Secretary (CBD/CP/LG-CB/12/2), which contained a synthesis of submissions on the status of implementation of the Framework and Action Plan for Capacity-Building for the Effective Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and a summary of the results of the activities undertaken, good practices and lessons learned. The note by the Executive Secretary on the status of implementation issued for the eighth meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/8/3) and the assessment and review of the effectiveness of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol: comparative analysis of data from the third reporting cycle in relation to the baseline data on the status of implementation (UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/8/12/Add.1) were also made available to facilitate consideration of the item by the Group.

11. The Secretariat made a presentation to introduce the agenda item.

12. The Group considered the information made available by the Secretariat, provided input to the periodic review of the status of implementation of the Framework and Action Plan, and drew conclusions as contained in paragraphs 25 to 29 below.

13. A member of the Group noted that the number of submissions was limited and might not be representative of the status of implementation of the Framework and Action Plan at a global level.

**ITEM 4. PLANNING FOR THE FOURTH ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW OF THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL AND FINAL EVALUATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL FOR THE PERIOD 2011-2020**

14. The Secretariat made a presentation to introduce the agenda item, including considerations on possible ways for the Liaison Group to contribute to the fourth assessment and review of the Protocol and final evaluation of the Strategic Plan.

15. The Group discussed how it could contribute, along with the Compliance Committee, in a complementary and non-duplicative manner, to the fourth assessment and review of the Cartagena Protocol and the final evaluation of the Strategic Plan. The Group discussed the scope of its input, a timeline for the process, coordination with the Compliance Committee and the preparation of documentation by the Secretariat. The Group recognized that the Secretariat would have an important role in coordinating the process, particularly by sharing, between the two bodies, the outcomes of their meetings.

16. The conclusions under this agenda item are presented in paragraphs 30 to 33 below.

## ITEM 5. PROCESSES FOR THE PREPARATION OF POST-2020 STRATEGIES

17. The Secretariat made a presentation to introduce the agenda item regarding the preparatory processes for the post-2020 strategies, including (a) the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; (b) the specific follow-up to the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol for the period 2011-2020; and (c) the long-term strategic framework for capacity-building beyond 2020 for the Convention and its Protocols.

18. The Group took note of the proposed preparatory process for the development of (a) the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, as contained in recommendation 2/19 of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, and (b) the strategic framework for capacity-building beyond 2020, as contained in recommendation 2/8 of the Subsidiary Body.

19. The Group discussed possible ways of providing input to the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the specific follow-up to the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol for the period 2011-2020, making best use of its biosafety-specific expertise, including expertise on the Nagoya – Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress, and taking into account the limited availability of resources.

20. Several members noted the usefulness of the current Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol (2011-2020) in supporting national implementation. The Group was of the opinion that a specific follow-up to the Strategic Plan would be crucial as an appropriate implementation tool, complementary to the post-2020 biodiversity framework.

21. In relation to capacity-building, the Group noted that the long-term strategic framework for capacity-building beyond 2020 is expected to be of a strategic and overarching nature and that a complementary, more specific, capacity-building action plan for biosafety would be required, covering the Cartagena Protocol and its Supplementary Protocol.

22. The Group was of the opinion that the development of the post-2020 strategies would require the participation of biosafety experts at the various steps involved in the processes. Members agreed to follow up in their regions to solicit views on the content of the biosafety component of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework in order to encourage wider participation of biosafety experts in the process.

23. The Secretariat noted that the timing for activities related to the post-2020 processes had not yet been decided and that it would be necessary to continue following the developments closely. The Group discussed a tentative timeline for its involvement in those processes. The Secretariat took note of it and would follow up accordingly.

24. The conclusions of the Group under the agenda item are contained in paragraphs 35 to 49 below.

## ITEM 6. CONCLUSIONS

### **Report on the status of implementation of the Framework and Action Plan for Capacity-Building for the effective implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (item 3 above)**

25. The Liaison Group was of the opinion that the operational objectives relating to the development of national biosafety legislation, risk assessment, detection and identification of living modified organisms, and public awareness, education and participation, as identified in decision VIII/3, continued to be relevant for the remaining period of the Framework and Action Plan for Capacity-Building.

26. In view of the recent entry into force of the Supplementary Protocol, the Group took the view that Parties should also prioritize capacity-building activities on liability and redress, as set out under focal area 4 of the Framework and Action Plan, in the remaining period of the Framework and Action Plan and beyond, in conjunction with carrying out activities to support capacity-building for the Cartagena Protocol.

27. The Group noted the importance of adequate funding to ensure sustainable support to Parties in carrying out capacity-building activities.

28. The Group also noted the importance of cooperation, partnerships and synergies with other international organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities, and other relevant stakeholders to enhance efficiency in capacity-building.

29. The Group recognized the recent efforts by Parties to strengthen capacities for biosafety mainstreaming, and welcomed the support provided by the Secretariat. The Group also noted that biosafety mainstreaming and information sharing would be important for further strengthening national biosafety frameworks in the remaining period of the Framework and Action Plan and beyond. Furthermore, the Group noted the importance of supporting capacity-building activities on socioeconomic considerations in a follow-up to the Framework and Action Plan.

**Planning for the fourth assessment and review of the Cartagena Protocol and final evaluation of the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol for the period 2011-2020 (item 4 above)**

30. The Liaison Group welcomed recommendation 2/12 of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, in which a role for the Liaison Group and the Compliance Committee was foreseen for the fourth assessment and review of the Cartagena Protocol and final evaluation of the Strategic Plan for Biosafety, and noted the value of having the two bodies contribute to this process in accordance with their respective areas of expertise. It agreed on the importance of effective coordination between the two bodies and noted the Secretariat's role in this regard. The Group noted the usefulness of some overlap in the membership of the two bodies for further facilitating coordination.

31. The Group agreed that the Secretariat would provide a single document containing a complete analysis of the available information on the implementation of the Protocol and its Strategic Plan to both the Liaison Group and the Compliance Committee, and would prepare different working documents for each body. This approach would enable a comprehensive review of the data for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at its third meeting.

32. In evaluating the information provided in the fourth national reports and other sources of information, the Group noted the value of analysing the data against the baseline<sup>3</sup> as well as against information obtained at the mid-term review with a view to enabling a better understanding of the progress made by Parties over time.

33. The Group noted the limited time available for the analysis of information following the submission of the fourth national reports, considering that the Liaison Group's contribution was to be submitted to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at its third meeting. In this context, the Group emphasized the importance of timely preparation and submission by Parties of the fourth national reports.

**Processes for the preparation of post-2020 strategies (item 5 above)**

34. Pending relevant decisions by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol at its ninth meeting, the Liaison Group at its twelfth meeting considered the processes for the preparation of post-2020 strategies and reached the following conclusions.

*Post-2020 global biodiversity framework and specific follow-up to the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety*

35. The Liaison Group welcomed recommendation 2/19 of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, and noted the value of including biosafety in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework as well as developing a specific follow-up to the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

36. The Group took the view that the possible biosafety component of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the specific follow-up to the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol should be developed by biosafety experts, including those with expertise on the Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress.

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<sup>3</sup> As established in decision BS-VI/15.

37. In developing the biosafety component within the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, the Group noted the importance of aligning it with the relevant Sustainable Development Goals and other global strategies.

38. With regard to the development of a specific follow-up to the Strategic Plan, the Group took the view that it should be developed as a programme of work or a similar implementation tool, while placing strategic biosafety elements in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, as appropriate. The Group noted that, in the development of the follow-up to the Strategic Plan, it was important to maintain the elements of the Strategic Plan that are still relevant while ensuring sufficient flexibility to account for new developments. The Group agreed on the need to review the current indicators with a view to assessing their relevance for measuring implementation of the Protocol.

39. The wide range of expertise available within the Group was noted, as was the potential to contribute to the various processes for the development of post-2020 strategies.

40. The Group decided on a tentative process for the lead-up to the third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation; this would entail, among other things:<sup>4</sup>

(a) Submission of views from Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on the possible inclusion of biosafety in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, in response to paragraph 3 of the proposed decision for the Parties to the Protocol contained in operative paragraph 10 of recommendation 2/19 of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, inviting Parties to participate in this process;

(b) Online discussions of the Liaison Group, as appropriate, to consider the submissions indicated in subparagraph (a) above and provide inputs to the development of the biosafety component of the global biodiversity framework;

(c) A face-to-face meeting of the Liaison Group (the thirteenth) to (i) prepare a draft of the biosafety component of the global biodiversity framework, taking into account the submissions indicated in subparagraph (a) above, and (ii) prepare a draft of the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;

(d) Global consultation workshop(s) to provide input to the biosafety component of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, as foreseen in CBD/SBI/2/17, annex I;

(e) Peer review by Parties to the Cartagena Protocol of the draft of the specific follow-up to the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

41. The Group advised the Executive Secretary to ensure that dedicated sessions would be convened to discuss biosafety matters during the global consultation workshop(s) referred to in paragraph 40 (d) above, as well as to ensure that an adequate number of biosafety experts, including those with expertise on the Supplementary Protocol, are supported to participate in the workshop(s).

*Long-term strategic framework for capacity-building beyond 2020 (overarching framework)*

42. In accordance with recommendation 2/8 of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, the Liaison Group welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the development of the long-term strategic framework for capacity-building beyond 2020 for the Convention and its Protocols. The Group decided to do this by providing inputs throughout the entire development of the draft long-term strategic framework for capacity-building, in close collaboration with the Secretariat and the consultant to be engaged for this purpose. In this context, the Group agreed on the need to provide early input into the study to provide the knowledge base for the preparation of the long-term strategic framework for capacity-building,<sup>5</sup> including through consultations among the Secretariat, consultant and the co-chairs of the Liaison Group.

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<sup>4</sup> The order of the activities may need to be adjusted in accordance with the progress made in the preparatory process for the development of the global biodiversity framework.

<sup>5</sup> Referred to in Subsidiary Body on Implementation recommendation 2/8.

43. The biosafety component of the long-term strategic framework for capacity-building should highlight the importance of capacity-building on biosafety towards achieving the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and should reflect, at a minimum, the areas identified by the Group as priorities: national biosafety frameworks; risk assessment and risk management; handling, transport, packaging and identification; liability and redress; public awareness, education and participation; information sharing; socioeconomic considerations; and mainstreaming.

44. The Secretariat will invite Parties, through their national focal points, to take part in a survey on capacity-building needs to implement the Cartagena Protocol as an input to the development of the long-term strategic framework for capacity-building.

45. Furthermore, consultations with biosafety experts, including those with expertise on the Supplementary Protocol, should be carried out as necessary to provide further inputs to the process, including through the global consultation workshop referred to in subparagraph 40 (d) above.

*Specific action plan for capacity-building on biosafety (implementation action plan)*

46. In addition to the long-term strategic framework for capacity-building beyond 2020 for the Convention and its Protocols, the Liaison Group noted the necessity of developing a specific action plan for capacity-building on biosafety, covering the Cartagena Protocol and its Supplementary Protocol, that is aligned with the specific follow-up to the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

47. The Group decided to take a leading role in the development of a specific action plan for capacity-building on biosafety as a follow-up to the Framework and Action Plan.

48. The current Framework and Action Plan for Capacity-Building will serve as a basis for the development of a follow-up action plan, and will include capacity-building needs arising from new developments as well as existing gaps.

49. The development of a follow-up action plan may comprise submissions of views from Parties, surveys, online discussions and face-to-face meetings of the Liaison Group and consultations with biosafety experts, as necessary.

*General conclusions*

50. The Liaison Group expressed concern about the diminished visibility of and attention given to biosafety matters at the intergovernmental meetings convened under the Convention and within the Secretariat and, in this regard, stressed the need to allocate adequate and specific resources to biosafety for processes under the Convention.

51. The Group recalled the importance of the Biosafety Clearing-House as an essential tool for information sharing, capacity-building and implementation of the Cartagena Protocol, and advised the Secretariat to ensure the allocation of adequate and specific resources for the improvement and maintenance of the Biosafety Clearing-House.

52. The Group decided that, at its thirteenth meeting, it would focus on the development of (a) the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, (b) the specific follow-up to the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, (c) the long-term strategic framework for capacity-building beyond 2020, and (d) the specific action plan for capacity-building on biosafety.

53. The Group also decided that, at its fourteenth meeting, it should focus on the fourth assessment and review and final evaluation of the Strategic Plan, and should also review the final drafts of (a) the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol and (b) the specific action plan for capacity-building on biosafety, taking into account information provided in the fourth national reports.

54. The Group recognized that the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol had expanded the Group's mandate beyond matters related to capacity-building and, in that regard, advised that a change of its name might be necessary to reflect its broader role.

**ITEM 7. OTHER MATTERS**

55. The Liaison Group decided that its thirteenth meeting would tentatively be held in the third quarter of 2019 and its fourteenth meeting would tentatively be held in the first quarter of 2020, while recognizing that the meetings are subject to the availability of resources and the precise dates of the meetings could change.

**ITEM 8. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING**

56. The Group adopted the report of the meeting as orally amended.

**ITEM 9. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

57. The meeting was closed by the co-chairs at 10.50 a.m. on Friday, 7 September 2018.

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