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**Online Forum on Capacity-building for Biosafety**
Online, 14–18 July 2025

# Report of the Online Forum on Capacity-building for Biosafety*

**Moderators' summary**

1. The Online Forum on Capacity-building for Biosafety, was convened from 14 July to 18 July 2025. The online forum was moderated by Ms. Thato Mogapi from South Africa. The moderator highlighted the topics to be covered as well as the relevant guiding questions.

2. As of 18 July 2025, 120 messages were posted by 217 participants, comprised of representatives of Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety; non-Parties; relevant organizations; United Nations agencies; and indigenous peoples and local communities, that were registered for the online forum.

3. The following three topics were introduced: (a) Topic 1: Capacity-building priority needs and challenges; (b) Topic 2: Ongoing and planned biosafety capacity-building projects/initiatives; and (c) Topic 3: Building a community of practice- Lessons learned and opportunities.

## Topic 1: Capacity-building priority needs and challenges

4. Under Topic 1 on capacity-building priority needs and challenges, there were a total of 47 inputs from participants. Parties and other stakeholders provided information on key capacity-building priority needs and challenges to implement the Capacity-building Action Plan for the Cartagena Protocol and inputs relevant to goals under the Capacity-building Action Plan.

**Key capacity-building priority needs and challenges to implement the Capacity-building Action Plan**

5. Regarding key capacity-building priority needs and challenges to implement the Capacity-building Action Plan, respondents noted the importance of:

(a) Securing financial support to implement regulations (e.g. for risk assessments of LMOs, regulatory frameworks, unintentional transboundary movements of LMOs, laboratory equipment, research, public awareness and public participation);

(b) Information sharing as there is limited coordination between national regulatory authorities and differences between countries' regulatory frameworks;

(c) Strengthening administrative systems to facilitate the mobilization of resources (e.g. for the implementation of regulatory frameworks, national plans and strategies, rulebooks and procedures, timely decision-making and effective monitoring to improve coordination);

(d) Training of regulators and stakeholders to strengthen regulatory frameworks, improve stakeholder communication and understand biosafety issues (e.g. for trust, transparency, expertise,

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and engagement in hybrid learning, mentorship, and simulation-based models to keep training up-to-date);

(e) Training on risk assessment of LMOs for regulators, scientists, and other stakeholders in different forms (e.g. for practical and hands-on workshops covering scientific fundamentals; in strengthening the ability to access, generate, and interpret relevant data; and training for emerging technologies);

(f) Training on detection and identification of LMOs in different forms (e.g. laboratory training; sample preparation; detection standards; emerging risk vectors such as pollen; customs officers receiving training on basic LMO information, shipping documentation requirements, laboratory contacts, information from the BCH and national standards; and customs and quarantine officers to establish clear inspection protocols for preventive actions).

**Goal A.2. on the Biosafety Clearing-House**

6. With regard to Goal A.2 of the Capacity-Building Action Plan, Parties and other stakeholders highlighted needs and challenges related to the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH), emphasizing the importance of timely access to comprehensive information on the implementation of the Protocol. Respondents noted the need to standardize data-sharing systems and ensure the prompt submission of biosafety information under Article 20, with many emphasizing enhancements at the national level. The African Union Development Agency highlighted the value of digitizing biosafety data in real time with centralized reporting automatically synchronized with BCH platforms, while Belarus stressed the critical role of BCH regional advisers in supporting implementation and capacity-building efforts. Additionally, a representative from South Africa suggested that innovations such as digital transformation using AI—for data interpretation, multilingual features, and interactive communication systems—could further strengthen the effectiveness of the BCH.

**Goal A.4. on compliance with the requirements of the Protocol**

7. With regard to Goal A.4 on compliance with the requirements of the Protocol, a few Parties and stakeholders highlighted challenges and needs regarding capacity-building in general, related to technical, financial, and institutional capacities, as well as limited coordination and gaps in regulatory frameworks. A contributor from ARECO-Rwanda Nziza emphasized the importance of compliance audits, suggesting the development of tracking tools and regular audit mechanisms. Working in silos with inconsistent oversight was noted, and cross-sector collaboration between agriculture, environment, customs, and other relevant agencies was recommended. The African Union Development Agency highlighted the need for drafting or amending biosafety laws and the development of national biosafety compliance strategies aligned with broader regulatory frameworks, such as environmental and food safety regimes. Contributors also underscored the importance of enabling the Compliance Committee to identify reporting challenges and implement corrective measures, alongside establishing oversight mechanisms to ensure adequate resources for the effective implementation of the Protocol.

**Goal A.5. on risk assessment and risk management of LMOs**

8. With regard to Goal A.5 on risk assessment and risk management of LMOs under the Action Plan, many contributors noted needs and challenges with regards to risk assessment and risk management of LMOs. The key issues relate to efforts towards making use of the precautionary approach and developing guidance.

*Precautionary approach*

9. A representative from the Third World Network noted the importance of developing capacity in operationalizing the precautionary approach when there are data gaps or high uncertainty with regards to risks of LMOs. It was suggested that methods (e.g. cut-off criteria) could be adopted by Parties for precautionary decision-making when full risk assessments of LMOs cannot be completed in countries.

*Developing guidance*

10. A few contributors noted the importance of developing guidance on risk assessment of LMOs. For example, an input was made by the Uganda Virus Research Institute that establishing international guidance documents are key in facilitating credible data on risk assessment and management of LMOs. Belarus noted the importance of maintaining and developing the technical series developed by the Secretariat.

**Goal A.6 on illegal and unintentional transboundary movements of LMOs**

11. Parties and other stakeholders had several inputs with reference to Goal A.6. of the Capacity-building Action Plan on illegal and unintentional transboundary movements of LMOs. Some of the key needs and challenges related to variety of crops, funding, detection of LMOs, standards, regulatory frameworks, plans and other key issues.

12. Representatives from Mexico noted a few challenges under this goal. A representative highlighted that as a country of origin and diversification of various crops, including corn, and growing risks of illegal and unintentional transboundary movements of living modified corn, may threaten native varieties. In this regard, there was a need for the development and establishment of effective detection and reporting systems to detect and respond to illegal transboundary movements of living modified crops (e.g. wind-dispersed genetically modified (GM) maize pollen. It was highlighted that there is a need to enhance the evaluation and monitoring systems of GMOs but that there are financial and technical limitations.

13. Another contributor from Mexico noted that the National Laboratory for Agri-food Biosafety (LNC-BIOSAA) initiative was monitoring, among others, living modified maize as it is banned. It was noted that a LMO identification network was developed with a few priorities (e.g. strengthen detection and identification of LMOs in national laboratories, quantifying LMOs, providing financial assistance for accreditation and certification of national laboratories to meet technical and quality standards).

14. Also, a contributor from China noted a need to enhance systems for post-release monitoring of approved LMOs, for example, with regards to addressing illegal transboundary movements. The monitoring system would also be to improve border inspection detection, sampling and testing, and mechanisms for enforcing compliance with the Protocol.

15. A contributor from GeneConvene noted the need to enhance national infrastructure and training to detect LMOs and respond to unintentional and illegal transboundary movements. In this regard, they had developed biosafety training initiatives covering documentation, standard operating procedures and emergency response tools.

16. Two contributors noted the importance of regulations and expertise in regulations. The Indigenous Information Network provided input that unharmonized regulatory frameworks support unintended transboundary movement of LMOs and that an entire region would be at risk. It was noted that there is a need to harmonize regulations between countries for LMOs and for new technologies. Third World Network noted that legal and regulatory expertise is needed to build, among others, liability and redress regarding LMOs and for new technologies to address illegal and unintentional transboundary movements of LMOs.

17. Two inputs also highlighted the importance of key personnel handling illegal and unintentional transboundary of LMOs. Benin noted that appointing and training personnel authorized to receive notifications in accordance with Article 17.2 and Article 25 of the Cartagena Protocol and providing their contact information to the Clearing-House Mechanism was key to addressing the goal under the Action Plan. A few contributors also noted that customs officers need standard operating procedures for border inspection protocols, including through regional and international standards.

18. A contributor from the African Union Development Agency outlined that there is a need for enhanced contingency plans as well as monitoring and response systems for addressing illegal and

unintentional transboundary movements of LMOs. The improvement would be technical work and regional cooperation to address border management issues. The representative also noted the importance of investment in detection infrastructure, including rapid test kits and integrated digital tracking systems for border monitoring.

**Goal A.9. on socioeconomic considerations regarding LMOs**

19. With regards to Goal A.9. on socioeconomic considerations regarding LMOs, many contributors noted the limited socioeconomic considerations of LMOs. The key areas of concern were regarding a lack of legal framework, engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities and training regulators.

20. A contributor from Mexico noted the challenge of not having legally binding regulatory frameworks for socioeconomic considerations. In particular, the importance of assessing social, economic, environmental, public health and biocultural impacts, in megadiverse and multicultural nations was noted. Also, it was noted that there is a need for a comprehensive approach to risk assessments, considering not only economic impacts but also, among others, cultural and social impacts on communities. In Mexico, it was noted that working groups on genetically modified cotton, LMO-free zones, and indigenous consultation processes and workshops and outreach materials had been developed to try to address socioeconomic considerations.

21. A few contributors highlighted the issue of engaging indigenous peoples and local communities as part of the socioeconomic considerations. A contributor from the ARECO-RWANDA NZIZA noted the importance of pilot projects on community-based socioeconomic assessments, including integrating traditional knowledge into decision-making regarding issues related to biosafety. A contributor from the African Union Development Agency noted the need to develop an assessment tool (e.g. platforms) for socioeconomic consideration regarding LMOs that would take into consideration perspectives of farmers, consumers, researchers and policymakers.

22. A contributor from Benin noted that there is need to train regulators to integrate socioeconomic considerations in decisions regarding biosafety issues.

**Goal B.3. on public participation regarding LMOs**

23. With reference to Goal B.3 of the Action Plan on public participation regarding LMOs, Parties and other stakeholders noted in particular some key issues: 1) lack of engaging indigenous peoples and local communities; 2) limited engagement of scientists; 3) lack of legal frameworks for public participation of imports of LMOs; and 4) access to information prior to public participation. African Union Development Agency noted by a contributor the limited development of regulatory frameworks involving the public and that public participation can contribute to transparent and inclusive biosafety governance and that Parties can continue to strength platforms and communication to facilitate engagement of the public.

*Public participation of indigenous peoples and local communities*

24. During the forum discussion there were many inputs with regards to public participation of indigenous peoples and local communities. Representatives from Mexico noted that historic challenge was engaging the general public (e.g. rural, peasants, Afro-Mexican communities and, in general, indigenous peoples and local communities) with their regulatory processes. In response to this challenge, the Inter-Secretarial Commission on Biosafety of Genetically Modified Organisms (CIBIOGEM) committed to strengthening effective, informed, and inclusive public participation. It was also recommended that training could take place before and after drafting regulations, developing communication strategies (e.g. for farmers, agro-dealers and youth), public-private partnerships and expert bodies with government officials and scientists. It was also noted that there could be two-way communication to exchange knowledge on imports of LMOs and sustaining local maize involving indigenous peoples and local communities. It was also outlined that the engagement and role of indigenous peoples and local communities could be increased in terms of decisions on

risk assessment and risk management of LMOs, socioeconomic considerations and Target 17 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

25. Four other contributors also emphasized the importance of indigenous peoples and local communities' involvement in decision-making regarding LMOs. Two contributors from the Third World Network noted the challenge with ensuring Free, Prior and Informed Consent to enable meaningful participation of indigenous peoples and local communities. A representative from the African Union Development Agency noted the need for community-level engagement platforms through local governments and civil society and a representative from the Indigenous Information Network noted the need for workshops and training programs for indigenous peoples and local communities. A representative of the Indigenous Information Network outlined, among others, the need for indigenous peoples and local communities to be involved in decisions related to science and mobilizing resources with regards to LMOs.

*Public participation and gender*

26. Two contributors noted the low engagement with regards to gender disparities. One contributor from Sri Lanka noted the lack of public education campaigns. Another contributor from the Republic of Moldova highlighted their project that also involved ensuring gender equality in, among others, risk analysis frameworks and detection and identification of LMOs.

*Regional and international cooperation to engage public participation*

27. Many contributors also outlined the need for regional cooperation that promoted participation of various stakeholders. A few examples of regional cooperation to address the need was GeneConvene contribution promoting science-communication forums and multi-country perception studies that strengthen transparency and dialogue for the public (e.g. national authorities, scientists, and communicators). Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) contributed their work on regional cooperation (e.g. technical assistance, science communication and virtual sessions) for the Latin America region to engage many stakeholders to actively be involved in implementing the Protocol (e.g. regulators, academia, and the private sector). The IICA work also addressed the challenge to harmonize regulations, identifying a system of training and providing awareness of new technologies. Two contributors noted the need for training between developed and developing countries and transfer of technology.

*Legal framework for public participation*

28. A few contributors noted the importance of legal frameworks that require public input at all relevant stages of LMO decision-making. In particular, the African Union Development Agency noted the need for legal mandates to institutionalize public participation in relevant phases of LMO evaluation and approval.

*Access to information for public participation*

29. A few representatives noted the limited culturally appropriate materials and language translations to engage the public. A representative from the African Union Development Agency highlighted the need for developing awareness materials tailored to local languages and cultural contexts (community radio, visual storytelling). South Africa also noted the importance of storytelling and social media to empower communities to participate in issues related to biosafety.

## Topic 2: Ongoing and planned biosafety capacity-building projects/initiatives

30. Under Topic 2 on ongoing and planned biosafety capacity-building projects and initiatives, participants provided a total of 39 inputs. This topic sought to identify initiatives from which Parties could benefit. Parties and other stakeholders highlighted both current and planned capacity-building activities, including degree programs, certificate courses, studies, and surveys, along with the relevant target audiences. They also emphasized key capacity-building opportunities as well as

global, regional, and local cooperation efforts that support the organization of these activities in various countries.

31. The table below provides an overview of the ongoing and planned biosafety capacity projects and initiatives.

| **Country or organization** | **Initiative / Activity** | **Type of initiative** | **Target audience** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Philippines | Mainstreaming biotechnology and biosafety into education sector | Educational / Curriculum Development | Students, Science Teachers |
| | Capacity-building of science teachers | Training | Teachers |
| | Development of educational materials | Educational Resources | Students, Teachers |
| | Curricula review with Department of Education to develop permanent curricula | Curriculum Development | Students, Teachers |
| Republic of Moldova | UNEP/GEF project to strengthen biosafety frameworks | Institutional / Regulatory | Risk assessors, Academia, Government Officers, NGOs, Students |
| | Training on risk assessment and LMO management (case studies: sugar beet, corn, soybean) | Technical / Training | Risk assessors, Academia, Government Officers, NGOs, Students |
| Tunisia | Translation of outreach materials into multiple languages | Educational / Awareness | General public, Stakeholders |
| | Dissemination via BCH, USBs, CD-ROMs, booklets | Awareness / Information Sharing | General public, Stakeholders |
| | National Action Plan for communication on biosafety | Policy / Awareness | General public, Stakeholders |
| | Seminars and workshops | Training / Awareness | General public, Stakeholders |
| | Annual International Day for Biodiversity celebrations | Awareness | General public |
| Burkina Faso | Integrating biosafety into higher education curricula | Curriculum Development | Students, Teachers |
| | Teacher capacity-building to harmonize courses | Training | Teachers |
| | Training and syllabus development workshops on biosafety | Training | Teachers, Academic Staff |
| Mexico | “Co-laboratory: Guardians of the Milpa and Life” | Community / Transdisciplinary Training | Students, Producers, Local Communities |
| | Participatory and intercultural activities (ethnobiological gardens, institutions, regional agencies) | Community / Awareness | Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities |

| Country or organization | Initiative / Activity | Type of initiative | Target audience |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Creation and dissemination of LMO and biosafety knowledge (forums, webinars, workshops, audiovisuals) | Awareness / Education | Academics, Government, Scientists, Communities |
| | University-based discussion panels on LMO policy and socioeconomic aspects | Educational / Policy | University Students, Researchers |
| | CIBIOGEM-led Consultation Protocols | Policy / Participation | Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, Afro-Mexican groups |
| South Africa | Training using hybrid learning, mentorship, and simulation-based models | Training | Regulators, Scientists, Other Stakeholders |
| | Risk assessment of LMOs | Technical / Training | Regulators, Scientists, Stakeholders |
| Sudan | Establishing a science-based biosafety system | Institutional / Regulatory | Government, Researchers, Public |
| | Implementation of national biosafety framework and standards for new technologies | Institutional / Regulatory | Government, Researchers, Public |
| Peru | Detection and identification of LMOs (customs, sanitary authorities) | Technical / Laboratory | Customs, Sanitary Authorities |
| | Online and in-person seminars on regulatory frameworks and BCH use | Awareness / Training | Students, University Staff, Stakeholders |
| Sri Lanka | Strengthening legal and institutional framework (implementation of biosafety act) | Institutional / Regulatory | Government, Researchers |
| Argentina | Technical capacity-building on risk assessment of LMOs and new technologies | Training / Study Tours | Developing country stakeholders, Regulators, Scientists |
| Third World Network | Courses integrating policy, legal, regulatory, ethical, economic, social issues | Educational / Awareness | Policymakers, Regulators, Scientists, Civil Society |
| | Training on risk assessment, regulatory frameworks, and synthetic biology | Technical / Training | Policymakers, Regulators, Scientists, Civil Society |
| Senegal | Partnership with African Biosafety Network Expertise | Capacity-building / Training | Government, Researchers, Local Communities |
| | Legal framework development for biosafety | Policy / Regulatory | Government Officials |
| | Training on risk assessment of LMOs | Training | Regulators, Scientists |

| Country or organization | Initiative / Activity | Type of initiative | Target audience |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Detection and identification of LMOs (staffing, reference lab) | Technical / Lab Training | Laboratory Staff, Inspectors |
| | Communication strategy development | Awareness / Communication | Local Communities, Research Institutions, Government Officials |
| Foundation for the NIH / GeneConvene | Global Collaborative scientific training | Training / Awareness | Scientists, Regulators, Communicators |
| | Gene-editing short courses at University of Dar Es Salaam | Training | Scientists, Regulators |
| | Training on gene drive technologies for malaria control | Technical / Training | African stakeholders |
| | Online training on monitoring GMOs | Technical / Training | Regulators, Scientists |
| | Workshop on GM insect research and contained LMO use (Mali, 2024) | Technical / Training | Biosafety professionals |
| | African Genetic Biocontrol Consortium pre-conference workshops (Ghana, 2025) | Training / Awareness | Regulators, Communication Experts |
| | Science communication for regulators in African countries (2025) | Training / Awareness | Communication experts, Regulators |
| | Scientific materials and platforms (articles, FAQs, infographics, webinars, 2025) | Educational / Awareness | Scientists, Public, Regulators |

**Capacity-building opportunities**

32. Regarding capacity-building opportunities, a few Parties and other stakeholders highlighted some key opportunities.

33. A submitter from Mexico noted the importance of certified national laboratory capable in each country to develop standardized risk assessment protocols and promote rigorous scientific research to support informed decision-making. These initiatives/projects would be coordinated between governmental, academic, scientific, and civil society institutions, including the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, to ensure participation to support enhanced research and public policy. The projects would be transdisciplinary, integrating methodological and analytical strategies to address issues associated with LMOs from multiple perspectives (e.g. human and environmental health, food sovereignty, socio-ecological systems, and the development of alternative technologies). It would also be to ensure the protection of original maize.

34. A contributor from the ARECO-RWANDA NZIZA highlighted several regional cooperation opportunities. These included regional toolkits, shared biosafety laboratory services, civil society collaboration platforms, and academic integration of biosafety content into agricultural programs for regional cooperation on public participation, grassroots engagement models, and compliance monitoring strategies.

**Global, and regional and cooperation on capacity-building**

35. Regarding global, regional, and local cooperation, several Parties and stakeholders highlighted key initiatives promoting collaboration in biosafety capacity-building.

36. A submitter from the Philippines shared the initiative "Multi-country Cooperation in the Implementation of National Biosafety Frameworks in Asia," designed to strengthen institutional, human, and regulatory capacities and promote cooperative measures. The initiative aims to ensure coherent and coordinated delivery of biosafety capacity-building and technical support, fostering sustained partnerships and resource-sharing, including technical facilities, expertise, methodologies, and skills.

37. RAEIN-Africa presented the project "Strengthening the Implementation of National Biosafety Frameworks in Southern Africa (SINBF)," which supports stakeholders with technical, institutional, and legal expertise to advance the review and implementation of national biosafety frameworks. Activities include inter-country workshops on risk assessment, risk management tools, socioeconomic considerations, and biosafety awareness, along with virtual exchanges to harmonize national legislation with international protocols, integrate biosafety into national development priorities, and mobilize resources. A Technical Advisory Committee guides participating country teams to ensure quality and consistency.

38. The African Union Development Agency highlighted initiatives aimed at strengthening strategic biosafety capacity-building across Africa, focusing on governance of biosafety systems. Activities include: 1) institutional capacity development through advocacy, legal support, training, workshops, and webinars to build regulatory systems and capacities for new technologies; 2) science diplomacy and negotiation training to empower countries in regional and international engagements; 3) transboundary engagement on emerging technologies (e.g., gene drive mosquitoes) to promote harmonized risk assessment, coordinated decision-making, and early identification of cross-border concerns; and 4) support for Rwanda's biosafety regulatory framework through training, technical assistance, and capacity-building.

39. A contributor from Benin outlined the "Regional Biosafety Program of the West African Monetary Union (PCB-UEMOA)," which provided training for regional biosafety experts and conducted national and regional workshops. This initiative established a network of cooperation and capacity-building among eight countries.

40. A contributor from Belarus presented the BioBridge project coordinated by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, titled "Enhancing Collaboration between the CEE and Central Asia's Centres of Excellence to Address the Key Drivers of Biodiversity Loss and Maintain Human, Crop, and Livestock Health." Conducted across seven countries, the initiative focused on comparing legal and technical regulations, laboratory methods for species and LMO detection, plant pathogen identification, and environmental DNA monitoring. The project included a five-day practical training on laboratory detection of biodiversity loss drivers, including LMOs. Kyrgyzstan is also implementing a related BioBridge project to establish a Coordination Resource Biosafety Centre for technical guidance and safe use of modern biotechnological products.

41. A submitter from the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) highlighted regional capacity-building initiatives in Latin America. These include preparatory virtual sessions for exchanging technical information ahead of UN Biodiversity meetings, risk assessment courses ("Risk Analysis in Biosafety") covering topics such as transgenic crops, and participation in the upcoming ISBR2026 scientific meeting in Ghent, Belgium, in November 2025.

42. A contributor from Tunisia highlighted three regional cooperative activities in Africa and the Middle East: a 2011 workshop for French-speaking African countries to strengthen Biosafety Clearing-House national focal points; the 18th Biosafety National Project Coordinators UNEP meeting for Africa on Implementation of National Biosafety Frameworks (2015); and the first annual

Bio-risk Management Symposium for Biosafety Associations in the Middle East and North Africa Region (2017).

43. A submitter from Mexico reported regional initiatives addressing detection and identification of LMOs, risk analysis and assessment, and traceability and labelling of products containing LMOs. These activities included online and offline measures to manage cross-border movements of living modified maize and cotton.

44. A contributor from Senegal highlighted the Regional Biosafety Programme of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) in partnership with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), designed to strengthen institutional frameworks for biosafety and promote cooperation and harmonization of biosafety initiatives across West Africa.

## Topic 3: building a community of practice- lessons learned and opportunities

45. Under Topic 3, building a community of practice - lessons learned and opportunities, there were a total of 29 inputs from participants. Parties highlighted the use of the Roster of Experts and networking opportunities for improving capacity-building. Parties also highlighted, based on their experiences and lessons learned, different types of cooperation efforts to help build synergies and share expertise (e.g., promoting partnerships).

**Use of the Roster of Experts**

46. Trinidad and Tobago provided input on the Roster of Experts, noting that an expert from their country played a key role in planning and implementing national biosafety projects. The expert contributed technical support for stakeholder training, project development, and review of draft national biosafety documents.

47. A contributor from Colombia highlighted their use of the Roster of Experts through various listed experts. It was noted that the roster is a valuable resource that should be used consistently to strengthen collaboration and facilitate information exchange.

48. A contributor from Benin emphasized that the Roster of Experts should serve as a platform to share good practices among national focal points. Given that focal points frequently change positions or retire, new focal points may be unaware of the roster and its potential to support Protocol implementation. The Secretariat could provide more accessible information about the Roster of Experts.

49. A contributor from the African Union Development Agency described the use of the Roster of Experts by the African Union and numerous regulators, highlighting that its effectiveness could be enhanced through political commitment, continuous updates, and investment in capacity-building. The roster is used for: 1) accessing independent and specialized technical expertise to support biosafety decision-making; 2) strengthening national and institutional capacity; and 3) assisting developing countries in making informed, science-based decisions under the Cartagena Protocol.

50. A contributor from Sri Lanka noted that their country plans to use the Roster of Experts to access global expertise and nominate local experts. A national platform is being developed for policymakers, regulators, researchers, and civil society to facilitate these activities.

51. A representative from Mexico indicated that their country has not yet utilized the Roster of Experts. However, experts on LMOs, biosafety, biotechnology, and socioeconomic considerations are available through CIBIOGEM and the Mexico Biosafety Clearing-House website.

52. A representative from Burkina Faso also reported not using the Roster of Experts. The main reason cited was that Burkina Faso had been the only French-speaking country engaged in biosafety activities in Africa for a period, limiting access and participation.

**Networking opportunities important for improving capacity-building**

53. A contributor from Trinidad and Tobago highlighted that networking enhances capacity-building through participation in workshops and technical webinars, which facilitate the sharing of experiences with other countries on developing administrative systems and risk assessment frameworks. Networking was also recognized as providing peer support, complementing formal training opportunities.

54. A contributor from Colombia emphasized that networking is a key factor in exchanging technical knowledge, regulatory frameworks, and best practice guidelines among Parties, organizations, and experts. Such opportunities are particularly important for Parties with limited financial resources or those in the process of developing their biosafety frameworks.

55. A submitter from Benin noted the value of networking for accessing expertise from countries with advanced biosafety and biotechnology systems. Within the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), Burkina Faso was highlighted as the only country with LMOs, providing training for experts and facilitating field visits for capacity-building.

56. Zimbabwe highlighted networking opportunities as essential for improving capacity-building efforts. The African Union and the African Seed Trade Association Plant Breeding Innovation Policy Dialogue in 2025 provided a platform for regulators and industry to discuss regulatory systems for plant breeding innovations. Participants benefited from promoting functional regulatory systems based on science and harmonized across Africa.

57. The African Union Development Agency provided multiple examples of networking and its outcomes, which include: 1) sharing knowledge and experience among regulators, researchers, legal experts, and policymakers; 2) promoting cross-border collaboration; 3) enhancing access to expertise and mentorship through regional and global biosafety platforms, including peer reviewer networks; and 4) stimulating innovation and adoption of best practices, such as exchanging regulatory strategies and risk communication models. Examples of networking platforms include: 1) the African Biosafety Network of Expertise (ABNE), hosted by AUDA-NEPAD, providing training and learning opportunities to support the development of functional, science-based biosafety systems; 2) Secretariat online forums and regional workshops on biosafety; 3) joint regional African economic organization initiatives for regulatory harmonization and training; 4) UNEP-GEF Biosafety Projects and regional workshops; and 5) academic and resource networks, including universities and think tanks, to promote joint publications, student exchanges, technology transfer, and regulatory innovation.

58. A representative from Argentina noted that networking opportunities are important for sharing information, emphasizing that experts involved should have relevant experience and that shared information should be verified and validated according to national regulations.

59. A contributor from Burkina Faso highlighted that networking is essential for regulating LMOs. They participate in platforms such as the Open Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology, supporting French-speaking countries in Africa.

60. Two representatives from Mexico emphasized networking as key to strengthening capacity-building efforts, including the exchange of knowledge, best practices, and innovative solutions among experts from diverse sectors and regions. Activities include international forums, workshops, and training programs. The National Laboratory for Agri-food Biosafety in Mexico fosters collaboration among government institutions, academia, civil society, the private sector, and the scientific community to enhance regulatory frameworks and risk assessment of LMOs. The laboratory also supports international collaboration through technical exchanges, joint research, shared training platforms, and risk analysis initiatives.

61. A representative from Every Women Hope Centre highlighted networking as essential for building human, institutional, technical, and financial capacities. Networking activities provide support in areas such as regulatory frameworks and addressing technical gaps.

**Cooperation efforts to help build synergies and share expertise (e.g., promoting partnerships)**

62. A contributor from Trinidad and Tobago highlighted a recent project demonstrating the value of cooperation in building technical capacities. While the regional biosafety project presented challenges, such as differing levels of readiness among participating countries, it also offered significant benefits. It was emphasized that promoting regional partnerships, particularly among countries with similar regulatory gaps and economic development levels, would enhance effectiveness. Partnerships through joint training programs, shared experts, and regional technical working groups can help mobilize resources, reduce duplication of efforts, and prepare countries for future technical capacity needs.

63. A contributor from Colombia noted the importance of international workshops organized by the Secretariat, including those on the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) and meetings of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Groups (AHTEGs) under the Convention on Biological Diversity. These meetings provide training, facilitate technical dialogue and negotiations, and create platforms for long-term collaborations. They allow Parties to exchange technical information, coordinate joint training activities, and identify potential partnerships for funding and implementing biosafety capacity-building initiatives.

64. A contributor from Benin emphasized the value of regional and subregional partnerships for creating synergies and sharing expertise. Within the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), which brings together eight countries, several experts have received training. Additionally, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has biosafety regulations that require collaborative implementation by experts from multiple countries.

65. A representative from the African Union Development Agency highlighted cooperation activities aimed at building regulatory capacity and sharing expertise, especially where financial resources, infrastructure, or technical knowledge are limited. Examples include: 1) South–South and regional cooperation, such as regional training workshops and virtual study tours; 2) bilateral institutional partnerships, including shared regulatory templates, peer reviews, and joint risk assessments; 3) technical cooperation through international organizations and learning institutions; 4) public–private partnerships involving governments, biotech companies, seed associations, and research institutions; 5) academic and research networks, including universities and biosciences hubs; and 6) knowledge platforms and digital communities, such as the Biosafety Clearing-House and the African Biosafety Communication Network.

66. A representative from Mexico highlighted the importance of cooperation and synergies in integrating traditional knowledge into public policy and prioritizing awareness, education, and participation regarding LMO risks. Partnerships include alliances between peasant and indigenous communities, universities, and governmental entities for technical training and advocacy of indigenous rights. Examples include community-based monitoring of transgenes in maize in Oaxaca and Chiapas. International cooperation platforms also support centers of origin and agroecological networks, linking academic projects with grassroots initiatives, such as farmers' markets, field schools, and ethnobiological gardens, to promote biosafety awareness and implement the Protocol.

67. A contributor from Every Women Hope Centre highlighted the importance of cooperative activities, including webinars, workshops, and online forums such as the Voluntary Peer Review mechanism for biodiversity, to build synergies and share expertise.

68. A representative from Sri Lanka emphasized regional collaboration and partnerships through programs and experience-sharing. Examples include community involvement initiatives and youth awareness programs to strengthen the support base for biosafety governance, as well as the use of platforms like the BCH Virtual Library and online discussion forums to access and contribute to global best practices.

**Conclusion**

69. The online forum provided further advancement on the implementation of the Capacity-building Action Plan under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety through discussions on capacity-building in the context of biosafety. The online forum served as a platform to further elaborate on identified needs and priorities, and to foster collaboration among a broad community of stakeholders engaged in biosafety capacity-building initiatives.

70. Under the key topics discussed participants highlighted:

(a) Key capacity-building priority needs and challenges to implement the Capacity-building Action Plan such as securing financial support to implement regulations, information-sharing, strengthening the administrative systems needed to implement the regulatory frameworks and training regulators and other stakeholders in particular in the field of risk assessments of LMOs and detection and identification of LMOs;

(b) Priority needs and challenges under different Goals of the Capacity-building Action Plan, such as Goal A.2 on the Biosafety Clearing-House, A.4. on compliance with the requirements of the Protocol, A.5 on risk assessment and risk management of LMOs, Goal A.6 on illegal and unintentional transboundary movements of LMOs, Goal A.9. on socioeconomic considerations regarding living modified organisms (LMOs) and Goal B.3. specifically on public participation regarding LMOs;

(c) Current and planned biosafety capacity-building activities, capacity-building opportunities as well as key global, regional, and local cooperation efforts that support the organization of these activities in various countries, including capacity-building opportunities;

(d) Building a community of practice through the use of the Roster of Experts; networking opportunities for improving capacity-building and different types of cooperation efforts to help build synergies and share expertise (e.g., promoting partnerships).