



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



MESSAGE

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From Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity
On the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on
Biosafety, 11 September 2008

“The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety: Five years of Global Cooperation Towards Sustainable
Development”

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the early morning hours of January 29, 2000 at 4.35 am in Montreal, the world witnessed the adoption of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the first major international environmental agreement of the twenty-first century.

Five years ago today, on 11 September 2003, the Protocol entered into force after receiving 50 ratifications. Since then, 148 countries and the European Community have become Parties to the Protocol. The speed at which the Protocol has been ratified is a clear demonstration of the importance that the world community attaches to the need for international cooperation in addressing issues related to biosafety.

I wish to pay tribute to all the 147 Parties for their clear political support for the Protocol. I also call upon all those countries that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Protocol as soon as possible.

Over the past five years, significant achievements have been made towards the implementation of the Protocol. In short, at the global level, the governing body of the Protocol has adopted more than 60 decisions elaborating tools and mechanisms to facilitate the effective implementation of the Protocol. For example the Biosafety Clearing-House has become operational and is facilitating the exchange of information on, and experience with, living modified organisms



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(LMOs). Other examples include the establishment of the compliance committee, the implementation of the capacity-building action plan and the agreement to continue negotiations towards a legally binding international regime on liability and redress for damage resulting from the transboundary movements of LMOs.

At the national level, more than 100 countries have now developed legal and administrative frameworks and other measures necessary to implement the Protocol. They have also implemented projects to build and strengthen human and institutional capacities in the safe use of biotechnology. The impressive work undertaken in a very short period of time in translating the provisions of this unique legal instrument into reality is unprecedented. I wish to pay tribute to all Parties, to other Governments and to all stakeholders for their concerted effort in operationalising the Protocol.

The milestone achievements made under the Protocol to date have been a direct result of global cooperation and partnership among the Parties, other governments and other stakeholders. That is the why the theme selected for this the anniversary is: *“The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety: Five years of global cooperation towards sustainable development”*. This theme was selected to highlight the spirit of consensus and cooperation that has characterized the Protocol process to date and to underline the contribution of the Protocol to the implementation of Agenda 21, the global programme of action on sustainable development, which was adopted by the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

As we mark this fifth anniversary, I invite all Governments and other stakeholders to reflect on the accomplishment made and the lessons learned so far and reaffirm their commitment towards the realization of the objective of the Protocol. Let us translate our good intentions into further concrete actions by working together to achieve full implementation of the Protocol to ensure the safe use of biotechnology for sustainable development.

I wish you a successful and memorable celebration of the fifth anniversary of the Protocol.