



CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGIONAL MEETING ON THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING-HOUSE

Lima, 4-6 September 2001

Item 2.2 of the provisional agenda*

ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

INTRODUCTION

Background

1. Article 20 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety establishes a Biosafety Clearing-House as part of the clearing-house mechanism under Article 18, paragraph 3, of the Convention, in order to facilitate the exchange of scientific, technical, environmental and legal information on, and experience with, living modified organisms; and to assist Parties to implement the Protocol, taking into account the special needs of developing country Parties, in particular the least developed and small island developing States among them, and countries with economies in transition as well as countries that are centres of origin and centres of genetic diversity.
2. At its first meeting, held in Montpellier from 11 to 15 December 2000, the Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (ICCP) stressed the important relationship between information sharing and capacity building. Accordingly, in its consideration of the agenda item regarding information sharing, the ICCP urged Governments to submit to the Executive Secretary their priority needs regarding capacities to participate in the development of the pilot phase of the Biosafety Clearing-House. It also recommended that the pilot phase should lead to the identification of capacity-building needs of those countries to be linked to the Biosafety Clearing-House, with a view to establishing a capacity-building programme addressing those needs (UNEP/CBD/ICCP/1/9, annex I, item 4.1)
3. The Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean has been convened in support of this objective, to provide countries of the region with an opportunity to express their needs and expectations with regard to the establishment of this pilot phase, keeping in mind the broader context of the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention. The Executive Secretary will compile the information received for a report to the Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety at its second meeting.
4. In addition, at its first meeting, the ICCP also invited Parties and Governments as well as non-governmental, private-sector and scientific organizations to submit information regarding capacity-building needs, priorities and existing initiatives as well as suggestions on capacity-building for the

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implementation of the Protocol to the Secretariat. In this regard, the Secretariat was requested to develop a questionnaire to facilitate the submission of information (UNEP/CBD/ICCP/1/9, annex I, item 4.2).

5. The questionnaire, entitled "Sample framework questions to aid in determining Parties' needs for capacity-building to implement the Biosafety Protocol", was circulated to all national focal points on 12 January 2001. In their response to the questionnaire, a number of countries from the Latin America and the Caribbean region (in particular Cuba, Ecuador and Jamaica) highlighted information exchange and data management as some of priority areas in which capacity building is needed. A summary of the submissions received was made available to the Open-ended Expert Meeting on Capacity-Building for the Protocol held in Havana from 11 to 13 July 2001 (UNEP/CBD/BS/EM-CB/1/2).

6. The meeting will consider issues relevant to the operation of the Biosafety Clearing-House in Latin America and the Caribbean. Specific objectives for the meeting include:

(a) To determine the information requirements and mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean needed to support information exchange activities under the Protocol at the local and national level;

(b) To identify likely problems and suggest solutions in the implementation and ongoing development of the Biosafety Clearing-House information-exchange activities in Latin America and the Caribbean;

(c) To present and discuss existing and potential regional initiatives for information-exchange mechanisms related to the Protocol and to explore partnerships that would improve information-exchange mechanisms and reduce duplication of efforts;

(d) To provide training on the operation of the pilot phase of the Biosafety Clearing-House.

Participants

7. Each Latin America and Caribbean country Party to the Convention is being invited to nominate one participant to be supported by the Secretariat, preferably qualified in the fields of management of biosafety-related issues (such as notifications for decision-making); information-sharing systems and database-management; and/or experience with the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention. Nominations were requested from the national focal points under the Convention on 3 August 2001.

8. In order to further assist the deliberations of this workshop, Parties, Governments and relevant organizations were also requested to submit their views and needs with regard to capacity building under the Protocol, and/or the operation of the Biosafety Clearing-House, as well as any other relevant information they may wish to convey prior to the meeting.

9. In addition to these Government-nominated participants, the following will also be invited to participate in the meeting as observers and/or resource persons:

(a) Representatives from the following intergovernmental organizations active in biosafety and/or information-exchange issues: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Bank and Global Environment Facility (GEF);

(b) Representatives from the following non-governmental organizations: Canada-Latin America Initiative in Biotechnology for Sustainable Development (CamBioTech), Friends of the Earth (FOE), Network of Environmental Funds of Latin America and the Caribbean (RedLAC) and the Global Industry Coalition (GIC);

(c) Representatives of bilateral donors, particularly from those Governments who indicated at the first meeting of the ICCP their interest in funding capacity-building activities to enable the active participation of developing countries in the pilot phase of the Biosafety Clearing-House.

Documents

10. A list of documents for the meeting is attached as annex I below.

Anticipated outcome of the meeting

11. It is expected that the meeting will facilitate a better definition of the needs of countries of the Latin America and the Caribbean region with regard to the establishment of the Biosafety Clearing-House and the operation of the Biosafety Protocol, and will recommend possible solutions to overcome the identified constraints and impediments.

12. The recommendations of the meeting will be communicated to the ICCP at its second meeting, to be held in Nairobi from 1 to 5 October 2001. The report of the meeting will be made available on the Convention website and will be made available to all Parties to the Convention and other States, and to interested national and international institutions and organizations, including funding agencies.

ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

13. The meeting will be held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Lima, Peru. The meeting will be opened by the Secretariat at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, 4 September 2001.

ITEM 2. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS*2.1. Election of officers*

14. The regional meeting will be invited to elect its Chair and Rapporteur from among its members. Proposals will be made from the floor.

2.2. Adoption of agenda

15. The regional meeting will be invited to adopt its agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda proposed in document UNEP/CBD/BCH/Lac.Reg/1/1.

2.3. Organization of work

16. A proposed programme of work for the meeting is shown in annex II below.

17. Participants will be invited to discuss the issues relevant to information-sharing and the Biosafety Clearing-House as reflected in the work plan of the ICCP, as well as issues pertaining to regional needs assessments in relation to capacity building under the Protocol. To facilitate these discussions, it is suggested that there should be three substantive sessions on, respectively:

(a) Information exchange under the Biosafety Protocol, including a review of the operation of the pilot phase and the outcomes of the African regional meeting on the Biosafety Clearing-House;

(b) Existing biodiversity and biosafety information exchange mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean; and

(c) Building capacity for information exchange under the Protocol.

18. Each of these headings will include a number of topics that encompass various relevant issues.

ITEM 3. ISSUES FOR IN-DEPTH CONSIDERATION

19. Agenda item 3, the main substantive item of the agenda, contains four sub-items, which correspond to the sessions referred to in paragraph 17 above. Following an introduction to the topic, the regional meeting will be invited to discuss relevant issues, with a view to making recommendations relevant to the objectives for the meeting.

3.1. Information exchange under the Biosafety Protocol and implementation of the pilot phase of the Biosafety Clearing-House

20. The Secretariat will make a short presentation on issues relevant to this item, based on documents prepared for the first meeting of the ICCP. Accordingly, it is proposed that this item of the agenda should cover the following elements:

- (a) Information exchange requirements under the Biosafety Protocol;
- (b) Outcomes of the ICCP and the African regional meeting on the Biosafety Clearing-House and the clearing-house mechanism.

21. These issues are elaborated upon in two background documents that were prepared for the first meeting of the ICCP (UNEP/CBD/ICCP/1/3, UNEP/CBD/ICCP/1/4) and the report of the African regional meeting on the Biosafety Clearing-House and the clearing-house mechanism (UNEP/CBD/Afr.Reg/1/2) that are available from the Secretariat for information purposes.

3.2. Biodiversity and biosafety information-exchange mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean

22. In considering this item, the regional meeting will be invited to review issues relating to the status of existing mechanisms of biodiversity and biosafety information exchange in Latin America and the Caribbean (such as electronic versus non-electronic information exchange, major actors responsible for producing and disseminating information, availability and accessibility of existing information resources at a national and regional level).

23. Under this item, representatives from intergovernmental organizations, bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations involved in enabling activities will be invited to give an overview of the aspects of these projects relevant to information-sharing activities in the region for consideration by the meeting (for example, the clearing-house mechanism module under the national biodiversity strategies and action plans projects funded by GEF).

24. Possible group discussions that could be held under this item with a view to assessing regional needs include: (i) opportunities for dissemination of information and data required under the Biosafety Protocol by non Internet-based means; and (ii) problems and solutions involving electronic communication - technical, human resources, funding, etc.

3.3. Building capacity for information exchange under the Protocol

25. In considering this item, the regional meeting will be invited to consider issues relevant to building capacity for information exchange under the Protocol. It is proposed that this item of the agenda include the following elements:

- (a) Current information-exchange capacity (review of ongoing or completed projects by countries, feedback on relevant projects from the implementing agencies);
- (b) Key organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean that could act as information centres.

26. Under this item, representatives from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations involved in enabling activities will be invited to give an overview of the aspects of these projects relevant to information-sharing activities in the region for consideration by the meeting (for example, the biodiversity data management project funded by GEF).

27. Possible group discussions that could be held under this item with a view to determining options for regional capacity-building include: (i) opportunities for operating an electronic Internet-based Biosafety Clearing-House information-exchange system in conjunction with non-electronic information-exchange mechanisms; and (ii) opportunities for facilitation of information exchange by key organisations in the region.

28. This issue is further elaborated upon in the report of the Open-ended Meeting of Experts on Capacity-Building for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (UNEP/CBD/BS/EM-CB/1/3)*.

3.4. Implementation of the pilot phase of the Biosafety Clearing-House

29. The Secretariat will make a short presentation on issues relevant to this item, based on documents prepared for the second meeting of the ICCP. In considering this item, the regional meeting will be invited to review the structure and operation of the pilot phase with a view to making recommendations on enhancing its accessibility to the Latin America and the Caribbean region.

30. Accordingly, it is proposed that this item of the agenda should cover the following elements:

- (a) Progress report on the pilot phase of the Biosafety Clearing-House;
- (b) Short training session on the operation of the pilot phase of the Biosafety Clearing-House;
- (c) Opportunity for delegates to explore the central portal and the management centre of the pilot phase of the Biosafety Clearing-House.

31. These issues are elaborated upon in two documents for the second meeting of the ICCP that are available for information purposes (UNEP/CBD/ICCP/2/9, UNEP/CBD/ICCP/2/10).

ITEM 4. PREPARATION OF REGIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENTS AND PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

32. Under this item, participants will be invited to prepare regional needs assessments for the Biosafety Clearing-House, and to determine the priorities for action, based on these assessments.

ITEM 5. OTHER MATTERS

33. The regional meeting will be invited to consider any other matters under this agenda item.

ITEM 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

34. The regional meeting will be invited to formulate its general conclusions and recommendations on the issues considered at this meeting.

* This report is also annexed to the note by the Executive Secretary on capacity-building, prepared for the second meeting of the ICCP (UNEP/CBD/ICCP/2/10).

ITEM 7. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

35. The regional meeting will consider and adopt its report, on the basis of the draft report of the meeting and draft recommendations to be presented by the Rapporteur.

ITEM 8. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

36. It is expected that the meeting will be closed at 5 p.m. on Thursday, 6 September 2001.

Annex I

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS FOR THE LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGIONAL
MEETING ON THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING-HOUSE**

PLEASE NOTE:

**For reasons of economy, documents will be available at the meeting in a limited number.
Participants are requested to bring their copies of the documents to the meeting.**

Working documents

UNEP/CBD/BCH/LAC.Reg/1/1	Provisional agenda
UNEP/CBD/BCH/LAC.Reg/1/1/Add.1	Annotations to the provisional agenda

Background documents

UNEP/CBD/ICCP/1/3	Information-sharing (Article 20, Article 19) (paper prepared for the first meeting of the ICCP, 11-15 December 2000)
UNEP/CBD/ICCP/1/4	Capacity-building (Article 22, Article 28) (paper prepared for the first meeting of the ICCP, 11-15 December 2000)
UNEP/CBD/ICCP/1/9	Report of the first meeting of the ICCP (11-15 December 2000)
UNEP/CBD/Afr.Reg/1/2	Report of the African Regional Meeting on the Biosafety Clearing-House and the Clearing-house Mechanism (26-28 February 2001)
UNEP/CBD/BS/EM-CB/1/3	Report of the Open-ended Meeting of Experts on Capacity-Building for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (11-13 July 2001)
UNEP/CBD/ICCP/2/9	Information-sharing and the Biosafety Clearing-House (Article 20): progress report on the implementation of the pilot phase of the Biosafety Clearing-House (paper prepared for the second meeting of the ICCP, 1-5 October 2001)
UNEP/CBD/ICCP/2/10	Capacity-building (Article 22, and Article 28, para. 3) (paper prepared for the second meeting of the ICCP, 1-5 October 2001)

Annex II

**PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE LATIN AMERICA AND THE
CARIBBEAN REGIONAL MEETING ON THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING-HOUSE**

Tuesday, 4 September 2001

- 9 a.m. Opening of the meeting (item 1)
- 9 a.m. – 10 a.m. Introductory statements
- Organizational matters:
- Election of officers (item 2.1)
- Adoption of agenda (item 2.2)
- Organization of work (item 2.3)
- 10 a.m.—11 a.m. Information exchange under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (item 3.1)
- 11 a.m.—12.30 p.m. Existing biodiversity and biosafety information-exchange mechanisms in Africa (item 3.2)
- 12.30 p.m. —1.30 p.m. Lunch break
- 1.30 p.m—3 p.m. Building capacity for information exchange under the Convention and the Protocol (item 3.3)
- 3 p.m.—5 p.m. Group discussions

Wednesday, 5 September 2001

- 9 a.m.—12.30 p.m. Implementation of the pilot phase of the Biosafety Clearing-House (item 3.4)
- 12.30 p.m.—1.30 p.m. Lunch break
- 1.30 p.m.—5 p.m. Preparation of regional needs assessments and priorities for action (item 4)

Thursday, 6 September 2001

- 9 a.m.—10:30 am Preparation of regional needs assessments and priorities for action, continued... (item 4)
- 10:30 am—noon Other matters (item 5)
- 1 p.m.—2 p.m. Lunch break
- 2 p.m.—5 p.m. Finalization and adoption of report and recommendations (items 6 and 7)
- 5 p.m. Closure of the meeting (item 8)
