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OPEN-ENDED EXPERT MEETING ON
CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR THE
CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY
Havana, 11-13 July 2001
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY SUMMARIZING INFORMATION RECEIVED
IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON CAPACITY-BUILDING**

*Capacity-building for the implementation of the Biosafety Protocol: submission by
the United States of America*

Note by the Executive Secretary

The Executive Secretary is circulating herewith, for the information of participants in the Open-ended Expert Meeting on Capacity-building for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, a submission by the United States of America on capacity-building for the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The document is being circulated in the form and in the language in which it was received by the Secretariat.

* UNEP/CBD/BS/EM-CB/1/1.

Submission of the United States:
Capacity Building
for the implementation of the Biosafety Protocol

April 5, 2001

Areas of U.S. expertise and experience to share

The U.S. has significant experience and expertise in:

- regulatory development and implementation.
- risk analysis – assessment, management, and communication – including hazard identification, evaluation of risks, and the development of domestic and regional assessment capacity.
- analyzing risks to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
- collaborating with developing countries on issues related to biotechnology and biosafety.
- developing and maintaining information clearinghouses.

Roles of entities to facilitate capacity building

- **The Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol (ICCP)** should gather the information required for the Conference of the Parties to decide what capacity-building projects will be the most effective in facilitating countries' implementation of the Biosafety Protocol (BSP). This information will include the identification of priorities of each country or region for capacity building and the determination of ways to meet these needs.
- **The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat** has a special role in facilitating the creation and implementation of the Biosafety Clearing House and the Roster of Experts—two important aspects of capacity building. To facilitate the flow of information and the functioning of the Roster of Experts and the multiple existing or planned capacity-building activities, the CBD Secretariat should play an ongoing coordinating, monitoring and facilitating role for international capacity-building projects.
- **Developing countries and countries with economies in transition** should clearly identify priorities for assistance to ensure the capacity building resources are used most effectively.
- **Donors** should attempt to contribute resources to effectively implement the capacity-building priorities articulated by developing countries and countries with economies in transition, including sponsoring regional and sub-regional workshops.
- **The Global Environment Facility's (GEF) capacity-building project** is an essential element in creating domestic national biosafety frameworks around the globe. The progress of the GEF project should be disseminated on a regular basis through the CBD. The GEF project should also facilitate the use of existing and developing regional networks.
- **Regional networks** created by groups of developing countries and countries with economies in transition should be encouraged and supported by donor organizations and

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developed countries. Regional networks provide an efficient means of using limited resources to address multiple needs across a wide geographic area.

- **The private sector/industry** is in a unique position to participate in the effective implementation of the BSP. With practical experience and necessary resources, as well as a stake in effective implementation, industry can and should increase awareness, provide technical advice, and help to implement the Biosafety Clearing House.
- **Non-governmental organizations** can also participate and assist in domestic and regional efforts to implement the BSP, including raising awareness of the BSP, providing technical advice and helping to implement the Biosafety Clearing House.
- **Scientific/academic institutions** may provide participants for the Roster of Experts. These organizations can also assist with the effective implementation of the Biosafety Clearing House. They may choose a role in institutional development and addressing research gaps in risk assessment and management information.

Existing U.S. initiatives for capacity building

The U.S. has been working internationally for many years, often through collaborative projects, to build capacity in agricultural biotechnology. Primarily through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. government works to build capacity to develop and use biotechnology to address economic development and food security in developing countries. Underlying all U.S. agricultural biotechnology efforts is a deliberate focus on building technical capacity to support science-based regulation for the safe development, application, and trade in products derived from biotechnology – biosafety.

U.S. Government projects specifically related to biosafety

The U.S. government has been working extensively across the globe for many years to improve the regulatory and technical capacity of developing countries. Key U.S. agencies are the Department of State, the USAID, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). These initiatives cover a range of biosafety-related activities and include:

Department of State

- **Biosafety Clearing House Implementation:** In 2000, the U.S. government is contributing \$360,000 to help design and implement the Biosafety Clearing House. The Department of State, in conjunction with USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), will provide these funds to the CBD in order to assist with the establishment of the clearing house architecture and to conduct a series of regional educational and information-gathering workshops.

USAID

The USAID spent \$8 million in the year 2000 on capacity building projects related to biotechnology. Current projects focusing on biosafety capacity building include:

- **The Agricultural Biotechnology Support Project (ABSP):** ABSP is a cooperative agreement between USAID and Michigan State University that supports research and biosafety capacity building in the Philippines, Egypt, East/Central Africa, and six Southern

- African countries.** Previously, ABSP supported partnerships and capacity building with Costa Rica, Morocco, Indonesia, and Kenya. ABSP is currently providing technical support to two major **regional biosafety programs**, in East/Central Africa and in Southern Africa. Life of project funding from USAID since 1991 totals \$15 million.
- **Regional Biotechnology and Biosafety Program in East/Central Africa:** The program's goals are to promote biotechnology transfer and research, and to develop a **regional strategy for biosafety capacity building, regulatory harmonization, and regulatory cooperation**, including the development and harmonization of biosafety regulations on a regional level. USAID is working with a regional African organization of national agricultural research systems (the Association for Strengthening Agriculture Research in East and Central Africa or ASARECA) to develop and implement this program.
 - **Biosafety Regulatory Training in Southern Africa:** In partnership with South African institutions, USAID is providing support to a regional program on **biosafety capacity building** involving 6 countries. The program will provide **risk assessment training** and other technical training related to **biosafety regulatory implementation**.
 - **Public Outreach in Biotechnology in Africa:** The goal of this program is to promote **communication with the public by policy makers and scientists on biotechnology issues**, providing more accurate information on biotechnology. Three workshops will be held, including training workshops in Southern and Eastern Africa. The program is funded by USAID, and implemented by USDA with the International Agricultural Research Centers (IARC) and Historically Black Colleges and Universities, led by Tuskegee University and two African organizations, the African Biotechnology Stakeholders Forum in East Africa and AfricaBio in South Africa.

USDA

- **Cochran Fellowship Program:** Through this program, USDA provides short-term agricultural training in the United States for public and private specialists and administrators concerned with agricultural trade, policy, management, and technology transfer. Since its start in 1984, the Cochran Fellowship Program has provided training for over 7,600 international participants from 81 countries. Over the past several years, the number of international participants from emerging market countries has increased annually in areas related to **needs assessment, risk management, and capacity building**. About 50 participants participate annually in these programs.
- **International Biosafety Symposia:** Biannual symposia bring researchers together from around the world to present and discuss results of **environmental biosafety research**. The 7th symposium will be held in Beijing in July 2002. Funding is through the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and other Federal agencies.
- **The Scientific Cooperation Research Program (SCRIP):** Supports international cooperative research focused on practical uses of science to help solve critical problems affecting food, agriculture and the environment in both the U.S. and collaborating countries. Managed by the Foreign Agricultural Service's Research and Scientific Exchanges Division,

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the program provides linkages to international resources and enhances research and technical efforts of scientists domestically and worldwide. Target subject areas for this program include **maintaining biodiversity**, preserving germplasm, and agricultural technology adoption and trade.

- **Regulation and Risk Assessment Workshops:** For the last ten years, APHIS has conducted various workshops on U.S. **regulatory approach and risk assessment procedures**. These workshops are provided for developing countries and countries with economies in transition that are developing guidelines and other legal mechanisms for reviewing genetically engineered organisms that are being imported, field tested, researched, and/or grown in their countries. Both bilateral and multilateral fora have been used to share APHIS experience in handling and conducting risk analysis for agricultural biotechnology products.
- **APEC Country Workshops:** For the last six years, APHIS has worked with member economies under the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation forum on technical cooperation, capacity building, the safe and effective use of agricultural biotechnology, and communicating effectively about biotechnology so that **public awareness and understanding** of this technology are enhanced. Participants have included decision-makers/scientists from developing countries (under the Cochran fellowship program) and also under the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA). APHIS along with the Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) conducted a capacity building exercise in India for approximately 15 countries from Asia Pacific region.

USDA - National Science Foundation (NSF) - National Institutes of Health (NIH)

- **Fogarty International Center of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) - International Cooperative Biodiversity Groups (ICBG):** Seven ICBGs, composed of a variety of public and private organizations, study the interdependent themes of biodiversity conservation, drug discovery, and sustainable economic growth in 11 countries. The focus of the program is to discover natural products suited for modern medicine while securing the benefits of these discoveries for **local communities** and other host country organizations. The program also helps developing countries ensure sustainable long-term harvesting, provides funding for **biodiversity conservation**, and promotes **training and infrastructure support**. U.S. Federal Interagency funding (\$3.75 million in 1999) is through USDA, NSF and NIH.

Other international capacity-building projects to which the U.S. Government provides funding

- **GEF - Development of National Biosafety Frameworks:** Funded through the Global Environment Facility and UNEP, this project aims to assist countries in preparing a biosafety framework to meet their obligations under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. It includes regional and sub-regional workshops that provide the information on which to build national frameworks and to collaborate at the sub-regional level to assure the availability of the necessary scientific infrastructure. Assistance will be provided at the national level to identify biotechnological activity within a country and the extent of coverage of already existing laws and regulations. It will provide the necessary assistance to ensure that stakeholders are consulted in drawing up guidelines, regulations or laws to achieve the stated aims. Over the past three years the U.S. has provided GEF nearly \$120 million in funds.

- **Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR):** An informal association of 58 public and private sector members, this Group supports 16 international agriculture centers. The program facilitates capacity building, research, partnership, policy support, and sustainable agriculture. The U.S. was the third largest contributor in 1999, with \$5 million attributed to biotechnology efforts including biosafety capacity building. Two centers that conduct biosafety capacity building activities supported by CGIAR are:
 - **Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR):** Formed by international and national agricultural research institutions, universities, the private sector, NGOs, regional and sub-regional organizations, the donor community and farmers' organizations, GFAR facilitates **information exchanges and collaborative partnerships** between countries through the Global System for Agricultural Research Initiative.
 - **International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR):** In collaboration with CGIAR, ISNAR's Intermediate Biotechnology Service (IBS) provides training, tools and advisory services to research managers and policy makers. IBS has performed 2 country case studies on improving **national biosafety systems**. ISNAR also evaluates the results of capacity-development programs (including CGIAR) and creates networks of professionals to develop regional expertise.