



Convention on Biological Diversity

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REGIONAL ONLINE REAL-TIME CONFERENCES ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS IN DECISION-MAKING CONCERNING LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS

Africa, 16 June (English) and 5 July 2011 (French)
Western European and Others and Central and Eastern Europe,
21 June 2011
Latin America and the Caribbean, 23 June 2011
Asia and the Pacific, 7 July 2011

ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

INTRODUCTION

1. Article 26 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety concerns socio-economic considerations. It provides:

“1. The Parties, in reaching a decision on import under this Protocol or under its domestic measures implementing the Protocol, may take into account, consistent with their international obligations, socio-economic considerations arising from the impact of living modified organisms on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, especially with regard to the value of biological diversity to indigenous and local communities.

“2. The Parties are encouraged to cooperate on research and information exchange on any socio-economic impacts of living modified organisms, especially on indigenous and local communities.”

2. In their decision BS-V/3, the Parties to the Protocol requested the Executive Secretary to convene regional online conferences to: (i) facilitate the exchange of views, information and experiences on socio-economic considerations on a regional basis; and (ii) identify possible issues for further consideration.

3. The decision also requested the Executive Secretary to convene, prior to the sixth meeting of the Parties to the Protocol; “subject to the necessary financial resources being made available, a regionally-balanced workshop on capacity-building for research and information exchange on socio-economic impacts of living modified organisms”.

4. To implement the above requests, the Secretariat initiated a three-step process. The first step was a series of online discussion groups on socio-economic considerations which ran from 21 March to 8 May 2011. The purpose of the online discussion groups was to:

(a) Facilitate a global exchange of information and experiences on socio-economic considerations;

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- (b) Develop a clearer understanding of the different perspectives on the issue; and
- (c) Identify issues for further discussion during the regional online real-time conferences and the workshop.

5. More information on the discussion groups, including all the interventions, may be found through the portal on socio-economic considerations in the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH): http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_art26/discussiongroups_se.shtml.

6. The second step in the process is the regional online real-time conferences. Five real-time conferences will be held:

- (a) Africa (in English), 16 June 2011 at 10 a.m. GMT;
- (b) Western European and Others Group (WEOG) and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) (in English), 21 June 2011 at 12 noon GMT;
- (c) Latin America and the Caribbean (in Spanish), 23 June 2011 at 3 p.m. GMT;
- (d) Africa (in French), 5 July 2011 at 10 a.m. GMT; and
- (e) Asia-Pacific (in English), 7 July 2011 at 3 a.m. GMT.

7. The third step is the workshop on socio-economic considerations, which is tentatively scheduled for November 2011. The objectives of the workshop are: (a) analysis of the capacity-building activities, needs and priorities regarding socio-economic considerations and identification of options for cooperation in addressing those needs; and (b) exchange and analysis of information on the use of socio-economic considerations in the context of Article 26 of the Protocol. The outcomes of the online discussion groups and regional online real-time conferences will serve as inputs for the workshop.

8. As requested in decision BS-V/3, a synthesis of the outcomes of the online conferences and the workshop will be submitted to the sixth meeting of the Parties for consideration of further steps.

ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

9. The conferences will be opened by the Chairs according to the dates and times listed in paragraph 7, above. Each conference will last for approximately four hours. Any changes to this schedule will be communicated to the participants and announced via the portal on socio-economic considerations in the BCH (http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_art26/portal.shtml).

10. The chairs for the conferences are as follows: Mr. Abisai Mafa (Africa – English); Mr. Andreas Heissenberger (WEOG and CEE); Ms. Michelle Chauvet (Latin America and the Caribbean); Dr. Mahaman Gado Zaki (Africa – French); and Ms. Praopan Tongsom (Asia-Pacific).

ITEM 2. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

2.1. Adoption of the agenda

11. The participants in each of the conferences will be invited to adopt the agenda for the conference on the basis of the provisional agenda prepared by the Executive Secretary (UNEP/CBD/BS/REGCONF-SEC/1/1). The provisional agenda has been prepared keeping in mind the objectives of the online conferences and the points raised during the online discussion groups.

2.2. Organization of work

12. The conferences will take place online in the form of a “chat room” where participants will be able to post written interventions. A list of participants will be visible to all who are logged in to the conference. The conference will take up the agenda items one by one. Participants will need to request the floor when they wish to make interventions on the items as they are opened by the Chair for discussion. Participants will be able to consult with the Secretariat in case of technical difficulties through an online “Helpdesk” or by telephone. Prior to the conferences, participants will have the opportunity to test the

conference system. Additional information on technical requirements is available through the web page for the real-time conferences: http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_art26/realtime_se.shtml.

13. The documentation that will be made available for the meeting is listed in the annex below. Participants are encouraged to prepare their initial interventions for each of the substantive issues in advance based on the following information.

ITEM 3. SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

3.1. National experiences with socio-economic considerations in biosafety decision-making

14. Under this agenda item, participants in the real-time conferences will be invited to provide information on their country's experiences with socio-economic considerations in decision-making on living modified organisms (LMOs).

15. In preparing their interventions for this agenda item, the participants in the real-time conferences are invited to consider the following questions:

(a) Has your country included provisions on socio-economic considerations in its national biosafety framework, biosafety policy, legislation and/or regulations? If yes, briefly describe the relevant provisions?

(b) What experience does your country have with implementing socio-economic considerations in biosafety decision-making? (For example, has your country taken socio-economic considerations into account in making a decision on a specific LMO or conducted a general technology assessment?)

(c) What have been the main challenges and obstacles to taking socio-economic considerations into account in decision-making? How have these been addressed?

(d) Does your country have experience with socio-economic considerations in other sectors besides biosafety? (For example, have socio-economic considerations been included in decision-making processes for other products such as pharmaceuticals or in planning and decision-making for development projects using methodologies such as social impact assessments or strategic environmental assessment?)

3.2. Considerations driving inclusion of socio-economic issues in biosafety decision-making

16. Paragraph 1 of Article 26 of the Biosafety Protocol provides that Parties may include socio-economic considerations in their decision-making on living modified organisms; it does not oblige them to do so. Countries will decide to include socio-economic considerations in their decision-making for specific reasons or in order to achieve certain goals or objectives.

17. Under this agenda item, the participants will be invited to consider some of the reasons or factors that lead countries to include socio-economic considerations in their biosafety decision-making. In this regard, participants may wish to consider the following questions:

(a) What goals does your country wish to achieve by taking socio-economic considerations into account in decision-making on LMOs?

(b) What would need to be assessed to achieve these goals?

(c) What capacity-building does your country require to meet these goals?

3.3. Other issues for further consideration

18. According to decision BS-V/3, one of the objectives for the real-time conferences is the identification of issues for further consideration. As outlined above, paragraph 28 of the decision requests a synthesis of the real-time conferences and the workshop on socio-economic considerations to be submitted to the sixth meeting of the Parties for consideration of further steps. Under this agenda item, the

participants will be invited to suggest, from the perspective of their region, issues for further consideration during the workshop and further steps to be considered by the Parties to the Protocol at their sixth meeting.

19. In preparing interventions for this agenda item, participants may wish to consider the background information that will be made available for the conferences. This includes the submissions of relevant information on socio-economic considerations, including guidance material and case-studies on, *inter alia*, institutional arrangements and best practices which are being made available in the resources section of the portal on socio-economic considerations in the Biosafety Clearing-House (http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_art26/resources.shtml). A summary of the submissions has been prepared as document UNEP/CBD/BS/REGCONF-SEC/1/INF/1. Participants may also wish to consider relevant documents prepared for the fourth and fifth meetings of the Parties to the Biosafety Protocol as listed in the annex below.

20. Participants are also invited to consider the following questions:

(a) How should operational objective 1.7 of the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety for the Period 2011-2020 be implemented? The operational objective is “to, on the basis of research and information exchange, provide relevant guidance on socio-economic considerations that may be taken into account in reaching decisions on the import of living modified organisms”;¹

(b) Building on theme 7 from the online discussion groups, what are some key issues for your region that should be discussed during the workshop on socio-economic considerations?

ITEM 4. OTHER MATTERS

21. Under this item, the participants in the conferences may wish to consider any other relevant matters that are raised.

ITEM 5. CLOSURE OF THE CONFERENCE

22. It is expected that the conferences will be closed by their respective Chairs after three to four hours of discussion. The transcripts of the conferences will be made publicly available through the Biosafety Clearing-House.

¹ Annex I to decision BS-V/16.

*Annex***LIST OF DOCUMENTS FOR THE REGIONAL ONLINE REAL-TIME CONFERENCES ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS IN DECISION-MAKING CONCERNING LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS**

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
UNEP/CBD/BS/CONF-SEC/1/1	Provisional agenda
UNEP/CBD/BS/CONF-SEC/1/1/Add.1	Annotations to the provisional agenda
UNEP/CBD/BS/CONF-SEC/1/INF/1	Socio-economic considerations: summary of submissions received from Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations
UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/5/INF/10	Summary report on the survey on the application of and experience in the use of socio-economic considerations in decision-making on living modified organisms
UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/4/15	Socio-economic considerations (Article 26, paragraph 2)
UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/4/INF/1	Socio-economic considerations - compilation of views and case-studies concerning socio-economic impacts of living modified organisms
