

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Committee  
for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety  
21 March 2001, Montreal**

**Attendance:**

Bureau members present: Cameroon (Chair), France, India, Peru, Poland, St. Kitts and Nevis, Switzerland and Ukraine.

The Chairman informed the Bureau that members from the Islamic Republic of Iran and South Africa were not able to come to the meeting due to last minute unavoidable circumstances.

Secretariat of the CBD: Executive Secretary and Biosafety Unit staff.

A representative of UNEP was also present at the meeting.

**Agenda:**

The meeting adopted the agenda as annexed hereto (Annex 1).

**Deliberations of the meeting:**

1. Outcome of the liaison group meeting of technical experts on the Biosafety Clearing-House:

The Bureau had before it a non-paper containing the recommendations made by the Liaison Group Meeting of Technical Experts on the pilot phase of the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH), convened at the initiative of the Executive Secretary, and held on 19 and 20 March 2001. After a round of exchanges of views on the recommendations and the way to proceed forward with the launching of the pilot phase of the BCH, it was agreed that members of the Bureau who may wish to make further comments, after making consultations with their constituencies, should do so within 7 days from the date of this meeting. Once all comments have been reflected, the recommendations will be consolidated in a Note from the ICCP Bureau which will be transmitted to all national focal points and will also be posted on the website of the Secretariat.

The Bureau also recommended that the Secretariat makes the internet version of the central portal of the pilot phase of the BCH “go live” on its website as soon as possible, with a view to allowing all interested Governments and other stakeholders to start participating in the pilot phase and provide comments to continue guiding its development until the time it will be reviewed at the ICCP-2 meeting. The Bureau recommended that such comments be posted on the BCH website (e.g. a bulletin board) in order to ensure transparency.

It was stressed in particular that any technical choice made by the Secretariat for the pilot phase should, as far as possible, be based on the required flexibility in order to take into account future choices regarding the operation of the BCH (e.g. possibility in the future for direct loading of information “life” by Parties).

Finally the Bureau was informed that only 8 countries had replied as yet to the notification made by the Secretariat as regards submission of the national information and links to national web sites, for inclusion in the pilot phase of the BCH, and agreed to convey to their constituencies the request to provide, as a matter of urgency, this information to the Secretariat in order for the pilot phase to be as inclusive as possible.

2. Progress report on the status of implementation of the inter-sessional activities:

The Secretariat presented a summary report of progress in the implementation of the inter-sessional activities recommended by ICCP-1, particularly with respect to those, which had specific deadlines. The Secretariat expressed the concern that so far little feedback had been received regarding the various recommendations requesting action from Governments, which were conveyed to all national focal points in the Notification dated 12 January 2001. Bureau members agreed that they will each try to convey the message to their respective constituencies on the need to provide the Secretariat with the requested feedback/submissions so as to facilitate the preparation and implementation of corresponding activities in particular meetings expected to be organized by the Secretariat in the inter-sessional period between ICCP-1 and ICCP-2.

The Secretariat also informed the Bureau on the status of funding of various activities under the Biosafety Programme approved by COP 5 and those requested by ICCP-1. It was noted that there was still a shortfall in the funding of some of the meetings which will take place in the inter-sessional period, particularly with respect to supporting the participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in, *inter alia*, the following meetings: workshop on capacity building for the implementation of the Biosafety Protocol to be held in Cuba in June 2001; open-ended meeting of experts on compliance to be held back-to-back with ICCP-2; and, the ICCP-2 meeting itself. The Executive Secretary and the Chair urged Bureau members representing developed and other donor countries to take the message to their constituencies to raise funds to ensure the successful organization of these important meetings (see further issues regarding funding below under other matters).

3. Date and venue of the next Bureau meeting:

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Bureau will take place from 5 to 6 of July 2001 in Yaounde, Cameroon, following the offer made by the Chair at the last meeting of the Bureau in Montpellier which had been accepted by all.

4. Other Matters:

4.1. Date and venue for the second meeting of the ICCP:

The Executive Secretary informed the Bureau of the offer made by the Executive Director of UNEP to COP-5 Bureau to host ICCP-2 meeting at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, on the same dates as those previously agreed by ICCP-1, i.e., from 1 to 5 October 2001, and to bear any difference in costs resulting from hosting the meeting in Nairobi rather than at the seat of the Secretariat in Montreal.

The Bureau thanked and accepted the generous offer of UNEP and requested the Secretariat to issue a notification to all Governments informing them of the change of venue of the second meeting of ICCP.

Given that the first meeting of the ICCP had also adopted a recommendation calling for an open-ended meeting of experts on Compliance (Article 34 of the Protocol), which would be of 3 days duration, to be held back-to-back with the second meeting of the ICCP, the Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that UNEP had confirmed that its conference facilities in Nairobi would also be available for this meeting prior to ICCP-2. He however stressed that the offer of the Executive Director of UNEP to cover the additional costs of hosting the meetings in Nairobi rather than Montreal applied at this stage only to the ICCP-2 meeting but not to the open-ended meeting of experts on Compliance.

The Bureau agreed that the meeting on Compliance be held from 26 to 28 September 2001 in Nairobi and requested the Secretariat to convey also this information to Governments. The Secretariat will try to raise funds for this meeting from UNEP and donor countries, particularly for supporting the participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

Due to the amount of work to be finalized at ICCP-2, the Bureau also felt that the time left (2 days) between the meeting on compliance and ICCP-2 would be well suited for intra- and inter-regional informal consultations and requested the Secretariat to convey this information to Governments as well as requesting them to identify in due time tentative schedule and request for rooms for such informal consultations.

4.2. Any other matter:

i) Offer by the Netherlands to host the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties (MOP-1) to the Protocol in conjunction with COP-6:

The Executive Secretary reminded the Bureau of the offer made by the Netherlands to host COP 6 meeting in the Hague in April 2002, as well as the first meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (MOP-1) which would be held back to back with COP 6, if there are enough ratifications by that time to make this technically possible.

In order to facilitate timely preparations for the meeting, the Bureau considered a draft provisional agenda for MOP-1 (annex 2) and cleared it for transmission to the Government of the Netherlands and to ICCP-2.

ii) Note from Dr. P. K. Ghosh (India), on capacity building:

The Bureau noted with appreciation a note submitted by Dr. P. K. Ghosh on behalf of India highlighting some relevant aspects of capacity building for biosafety purposes. The Bureau agreed that the note could be taken as a country contribution towards the issue of capacity building and recommended that the note be circulated as an information document at the upcoming workshop on capacity building, which will be held in Cuba in June 2001 (see below).

iii) The outcome of the African Regional Workshop on the Biosafety Clearing-House:

The draft report of the above meeting was made available to Bureau members for information. The Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the process and outcome of the Regional workshop. The member of the Bureau who participated in the workshop representing the Bureau also presented his appreciation and assessment of the workshop. The Bureau accepted his suggestion regarding the importance of enabling one or two representatives from a region to attend similar workshops in the future in other regions and share lessons and experiences learnt from their workshop with a view to fostering consistency and cross-fertilization between regions, starting with the participation of two or three African regional representatives, to be identified by the region, in the next regional workshop.

The Secretariat informed the Bureau of the financial resources made available by the Government of the United States of America (US\$ 360,000) for organizing similar workshops for the remaining developing regions, namely: GRULAC, Asia/Pacific and Central/Eastern Europe. Regarding the schedule for these workshops, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that it will endeavor to organize at least one more regional workshop before ICCP-2 (for either GRULAC or Asia/Pacific), and assured the Bureau that, in any event, all remaining regional workshops on the BCH will take place before the end of March 2002 as the project supported with funding from the USA has to be completed by 31 March 2002.

iv) Preparations for the meeting on capacity building for implementation of the Biosafety Protocol and on the UNEP workshop on national framework in biosafety, to be held in Cuba:

The Secretariat informed the Bureau on the status of preparations for the open-ended expert meeting to further develop proposals on the implementation on capacity building provisions of the Protocol as recommended by ICCP-1 for consideration by the second meeting of the ICCP. The Government of Cuba has indicated its willingness to host this meeting, as well as the workshop on financial support for the creation and implementation of national biosafety frameworks to be organized by UNEP and the GEF back-to-back with the open-ended meeting, during the week of 4 to 8 June 2001. The representative of UNEP briefed the Bureau on the preparations for the latter workshop. The Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that following consultations between the Government of Cuba, UNEP, GEF and the Secretariat, the proposal was to have the open-ended meeting on capacity building take place from 4 to 6 June 2001, to be

followed by the UNEP/GEF workshop on financial support for national biosafety frameworks on 7 June 2001.

The Bureau agreed with the above proposal but highlighted the need to keep separate the financial arrangements for the two events. With respect to a proposal referred to the ICCP Bureau by COP 5 Bureau regarding the possibility of using US\$ 120,000 from the special financial contribution made available by the Government of Canada as host country to the Secretariat for the year 2001, to contribute to funding the two meetings to be held in Cuba, the Bureau was of the view that UNEP should provide all the required funding for the second workshop. As regards the open-ended meeting of experts on capacity building for the implementation of the Biosafety Protocol, the Bureau requested the Executive Secretary to try first to resort to other voluntary sources of funding such as the GEF, UNEP, and other donor countries, and to use the special contribution mentioned above only if required to offset any shortfalls. The Bureau expressed the view that this special contribution should be used on a priority basis for activities related to the implementation of the pilot phase of the Biosafety Clearing-House.

In view of these elements, and noting the critical importance of this inter-sessional activity for the implementation of the Protocol, the Bureau requested the Secretariat to proceed with the preparations of the 3 days open-ended meeting of experts on capacity building for the implementation of the Biosafety Protocol and to issue invitations to all Governments for such meeting. The Bureau also recommended to the Secretariat to invite relevant public, private non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations currently involved in activities relating to capacity building in biosafety to be present at the Cuba meeting and make presentations on their activities, in order to highlight the synergies and the complementarities among various initiatives. It was suggested that a mini-fair (e.g. side events) could also be organized in conjunction with the meeting to give opportunity to various governments or organizations involved in biosafety-related capacity building programmes to make presentations on their activities. In this regard, the IUCN's initiative to develop and publish a guide for the implementation of the Biosafety Protocol, and the project of the Government of the Netherlands, supported by other European countries, to assist countries of Central and Eastern Europe with the development of their biosafety frameworks, were mentioned as examples of such activities that could be presented at the Cuba meeting.

The Bureau had before it proposed elements for draft agendas for the Cuba workshops and members were invited to forward their comments to the Secretariat as soon as possible (in any event no later than 31 March 2001) to allow the Secretariat to finalize the draft agendas.

The Bureau also emphasized the importance of participation of its members in the Cuba meeting.

v) Other inter-sessional meetings:

- Meeting of Government-nominated technical experts in handling, transport, packaging and identification (Article 18):

The Bureau was briefed on the status of preparation for this meeting, scheduled to take place from 13 to 15 June in Paris, France. The Secretariat emphasized, in particular, the fact that no information has been submitted so far from Governments or relevant organizations on their existing practices, rules and standards relevant to Article 18, as requested by ICCP-1. Nor has any nomination of experts been forwarded so far to the Secretariat.

The Bureau member from France briefed the Bureau about the facilities that will be made available to the meeting by the French Government. He said that the meeting hall can accommodate 52 representatives actively participating in the discussions and ca 70 silent observers. The Bureau was also informed that it was foreseen that the facilities would enable the use of two contact groups, and endorsed such proposal if it were to be so decided by the expert meeting (e.g. to deal with the two issues at stake, namely article 18.2 (b) and article 18.2 (c)). Furthermore, he indicated upon request that any additional cost incurred for two languages (E and F) interpretation, if so decided, would be covered by the host Governments.

The Bureau noted with appreciation the contributions and/or pledges made by donors for this meeting, namely France and Canada who will co-host the meeting, and the United Kingdom (UK£ 10,000 for the meeting).

The Bureau had before it proposed elements for a draft agenda for this meeting and members were invited to forward their comments to the Secretariat as soon as possible (in any event no later than 31 March 2001) to allow the Secretariat to finalize the draft agenda.

- Open-ended experts meeting on compliance (Article 34):

This meeting is scheduled to take place back-to-back with ICCP-2. The Bureau was informed that so far, only three countries and one regional organization have communicated their views on the elements and options for a compliance regime under the Protocol, following the request from ICCP-1. The Secretariat requested Bureau members to urge their constituencies to communicate their views regarding compliance and also on Article 18 referred to above, within the remaining time before the deadline (i.e. 31 March 2001), so as to allow the preparation of synthesis reports of submitted views by the Secretariat before the planned technical experts' meeting.

The Bureau had before it proposed elements for a draft agenda for this open-ended meeting and members were invited to forward their comments to the Secretariat as soon as possible (in any event no later than 31 March 2001) to allow the Secretariat to finalize the draft agenda.

- Liability:

The Bureau was also briefed on the forthcoming workshop on liability to be held in the framework of the CBD (decision V/18) from 18 to 20 June 2001 in Paris, France. As liability will be an issue on the agenda of the second meeting of the ICCP, this workshop is also of relevance for the preparations of ICCP-2. The assumption so far is that the meeting should be held in the same premises as the expert meeting on article 18, pending further consultations on attendance.

vi) Any other matter:

One Bureau member informed other members of the Bureau of the upcoming FAO meetings under the Committee of Agriculture and the IPPC (the International Plant Protection Convention) concerning the FAO's Biosecurity Policy/Strategy initiative. He expressed the view, endorsed by the Bureau, that there is a need for the ICCP and the Secretariat to follow closely those processes with a view to foster mutual supportiveness with the implementation of the Protocol under the IPPC and to assess their implications for the work of the ICCP.

Annex 1

**Provisional Agenda**

**ICCP Bureau Meeting, 21 March 2001, Montreal**

1. Outcome of the liaison group meeting of technical experts on the Biosafety Clearing-House.
2. Progress report on the status of implementation of the inter-sessional activities recommended by the first meeting of the ICCP as contained in the report of the meeting (Document UNEP/CBD/ICCP/1/9, Annex 1).
3. Date and venue of the next Bureau meeting.
4. Other matters:
  - 4.1 Date and venue for the second meeting of the ICCP;
  - 4.2 Any other matter.



**Annex 2****FIRST MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION  
ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY SERVING AS THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO  
THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY****Draft provisional agenda**

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
  - 2.1. Election of officers;
  - 2.2. Adoption of the agenda;
  - 2.3. Organization of work.
3. Adoption of the rules of procedure for the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.
4. Report of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (ICCP).
5. Report on the credentials of representatives to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.
6. Matters stipulated by the Protocol for action by the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol:
  - 6.1. Decision procedure (Article 10, para.7);
  - 6.2. Information sharing and the Biosafety Clearing-House (Article 20, para.4);
  - 6.3. Liability and Redress (Article 27);
  - 6.4. Secretariat (Article 31, para.3));
  - 6.5. Compliance (Article 34);

7. Other matters recommended by the ICCP for consideration by the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol:
  - 7.1. Handling, transport, packaging and identification (Article 18);
  - 7.2. Capacity building (Article 22; Article 28, para.3);
  - 7.3. Monitoring and reporting (Article 33);
  - 7.4. Consideration of other issues necessary for the effective implementation of the Protocol (e.g., Article 29, para.4).
8. Medium-term programme of work of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.
9. Date and Venue for the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.
10. Other matters.
11. Adoption of the report.
12. Closure of the meeting.