



**CONVENTION ON
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**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION
ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY SERVING AS THE
MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CARTAGENA
PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY**

Second meeting

Montreal, 30 May-3 June 2005

Item 6 of the provisional agenda **

**REPORT OF THE COORDINATION MEETING FOR GOVERNMENTS AND
ORGANIZATIONS IMPLEMENTING OR FUNDING BIOSAFETY
CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The first Coordination Meeting for Governments and Organizations Implementing or Funding Biosafety Capacity-Building Activities was held in Montreal from 26 to 27 January 2005.
2. The meeting was attended by 33 participants. The list of participants is contained in an annex to this report (annex III).
3. The meeting was convened by the Executive Secretary, in accordance with decision BS-I/5 regarding the Coordination Mechanism for the Implementation of the Action Plan on Building Capacities for the Effective Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, which was adopted by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at its first meeting.

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4. Coordination meetings are one of the five elements of the Coordination Mechanism, and are aimed at facilitating the sharing of knowledge, views and operational experience between different organizations regarding their biosafety capacity-building activities, with the view to fostering synergies, partnerships and harmonization of efforts. ^{1/}

5. The meeting elected François Pythoud (Switzerland) to serve as its Chairperson, and Stacey Wells-Moultrie (Bahamas) to serve as Rapporteur.

6. The meeting adopted the provisional agenda provided in document UNEP/CBD/BS/CM-CB/1/1. The following main items were discussed by the meeting:

(a) Interim report on implementation of the coordination mechanism;

(b) Draft report on the Biosafety capacity-building needs and priorities of countries, the coverage and gaps in existing biosafety capacity-building initiatives and measures to address the needs and gaps, including options for enhancing the adequacy and effectiveness of financial assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition; and

(c) Mechanisms for promoting networking and collaboration between different biosafety capacity-building initiatives.

7. At the start of the meeting, participants shared information about the ongoing and planned biosafety capacity-building initiatives in which they are involved.

8. The meeting discussed and adopted operational procedures and guidelines to facilitate the organization and conduct of future Coordination Meetings, contained in annex I to this report.

9. The meeting also discussed and adopted operational modalities for the Biosafety Capacity-Building Network as annexed to this report (annex II) and elected a Steering Committee comprising seven members to provide overall guidance to the operation of the network and oversee implementation of its activities. The members are: Hartmut Meyer (Germany, Chairperson), Stacey Wells-Moultrie (Bahamas, Vice Chairperson), S.R. Rao (India), Helle Biseth (Norway), Chris Viljoen (South Africa), Christopher Briggs (UNEP/GEF) and Joel Cohen (International Food Policy Research Institute, IFPRI).

II. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Implementation of the Coordination Mechanism ^{2/}

10. The meeting recommended the following measures to enhance the implementation of the Coordination Mechanism:

(a) Institutions and organizations should record and update their initiatives in the BCH capacity-building databases.

^{1/} The five elements of the Coordination Mechanism are: the capacity-building Liaison Group, the biosafety capacity-building databases, the information-sharing and networking mechanism, coordination meetings and workshops, and the reporting mechanism (reference COP-MOP decision BS-I/5).

^{2/} Including implementation of the following elements: the biosafety capacity-building databases, the information-sharing and networking mechanism, coordination meetings and workshops, and the reporting mechanism.

(b) The Biosafety Clearing-House databases should allow institutions to indicate opportunities for partnership in delivery of particular capacity-building activities, in order to maximize synergies.

(c) Recognizing that confidential information should not be included in the Biosafety Clearing-House databases, institutions should provide basic information about their initiatives in the databases that would be useful to enhance synergies.

(d) The capacity-building databases should include planned initiatives so as to facilitate a proactive approach to collaboration and coordination.

(e) The compendium of biosafety courses, which was developed by Coordination Meeting of institutions offering biosafety-related training and education programs held 4-6 October 2004 in Geneva, should be expanded to include a more detailed list of descriptors for course contents, so that users can search for training that suits their specific needs, ensuring coverage of the key elements identified in the Capacity-Building Action Plan adopted by the meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at its first meeting.

(f) Recipient countries should develop national strategies for capacity building in biosafety, prioritizing the needs for capacity building activities in the different components of the national biosafety framework, and should share these through the Coordination Mechanism, to facilitate a proactive approach to coordinating support to capacity-building and matching initiatives with country needs.

(g) The Coordination Mechanism should facilitate contacts between countries and experts (national, regional or international) who can provide needed assistance.

(h) All capacity-building initiatives should consider including an element of facilitating sharing of experiences, such as through participation in the coordination meetings.

B. Priority Needs of Countries, Coverage and Gaps in Existing Biosafety Capacity-Building Initiatives and Possible Measures for Addressing the Needs and Gaps, including Options for Enhancing the Adequacy and Effectiveness of Financial Assistance

Priority Needs of Countries and Measures for Addressing Needs and Gaps

11. The meeting agreed on the following main conclusions and recommendations regarding measures for addressing the needs and gaps in building capacities for the effective implementation of the Protocol:

(a) Assessment of country needs should be based on inputs from government and all relevant stakeholders.

(b) Capacity-building initiatives should be needs-driven.

(c) Assessment of needs is an iterative process, and therefore countries should review their needs as their capacity evolves, and update their records in the BCH accordingly. Initiatives should consider assisting countries in this regard.

(d) It is necessary to prioritize among the types of measures that should be used to address needs and gaps, and to focus on addressing needs that are directly related to implementation of the Protocol. Priority should be given in particular to:

- (i) Development of national strategies for capacity-building in biosafety, taking into account the different needs of countries that adopt biotechnologies and those that may only be importers of the products of biotechnology.
 - (ii) Regional and sub-regional initiatives and approaches,
 - (iii) Enhancing human resources development and the role of academic and other training institutions,
 - (iv) Building capacity to enable countries to conduct their own biosafety-related research.
- (e) Capacity-building initiatives should pursue approaches that are likely to result in sustainability of capacity-building, including for example:
- (i) Promotion of south-south interactions
 - (ii) “Train the trainers” approaches including enabling local institutions to conduct capacity-building activities, and
 - (iii) Long-term in-depth training options in addition to short-term workshops.
- (f) Consideration should be given to linguistic groupings in the design of capacity-building initiatives targeting multiple countries.

Enhancing the Adequacy and Effectiveness of Financial Assistance

12. The meeting made the following recommendations for enhancing the adequacy and effectiveness of financial assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition for capacity-building in biosafety:

- (a) Donors should consider simplifying the procedures for making resources available, and harmonize to the extent possible, in order to improve access to resources for capacity-building by recipient countries.
- (b) Donors and organizations providing assistance should consider provision of training in project proposal development.
- (c) The Coordination Mechanism should be used to monitor the coverage of capacity-building initiatives, with a view to facilitating identification of gaps.
- (d) Donors could consider requiring that countries seeking support for capacity-building initiatives provide information on other related ongoing initiatives.
- (e) Donors and organizations developing capacity-building initiatives should consider informing and involving the public research sector.

C. Measures for Promoting Networking and Collaboration Between Different Biosafety Capacity-Building Initiatives

13. The meeting made the following recommendations with regard to the Biosafety Capacity-Building Network:

- (a) The biosafety capacity-building network should be simple and function as an umbrella network by linking to existing regional and sub-regional networks, without duplicating the work of those existing networks.

(b) Recipient countries should be encouraged and supported to participate in the biosafety capacity-building network.

Annex I

**OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE
COORDINATION MEETINGS**

Purpose of the meetings

1. The primary objective of the coordination meetings will be to facilitate interaction and exchange of information, views and experience with a view to promoting synergies, complementarities and partnerships between various capacity building initiatives and enhancing their impact. Specifically, the meetings will *inter alia* seek to:

(a) Enhance mutual awareness among participating organizations of the ongoing and planned activities with a view to identifying their coverage, overlaps and deficiencies and gaps.

(b) Minimize the unnecessary overlaps and duplication of effort and resources, including through synchronizing the ongoing initiatives.

(c) Facilitate sharing, leveraging and learning from each other's experience, good practices and lessons learned from the biosafety capacity-building initiatives.

(d) Enhance mutual understanding of the emerging capacity-building issues and priority needs of countries and endeavor to identify solutions and steps to address them.

(e) Promote cross-fertilization of ideas to improve coordination and delivery of capacity-building initiatives with a view to enhancing their effectiveness in responding to the needs and priorities of countries and realizing maximum impact.

Frequency, timing and duration of the meetings

2. The meetings will be convened whenever necessary, subject to availability of funding, and will take advantage of the opportunities presented by other forums where most participants are present. Initially it is envisaged that at least one meeting a year may be needed. Each meeting will normally not exceed three days.

3. Announcements of the meetings and the provisional agenda will be publicized through the Protocol web site and the Biosafety Clearing-House, at least two months before the meeting.

4. Intersessionally, participating organizations will communicate and exchange information and views through the electronic communications tools developed for the Biosafety Capacity-Building Network, including the restricted website, e-mail listserv and/or electronic discussion forums.

5. The meetings will be held sufficiently in advance of the next meetings of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol so that issues requiring its attention are discussed and relevant recommendations forwarded to it for consideration.

Responsibility for convening the meetings

6. The meetings will be organized by the Secretariat in collaboration with other relevant organizations, including the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its Implementing Agencies, subject to availability of funding.

7. Organizations interested in sponsoring or co-organizing coordination meetings at the international or regional level will be invited to inform the Secretariat and enter into a memorandum of cooperation. Invitations for attending such meetings will be extended by both the Secretariat and main sponsoring organization.

Participation

8. The meetings will be open to governments and organizations that are implementing or funding capacity-building projects for the effective implementation of the Protocol. Potential participants will be invited to express their interest through the Secretariat along with details of their ongoing activities.

9. To the extent possible, members of the liaison group on capacity-building for biosafety will be encouraged to attend the coordination meetings as one of the strategies for cross-linking the coordination meetings with the other elements of the Coordination Mechanisms.

Election of officials

10. A steering committee comprising a Chair, a vice-Chair and five members will be elected every two years, with due regard to geographic, thematic and gender balance. The Steering Committee shall include representatives from recipient countries. In order to maintain institutional memory, at least one third of the members will be retained whenever a new committee is elected. The Chair and vice-Chair of each meeting, with the assistance of the Secretariat, shall be responsible for preparing and circulating to participants the reports of the meeting. The steering committee will be responsible for providing the necessary strategic direction and overseeing, until the next coordination meeting, implementation of the follow-up activities that fall outside the primary responsibility of the Secretariat.

Agendas of the meetings

11. The Steering Committee will develop the agenda for the meetings in consultation with the Secretariat and the organization(s) offering to sponsor/ host a coordination meeting. For the time being, the following will be standing substantive items on the agenda:

(a) Report of the previous meeting, including consideration of the progress made in implementing the agreed outcomes and a review of the changes that occurred as a result.

(b) Presentations by participants on their ongoing and planned activities, emerging opportunities for collaboration and other relevant developments since the last meeting.

(c) Consideration of the priority needs of countries and specific requests for capacity-building support.

12. As much as possible, the deliberations of the meetings will focus on understanding the key capacity-building issues and priority needs of countries and on identifying how best to assist countries to build their capacities to effectively implement the Protocol. The meetings will also seek to facilitate participants in identifying opportunities for establishing partnerships and collaboration with different players.

Procedures and style of conducting the meetings

13. The meetings shall be as informal and flexible as possible in order to allow a free interaction and sharing of information, experience and ideas. They will not aim at reaching consensus on particular issues but at promoting broad exchange of information, views and opinions and allowing a free flow of ideas through brainstorming. Different viewpoints of participants will be recorded and emerging issues requiring further consideration identified. The meetings may come up with specific recommendations and follow-up actions, as appropriate.

Working language

14. The working language of the international coordination meetings will be English. Regional coordination meetings may be organized in the language spoken by the majority of participants from the region.

Documentation and reports

15. The Secretariat will prepare, with guidance from the steering committee, relevant documentation on the agreed issues for the agenda to facilitate the discussions at the meetings. The documents will be distributed to participants at least four weeks before the meeting.

16. Prior to each meeting, participants will be invited to submit to the Secretariat relevant information and documents, including summaries of their activities undertaken in the preceding period, new planned activities or work programmes and an indication of potential opportunities for collaboration to be distributed to all participants.

17. The reports of the meetings will be distributed to all participants within two weeks of the close of the meeting. Specific recommendations requiring consideration by the Conference of Parties serving as the meeting of Parties to the Protocol will be transmitted formally through the Secretariat. The reports and other relevant outputs of the meetings may also be submitted as information documents and made public through the Biosafety Clearing-House, as appropriate.

Financing of the meetings

18. Organization of the meetings will, inter alia, be funded through voluntary contributions from the sponsors/co-organizers of each meeting and from donors. Participants will be expected to cover the costs of their participation in the meetings.

*Annex II***OPERATIONAL MODALITIES FOR THE BIOSAFETY CAPACITY-BUILDING NETWORK****Mandate and Functions**

19. The primary purpose of the network is to facilitate and enhance active interaction and sharing of knowledge, views, experiences and lessons learned among individuals, organizations and donor agencies interested in promoting biosafety capacity-building and research, in a timely, organized and effective manner. The specific functions and activities/ services of the network will include the following:

(a) Helping to strengthen linkages and interactions between different organizations or individuals involved biosafety capacity-building activities, in order to promote synergies and better coordination and collaboration.

(b) Facilitating informal but systematic interactions to foster sharing and leveraging of knowledge, best practices and lessons learned with a view to enhancing mutual learning and maximum use of available knowledge and experience.

(c) Enabling different players to keep each other informed about their ongoing or planned activities in order to avoid duplication of effort and to optimize the allocation of resources.

(d) Fostering linkages between on-the-ground experience and action and the relevant policy processes at the national, regional and global levels.

(e) Facilitating the establishment of collaborative partnerships or twinning arrangements and foster the pooling of resources and expertise.

(f) Mobilizing expertise and information resources available through the network to provide technical assistance to Parties to the Protocol, upon request.

Membership and Participation in the Network

20. The network will be open to representatives of interested governments and relevant organizations that are implementing or funding capacity-building projects for the effective implementation of the Protocol.

21. Potential participants interested in joining the network will be invited to express their interest to the Secretariat and/or register through the Biosafety Clearing-House.

22. Members of the network will be encouraged share voluntarily their relevant information and experience through network and to advancing the goal and objectives of the network.

Administration and Functioning of the Network

23. In accordance with decision BS-I/5 of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of Parties to the Protocol, the network will be administered by the Executive Secretary of the Protocol and will be implemented primarily through the Biosafety Clearing-House, which will serve as the “network hub”.

24. The Steering Committee elected at the coordination meetings will provide overall policy guidance to the operations of the network and to oversee the implementation of its activities. Members of the Steering Committee will serve for a period of two years, renewable once. In order to maintain institutional memory, at least one third of the members will be retained when a new committee is elected. The Steering Committee will work mainly through the internet-based tools established for the network.

25. The network will operate primarily through Internet-based tools, including: e-mail listservs, bulletin boards, electronic discussion forums and electronic conferences, will be the primary means of interaction between the network members.

26. A restricted (password-protected) website will be established to allow exchange of views and information among members of the network and facilitate networking and access to information about the network activities. An e-mail listserv will also be established for all members to all dissemination of information and comments relevant to all members. A bulletin board may also be to allow ongoing posting of views, comments and new information on different biosafety issues. In addition, thematic or issue-specific e-mail listservs or electronic discussion forums may also be established as required, to allow exchange of information and dialogue on specific themes/ topical issues over a defined period time.

27. Partner organizations will be encouraged to volunteer in co-sponsoring or moderating specific thematic discussions or managing issue-specific e-mail listservs. The discussion forums may, as appropriate, result in specific products (e.g. reports/ proceedings), which may also be published as hard copies and made available to interested countries.

Responsibilities of the Secretariat

28. The Secretariat will service the network by:

(a) Developing and maintaining communication tools for the network, including a restricted website, e-mail listservs and electronic discussion forums for members of the network.

(b) Facilitating communication, interaction and exchange of information among members of the network.

(c) Maintaining records of the network membership and disseminating relevant reports and other outputs of its activities.

(d) Preparing progress reports and other relevant documentation for consideration by the Conference of the Parties serving as meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.

(e) Undertaking other activities as requested by the network, subject to availability of funding.

Regional and thematic sub-networks

29. Thematic sub-networks or taskforces may be established to address specific issues or undertake specific activities and to avoid overloading the main work programme of the Network. The sub-networks may provide an effective mechanism for interested organizations working on specific issues or thematic areas to consult with each other on their plans and activities, and to discuss practical ways and means of ensuring that the activities are mutually supportive.

30. Specific sub-networks will be established by, and will report progress of their activities to, the regular general coordination meetings of the network members. Members of the network would be requested to administer such sub-networks, when established and provide to the Secretariat only the relevant reports and other outputs that need to be shared broadly among all the network members.

31. Members may also establish regional and sub-regional nodes of the network or strengthen linkages with existing relevant regional and sub-regional networks dealing for biosafety capacity-building, within the overall framework of the Biosafety Capacity-Building Network, to address region-specific requirements. The lead organizations for the regional and sub-regional network will provide to the Secretariat the relevant information and report that need to be shared broadly among all the network members.

Funding of the Network

32. In accordance with the core principles of the Coordination Mechanism, implementation of the network will involve as minimal additional resource requirements as possible. Most of the core activities of the network, such as maintenance of the network website and communication tools will be implemented within the budget of Secretariat. Other activities of the network requiring additional resources will be funded, *inter alia*, through voluntary contributions from the members and willing sponsors/ donors.

Periodic Review of the Network

33. The operations of the network including the effectiveness of its activities, outputs and impact will be reviewed after three years and thereafter after every five years along the same schedule for the review of implementation of the Protocol.

Annex III
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

1. Mr. Jairon Alcir do Nascimento
Coordinator General
National Technical Biosafety Committee
Executive Secretariat, SPO Area 5 Qd.
03 Bloco B, 1* Andar, Salas 8-10
Brasilia DF 70610-200, Brazil
Tel.: +55 61 411 5516
Fax: +55 61 317 7475
E-Mail: jalcir@mct.gov.br

2. Ms. Gity Behravan
Research Advisor
Department for Research Cooperation (SAREC)
Swedish International Development
Cooperation Agency (SIDA)
SE-10525
Stockholm, Sweden
Tel.: +46 8 698 5261
Fax: +46 8 698 5656
E-Mail: gity.behravan@sida.se

3. Ms. Helle Biseth
Norwegian Agency for Development
Cooperation (NORAD)
P.O. Box 8034
Dep. N-0030
Oslo, Norway
E-Mail: heb@norad.no

4. Mr. Christopher Briggs
Global Programme Manager
UNEP/GEF Biosafety Unit
United Nations Environment Programme
15 Chemin des Anemones, Chatelaine
Geneva CH-1219, Switzerland
Tel.: +41 22 917 8411
Fax: +41 22 917 8070
E-Mail: chris.briggs@unep.ch

5. Ms. Janet Carpenter
Biotechnology Advisor
U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C
United States of America
Tel.: +1 202 712 5652
Fax: +1 202 216 3227
E-Mail: jcarpenter@usaid.gov

6. Mr. Joel Cohen
Director, Program for Biosafety Systems
Consultative Group on International Agricultural
Research (CGIAR-USA)
International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
2033 K Street, NW
Washington DC 20006-1002
Tel.: +1 202 862 8128
Fax: +1 202 473 8110/467 4439
E-Mail: j.cohen@cgiar.org

7. Ms. Mary-Ellen Foley
Environmental Specialist
World Bank (WB)
1818 H Street NW
Washington DC 20433
United States of America
Tel.: +1 202 458 0445
Fax: +1 202 522 3258
E-Mail: mfoley1@worldbank.org

8. Mr. Marc Fortin
Associate Dean (Research) and Ass. Professor
Department of Plant Science
McGill University
21, 111 Lakeshore, St. Anne de Bellevue
Montreal, Canada
Tel.: +1 514 398 7851 ext. 8384
Fax: +1 514 398 7897
E-Mail: marc.fortin@mcgill.ca

9. Ms. Olga Goldfain
General Manager
Norwegian Institute of Gene Ecology
Science Park
Box 6418
Tromso 9294, Norway
Tel.: +47 77 64 44 88
Fax: +47 77 64 61 00
E-Mail: olga@genok.org

10. Mr. Charles Haines
Canadian International Development Agency
200 Promenade du Portage
Gatineau K1A 0G4
Canada
E-Mail: charles_haines@acdi-cida.qc.ca

11. Mr. Jarle Harstad
Lead Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist
Office of Monitoring and Evaluation
Global Environment Facility (GEF)
1818 H Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20433
United States of America
Tel.: +1 202 458 4619
Fax: +1 202 522 3240 / 3245
E-Mail: jharstad@TheGEF.org

12. Mr. Jan Husby
Senior Advisor
United Nations Environment Programme
(UNEP)
Division of Environmental Conventions (DEC)
P.O. Box 30552 Gigiri
Nairobi,
Kenya
Tel.: +254 20 62 3432
E-Mail: jan.husby@unep.org;
jan.husby@dirnat.no

13. Mr. Wang Jie
Senior Programme Officer, Biosafety
Management Officer
CBD and Biosafety Office, Department of
Nature and Ecological Protection
State Environmental Protection Administration
(SEPA)
115 Xizhimennei, Nanxiaojie
Beijing 100035
China
Tel.: +86 10 671 17 664
Fax: +86 10 671 33 967
E-Mail: wang.jie@sepa.gov.cn

14. Mr. Sam Johnston
Senior Research Fellow
United Nations University
Institute of Advanced Studies
International Organizations Center 6F
Pacifico-Yokohama
Minato Mirai
Nishi-ku
Yokohama 220-0012
Japan
Tel.: +81 45 221 2300
Fax: +81 45 221 2302/+613 9686 2637
E-Mail: johnston@ias.unu.edu

15. Mr. Dan Kiambi
McGill University
21, 111 Lakeshore, St. Anne de Bellevue
Montreal, Canada
Tel.: +1 514 398 7752
Fax: +1 514 398 7897
E-Mail: dionysious.kiambi@mail.mcgill.ca

16. Ms. Muffy Koch
Senior Associate
AGBIOS Inc.
106 St. John Street, P.O. Box 475
Merrickville, Ontario K0G 1N0
Canada
Tel.: +1 613 269 7966
Fax: +1 613 269 4367
E-Mail: mkoch@agbios.com

17. Ms. Sarah Lukie
Global Industry Coalition
1900 K Street NW
Washington D. C. 20009
United States of America
Tel.: +1 202 496 7173
Fax: +1 202 496 7756
E-Mail: slukie@mckennalong.com

18. Ms. Ruth Mackenzie
Principal Research Fellow
Faculty of Laws
University College London
Bentham House, Endsleigh Gardens
London WC1H 0EG
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern
Ireland
Tel.: +44 207 679 1455
Fax: +44 207 679 1440
E-Mail: r.mackenzie@ucl.ac.uk

19. Mr. Desmond Mahon
Director, National Focal Point, Cartagena Protocol
on Biosafety
Environment Canada
Place Vincent Massey
351 St. Joseph Blvd, 16th floor
Hull, PQ K1A 0H3
Canada
Tel.: +1 819 997 3181
Fax: +1 819 953 7682
E-Mail: des.mahon@ec.gc.ca

20. Mr. Hartmut Meyer
Biosafety Consultant
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische
Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)
Dag Hammarskjöld Weg 1-5
Postfach 5180
Eschborn 65726
Germany
Tel.: +49 6196 79 1363/79 7403
Fax: +49 6196 79 6190
E-Mail: hmeyer@ngi.de

21. Mr. Charles Francis Mugoya
Regional Coordinator
ASARECA Biotechnology and Biosafety
Programme
Plot 5, Mpigi Road, P.O. Box 765
Entebbe,
Uganda
Tel.: +256 41 322 126
Fax: +256 41 322 593
E-Mail: mugoyac@yahoo.com;
c.mugoya@asareca.org; biotech@asareca.org

22. Mr. François Pythoud
Senior Scientific Adviser
Section Biotechnologie et Flux de substances
Office fédéral de l'environnement, des forêts et
du paysage
CH-3003 Berne
Switzerland
Tel.: +41 31 322 93 95
Fax: +41 31 324 79 78
E-Mail: francois.pythoud@buwal.admin.ch

23. Mr. S.R. Rao
Director
Department of Biotechnology
Ministry of Science and Technology
Block-2, C.G.O Complex, 7th Floor, Lodi Road
CGO Complex, Lodi Road
New Delhi 110-003
India
Tel.: +91 11 233 16 766/243 60 295
Fax: +91 11 233 16 745
E-Mail: srrao@dbt.nic.in;
srraodbt@indiatimes.com

24. Ms. Barbara Shaw
Policy Advisor – Agriculture/Biotechnology
Canadian International Development Agency
200 Promenade du Portage
Gatineau K1A 0G4
Canada
Tel.: +1 819 994 4079
E-Mail: barbara_shaw@acdi-cida.gc.ca

25. Mr. Rajinder Singh
State Department
2201 C St NW, OES/ETC Room 4333
Washington D.C. 20520
United States of America

26. Mr. Andrea Sonnino
Senior Agricultural Research Officer
Research and Technology Development Service,
Research,
Extension and Training Division
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United
Nations (FAO)
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
Rome 00100, Italy
Tel.: +39 06 5705 5499
Fax: +39 06 5705 5731
E-Mail: andrea.sonnino@fao.org

27. Mr. Jaco Tavenier
Ministry of the Environment
P.O. Box 30945
The Hague 2500 GX
Netherlands
Tel.: +31 70 339 4035
Fax: +31 70 339 1306/ 31 70 339 1316
E-Mail: jaco.tavenier@minvrom.nl

28. Mr. Mark Tepfer
Scientific Coordinator
International Centre for Genetic Engineering and
Biotechnology (ICGEB)
ICGEB Biosafety Outstation
Editor-in-Chief, Environmental Biosafety Research
Via Piovega 23
Ca' Tron di Roncade,
Treviso, Italia
Tel.: +39 0422 789 708
Fax: +39 0422 789 730
E-Mail: Mark.Tepfer@icgeb.org; ebr@icgeb.org

29. Mr. George Tzotzos
Chief of Biodiversity Unit
United Nations Industrial Development
Organization (UNIDO)
Vienna International Centre, P.O. Box 300
Vienna A-1400, Austria
Tel.: +431 26 026 4336
Fax: +431 26 026 6810
E-Mail: G.Tzotzos@unido.org

30. Ms. Paz Valiente
Global Environment Facility (GEF)
1818 H Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20433
United States of America
Tel.: +1 202 458 8863
Fax: +1 202 522 3240/3245
E-Mail: pvaliente@TheGEF.org

31. Mr. Piet van der Meer
HORIZONS Sprl.
Foundation Public Research and Regulations
C/o Rue de Fichermont 15
Lasne B-1380,
Belgium
Tel.: +32 2 652 1240
Fax: +32 2 652 3570
E-Mail: piet.vandermeer@cs.com

32. Mr. Chris Viljoen
Senior Lecturer
GMO Testing Facility
Department of Plant Sciences
Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences
University of the Free State
P.O. Box 339
Bloemfontein 9300
South Africa
Tel.: +27 051 401 2776
Fax: +27 051 448 8772
E-Mail: viljoecd.sci@mail.uovs.ac.za

33. Ms. Stacey Wells-Moultrie
Assistant Geologist
The Bahamas Environment Science and Technology
Commission (BEST)
Nassau Court
P.O. Box N 3730
Nassau, Bahamas
Tel.: +242 322 2576
Fax: +242 326 3509
E-Mail: bestnbs@hotmail.com; smoultrie@best.bs
