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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

Third meeting Curitiba, Brazil, 13 – 17 March 2006 Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

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

I. INTRODUCTION

- 1. The second Coordination Meeting for Governments and Organizations Implementing or Funding Biosafety Capacity-Building Activities was held in Tromso, Norway from 18 to 20 January 2006.
- 2. The meeting was attended by 39 participants. The list of participants is contained in Annex II to this report.
- 3. The meeting was sponsored and hosted by the Government of Norway in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 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 (COP-MOP) at its first meeting.
- 4. The meeting was opened by Mr. Poul Engberg-Pedersen, Director General of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).
- 5. Participants elected Mr. Hartmut Meyer (Germany) to serve as Chairperson of the meeting and Ms. Stacey Wells-Moultrie (Bahamas) to serve as Rapporteur.

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^{*} UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/3/1

- 6. The meeting adopted the provisional agenda provided in document UNEP/CBD/BS/CM-CB/2/1. The following key items were discussed at the meeting:
 - (a) Consideration of practical measures to achieve operational-level synergies and complementarities between capacity-building initiatives.
 - (b) Consideration of practical experiences, best practices and lessons learned in capacity-building for the effective implementation of the Protocol.
 - (c) Input into the comprehensive review of the Action Plan for Building Capacities for the Effective Implementation of the Protocol.
- 7. During the meeting, participants shared information about the ongoing and planned biosafety capacity-building initiatives in which they are involved. It was agreed that the information shared at the meeting will be compilied and made available through the Biosafety Clearing-House. Participants who had not already done so promised to submit to the Secretariat written updates about their initiatives within one week after the meeting.
- 8. The meeting also discussed and adopted an Interim Guiding Framework for Promoting Practical Synergies and Complementarity Between Biosafety Capacity-Building Initiatives at the Country Level, which is contained in Annex I of this report.
- 9. Under agenda item 5 (other matters), the meeting exchanged views on possible agenda items for the next coordination meeting, as well as the tentative venues and dates. It was agreed that the issue of 'regional and sub-regional approaches' will be one of the agenda items at the next meeting. The Steering Committee will make a final decision regarding the agenda, date and venue after the third meeting of the COP-MOP.

II. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Review of the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the first coordination meeting

- 10. Participants reviewed the progress made with regard to the implementation of the recommendations of the first coordination meeting, including updates on: the capacity building initiatives undertaken, efforts made to address capacity needs and priorities of countries, the progress in developing national capacity-building strategies and the promotion of south-south cooperation. In this regard, the following recommendations were made:
 - (a) The design of capacity-building projects should include a requirement to provide and update information in the project database in the Biosafety Clearing-House.
 - (b) Where national capacity-building strategies have been developed, they should be taken into account when capacity-building projects and initiatives are being developed.
 - (c) The national capacity-building strategies that have been developed should be made available through the Biosafety Clearing-House.
 - (d) The design of any capacity-building project should include measures that would ensure the sustainability of activities beyond the project's life.
 - (e) Governments and organizations should provide information on best practices in south-south cooperation based on their experiences.

B. Practical experiences, best practices and lessons learned in capacity-building for the effective implementation of the Protocol

- 11. The meeting heard case study presentations of the following ongoing and completed biosafety building projects, which focused on the practical experiences, best practices and lessons learned as well as the main challenges encountered and how they were addressed:
 - (a) German-funded Project on Civil Society Participation in Algeria's Biosafety Process;
 - (b) Norwegian Assistance to Zambia to build capacity for the implementation of the National Biotechnology and Biosafety Policy and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;
 - (c) Mexico-UNDP/GEF Capacity Building Project for the Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework;
 - (d) Dutch MATRA Project on Implementation of Biosafety Frameworks in Pre-Accession Countries of Central and Eastern Europe (1999-2002);
 - (e) USAID-funded Program for Biosafety Systems and;
 - (f) UNEP-GEF Global Project on Development of National Biosafety Frameworks.
- 12. It was agreed that these presentations will be made available through the Biosafety Clearing-House.

C. Input into the comprehensive review of the Action Plan for Building Capacities for the Effective Implementation of the Protocol

- 13. The meeting discussed the draft background paper prepared by the Exeuctive Secretary on the progress in, and effectiveness of, the implementation of the Action Plan. The following views and comments were made regarding possible measures for addressing the constraints to the effective implementation of the Action Plan identified in the paper and were forwarded for consideration by the third meeting of the liaison group for capacity-building for biosafety:
 - (a) *Insufficient funding*:
 - (i) Recipient countries should incorporate biosafety capacity building into their national development policies and strategies, which are often used by donors and organizations in developing their assistance policies and programmes.
 - (ii) Recipient countries should also include biosafety issues in their national budgets.
 - (iii) Donors should incorporate biosafety capacity building support into their development aid policies and strategies, and in the corresponding sectoral, bilateral and multilateral programmes.
 - (b) Lack of adequate human capacities:
 - (i) Countries should utilize opportunities offered by biotechnology capacity building activities to the extent that they are relevant for biosafety.

- (ii) Building capacity for biosafety should go beyond creating awareness about technical and scientific issues, through seminars and short-term training activities. It should aim at creating core expertise through long-term training, including attachment of personnel to specialized institutions, located in the country or abroad.
- (iii) In order to ensure sustainability of biosafety capacity-building efforts, a long-term perspective should be taken in the design and implementation of projects. As well, the implementation of training programmes should be spearheaded by local experts and national training institutions.

(c) Low priority given to biosafety:

- (i) National institutions dealing with biosafety should make use of all available opportunities to raise public and political awareness regarding biosafety issues.
- (ii) Both donor and recipient governments should integrate biosafety into their broader sustainable development strategies and approaches, such as those related to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

(d) *Lack of information*:

- (i) Every country should make an effort to improve the level and quality of information provided in the capacity building databases in the Biosafety Clearing-House.
- (ii) Countries participating in the UNEP-GEF project on "Building Capacity for Effective Participation in the Biosafety Clearing-House" should be required to provide relevant information to the BCH before or upon completion of the project.
- (iii) All biosafety capacity-building projects should include a requirement to provide information on the project activities, outcomes and lessons learned to the capacity-building databases in the Biosafety Clearing-House.

(e) *Poor coordination and collaboration*:

- (i) Each Government should establish a coordination mechanism for biosafety capacity building in accordance with decision BS-I/5, paragraph 23.
- (ii) Best practices in coordination and collaboration should be documented and publicized, including through the Biosafety Clearing-House.

ANNEX I

INTERIM GUIDING FRAMEWORK FOR PROMOTING PRACTICAL SYNERGIES AND COMPLEMENTARITY BETWEEN BIOSAFETY CAPACITY-BUILDING INITIATIVES AT THE COUNTRY-LEVEL

I. INTRODUCTION

- 1. In its decision BS-I/5 on capacity-building, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety adopted a Coordination Mechanism to facilitate the exchange of information with a view to promoting partnerships and maximizing synergies and complementarities between biosafety capacity-building initiatives (i.e. projects, programmes and other activities).
- 2. Efforts are being made to promote coordination at the global level through the Coordination Mechanism, especially the capacity-building databases and the coordination meetings. There is also an urgent need to promote coordination and to realize concrete synergies and complementarity between biosafety capacity-building initiatives at the country-level.

II. OBJECTIVE

3. This framework is intended to provide guiding principles and a list of options of operational modalities that could be applied to enhance coordination and harmonization between different capacity-building initiatives for promoting the Cartagena Protocol on biosafety, with a view to achieving practical synergies and complementarity between them. The ultimate goal is to maximize the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of these initiatives.

III. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 4. Developing countries and countries with economies in transition (hereafter referred to as "recipient countries") as well as Governments and organizations providing capacity-building assistance for biosafety (hereafter referred to as "donors and organizations") are invited to take into account the following operational principles to guide their efforts in promoting coordination and harmonization of biosafety capacity-building initiatives at the country-level:
- (a) Recipient countries should set the agenda for the national biosafety capacity-building initiatives and should own and lead the process for the coordination and harmonization of the different initiatives.
- (b) Coordination activities should be tailored to the specific situation in each recipient country. As well biosafety capacity-building assistance should be delivered in accordance with the needs and priorities of the recipient countries.
- (c) Recipient countries should be fully committed to the coordination and harmonization process and should establish an enabling environment. Donors and organizations should consider building the capacity of recipient countries in order to effectively manage the process.
- (d) Donors and organizations should deliver their assistance in consultation with the national biosafety capacity development coordination mechanism established by each country. This mechanism should include, inter alia, the national focal point for the Cartagena Protocol and the competent national authority/authorities designated pursuant to article 19 of the Protocol, and, if appropriate, the national biosafety committee.

- (e) Donors and organizations should, to extent possible, streamline their assistance procedures, including monitoring and reporting requirements, so that recipient countries with limited capacities do not have to deal with multiple requirements.
- (f) The coordination and harmonization of biosafety capacity-building initiatives should be undertaken through an open, transparent and all-inclusive participatory process, involving relevant recipient Government agencies, donors and other relevant stakeholders.
- (g) Institutional arrangements for coordination should be flexible in order to respond to local needs and changing circumstances and to accommodate the comparative advantages of different donors.

IV. OPERATIONAL MODALITIES

A. Procedures and approaches

- 5. The process of coordination and harmonization of biosafety capacity-building initiatives, particularly at the country-level, may involve the following basic steps, procedures and approaches:
- (a) Situational analysis and needs assessment: In order to achieve effective coordination and harmonization it may be necessary for recipient countries to review the status and effectiveness of their biosafety capacity-building efforts (including an overview of capacity building initiatives that have been or are being carried out, the level of implementation of the national biosafety frameworks and the lessons learned from thereof). It may also necessary for recipient countries to assess their needs and priorities. That information could be made available through the Biosafety Clearing-House.
- (b) Development of national biosafety capacity-building strategies and plans: In accordance with decision BS-II/3, paragraphs 19 and 20, recipient countries should consider developing, on the basis of the needs assessments, national biosafety capacity-building strategies and action plans defining their overall vision, priorities, objectives and targets. The strategy and action plan could also stipulate the roles of different players, the desired approaches and the areas of focus. Such plans could be used as the reference documents for those interested in providing capacity-building assistance and could form the basis for coordinating and synchronizing different capacity-building initiatives. The national biosafety capacity-building strategies and action plans should be made available through the Biosafety Clearing-House.

B. Specific coordination measures and actions

- 6. There is a wide range of specific measures and actions that could be systematically taken by both recipient countries and donors to achieve practical synergies and complementarity between biosafety capacity-building initiatives. These could be undertaken through formalized arrangements (e.g. institutionalized forums, committees or memoranda of understanding), semi-formal arrangements; or through informal or ad hoc arrangements.
- 7. Formalized coordination activities and measures could include the following: periodic meetings between recipient Governments and donors/organizations (including round tables or consultative groups), regular donor and organizations' coordination meetings held in recipient countries (including joint participation in their respective project steering committees), institutionalized exchange of information through websites or databases, joint reviews and assessments, implementation of joint action plans; joint projects or activities (e.g. seminars and workshops, training events or studies), preparation of joint country and sectoral strategy papers; or pooling of resources (e.g. through co-financing of specific activities or through trust fund arrangements).

- 8. Ongoing country-level dialogue: In the course of implementing the capacity-building programme, it may be useful to organize periodic forums at the country level in order to facilitate dialogue between recipient Governments and donors/ organizations. This would serve to review progress with the coordination and harmonization efforts at both the strategic and operational levels, to share experiences and to discuss any new developments.
- 9. Semi-formal coordination measures could include: exchange of publications and training materials, exchange of work plans or schedules of events; cross-participation in each others' activities, including semianrs and workshops; exchange of draft documents (including project appraisals, analyses, guidance materials, etc.) for review and comment; or participation in joint ad-hoc technical groups or task forces (e.g. to develop joint guidance, methodologies and other tools).
- 10. *Informal or ad hoc coordination measures* could include: personal contacts and networking; exchange of opinions and insights; informal briefings; ad hoc consultations or participation in each other's planning and review meetings.

C. Institutional arrangements

- 11. In accordance with decision BS-I/5, paragraph 23, recipient countries should consider establishing national biosafety coordination mechanisms to promote the coordination and harmonization of biosafety capacity-building assistance and to promote synergies between existing capacity-building initiatives. The institutional structure for such a mechanism could include a steering group. The National Biosafety Committee, or an equivalent body, could be used to serve as the national steering group for the coordination and harmonization of biosafety capacity-building assistance. Its roles in this regard would, *inter alia*, include the following:
 - (a) Serve as the reference point regarding biosafety capacity-building assistance programmes;
- (b) Liaise and establish linkages with the overall national aid coordination mechanism, where it exists;
- (c) Ensure effective coordination and buy-in among relevant Government agencies and other stakeholders;
- (d) Organize and manage biosafety capacity-building consultative meetings or round tables for donors and relevant stakeholders;
- (e) Coordinate the assessment of biosafety capacity-building needs and priorities and the periodic review of the assessments;
 - (f) Coordinate the preparation of the biosafety capacity-building strategy and action plan;
- (g) Analyze and track external assistance commitments and disbursements by donors for the biosafety capacity-building action plan to ensure effective resource allocation;
- (h) Monitor and report on the execution of the donor-funded biosafety projects and programmes;
- (i) Liaise and establish linkages with other relevant capacity-building initiatives at the national level;
- (j) Monitor the overall progress of biosafety capacity-building efforts and propose ways and means for improvement.

- 12. To facilitate communication with other stakeholders, the steering group may consider designating one of its members as a contact point and make his/her contact details available through the Biosafety Clearing-House. The designated contact may also be given the responsibility of notifying the BCH about all the capacity-building initiatives undertaken in a given country.
- 13. In addition to the national coordination mechanisms described above, donors and organizations providing biosafety capacity-building assistance to the same countries may wish to consider establishing a consultative mechanism among themselves. This could include regular consultative meetings to, among other things: exchange information; harmonize their assistance policies and approaches where possible; synchronize their assistance initiatives and identify opportunities for joint activities; and agree on joint operational requirements and guidelines to be discussed with recipient Governments.
- 14. Donors and organizations may also wish to designate, at their home offices, contact persons for biosafety capacity-building assistance activities and make this information available through the Biosafety Clearing-House. Such a person would serve as a contact point for all information regarding the biosafety assistance programmes of the donor in different countries.

V. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 15. These guidelines are designed to promote coordination and harmonization of biosafety capacity-building initiatives with a view to achieving practical synergies and complementarity between them and ultimately maximizing their efficiency, effectiveness and impact. In this regard, it is important for each recipient country to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework, with a set of specific actions and indicators, to assess the progress towards achieving these objectives.
- 16. The recipient countries should consider preparing periodic progress reports and sharing their operational experiences, best practices and lessons learned through the Biosafety Clearing-House.
- 17. This guiding framework shall be reviewed and updated, if necessary, every five years. An initial review shall be undertaken after two years of its adoption.

ANNEX II LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Austria

1. Mr. Andreas Heissenberger

EU Presidency

Federal Environment Agency

Spittelauer Lände 5 Vienna A-1090, Austria Tel.: +43 13 1304 3032 Fax: +43 13 1304 3700

E-Mail: andreas.heissenberger@umweltbundesamt.at

Bahamas

2. Ms. Stacey Wells-Moultrie

Assistant Geologist

The Bahamas Environment Science and Technology

Commission (BEST)

Nassau Court P.O. Box N3730 Nassau, Bahamas

Tel.: +242 322 2576/4546 Fax: +242 326 3509

E-Mail: smoultrie@best.bs; bestnbs@hotmail.com

<u>Bulgaria</u>

3. Prof. Atanas Atanasov

Director

Plant Biotechnology Research Centre

AgroBioInstitute

Bul. Dragan Tsankov 8 Sofia 1164, Bulgaria

Tel.: +359 2 963 54 07 Fax: +359 2 963 54 08

E-Mail: atanas atanassov@abi.bg

China

4. Dr. Dayuan Xue

Professor

Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences 8 Jiang-Wang-Miao St., P.O. Box 4202

Nanjing 210042, China

Tel.: +86 10 6893 1632/ 86 13 910 17 6361 (mob.) Fax: +86 25 85 41 1611/ +86 10 68 93 1632

E-Mail: xuedayuan@hotmail.com

Cuba

5. Ms. Lenia Arce Hernández

Head, Safeguard Department and Legal Adviser

Centro Nacional de Seguridad Biológica Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnologia y Medio

Ambiente

Calle 28 No. 502 e/5ta y 7ma Miramar

Habana, Cuba

Tel.: +53 7 2031935 Fax: +53 7 2031664

E-Mail: leniarce2004@yahoo.es

lenia@orasen.co.cu

Finland

6. Dr. Marja Ruohonen-Lehto

Senior Advisor

Finnish Environment Institute

Department for Expert Services

Chemicals Division

Mechelininkatu 34 a, P.O.Box 140

FIN-00251 Helsinki, Finland

Tel: +358 9 4030 0542 Fax: +358 9 4030 0591

E-mail: marja.ruohonen-lehto@ymparisto.fi

European Community

7. Dr. Antonia Rana

Scientific Officer

Biotechnology and GMOs Unit

Joint Research Centre - Institute for Health and

Consumer Protection

Via E. Fermi 1, T.P. 331 Ispra VA 21020, Italy

Tel.: +39 332 785 478

Fax: +39 332 783 478 E-Mail: antonia.rana@jrc.it

Germany

8. Dr. Hartmut Meyer Biosafety Consultant

Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische

Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) Dag Hammarskjold Weg 1-5

Postfach 5180

Eschborn 65726, Germany Tel.: +49 6196 79 7403 Fax: +49 6196 79 6190 E-Mail: hmeyer@ngi.de

9. Mrs. Anne-Katrin Pfeiffer

Referat 312, Environment and Protection of Natural

Resources

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and

Development

Adenauerallee 139-141 Bonn D-53113, Germany Tel.: +49 1888 5353762 Fax: +49 1888 10 5353762

E-Mail: anne-katrin.pfeiffer@bmz.bund.de

<u>India</u>

10. 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, Lodiroad 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@yahoo.com

Italy

11. Ms. Maria Antonietta Toscano

Professor of Microbiology University of Catalania (Italy) Tel: +39 06 5722 3456

Fax: +39 06 5722 3486 E-mail: matoscan@unict.it

Malaysia

12. Mr. K. Nagulendran

Principal Assistant Secretary

Conservation and Environmental Management

Division

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

Level 6 Tower Block 4a3, Precinct 4

Federal Govt. Admin. Centre 62574 Putrajaya, Malaysia Tel.: +603 8886 1128

Fax: +603 8888 4473

E-Mail: nagu@nre.gov.my; nagu88@yahoo.com

Mexico

13. Dr. Agustin Lopez Herrera

Profesor-investigador Departamento de Fitotecnia Universidad Autonoma Chapingo Chapingo, Estado de México

56230 Mexico

Tel./Fax: (595) 952 1500 ext 6368 Fax/ Tel.: (55) 5133 1108 ext. 6368 E-Mail: alopezh@correo.chapingo.mx

Norway

14. Mr. Knut Berdal

Senior Scientist

Norwegian Veterinary Institute

Tel.: +47 23 21 62 42 Fax: +47 23 21 60 00

E-Mail: knut.berdal@vetinst.no

15. Ms. Helle Biseth

Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

(NORAD) P.O. Box 8034 Dep. N-0030 Oslo, Norway

Tel.: +47 22 240235 Fax: +47 22 242031

E-Mail: helle.biseth@norad.no

16. Mr. Poul Engberg-Pedersen

Director General

Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

(NORAD) P.O. Box 8034 Dep. N-0030 Oslo, Norway

Tel.: +47 22 24 2030 Fax: +47 22 24 2031

E-Mail: poul.engberg-pedersen@norad.no

17. Mr. Svein Aage Mehli

Directorate for Nature Management

Tungasletta 2

7485 Trondheim, Norway Tel.: +47 73 58 08 05 Fax: +47 73 58 05 01

E-Mail: svein-aage.mehli@dirnat.no

Republic of Moldova

18. Dr. Angela Lozan

Biosafety National Project Coordinator Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources,

Str. Cosmonautiloz 9

Chisinou, Republic of Moldova

+373 22 22 68 74 Tel· +373 22 22 68 74 Fax:

E-Mail: angelalozan@vahoo.com

South Africa

19. Dr. Chris Viljoen 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 51 401 2776 Fax: +27 51 444 5945

E-Mail: viljoecd.sci@mail.uovs.ac.za

Togo

20. Prof. Gado Tchangbedji **Enseignant Chercheur** Université de Lomé

B.P. 1515 Lomé, Togo

Tel.: +228 911 3834 Fax: +228 221 8595

E-Mail: tchangbedji@hotmail.com

Uganda

21. Dr. 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;

Ukraine

22. Dr. Sergiy I. Gubar

Deputy Director

Directorate for Biotic, Land, Water Resources and

ECONet

Ministry of Environmental Protection

House 35, Uritskogo Street

Kyiv 03035, Ukraine

+380 44 206 31 66/44 206 31 53 Tel · +380 44 206 31 66/44 206 31 53 Fax:

E-Mail: sgubar@svitonline.com

Zambia

23. Dr. Mwananyanda Mbikusita Lewanika

Executive Director

National Institute for Scientific and Industrial

Research

International Airport Road

PO Box 310158

Lusaka 15302, Zambia Tel.: +260 1 281013 +260 1 281084 Fax:

E-Mail: sanyanda@hotmail.com; mmlewanika@nisir.org.zm

NON-PARTIES

Canada

24. Mr. Desmond Mahon Manager, Office of Biosafety Strategic Priorities Directorate **Environment Canada** Place Vincent Massey 351 St. Joseph Blvd, 21st floor Hull, PQ K1A 0H3, Canada +1 819 997 3181 Tel.: +1 819 953 7682 Fax:

United States of America

E-Mail: des.mahon@ec.gc.ca

25. Ms. Janet Carpenter Biotechnology Advisor U.S. Agency for International Development 1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW Washington, DC 20523-3800 United States of America Tel.: +202 712 5652

Fax: +202 216 3227 E-Mail: jcarpenter@usaid.gov

UNITED NATIONS AND SPECIALIZED **AGENCIES**

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)/International

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**

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla Rome 00100. Italy

Tel· +39 06 5705 5499 Fax: +39 06 5705 5731

E-Mail: andrea.sonnino@fao.org

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

27. Ms. Paz Valiente Senior Environmental Specialist Global Environment Facility 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

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

28. Mr. Christopher Briggs Global Programme Manager United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/GEF) 15 Chemin des Anemones I-34012 Chatelaine Geneva CH-1219, Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 917 8411 Fax: +41 22 917 8070

E-Mail: chris.briggs@unep.ch

United Nations University (UNU)

29. Ms. Ruth Mackenzie Adjunct Senior Fellow Institute of Advanced Studies United Nations University (UNU) 6F, International Organizations Center Pacifico-Yokohama, 1-1-1- Minato Mirai, Nishi Ku

Yokohama 220 0012, Japan +81 45 221 2300 Tel.: Fax: +81 45 221 2303

E-Mail: mackenzie@ias.unu.edu;

r.mackenzie@ucl.ac.uk;

World Bank

30. Ms. Mary-Ellen Foley **Environmental Specialist** World Bank 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

2023 WC Haarlem, The Netherlands

Tel.: +31 23 5263125 Fax: +31 84 724 7818 E-mail: jce.komen@planet.nl

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB)

31. Mr. Decio Ripandelli

Director, Administration and External Relationship

Head of Biosafety Unit

International Centre for Genetic Engineering and

Biotechnology

AREA Science Park, Padriciano 99

I-34012

Trieste 34012,

Italy

Tel.: +39 040 375 7345 Fax: +39 040 375 7363 E-Mail: decio@icgeb.org

<u>International Plant Genetic Resources Institute</u> (IPGRI)

32. Ms. Elizabeth Goldberg

Head, Capacity Development Unit

International Plant Genetic Resources Institute

Via dei Tre Denari 472/a Macarese (Flumicino) Rome 00057, Italy Tel.: +39 06 6118 237

Fax: +39 06 6197 9661 E-Mail: e.goldberg@cgiar.org

<u>International Food Policy Research Institute</u> (IFPRI)

33. Mr. John Komen

Program for Biosafety Systems

International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)

c/o Duinoordstraat 69

Third World Network

36. Ms. Li Lin Lim

Researcher

Third World Network 2-1 Jalan 31/70A

Desa Sri Hartamas

Kuala Lumpur 50480, Malaysia

Tel.: +603 2300 2585 Fax: +603 2300 2595 E-Mail: twnkl@po.jaring.my

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Association de Réflexion, d'Echanges et d'Actions pour l'Environnement et le Développement

34. Dr. Meriem Louanchi-Bousdira

Senior Lecturer

National Institute of Agriculture

Association de Réflexion, d'Échanges et d'Actions

pour l'Environnement et le Développement

30 Chemin Mokrane Aoues

El Mouradia

Alger 16070, Algeria Tel.: +213 73 20 21 59

Fax: +213 21 44 84 10 E-Mail: louanchi@no-log.org

m.louanchi@ina.dz

Rockfeller Foundation

35. Mr. Jacob Werksman

Senior Advisor

Rockefeller Foundation

420 Fifth Av.

New York, NY 10018 United States of America

Tel.: +1 212 852 8212 Fax: +1 212 852 8461

E-Mail: jwerksman@rockfound.org

<u>INDUSTRY</u>

Global Industry Coalition

37. Ms. Sarah Lukie

International and Regulatory Affairs Consultant

Global Industry Coalition

c/o McKenna Long & Aldridge

1900 K Street NW

Washington D. C. 20006

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United States of America Tel.: +1 202 496 7173 Fax: +1 202 496 7756

E-Mail: slukie@mckennalong.com;

slukie@hotmail.com

EDUCATION/UNIVERSITY

Danish Institute of Agricultural Sciences

38. Dr. Gabor Lovei Senior scientist, Department of Integrated Pest Management Danish Institute of Agricultural Sciences GMO ERA Project Flakkebjerg Research Centre Slagelse DK-4200, Denmark Tel.: +89993636 Fax: +58113301

E-Mail: gabor.lovei@agrsci.dk

Norwegian Institute of Gene Ecology

39. Mr. Jan Husby Senior Advisor Norwegian Institute of Gene Ecology Science Park, P.O. Box 6418 Tromso N-9294 Norway

Tel.: +47 73 92 0924/73 80 1440

Fax: +47 77 64 61 00

E-Mail: jan.husby@genok.org
