



Convention on Biological Diversity

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/7/7
26 August 2014

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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

Seventh meeting

Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, 29 September - 3 October 2014

Item 9 of the provisional agenda*

SYNTHESIS REPORT ON THE EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY

Note by the Executive Secretary

INTRODUCTION

1. The second assessment and review of the effectiveness of the Protocol,¹ which was considered by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety at its sixth meeting, noted that while some progress has been made in the implementation of the Protocol, a number of barriers have impeded its full implementation at the national level. These include lack of human, financial and technical resources; the low level of awareness of biosafety issues among the public and policymakers; and the limited integration of biosafety considerations into relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral policies, plans and programmes, including national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), national development plans and development cooperation policies and programmes.

2. At its meeting held in Montreal on 6 October 2013, the Bureau of the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP 6) endorsed a proposal by the Executive Secretary to convene a special session on the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety during COP-MOP 7. The special session is intended to provide a platform for sharing views, experiences and lessons learned, including the challenges encountered, in the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. In particular, the special session will allow Parties to share experience and views on the integration of biosafety into the NBSAPs and national development policies, plans and programmes; and on mobilization of additional resources to advance the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol at the national level in line with the Strategic Plan for the Protocol on Biosafety for the period 2011-2020, as urged by the COP-MOP in paragraphs 2 (a) and 2 (b) of its decision BS-V/16.

* UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/7/1.

¹ UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/6/17/Add.1

3. In preparation for the special session, an “Online Discussion Forum on the Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety” was held through the Biosafety Clearing-House from 26 May to 13 June 2014 to allow for a preliminary exchange of views, experiences and lessons learned.² The discussion forum was moderated by Malta Qwathekana (South Africa) and Daniel Lewis (Grenada). A total of 28 participants took part in the discussions; 25 from 21 Parties and 3 from organizations posted a total of 151 messages during the discussions. In addition, the tenth meeting of the Liaison Group on Capacity-Building for Biosafety, which was held from 7 to 9 April 2014 in Budapest, Hungary, considered the issue of capacity-building for the integration of national measures for implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety into national biodiversity strategies and action plans and national development policies and plans, and for the mobilization of additional resources to support national implementation of the Protocol.

4. The present note provides a synthesis of the relevant outcomes of the online discussion forum and the tenth meeting of the Liaison Group on Capacity-Building for Biosafety. Section I summarizes the experiences, challenges and lessons learned in the integration of biosafety into NBSAPs and national development plans and the potential tools and strategies for enhancing the integration of biosafety into NBSAPs and national development plans. Section II summarizes the outcomes of the online discussions with regard to mobilization of resources to advance the implementation of the Protocol at the national level. Section III outlines the outcomes of the tenth meeting of the Liaison Group on Capacity-building for Biosafety and the recommendations of fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity to the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention relating to the Protocol. The last section outlines the general observations and recommendations that emerged from the online discussion forum.

I. NATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED IN INTEGRATING BIOSAFETY INTO NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

5. In paragraph 2 of decision BS-V/16, the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol invited Parties, other Governments and relevant international organizations to review and align, as appropriate, their national action plans and programmes relevant to the implementation of the Protocol, including their national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), with the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety 2011-2020 and to allocate adequate human and financial resources necessary to expedite the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

6. During the “Online Discussion Forum on the Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety”, a number of participants shared information regarding their countries’ experiences and lessons learned in integrating biosafety into NBSAPs and national development plans. This included information regarding the main obstacles and challenges faced, the potential benefits of such integration; and the tools, approaches and mechanisms used. The participants also discussed measures for strengthening national capacities to more effectively integrate biosafety into NBSAPs and development plans and processes.

A. *Current status of integration of biosafety into national biodiversity strategies and action plans and national development policies and plans*

7. A number of countries, including Belarus, Cambodia, Cameroon, India, Liberia, Guyana, Mauritius, Mexico, Republic of Moldova, South Africa, St Lucia and Uganda included biosafety in their

² The Online Discussion Forum postings are available at: http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_art22/cbforum2014.shtml.

first NBSAPs and/or the revised NBSAPs and some countries, such as Cameroon, Malaysia and Mexico, have included biosafety considerations in their national development policies, plans and programmes.

8. In Cambodia, biosafety and biotechnology were among the 17 themes of the first NBSAP though they were not as detailed as in the Action Plan for Biosafety and Modern Biotechnology for Cambodia 2010-2014. Also, the new draft revised NBSAP does not comprehensively cover biosafety and biotechnology issues.

9. In Cameroon, the second national biodiversity strategy and action plan (2012) integrates biosecurity issues and identifies them as a priority for the safeguard of ecosystems and species and calls for the development of a strategy and programme to control and prevent biological invaders (Target 7.1). The Sector Strategy for the Ministry of Environment and the national development plan also integrate biosecurity concerns as a priority. Furthermore, the 2011 National Environmental Management Plan II, which provides the orientation for key strategic policy instruments on the environment, gives priority to biosafety as a sub component. This broader policy documents and legal instruments largely provided the momentum and justification for mainstreaming biosafety considerations in several biodiversity related strategies and national development plans. Within the NBSAP mainstreaming process, which provides the policy mandate, biosecurity is expected to receive increased attention and support within decision-making processes in Cameroon.

10. In India, biosafety is an integral part of several policy documents such as the 2006 National Environment Policy (NEP), the 2007 National Policy for Farmers, revised National Biodiversity Action Plan (2008), the Foreign Trade Policy (2008), the National Policy on Disaster Management (2009), and the National Biotechnology Strategy-II (2014). These policies and programmes are supported by relevant legislations and guidelines.

11. In Liberia biosafety was integrated into the first NBSAP and is also incorporated into the new revised NBSAP. In this regard, biosafety might be considered an important national development issue. However, what is important is the political will to provide budget support to implement the NBSAP itself of which biosafety is an integral part. The first NBSAP did not receive much support and biosafety suffered the same fate.

12. In Malaysia, biosafety has always been a part of the National Biodiversity Policy 1996, which contains NBSAPs. Biosafety has now been integrated in the National Development Plan. Since 2014, government allocation has been provided in the 10th Malaysian Development Plan for the implementation of the Biosafety Act 2007 on top of annual operating budget allocated to the Department of Biosafety since it was formed in 2008. Currently the National Biodiversity Policy is being reviewed and expected to be completed by next year. This provides an opportunity to highlight the role of biosafety to enable it attract the necessary financial resources.

13. In Mexico, biosafety has been included in the NBSAPs since 2000, and is reflected in previous and current strategies on biodiversity. Mexico has an operational Biosafety National Law and a national commission on biosafety known as CIBIOGEM (Inter-secretarial Commission on Biosafety of Genetically Modified Organisms, which is in charge of coordinating public policies on LMOs. Biosafety is explicitly mentioned in the environmental national plan in relation to LMO monitoring and risk assessment activities and in the national agricultural plan, the safe development of biotechnologies (including modern biotechnology) to contribute to agricultural production is explicitly mentioned as a strategic goal. The National Focal points for the CBD and Cartagena Protocol require close coordination to ensure that biosafety activities complement NBSAPs goals. While progress has been made in this regard, continued efforts are required for policy alignment across various sectors.

14. In Moldova, the new draft NBSAP integrates biosafety issues and outlines a number of actions to be undertaken in the short, medium and long-term consistent with the Cartagena Protocol and its Strategic Plan. Issues and actions outlined in the NBSAP relate to enhancing capacities and procedures for risk assessment/management, laboratory detection of LMOs facilities and skills, monitoring and inspection, integration of socioeconomic considerations in decision-making, ensuring the financial mechanisms for liability and redress, as well as public information and transparency in decision-making.

15. In Nigeria, a biosafety policy is in place and a biosafety bill is before the Parliament. The promulgation of a biosafety law will ensure the mainstreaming of biosafety into the national system and would attract specific allocation in the national budget. In a bid to further mainstream biosafety into the national system, the National Council on Environment has authorized all states to establish a biosafety desk. Institutes that have ability to carry out modern biotechnology activities have also been requested to establish Institutional Biosafety Committees and be accredited. Federal Agencies and Ministries that have biosafety-related functions have also established biosafety desks and have BCH User authorization identification assigned to them. The NBSAP captured the national biosafety system with its management vested in the Federal Ministry of Environment.

16. In South Africa, the development of the current NBSAP was underpinned, among other things, by the concerns about the possible negative impacts of widespread planting of LMO crops on South Africa's rich and unique biodiversity; the need to strengthen legislation, decision-making, monitoring and enforcement; the need to take a precautionary approach to the release of LMOs into the environment, especially in biodiversity priority areas; and the need to align policy and legislation between and among sectors. These factors resulted in the development of an NBSAP that aims, inter alia, to ensure effective management and control measures to minimize the potential risks to biodiversity posed by living modified organisms (LMOs). The NBSAP includes the following specific activities: (i) ensure institutional cooperation and coordination to deal with the potential risks posed by LMOs; (ii) develop and implement effective measures for management and control of potentially risky activities relating to LMOs; and (iii) share information and provide support to ensure adoption and implementation of highest biosafety standards to minimize risks associated with LMOs. Chapter 5 of the national development plan also provides for environmental sustainability and resilience and highlights the need for 'Increased investment in new agricultural technologies, research and the development of adaptation strategies for the protection of rural livelihoods and expansion of commercial agriculture. Effort is made to get other relevant government departments such as the Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and other important stakeholders to address biosafety issues. This collaboration has fostered the recognition of biosafety in other sectors, allocation of national budgets by various authorities for biosafety and the implementation of biosafety-related legislation to enhance environmental protection.

17. In St. Lucia, biosafety has been included in the draft second NBSAP (2014-2020). This will facilitate the establishment of systems for effective biosafety management. Biosafety is also included in plans to develop the Green Economy initiative to advance socioeconomic development and biosafety regulatory systems are recognized as essential for the safe application of modern biotechnology. The national development plan will contain the revised biodiversity strategy and action plan that contains plans for effective biosafety management.

18. In the United Kingdom, the importance of biosafety is recognized in various policy documents. The inclusion of biosafety plans into the National Biodiversity Strategy has helped to raise the profile and awareness of measures to support safe and responsible use of genetically modified organisms.

19. In Zimbabwe, biosafety issues were not recognized as essential elements in the first NBSAP and funds allocated for the Convention on Biological Diversity did not cater for biosafety activities. However

in the new revised NBSAP, biosafety issues have been integrated and it is hoped that funding for biosafety issues will be made available under the biodiversity portfolio.

B. Main challenges to integration of biosafety into NBSAPs and national development plans

20. The obstacles and challenges to the integration of biosafety into NBSAPs and national development plans vary from country to country. In Cambodia, the main challenge is that although biosafety cuts across various sectors (agriculture, health, ecology, socioeconomic and environment), there is limited coordination among stakeholders from those sectors.

21. In Malaysia, the main obstacle in the past years was the resistance by industry against regulating LMOs, which had wanted the biosafety law to be repealed. However after consistent dialogue which adequately addressed all issues brought up, industry accepted the law, which is currently being implemented in a flexible manner. The lack of adequate funding for biosafety was also a major challenge but since the Biosafety Act 2007 was enacted, the government has made allocations in the national budget for its implementation.

22. In Mexico, the main challenges include lack of effective coordination and harmonization of activities for the implementation of the biosafety-related legal instruments and policies, mainly due to non-aligned visions/objectives and lack of information exchange. Another challenge is the shortage of skilled human resources and the heavy workload for the national focal points which limits their ability to make information available to relevant sectors and to collect and compilation their opinions.

23. In Nigeria, the main obstacle is the absence of a national biosafety law which has made it difficult to obtain appropriation for biosafety in the national budget.

24. In Pakistan, the biosafety mechanism needs improvement with regard to: strengthening bioresearch laboratories from commercial interests; improvement in risk assessment of specific cases in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol; enhancement of regulatory institutions capacity to physically verify biosafety data of applicant companies before allowing release of GM crop; establishment of biosafety regulatory institutions at provincial levels; and continued involvement of the media and the public through awareness-raising and training workshops on biosafety.

25. In South Africa, the main challenge hampering the integration of biosafety into NBSAPs is the fact that the competent authorities for biosafety matters are not within the environment authorities. In that case, it is necessarily to integrate biosafety not only into NBSAP but also in policies and plans of other sectors such as agriculture, science and technology, and trade and industry. Another challenge is the absence of a specific funding allocation for biosafety within the national GEF allocation for biodiversity. As a result, biosafety issues are not necessarily given sufficient resources.

26. Other challenges mentioned during the online discussion forum include lack of political support or buy-in at the policy level, especially in cases where it has not been possible to demonstrate that biosafety has a significant impact on the economy and society in the short to medium term. In this regard, it was suggested that a good strategy to overcome this challenge is to establish, as appropriate, linkages between biosafety and other national issues and priorities such as poverty reduction, foreign direct investment for biotechnology research and production; and climate change adaptation.

C. *Potential benefits of integrating biosafety into relevant policies and plans*

27. Participants in the online discussion forum identified a number of potential benefits of integrating biosafety into NBSAPs and national development plans. Among other things, it was noted that such integration would:

(a) Enhance the profile and visibility of biosafety issues at the national level and help clarify the role of biosafety in ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promoting sustainable development;

(b) Raise the profile, visibility and awareness of measures to support safe and responsible use of living modified organisms (biosafety measures);

(c) Increase biodiversity conservation consciousness in the development and implementation of modern biotechnology activities;

(d) Enhance opportunities for mobilizing resources internally and externally; for example it would help to secure dedicated national budgetary allocations for biosafety and also attract external support;³

(e) Help to maximize the use available resources and to secure more support from relevant stakeholders;

(f) Help to ensure that serious consideration is given to biosafety issues including the financing aspect which supports long-term sustainability;

(g) Promote joint research projects that could help to manage invasive alien species, GMO events not approved and handle, in a better way, biotechnology research projects;

(h) Facilitate coordination and foster synergy with the work and activities of relevant sectorial government departments and make them more efficient and enhance joint responsibility.

28. Integrating biosafety into NBSAPs and national development policies, plans and programmes would also create a platform:

(a) To raise awareness on the possible positive and negative impacts of LMOs on biodiversity;

(b) To ensure that biosafety is considered among the top national priorities and sustainable development policy discussions and actions at the national level;

(c) To realize the need to strengthen legislation, decision-making, monitoring and enforcement;

(d) To take a precautionary approach to the release of LMOs into the environment, especially in biodiversity priority areas;

(e) To align policy and legislation between and amongst sectors;

³ For example, it was noted that in Cameroon the integration of biosafety issues in the NBSAP II, the Environment Sector Plan and the National Environmental Management Plan II has provided a great opportunity for mobilisation resources internally. Over the last two years specific allocations have been provided for biosafety activities in the national budget.

(f) To facilitate the allocation of financial and human resources for biosafety in the context of biodiversity management.

D. Tools, strategies and approaches for integrating biosafety into NBSAPs and development planning, financing and implementation processes

29. Governments have used various tools, methods and approaches to integrate biosafety considerations into NBSAPs and national development policies, plans and programmes. One participant noted that the same strategies and approaches used in mainstreaming NBSAP into the national development plans and other sectorial plans could be useful for integrating biosafety into the NBSAPs and national development plans as well. Many NBSAPs and national development plans call for appropriate environmental, health and social assessment of particular technologies or interventions, especially if they have an impact on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Some provide focus on LMOs, for example Malaysia's National Policy on Biological Diversity, which is currently being revised. Such assessments are an integral part of the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. In exploring ways to better integrate biosafety into NBSAPs and national development plans, existing outcomes of work under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, such as the "Guidance on Risk Assessment of Living Modified Organisms" developed by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Risk Assessment and the relevant online discussion forums should be used. The Guidance for example, provides guidance for Parties and others on risk assessment, providing a ready, practical and useable document. Such documents can help Parties to ensure that when biosafety is integrated into NBSAPs and national development plans, this is on the basis of clear and informed elements.

30. In discussing strategies and approaches of how to integrate biosafety into NBSAP, it is important to also be aware of the general conceptual approach that is applied for biodiversity strategic planning towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. This approach also needs to be applied in the identification of appropriate biosafety activities that are relevant to meeting the Aichi Targets in the country. The synergy between biosafety and biodiversity activities should be considered as one of important approach to achieve high efficiency and results.

31. One key strategy is identifying and consulting/ communicating with "right" persons in the relevant ministries, departments or agencies to identify the priority areas to be integrated and the potential entry points. Consultative meetings and workshops could be used to allow stakeholders to express their views or validate what has been compiled.

32. Mainstreaming biosafety into NBSAPs and national development plans would also require awareness-raising, capacity-building, consensus among policymakers and political will to include the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety as one of the national priorities and hence provide for it in the national budgets.

33. Parties have used various entry points to integrate biosafety into NBSAPs and national development plans. In Malaysia, the development of biotechnology including modern biotechnology has been identified as an important driver of the economy. As progress is made towards development of modern biotechnology, a regulatory process for ensuring its safety (biosafety) has found its place in the National Development Plan though not on equal footing with biotechnology.

34. In Cameroon, various strategic approaches have been useful in integrating biosafety into NBSAPs and development plans. A comprehensive approach is currently being adopted in dealing with biosafety issues. Living modified organisms are addressed alongside introduced or native invasive alien species and a strong link has been established between living modified organisms and biodiversity.

Dealing with biological invaders demands a multidisciplinary approach and buy in from key sectors and this has been established through the National Biosafety Advisory Committee which has the mandate to advise on and monitor the biosafety issues. The multi-sectoral character of the Committee has been very critical in ensuring buy-in from various sectors and the involvement of relevant sectors including the private sector. The Ministry of Environment has, through a memorandum of understanding with key sectors, set up taskforces based in the office of the participating partner ministries, including the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Scientific Research, and the Ministry of Higher Education (responsible for the research centres and Universities). The trend observed is that biodiversity focal persons in these ministries have equally been designated the biosafety focal persons to manage these task forces. Through this approach, key sectors are collectively involved in handling requests, carrying out joint monitoring and control and follow-up actions especially in the LMO field trials. Actors not directly involved in these key organs have also been involved through consultative processes. Cameroon's NBSAP II provides for Indicators developed in a general manner for all Targets which include the biosecurity relevant targets.

35. In St Lucia, biosafety considerations will be included in the activities to develop products from modern biotechnology and as the country seeks to protect its biodiversity from the possible negative impacts of living modified organisms. The equipment to be used to carry out this study is the same that is needed for GMO detection. Hence biosafety considerations will be incorporated into this new venture. All these developments are geared towards enhancing the socio-economic development of the island. A country cannot go wrong by using the strategy to integrate biosafety into national plans, programmes and policies and it would be hard for the political leaders to deny the place of biosafety in these ventures.

36. In India, to ensure that development of biotechnology does not lead to unforeseen adverse impacts, the National Environment Policy (NEP, 2006), National Biotechnology Strategy-II, 2014 and revised National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP, 2008) have identified the following action points for appropriate use of new technologies:

(a) Review the regulatory processes for LMOs so that all relevant scientific knowledge is taken into account, and ecological, health, and economic concerns are adequately addressed;

(b) Periodically review the National Biosafety Guidelines, and Bio-safety Operations Manual to ensure that these are based on current scientific knowledge;

(c) Ensure the conservation of biodiversity and human health when dealing with LMOs in transboundary movement in a manner consistent with the multilateral Biosafety Protocol;

(d) Develop appropriate liability and redress mechanisms to internalize environmental costs and address economic concerns in case of any damage to biodiversity;

(e) Develop national capacities and public awareness for biodiversity conservation specifically in the context of appropriate use of new technologies such as LMOs.

37. In Liberia, one important tool used to ensure environmental sustainability is the conduct of environmental and social impact assessment. The biosafety processes are very much aligned with this and this has greatly facilitated the integration of biosafety into the NBSAP.

38. In Mexico, the process for updating the NBSAPs is in progress with several rounds of consultation with the competent officials. The process includes stakeholders such academia, institutions, civil society and government. A set of actions are included in the NBSAP, focusing on priority areas such as conservation, and sustainable use of genetic resources.

39. In Nigeria, the NBSAP document was developed earlier without the incorporation of biosafety issues. The document therefore needs to be further reviewed and developed to incorporate modern biotechnology and biosafety activities. Though in the earlier NBSAP document some specific projects, activities and the methodology aimed at reducing poverty, employment generation, environmental sustainability, wealth creation were highlighted for their implementation. Now that we are talking Biosafety (modern biotech) most of the activities identified in the NBSAP document can be developed further to now include modern biotech to fast track the actualization of the set objectives in the NBSAP.

40. In the United Kingdom, policymakers and government recognize the importance of biodiversity and biosafety and measures protecting both have been in place for some time. There is a regular review of the evidence and work with key stakeholders to identify pragmatic and effective biosafety measures which are appropriate to the United Kingdom. The importance of biosafety has been recognized in the UK for some time thus enabling it to be supported by specialized training programmes, qualifications and information and guidance supporting good practice is publically available on websites. It is necessary to recognize the important and positive socioeconomic impacts the responsible and safe use of GM technology has the potential to deliver. This is reflected in the UK's Biodiversity Strategy as it takes a broad view of ecosystems and their services. The inclusion of biosafety in the UK's Biodiversity Strategy will continue to take a holistic approach and use input from a range of specialists.

41. Additional tools and mechanisms that could be developed to assist in designing interventions for integrating biosafety into NBSAPs and national development plans include national biosafety awareness strategies to increase the awareness of biosafety among the policymakers and the general public. Policymakers and relevant enforcement agencies must be well informed on current biosafety issues. This can be done regularly through meetings, seminars or workshops.

42. Another mechanism could be the establishment of national councils for biodiversity and biosafety comprising of representatives from various relevant sectors.

43. It would also be useful to exchange experiences that other countries use on the process of incorporating biosafety into their National Plans, possibly this could open the possibility to generate a Guidance tool based upon the Parties' most relevant experiences.

44. Finally, it may also be useful to elaborate minimal criteria that Parties have identified as difficult milestones or any other relevant topics where there are common issues for linking biodiversity goals and biosafety considerations which could be of interest to assist/exemplify/share experience with the CBD/PCB parties. Periodic revisions of the National priorities on biodiversity and biosafety could also be recommended for consistency with local regulatory needs, as well as evaluating on going activities.

E. Measures for strengthening national capacities to integrate biosafety into NBSAPs and national development plans and processes

45. In the online discussion forum, the participants highlighted the need for skilled people with capabilities to engage with and convince the authorities in charge of NBSAPs or National Development Plans. There is also a need to train key policymakers in the basics of biosafety, the linkages between biosafety and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and socioeconomic development and how biosafety can be integrated into NBSAPs and national development policies, plans and programmes. Targeting politicians and other Government officials for capacity development is clearly a very important strategic goal that Parties seeking to improve the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol may wish to consider. It is also essential to ensure that, in addition to the requisite technical background, the

personnel are trained in community participatory management skills so that they can effectively interface with the public and address the relevant socioeconomic issues.

46. Participants identified some specific activities that could be taken to strengthen the capacities of Parties to integrate biosafety into NBSAPs and national development plans. Among other things, it was noted that there is a need to train key administrators, policymakers (including parliamentarians, members of the National Biosafety Committees, etc.) and other experts (laboratory technicians, field inspectors etc.) and to sensitize the general public on biosafety issues. Training key policymakers and other Government officials is of strategic importance. It would help to ensure that biosafety activities are well captured in the national development plans and processes. It would also help to ensure that the deliberations and decisions made, for example by the National Biosafety Committees, are well-informed.

47. Some participants also suggested that a generic guidance document on integration of biosafety into NBSAPs and national development plans may be necessary. Such a document would need to include clear facts and arguments that can convince policymakers and other authorities.

48. A national strategy for human resource development in the area of biosafety is vital. Biosafety implementation needs skilled personnel capable of handling complex issues such as risk assessment and risk management. There is a need to implement biosafety capacity-building projects and programmes to train a pool of skilled persons. Policymakers need to understand that biosafety is not an abstract subject matter but rather an important area that is inextricably linked to the countries' socioeconomic development and as such gives it the kind of importance and prioritization it deserves.

49. At institutional level, organizational structures and responsibilities would need to be reviewed over time and experts brought on board in order to support the implementation of biosafety action plans identified in the NBSAPs. Creating sound institutional frameworks and coordination mechanisms would help to ensure that biosafety considerations are fully mainstreamed and taken into account in various activities, projects and programmes for implementing the NBSAPs.

II. MOBILIZATION OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL

50. During the "Online Forum on the Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety", participants shared experiences and made a number of observations regarding the issues of mobilization of additional resources for the implementation of the Protocol. Among other things, it was noted that:

(a) Mobilization of resources for biosafety activities, from both internal and external sources, has increasingly become more difficult in the last few years. In many countries regulatory agencies responsible for biosafety have limited funding for biosafety activities;

(b) In many countries it is imperative to put in place a biosafety policy and a national law on biosafety to be able to secure national budgetary allocations for biosafety activities. Passing a biosafety law paves way for inclusion of a line item in the national budget for biosafety-related activities under the relevant Ministries/agencies. Short of a law, it is extremely difficult to get funds allocated for biosafety in the national budget. For example, India, Malaysia and Mexico noted that following the enactment of their national biosafety laws, specific budgets are allocated every year for implementing activities mandated under the biosafety law;

(c) It is also important to mainstream biosafety into the national development plans, such as "Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategies. When biosafety is fully integrated into the national planning process, it can be possible to receive a national budget allocation;

(d) If biosafety activities are integrated into NBSAPs and other national development plans they gain more recognition and prioritization. They can also benefit from other funds other than national budgets, for example the national GEF allocations;

(e) Raising awareness of the importance of biosafety and the Cartagena Protocol, especially among policy and decision-makers, is crucial. Build political support for biosafety could ultimately result in favourable budgetary allocations. Efforts need to be devoted to providing accurate information to policymakers and all stakeholders and in a timely manner;

(f) Effort should be made to identify and engage “biosafety champions” to promote awareness and greater understanding among policymakers and the general public of the importance of ensuring that modern biotechnology is developed and applied in a safe and environmentally sound manner;

(g) It is important to link biosafety to the issues of national concern or government priorities so as to attract the attention of policymakers. For example, relevant officials should demonstrate how biosafety is crucial to ensuring the safe application of modern biotechnology for socioeconomic development, thereby maximizing benefits of the technology while safeguarding human and animal health and the environment from its potential risks;

(h) There is also a need to work with civil society, academia, the youths, ordinary people, funding agencies to convince them that implementing the Protocol must be seen as a national priority and is inextricably linked to national development and security.

51. A number of participants also highlighted the need for continued support from the financial mechanism for the Protocol – the Global Environment Facility. It was noted that many countries have not yet finalized developing their national biosafety framework or enacted their biosafety laws, which as noted above is crucial to securing national budgetary allocations for biosafety activities.

III. OUTCOMES OF THE TENTH MEETING OF THE LIAISON GROUP ON CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR BIOSAFETY AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

52. The tenth meeting of the Liaison Group on Capacity-Building for Biosafety which was held from 7 to 9 April 2014 in Budapest, considered the issue of capacity-building for the integration of national measures for implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety into national biodiversity strategies and action plans and national development policies and plans and for mobilization of additional resources to support national implementation of the Protocol.

53. The Liaison Group members noted that there were number of institutional and human resource capacity barriers to the integration of biosafety into NBSAPs and national development plans and these related to limitations in the following aspects:

(a) Communication between and among various ministries and departments and other stakeholders, in particular communication between national focal points for the Cartagena Protocol and the Convention, and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) operational focal points in cases where these are located in different institutions;

(b) Coordination among relevant ministries and departments to allow for integrated, coherent and coordinated approaches to the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol and the Convention;

(c) Cooperation (and in some cases competition) between institutions responsible for biosafety and other sectoral and cross-sectoral departments;

(d) Availability of human resources with the necessary skills and competences; in most countries there are few staff dedicated to biosafety and most of them are preoccupied with regulatory activities and have limited time to undertake outreach activities;

(e) The communication, education and negotiation skills of the Protocol national focal points and their ability to engage and convince other sectors about the relevance of biosafety to their work and to raise the profile of biosafety;

(f) Consideration of biosafety among other competing national objectives and priorities; in many countries biosafety is still not given due consideration among the top national priorities;

(g) Limited availability of funding and other resources for biosafety activities.

54. After detailed discussions the Liaison Group members arrived at the following general observations and suggestions:

(a) There is a need for concerted and coordinated efforts to promote integrated, coherent and coordinated approaches to the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols, i.e., the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit-sharing, at all levels;

(b) Biosafety should be integrated into NBSAPs and, as appropriate, into other sectoral and cross-sectoral policies, plans and programmes (including agriculture, forestry, fisheries, health, environment, science and technology, trade and industry and others) and not limited only to national biosafety framework documents, in view of the fact that the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety was adopted as a treaty under the Convention and that there are provisions in the Convention regarding living modified organisms, including Articles 8(g) and 19 (4), that all Parties are obliged to implement;

(c) The Cartagena Protocol national focal points have a critical role to play in promoting awareness of the importance of biosafety among key policy and decisionmakers (including members of cabinet, parliamentarians, senior officials in relevant line ministries and departments, GEF operational focal points, and other stakeholders) and to secure their support and commitment with a view to ensuring that biosafety is given due consideration in NBSAPs, national development plans, budgets, development cooperation programmes and other processes;

(d) Effective communication, coordination and cooperation between and among various ministries and departments and other stakeholders, in particular between national focal points for the Protocol and the Convention and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) operational focal points are very crucial in facilitating the integration of biosafety into NBSAPs, national development plans and other sectoral and cross-sectoral policies, plans and programmes;

(e) There is a need for a strong outreach programme targeting key policymakers, the general public and other stakeholders, similar to the one that was undertaken under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in order to raise the awareness and profile of biosafety issues among other national priority issues and objectives and the linkages between biosafety and national sustainable development goals, including food security, research and development and environmental sustainability;

(f) There are potential useful lessons that can be drawn from other processes such as the ongoing processes for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction strategies/early warning systems and climate change adaptation measures into national policies, plans and programmes for sustainable development and poverty reduction;

(g) Every opportunity should be used to promote an integrated approach to implementation of the Convention and its Protocols, starting with WGRI 5 and SBSTTA 18 meetings. The planned special session on implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to be held during the seventh meeting of COP-MOP, as well as the special informal session during the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which will discuss opportunities and challenges towards achieving the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, would also provide unique high-level opportunities to share experiences and discuss the way forward towards integration of biosafety into NBSAPs and national development plans, and to leverage political support and commitment for this important process.

55. Having taken into account the recommendations of the tenth meeting of the Liaison Group contained document UNEP/CBD/BS/LG-CB/10/2, the fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (WGRI-5), in its recommendation 5/2 on “Improving the efficiency of structures and processes under the Convention and its Protocols”,⁴ advised the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting to adopt the following decisions that relate to the interlinkages and synergistic implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Convention on Biological Diversity:

1. *Recommends* that, in future, the high-level segment of the Conference of the Parties be considered as a high-level segment of the Convention and its Protocols;

2. *Decides* to include an item on the agenda of its future meetings on integrated approaches to the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols;

3. *Decides* to add a standing item entitled “report on the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and implementation of Article 8(g)” to the agenda of its regular meetings to consider the main outcomes of the preceding meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol⁵ and the general state of affairs under the Cartagena Protocol with a view to fostering synergies and integration;

4. *Decides*, on the basis of the plan prepared by the Executive Secretary, and in the light of the consideration of this issue by the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol, that the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties shall be organized within a two-week period that also includes the meetings of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol and to the Cartagena Protocol, in the manner set out in annex I⁶ to this decision;

14. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary to explore options, including costs involved, for holding regional preparatory meetings prior to the concurrent meetings of the Conference of the Parties and the meetings of the Parties to the Protocols, and to provide a

⁴ Contained in document UNEP/CBD/COP/12/4.

⁵ Note: if paragraph 4 of this draft decision is adopted, then this paragraph would not apply to the thirteenth meeting, since there would be no such “preceding meeting”.

⁶ The annex will be developed by the Conference of the Parties on the basis of the plan prepared by the Executive Secretary pursuant to paragraph 1(b) of WGRI recommendation 5/2.

report to at its sixth meeting or to the subsidiary body on implementation that may be established in accordance with paragraph 7 above;

15. *Invites* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to consider strengthening the involvement of the regional offices of the United Nations Environment Programme to support the efforts of Parties to implement their commitments under the Convention and its Protocols;

16. *Encourages* Parties to integrate biosafety and access and benefit-sharing into national biodiversity strategies and action plans, national development plans and other relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral policies, plans and programmes, as appropriate, taking into account national circumstances, legislation and priorities;

17. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources:

(a) To undertake an assessment of the Parties' capacity needs and skill gaps with regard to integration of biosafety and access and benefit-sharing issues into national biodiversity strategies and action plans and national development plans in order to tailor the capacity-building interventions based on the needs of Parties;

(b) To organize regional workshops for national focal points for the Cartagena Protocol, the Nagoya Protocol and Convention as well as indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders to share experiences and lessons learned in the integration of biosafety and access and benefit-sharing into national biodiversity strategies and action plans;

18. *Encourages* Parties and other Governments, as appropriate, in accordance with national circumstances and priorities, to strengthen national coordination mechanisms to facilitate a coordinated approach to the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols as well as other biodiversity-related conventions and the other Rio conventions.

56. Parties to the Protocol may wish to take note of the above recommendations in their deliberations during the special session.

IV. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

57. The following are some of the general observations that emerged from the online discussion forum:

(a) Since coming into force in 2013, the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety has by and large been implemented independently from its parent treaty (the Convention on Biological Diversity) and not as a treaty established to implement specific aspects of the Convention. There is clearly a need to review the current approach and seek ways and means to foster the synergies and linkages between the Cartagena Protocol and the Convention at both national and international levels and to ensure that the Protocol is not treated as a wholly international treaty independent from the Convention;

(b) NBSAPs are important policy documents which, if developed in a comprehensive and participatory manner and with the support of various stakeholders, could facilitate an integrated and coordinated approach towards the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Protocols at the national level. Such an integrated and coordinated approach would help to minimize duplication, enhance synergies and promote efficient use of available resources. It is therefore of critical

importance to have activities for implementation of the Cartagena Protocol as integral part of the NBSAPs;

(c) Mainstreaming biosafety may be challenging but it is crucial as there is very little awareness of the importance of biosafety. Furthermore, competing interests from various sectors seem to subsume biosafety when opportunities arise for its mainstreaming at the national level. There is however a gradual recognition of biosafety as a concern among agencies or institutions;

(d) Awareness-raising and capacity-building are critical to ensuring effective integration of biosafety into NBSAPs and national development policies, plans and programmes. This could be achieved through, inter alia, presentations at high-level meetings such as parliamentary sessions, submissions to cabinet, training workshops, exchange programmes and dissemination of awareness materials;

(e) The process of integrating biosafety considerations into NBSAPs and national development plans requires constant consultations and engagement of various stakeholders involved in NBSAP and national planning processes;

(f) Integration of biosafety into NBSAPs and national development plans would raise the profile of biosafety at the national level and open avenues for its access into national budgets and other financing mechanisms such as the GEF;

(g) Importance of national legislation on biosafety facilitates national recognition of biosafety as a priority and help gain access into national budgets.

58. The meeting of the Parties to the Protocol may, taking into account the information provided in the present note, wish to deliberate on the issue during the special session in order to advance the implementation of the Protocol. The meeting may wish, inter alia, to invite Parties to integrate measures for the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol into the NBSAPs and national development plans, as appropriate, and urge national focal points to undertake measures to increase the visibility and recognition biosafety issues in relevant other sectoral and cross-sectoral policies, plans and processes.
