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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

Eighth meeting

Cancun, Mexico, 4-17 December 2016

Item 17 of the provisional agenda**

PUBLIC AWARENESS, EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATION (ARTICLE 23)

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its decision BS-V/13, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety adopted the programme of work on public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms (hereafter “Programme of Work”) for the period of 2010 to 2015 to facilitate the implementation of Article 23 of the Cartagena Protocol. The Programme of Work is comprised of four programme elements focusing on capacity-building, public awareness and education, public access to information, and public participation.¹

2. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol invited Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, as appropriate, to make use of the Programme of Work and share their experiences and lessons learned through the Biosafety Clearing-House, and decided to review the Programme of Work at its eighth meeting in the light of experiences gained by Parties.

3. To facilitate the discussions, section II of this note contains a summary report on the status of implementation of the Programme of Work. Section III contains activities held or supported by the Secretariat to assist in the implementation of the Programme of Work. Section IV outlines best practices, challenges and lessons learned from the implementation of the Programme of Work. Section V contains possible ways forward regarding the Programme of Work while section VI presents some conclusions. Finally, section VII contains possible elements of a draft decision on public awareness, education and

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¹ The text of the Programme of Work is available at <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/mop-05/addition/mop-05-dec-13-annex-en.pdf>.

participation, including access to information, concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms (LMOs). A summary of the priority areas/activities identified by Parties, other Governments and organizations in their submissions is contained in the annex to the present note.

II. REPORT ON THE STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK ON PUBLIC AWARENESS, EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATION CONCERNING THE SAFE TRANSFER, HANDLING AND USE OF LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS

4. In order to prepare an overview of the status of implementation of the elements in the Programme of Work, the Secretariat analysed the third national reports submitted by 124 Parties as of 31 August 2016.² Furthermore, the Secretariat issued a notification inviting Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to take part in a survey to gather information corresponding to indicators in the Programme of Work that could not be obtained from the third national reports and to facilitate an assessment of the level of implementation of Article 23 of the Cartagena Protocol. As of 31 August 2016, 46 Parties and 7 organizations had participated in the survey.³

5. To augment the analysis of information to facilitate the review of implementation of the Programme of Work, relevant information was also drawn from the BCH, online discussions and networks on access to information and public participation regarding LMOs, workshops and a joint Convention on Biological Diversity and Aarhus Convention round table.

6. A summary of the emerging trends on the status of implementation of the operational objectives and the indicators in the programme elements of the Programme of Work based on the analysis of the third national reports and dedicated survey is presented below.

A. Programme element 1: Capacity-building for the promotion of public awareness, education and participation

Operational objective	Indicators
<p>Operational objective 1.1</p> <p>To put in place enabling legal and/or policy frameworks and mechanisms to facilitate public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of LMOs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Parties that have policy and legal frameworks on public awareness, education and participation in place • Number of Parties with outreach strategies and/or communication plans that are implemented
<p>Operational objective 1.2</p> <p>To establish institutional mechanisms to promote and facilitate public awareness, education and participation concerning LMOs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Parties with units or departments and other institutional structures designated to promote public awareness, education and participation • Number of Parties engaged in collaborative activities • Number of Parties with well-functioning institutional mechanisms and/or with funding to improve institutional mechanisms

² The analysis of the third national report is available at <http://bch.cbd.int/database/reports/analyzer>

³ The results of the survey are available at https://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_art23/surveyresults.shtml

Operational objective	Indicators
<p>Operational objective 1.3</p> <p>To develop the professional capacity of personnel involved in promoting public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of LMOs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of experts in biosafety education nominated to the Roster of Experts • Number of educational programmes, including academic courses, with components on biosafety • Number of training, guidance materials and other supportive activities to build professional capacity
<p>Operational objective 1.4</p> <p>To promote collaboration and sharing of experiences and resource materials on public awareness, education and participation concerning LMOs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Parties making use of mechanisms and plans for exchange of experiences in public awareness, education and participation • Number of case-studies and other materials on public awareness, education and participation produced and shared through the Biosafety Clearing-House • Number of networks established and/or utilised to exchange information and materials • Number of Parties and other stakeholders in different sectors that are sharing information • Number of NGOs per country and region doing outreach work related to the Protocol

7. The goal of programme element 1 is to strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of Parties to promote and facilitate public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of LMOs. The following are emerging trends gathered from the third national reports and dedicated survey to evaluate the level of implementation of programme element 1:

Operational objective 1.1

(a) 36 per cent of Parties (45 Parties) indicated in their national reports that they have full legislation on public awareness, education and participation concerning LMOs while 45 per cent of Parties (57 Parties) have these to some extent. All Parties with full legislation or some degree thereof indicated that they had set up national biosafety frameworks (NBFs) and other related national frameworks that include public awareness and participation components. However, only 45 per cent of records (400 records) in the laws and regulations database in the BCH have components on public awareness, education and participation, including access to information;

(b) Only 42 per cent of Parties (52 Parties) indicated in their national reports that they have in place national communication strategies on biosafety;

Operational objective 1.2

(c) Nearly all Parties (89 per cent or 40 Parties) indicated through the survey that they currently have units or departments and other institutional structures, in their country, designated to promote public awareness, education and participation regarding LMOs, including mostly from 1 to 3 structures. Several Parties indicated that the structures are within the environment, science, technology, agriculture, food, health and trade sector. Furthermore, some Parties indicated that the structures are within the sustainable development, education, communication, veterinary, ethics and legal sectors. Some Parties are also using academia, advisory bodies and international or regional organizations and associations to promote Article 23;

(d) Over two thirds of Parties (70 per cent or 32 Parties) indicated through the survey that they have engaged in collaborative activities related to Article 23. These activities are at the international, regional, national and local levels and include a wide range of stakeholders (e.g. ministries, scientists/academia, farmers' organizations, border control entities, organizations, associations and the general public) through projects, workshops, media, training materials and other means. In particular, many Parties that responded indicated that they are collaborating with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as regards financial assistance for country-specific projects facilitated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). They also indicated that they are collaborating with the Aarhus Convention on different initiatives;

(e) Only 13 per cent of Parties (6 Parties) indicated through the survey that they have fully set in place well-functioning institutional mechanisms and/or funding to improve institutional mechanisms related to Article 23, while some Parties have done so to some extent (61 per cent or 28 Parties). Out of these, with a full or some degree of mechanism in place, many Parties outlined several mechanisms, such as agencies, advisory bodies, associations and centres;

Operational objective 1.3

(f) About half of Parties (54 per cent or 25 Parties) indicated through the survey that they have experts in biosafety education and communication. Out of the responses, most Parties have indicated that they have from 1 to 5 experts and some Parties noted that they have an equal number of women and men as experts;

Operational objective 1.4

(g) Only 26 per cent of Parties (12 Parties) that responded to the survey noted that they have fully made use of mechanisms and plans for exchange of experiences in public awareness, education and participation and 17 Parties (37 per cent) have done so to some extent. The mechanism and plans include regional and international training programmes (e.g. workshops, courses), media activities, dissemination of publications and/or public consultations;

(h) Only 39 per cent of Parties (18 Parties) indicated through the survey that they have case studies and other materials on public awareness, education and participation produced and shared through the BCH, including mostly from 1 to 5 case studies. The materials include: NBFs, regulations, decisions on LMOs, risk assessments summaries, training activities (e.g. seminars and training materials), awareness activities (e.g. brochures and videos);

(i) Two thirds of Parties (67 per cent or 30 Parties) that responded to the survey noted that they have established and/or utilized networks to exchange information and materials, including mostly from 1 to 5 networks. Out of the many networks, these include national and international associations, centres, social media networks, e-list server, forums, advisory bodies and working groups;

(j) A majority of Parties (83 per cent or 38 Parties) that responded to the survey have stakeholders in different sectors that are sharing biosafety information, including having from 1 to 5 sectors. These sectors range from the government and organizations to the media-related sectors in the field of the environment, agriculture, educational, customs, science, health, information, trade and finance;

(k) A majority of Parties (59 per cent or 27 Parties) indicated through the survey that there are NGOs, in their country, doing outreach work related to the Protocol. Among these Parties, most indicated that there are between 1 and 5 biosafety-related NGOs in their country. Some of the NGOs mentioned include: AfricaBio, the African Centre for Biodiversity, Agrobio, Assuring agricultural and food safety of GMOs in Southern Africa (GMASSURE), Biowatch, Biotica, Coalition pour la Protection

du Patrimoine Génétique Africain (COPAGEN), the Consumers' group, EcoTIRAS, the ETS Group, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, I-COOP Living Cooperative Association Korea, Inades-Formation, les Amis de la Terre, People's Biosafety Association, the Program for Biosafety Systems, the Southeast Asia Regional Initiatives for Community Empowerment (SEARICE), the Third World Network, the Tunisian Association on Biosafety and Environment Education, the Union of Concerned Scientists for Society and a number of societies.

B. Programme element 2: Public awareness and education

Operational objective	Indicators
<p>Operational objective 2.1 To promote public awareness concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of LMOs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistically meaningful number of responses from surveys by the end of 2011 • Number of national public awareness plans and programmes in place by the end of 2013 • Number of cooperation and coordination programmes and other activities in place • Number of publications and other materials produced and disseminated • Public availability of graphs and materials in the Biosafety Clearing-House • Number of Parties that will have systems for in place by 2015 • Number of seminars and workshops held • Number of media activities implemented • Number of Parties that have translated the Protocol and other materials in the official national and local languages
<p>Operational objective 2.2 To promote education concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of LMOs through formal academic institutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of school curricula that have included biosafety issues • Number of academic programmes/courses including biosafety issues • Number of e-learning modules developed • Number of educational materials and packages on biosafety available • Number of educational events in collaboration with educational institutions

8. The goal of programme element 2 is to promote broad public awareness and education of issues concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of LMOs. The following are emerging trends gathered from the third national reports and dedicated survey to evaluate the level of implementation of programme element 2:

Operational objective 2.1

(a) Only 45 per cent of Parties (20 Parties) indicated through the survey that they have received responses from biosafety awareness surveys in their countries, including on average from 500 to

1,000 responses. These were conducted on a national and/or local level to improve upcoming awareness and educational activities;

(b) A majority of Parties (56 per cent or 25 Parties) that responded to the survey noted that they currently share public available graphics and materials through the BCH, including educational materials, publications, toolkits, reports, videos and maps. A total of 1,470 records are also made available in the Biosafety Information Resource Center (BIRC) in the BCH as of 12 September 2016. These include: articles (24 per cent), audios /videos (0.3 per cent), books/book chapters (8 per cent), conference papers/proceedings (6 per cent), photo/graphics/maps and/or posters (0.2 per cent), manuals/tutorial/FAQs (8 per cent), databases/list servers (1 per cent), reports/factsheets (29 per cent), software applications (0.1 per cent), websites/blogs (8 per cent) and other records. However, only 16 per cent (233 records) of the total amount of records in the BIRC were on public awareness, education and participation materials, including training and communication materials;

(c) Almost half of Parties (48 per cent or 59 Parties) indicated through their national reports that they have national awareness and outreach programmes on biosafety. Many of these Parties have a few ongoing workshops and networks, in particular for government officials (e.g. ministries, component national authorities, advisory bodies and associations) or academia;

(d) Over two thirds of Parties (80 per cent or 36 Parties) indicated through the survey that they have a system for dissemination of biosafety information primarily through websites, workshops/fora, media (e.g. print and broadcast media), academia and seminars;

(e) Slightly over half of Parties (52 per cent or 24 Parties) indicated through the survey that they translate the Protocol text and other materials in the official national and local language(s). The other materials include: the text of the Nagoya – Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Protocol, An Explanatory Guide to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and national regulations on biosafety.

Operational objective 2.2

(f) The majority of Parties (56 per cent or 25 Parties) that responded to the survey noted that they currently have school curricula with biosafety issues, mostly from 1 to 10 curricula. Some are at the secondary level and others at the tertiary level of education;

(g) Over two thirds of Parties (70 per cent or 85 Parties) noted in their national reports that they have training materials and online modules, mostly from 1 to 5 such materials and modules. They have lecture notes, educational kits and other materials;

(h) 39 per cent of Parties (18 Parties) indicated through the survey that they have fully set in place educational programmes, including academic courses, with components on biosafety and only a few Parties have done so to some extent (19 Parties or 41 per cent). These are in particular biosafety courses at graduate and post-graduate level. However, out of all the responses, some Parties and organizations had undergraduate courses or e-learning courses for government officers. There are also a total of 49 accredited-academic courses listed in the capacity-building database in the BCH as of 12 September 2016. These are held by governments, academia or organizations.

C. Programme element 3. Public access to information

Operational objective 3.1	Indicators
To promote public access to accurate biosafety information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Parties with established procedures for public access to

<p>in a broad, easy and timely manner, including through the BCH, national websites and other mechanisms.</p>	<p>biosafety information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Parties with national Biosafety Clearing-House nodes or biosafety websites • Number of information materials available in different languages
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9. The goal of programme element 3 is to improve public access to information concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of LMOs. The following are emerging trends gathered from the third national reports and dedicated survey to evaluate the level of implementation of programme element 3:

(a) 39 per cent of Parties (18 Parties) indicated through the survey that they have fully set in place educational programmes, including academic courses, with components on biosafety and some Parties have done so to some extent (19 Parties or 41 per cent). These are in particular biosafety courses at graduate and post-graduate level. However, out of all the responses, some Parties and organizations had undergraduate courses or e-learning courses for government officers. There are also a total of 49 accredited academic courses listed in the capacity-building database in the BCH as of 12 September 2016. These are held by governments, academia or organizations;

(b) Less than half of Parties (44 per cent or 54 Parties) indicated through their national reports that they have fully established mechanisms for public access to biosafety information, while a third of Parties have done so to some extent (33 per cent or 38 Parties);

(c) Three-fourths of Parties (75 per cent or 92 Parties) indicated through their national reports that they have information materials and publications, mostly from 1 to 10 publications. They are sharing their publications, in particularly through national websites, national libraries and academia, while less of these are shared in the BCH central portal;

(d) A majority of Parties (65 per cent or 81 Parties) indicated through their national reports that they have informed its public about the means of public access to the BCH.

D. Programme element 4. Public participation

<p>Operational objective 4.1</p> <p>To establish mechanisms and procedures to consult and involve the public in the decision-making process regarding modified organisms and to make the results of such decisions available to the public.</p>	<p>Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Parties with a review mechanism for public participation, including outcomes of public consultations • Number of individuals participating in discussion forums, platforms and other mechanisms set up • Number of Parties that have involved the public in the development and review of their legal biosafety frameworks • Number of Parties with dedicated budgets for public participation • Number of Parties taking outcomes of public participation into consideration in decision-making regarding LMOs • Number of Parties conducting public consultations
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10. The goal of programme element 4 is to promote public participation in decision-making regarding LMOs. The following are emerging trends gathered from the third national reports and dedicated survey to evaluate the level of implementation of programme element 4:

(a) The majority of Parties (53 per cent or 66 Parties) that submitted their national reports have fully set in place mechanisms to consult the public in the decision-making process regarding LMOs, while some Parties have done so to some extent (31 Parties or 25 per cent). Some of the Parties highlighted their best practices in public participation including setting up timelines, selecting key techniques/tools (e.g. public debates, advisory bodies, public hearings), announcing to the public the possibility of providing inputs and facilitating appeal processes;

(b) The majority of Parties (57 per cent or 70 Parties) indicated through their national reports that they have fully set in place mechanism to make available to the public the results of decisions taken on LMOs, while some Parties have done so to some extent (19 per cent or 23 Parties). The information is made available in media, websites and public notices;

(c) Less than half of Parties (44 per cent or 54 Parties) indicated through their national reports that they have fully informed the public about existing modalities of public participation, in particular using websites, newspapers and workshops as key modalities, while only a few Parties have done so to some extent (35 Parties 28 per cent). At the regional level, the African region is mainly using newspapers, while websites are mainly used in other regions;

(d) Only 40 per cent of Parties (18 Parties) that responded to the survey indicated that they have fully set in place review mechanism for public participation, including outcomes of public consultations, while only 24 per cent or 11 Parties have done so to some extent. The review mechanisms take place through public forums, bulletin boards, surveys/studies, advisory boards, surveys and public hearings;

(e) Over three quarters of the Parties (76 per cent or 34 Parties) indicated through the survey that they have individuals participating in biosafety discussion forums, platforms and other mechanisms that are set up in their countries. Most of these Parties indicated that they have around 10 individuals participating in the forums. Out of the responses, a few Parties have discussions that only include experts in government or the scientific fields, while a few other Parties have discussions open to the general public. In their responses, a few Parties also indicated that they include both men and women as representatives in the forums;

(f) The majority of Parties (56 per cent or 21 Parties) indicated through the survey that they fully involve the public in the development and review of legal biosafety frameworks related to Article 23, only 11 Parties (24 per cent) do so to some extent. Some Parties further indicated that they only involve the general public during the process of developing and/or reviewing their NBFs. These Parties indicated that only experts (e.g. ministers, scientists, legal experts, biosafety experts) are participating in reviewing national regulations;

(g) Only 39 per cent of Parties (17 Parties) that responded to the survey noted that they have a dedicated budget for public participation regarding LMOs. However, of those Parties that provided more specific information, many Parties indicated that they still have the budget as part of the institutional budget with other expenses;

(h) The majority of Parties (60 per cent or 26 Parties) that responded to the survey noted that they fully take outcomes of public participation into consideration in decision-making regarding LMOs, while 11 Parties (23 per cent) do so to some extent. Many Parties only take into account certain public comments, such as only scientific based comments and not socio-economic issues, when considering public inputs in final decisions LMOs.

III. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN OR SUPPORTED BY THE SECRETARIAT TO ASSIST IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK

11. Since the adoption of the Programme of Work, the Secretariat has also held activities and provided resources to assist countries in implementing the Programme of Work and its elements to contribute to greater cooperation and co-ordination, exchange of information and experiences and improvement of the capacities of Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations. In response to paragraph 3 and 7 of decision BS-V/13 and operational objectives in the Programme of Work, the Secretariat has convened and facilitated the following activities:

(a) Regional capacity-building workshops on public awareness, education and participation, including access to information, regarding LMOs and workshops on mainstreaming biosafety into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and Resource Mobilization with a component on Article 23 in which Parties reached agreements on a number of collaborative activities, national frameworks and action plans for public access to information and public participation concerning LMOs and developed draft communication strategies;⁴

(b) Online regional networks on public awareness, education and participation concerning LMOs and disseminated a communication plan template in the network to enhance regional cooperation and promote the sharing of experiences and lessons learned in the implementation of Article 23 in the BCH;⁵

(c) Joint round table on public awareness, access to information and public participation regarding LMOs and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) with the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (the Aarhus Convention) held in 2013 in the context of operational objectives 1.2(d), 2.1(d) 3.1(a, b and e). A set of proposals to enhance cooperation (e.g. in particular through existing regional organizations and networks), public participation and access to information regarding LMOs was reached during the round table. It is also expected that additional recommendations on collaborative activities, access to information and public participation regarding LMOs will be made available at a second joint CBD/Aarhus Convention round table regarding LMOs/GMOs to be held from 15 to 17 November 2016.⁶ The two secretariats also developed a checklist and a summary of tools to facilitate the implementation of the programme of work;⁷

(d) Two online forums with online discussions on access to information and public participation regarding LMOs in the BCH discussing, among other things, facilitating access to information and on techniques for engaging the public, including a register of non-governmental organizations doing outreach work, in the context of operational objective 1.4(a and d). A general agreement on procedures to make information available both upon request and notifying the public on biosafety information was reached during online discussions on access to information concerning LMOs in 2012 held in the BCH.⁸ A general agreement that public participation mechanism should include criteria and other standards with regards to techniques and tools was reached in the online discussions on public participation concerning LMOs in 2014 held in the BCH. Furthermore, it is expected that common

⁴ The reports of the capacity-building workshops on public awareness, education and participation concerning LMOs are available in an information document (UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/8/INF/11).

⁵ The online regional networks on public awareness, education and participation (PAEP) concerning LMOs are available at http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_art23/regnetworks.shtml.

⁶ The reports from the joint CBD/Aarhus Convention round tables will be available in an information document (UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/8/INF/9).

⁷ The checklist and the summary of tools are available at http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_art23/pa_main.shtml.

⁸ The summaries and recommendations of the online discussions will be available in an information document (UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/8/INF/10).

views on public educational tools and methods, roles, responsibilities and procedures will emerge from online discussions to be held through the BCH in 2017;

(e) Development and launching of an e-learning platform with two self-directed e-learning modules on access to information and public participation concerning LMOs in the context of operational objective 1.3(c), including case studies, exercises, scenarios, checklists, template forms, social media guidelines, publishing tips, tools and methods, and sample national action plans available at <http://scbd.unssc.org/>. It is expected that a third e-learning module on public education regarding LMOs will be developed in 2016/17;

(f) Development and dissemination of a biosafety awareness survey template for Parties to conduct baseline surveys to ascertain the level of public awareness and evaluate public awareness of the issues regarding LMOs in the context of operational objective 2.1(a). A number of Parties shared their analysis from surveys in the BCH;⁹

(g) Celebration of the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the Protocol in 2013 and developed a number of publications and other resource materials to facilitate coherent efforts in facilitating public awareness. For the 10th anniversary, 28 Parties, Governments and organizations conducted public awareness activities, including publishing over 12 news articles;¹⁰

(h) Development and dissemination of five issues of the *Biosafety Protocol News* newsletter, three other publications and a number of factsheets in the context of operational objective 2.1(e).¹¹

IV. BEST PRACTICES, CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OR WORK

12. It is clear that some implementation of the programme elements is underway in particular to fully set in place mechanisms under the public awareness and public education element. These include: developing and sharing information materials; developing training materials and online modules; and establishing national websites and/or carrying out several public-awareness activities. There are also a few best practices under the public participation element to some extent set in place a functional mechanism. These include: to consult the public in the decision-making process regarding LMOs; and to make available to the public the results of decisions taken on LMOs. However, in their national reports, the surveys, online discussions and other sources, many Parties and organizations have reported a number of challenges. Most of the challenges lie within the capacity-building, public participation and access to information elements of the Programme of Work. These include:

(a) Limited number of incorporated, adopted and/or fully implemented NBFs and other legal or policy frameworks relevant to public participation and access to information, including incorporating general access to information laws into biosafety procedures (e.g. the Freedom of Information laws and other rights and/or environmental information laws incorporated into biosafety laws);

(b) Lack of capacity to implement the programme of work, including limited financial, human and technical capacity to implement most indicators under the programme elements (e.g.

⁹ The survey template is available at http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_art23/pa_survey.shtml.

¹⁰ The anniversary webpage and other resources webpages are available at http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_media.shtml.

¹¹ The following items are available at: the Biosafety Protocol News is available at http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_newsletter.shtml; the publications page is available at http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_otherpubl.shtml and http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_technicalseries.shtml; and the factsheets are available at http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_factsheets.shtml.

developing outreach strategies, nominating communications/education experts, conducting baseline surveys and acquiring a dedicated budget for programme of work);

(c) Limited initiatives to promote gender equality into biosafety outreach activities;

(d) Few training and educational opportunities for media and the general public;

(e) Limited standards on public education with regards to integrating biosafety issues into schools and universities. These include: educational tools and methods (e.g. new technology, materials in different languages, different formats, criteria for biosafety learning methods and curricula templates), roles and responsibilities of relevant authorities (e.g. ministries, academic institutions, school boards, teachers, scientists/researchers) and administrative procedures and mechanisms (e.g. top-down or bottom-up approaches to integrating biosafety, standards for biosafety as a stand-alone subject or integrated subject with other subjects);

(f) An illiteracy rate limits the access to information and public participation;

(g) Limited experiences in setting in place procedures and mechanisms for public access to biosafety information, such as: actively notifying the public of information in a timely manner and the means of public access to the BCH (e.g. in different online and offline formats as websites educational programmes, bulletin boards and meetings); maintaining up-to-date biosafety records management systems and other website resources; and providing access to information upon request (e.g. different public authorities handling specific requests, setting up timelines to respond promptly to requests, criteria for minimum charges, criteria for denial of information, criteria for confidential information and appeals processes);

(h) Limited experiences in setting in place procedures and mechanisms for public participation regarding LMOs, such as: involving the public throughout the decision-making process on LMOs; setting up timeframes for participation; informed the public about existing modalities for public participation (e.g. providing translation to local communities, written and oral public announcements and background information); developing guidelines, laws and regulations to incorporate outcomes of public participation into final decisions regarding LMOs; and making available to the public the results of decisions taken on LMOs.

V. POSSIBLE WAYS FORWARD REGARDING THE PROGRAMME OF WORK

13. An analysis of the survey to review progress in the implementation of the programme of work and provide suggestions regarding the necessary revision or revamping of the elements of the programme of work shows that the majority of Parties which took part in the survey (79 per cent or 34 Parties) recommended an extension of the programme of work for another five years.

14. Only a minority of Parties (11 Parties or 26 per cent) that responded to the survey recommended that the Programme of Work should be fully integrated with other initiatives. From the written responses, some Parties (7 or 22 per cent Parties) indicated that the Programme of Work should be integrated into the communication, education and public awareness programme for biodiversity (CEPA) or other joint initiatives with the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Aarhus Convention, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety with regard to workshops, customs officials work and youth campaigns.

15. Furthermore, the majority of Parties (74 per cent or 32 Parties) did not recommend major revisions or revamping of the elements of the programme of work. Among them, however, a number of Parties (62 per cent or 26 Parties) and some organizations (57 per cent or 4 organizations) identified existing areas and activities of the programme of work that could be further prioritized as follows:

Programme element 1: Capacity-building

- Raise awareness of new tools to facilitate the Programme of Work
- Identify country needs and best practices and focus on implementing the national biosafety frameworks and capacity-building with regards to Article 23
- Adopt and fully implement national biosafety frameworks and laws on Article 23, including revising the biosafety policy frameworks to include gender-aspects
- Set up national communication/outreach plans and programmes
- Set up a dedicated budget for the Programme of Work
- Organize joint activities to share human and financial resources, including to harmonize initiatives, mainly with the Convention on Biodiversity, the Aarhus Convention and the Food and Agriculture Organization
- Integrate the programme of work with the Strategic Plan for Biosafety until 2020

Programme element 2: Public awareness and education

- Integrate biosafety issues with youth-awareness campaigns
- Nominate communication experts
- Integrate biosafety workshops with biodiversity workshops at the national level
- Put in place mechanisms for women, indigenous communities/groups (e.g. other marginalized groups) and customs officers to be included in biosafety education at all levels and awareness activities (e.g. workshops, research centres, forums, social media, and traditional means)
- Identify the needs of women when conducting awareness-activities
- Establish an educational centre to organize training on biosafety curricula

Programme element 3: Public access to information

- Actively promote access to biosafety information in websites and for local initiatives
- Ensure that governments and academia promotes access to biosafety information and shares best practices to women
- Continue to share case studies on biosafety
- Put in place information alert systems to advise the public about new available information

Programme element 4: Public participation

- Implement public participation policies and systems
- Enhance equal opportunities for public participation of women and local communities in the decision-making process regarding LMOs
- Promote a wider range of women participating in biosafety-related capacity-building activities
- Put in place mechanisms to notify the public, in a timely and effective manner, about planned public consultations and opportunities to participate in decision-making regarding new LMO applications by using different tools (e.g. public announcements in national websites or local media and sharing information with local communities)
- Develop and implement a public participation framework or action plan

- Develop operating procedures to guide the public participation process regarding LMOs

16. Furthermore, based on decision XII/7 in which the Conference of the Parties decided to implement a Gender Plan of Action, many Parties (69 per cent or 22 Parties; survey) have also indicated the need for gender-specific aspects to be included in the specific areas/activities for the Programme of Work.

17. As a result, the Secretariat has developed, as per the annex to this note, a draft containing existing areas and activities of the Programme of Work that could be further prioritized, including specific sub-activities, timeframes and actors. The priority areas/activities for the Programme of Work identified in the annex aims at achieving a streamlined strategic focus and foster further commitment to advance the implementation of the Programme of Work.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

18. Based on the information provided above, it is evident that the Programme of Work has guided many Parties in developing relevant mechanisms related to public awareness, education and participation, including access to information. However, most Parties are still in the process of establishing or setting in place such mechanisms.

19. Taking into account the responses in their third national reports and through the dedicated survey, although a number of initiatives have been taken towards the implementation of the Programme of Work, it is clear that further efforts are still needed towards full implementation of Article 23 of the Cartagena Protocol. For the Programme of Work to be fully effective there is a need for further and continuous financial, human and technical initiatives and resources. There is also a need to continue to enhance collaborative activities. Overall, the challenges are mainly among the developing countries in ensuring that the needs are met to implement the Programme of Work.

20. According to the majority of Parties, an extension of the Programme of Work as a framework for developing mechanisms for Article 23 is critical, including the development of more focused priority areas/activities for the Programme of Work to better guide and enhance its implementation.

VII. ELEMENTS FOR A DRAFT DECISION

21. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol may wish:

(a) To recall decisions BS-IV/17 and BS-V/13 recognizing the need for a cohesive and focused approach to public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms;

(b) To take note of the report on the status of implementation of the Programme of Work on public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms under the Protocol;

(c) To extend the Programme of Work on public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms until 2020 with revised priority areas/activities as contained in the annex below to enable a streamlined strategic focus and foster further commitment to advancing the implementation of the Programme of Work;

(d) To urge developed country Parties and other Governments and relevant organizations to provide additional support to developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition to implement the Programme of Work;

(e) To urge Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to implement the Programme of Work and actively share their experiences and lessons learned through the Biosafety Clearing-House, regional clearing-houses and national clearing-houses;

(f) To invite Parties to participate in the biosafety theme in the NBSAPs Forum on National Biosafety Strategies and Action Plans in order to promote and facilitate the integration of the Programme of Work into National Biosafety Strategies and Action Plans;

(g) To request the Global Environment Facility to provide eligible Parties with dedicated financial resources to facilitate effective implementation of the Programme of Work;

(h) To request the Executive Secretary:

(i) Subject to the availability of funds, to hold online discussions, develop training materials and convene training courses on priority areas, including public participation and access to information, to advance the implementation of the Programme of Work;

(ii) To make available all the national websites and national biosafety clearing-houses on the website of the Convention;

(iii) To continue and enhance cooperation with other initiatives, such as the Aarhus Convention,¹² gender initiatives and other international, regional and national initiatives, to further facilitate the implementation of the Programme of Work;

(i) To encourage Parties to continue to enhance capacity for public awareness, education and participation, including access to information, regarding the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms, including for indigenous and local communities, and to integrate training, public awareness, education and participation into national initiatives for communication, education and public awareness, initiatives for the Sustainable Development Goals, initiatives for climate change [mitigation and] adaptation and other environmental initiatives;

(j) To encourage regional stakeholders and donors to play a greater role in supporting the integration of the Programme of Work into national initiatives to implement focal area 5 of the Framework and Action Plan for Capacity-Building for the Effective Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety¹³ to enhance capacity of public awareness, education and participation and Focal Area 5 of the Strategic Plan for Biosafety to raise the profile of the Protocol through outreach and communication.

¹² Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, done at Aarhus, Denmark, 25 June 1998. Available at: <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/documents/cep43e.pdf>.

¹³ [Decision BS-VI/3](#) of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, annex.

Annex

DRAFT PRIORITY ACTIVITIES/AREAS FOR THE PROGRAMME OF WORK ON PUBLIC AWARENESS, EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATION CONCERNING THE SAFE TRANSFER, HANDLING AND USE OF LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS

Programme element 1: Capacity-building for the promotion of public awareness, education and participation			
Goal: To strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of Parties to promote and facilitate public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms			
Priority Area 1	Sub-activities	Time frame	Actors
Advance legal and/or policy frameworks and mechanisms	Adopt, harmonize and implement legal and/or policy frameworks and mechanisms related to Article 23 of the Protocol, in particular the NBFs and incorporating general access to information laws into biosafety procedures (e.g. the Freedom of Information laws)	Within 2 Years	-Parties -Relevant organizations -SCBD
	Integrate and promote the Programme of Work elements into awareness and education components in the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and other national initiatives to implement Focal Area 2 on capacity-building for Article 23 and 5 on outreach of the Strategic Plan for Biosafety as well as Focal Area 5 on public awareness, education and participation of the Framework and Action Plan for Capacity-Building for the effective implementation of the Protocol		
	Share and announce the availability of frameworks and mechanisms related to Article 23 in the Central Portal and national BCH nodes		
	Integrate gender-perspectives in policies and frameworks related to Article 23		
	Identify a dedicated budget for the Programme of Work		
	Incorporate the communication plan template developed by the Secretariat and make use of draft communication plans developed in public awareness and participation workshops held by the Secretariat to ensure implementation of awareness/outreach programmes		
	Every quarter, systematically track, evaluate and proactively exchange information on the progress of the indicators in the Programme of Work in the BCH and with the Executive Secretary		

Priority Area 2	Sub-activities	Time frame	Actors
<p>Build and maintain joint initiatives</p>	Organize joint awareness and educational activities	<p>Within 2 Years</p>	<p>-Parties -Relevant organizations -SCBD -Academia</p>
	Participate in international, regional and national events related to the Strategic Plan for Biosafety, the Aarhus Convention, the Convention on Biodiversity and the Food and Agricultural Organization to integrate the Programme of Work in other initiatives		
	Promote the ratification of the Cartagena Protocol and its Nagoya Kuala – Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress through joint regional and sub-regional cooperation		
Priority Area 3	Sub-activities	Time frame	Actors
<p>Advance tools, resources and processes to broaden training activities</p>	Develop and make use of the Secretariat’s e-learning modules on access to information, public participation and upcoming public education as well as upcoming training materials and other training activities	<p>Within 3 Years</p>	<p>-Parties (e.g. focal points, ministries) -Relevant organizations -SCBD -Media</p>
	Disseminate and make available templates and other resources		
	Facilitate training-of-trainers programmes related to Article 23, with a particular focus on women and local communities		
	Make use of the Convention on Biodiversity’s CEPA toolkit, the Aarhus Convention’s Lucca Guidelines, the SCBD 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action and other related resources in developing training activities and materials		
	Nominate national biosafety education experts to facilitate biosafety education		
	Put in place a mechanisms targeted for women, local communities and customs officials to participate in biosafety education (e.g. participating in workshops and accessing research centres)		
	Develop a media strategy (e.g. facilitating journalist training on biosafety issues)		
	Develop and exchange guidelines and other resources on a regional level related to Article 23		

Programme element 2: Public awareness and education			
Goal: To promote broad public awareness and education of issues concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms			
Priority Area 4	Sub-activities	Time frame	Actors
Communicate biosafety and empower a wider audience	Set up an e-mail list serve as well as identify local areas (e.g. libraries and bulletin boards) and traditional methods to disseminate information (e.g. developing visual/graphic representation of biosafety information)	Within 2 Years	-Parties (NFPs, local and national government) -SCBD -Relevant organizations
	Organize awareness workshops, in particular for women and local communities		
	Disseminate information to United Nations bodies and other relevant international/regional bodies		
	Facilitate the translation of information materials through partners		
	Integrate communication activities with biodiversity, environment, sustainable development and other related agendas		
	Integrate biosafety issues into youth and gender-related awareness efforts held by other relevant programmes and other initiatives		
	Participate in national awareness-activities related to biodiversity, environment and related international days		
	Make use of the awareness survey template developed by the Secretariat and seek assistance by regional organizations to conduct national surveys online and/or offline in particular also ensuring that questions are targeted to women and local communities		
	Invite media to participate in the Biosafety Media Network ¹⁴		
	Develop biosafety messages		
	Enhance the networking and communication among national focal points to the Cartagena Protocol		
	Train and assign scientists and media to communicate biosafety issues		
	Facilitate a high-level dialogue including Ministries and Heads of States and Governments to increase the level of public awareness, education and participation with regards to biosafety issues		
Nominate experts as communicators and educators			

¹⁴ The media network is available at http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_art23/media_network.shtml.

Priority Area 5:	Sub-activities	Time frame	Actors
<p>Strengthen biosafety education at all levels</p>	Develop tools and methods for public education on biosafety, including developing training of standardized biosafety curricula at primary, secondary and/or tertiary levels and promoting new learning methods/technologies.	<p>Within 3 years</p>	<p>-Parties (e.g. NFPs, Ministry of Environment -Academia (e.g. school boards, committees/districts, academic institutions, researchers, scientists, principals and teachers, education inspectors, publishers of educational materials, professional organizations of teachers and/or curricula development institutions) -Organizations and associations</p>
	Develop procedures and set up other standards to integrate biosafety into education, including developing proposals (e.g. top-down or bottom-up approaches to integrating biosafety) and relations with various stakeholders involved in public education (e.g. Ministries, academic institutions, school boards, teachers, scientists/researchers)		
	Join networks with relevant educational focal points and integrate biosafety into biodiversity and other related environmental education at all levels		
	Promote exchange of programmes for scientist and public servants on a national and regional level		
	Integrate work on Article 23 with CEPA and use CEPA toolkit, including materials in particular for youth education		
	Make use of the Secretariat’s educational package on biosafety for education at all levels (in particular secondary schools), informal education and research institutes		
	Include women and local communities in developing biosafety education at all levels		
	Take a certificate by participating in the upcoming module on public education and developing procedures and practices of public education and curricula template as well as training/education action plan template		
<p align="center">Programme element 3. Public access to information</p>			
<p align="center">Goal: To improve public access to information concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms</p>			
Priority Area 6:	Suggested activities	Time frame	Actors
<p>Advance tools and procedures for access to information</p>	<p>Define the public through stakeholder analysis and appropriate actions through situation analysis, including promoting the most inclusive stakeholder participation</p>	<p>Within 3-5 years</p>	<p>Parties (e.g. NGOs, law-makers, judges, ministers) Media</p>

Set up a procedure to address information upon requests (e.g. help desks in different departments, request forms, recording requests, addressing requests within 15-30 days, standards for denying/confidential information and appeals process)	Academia, SCBD Organizations
Set up procedure to actively notify the public of information and means of public access to the BCH (e.g. setting up online and offline alert systems to provide information (e.g. public announcements in social media, e-lists, text messages, bulletin boards as well as disseminating simplified summaries and contact information of focal points)	
Facilitate workshops on access to information in particular to ensure the participation of women, local communities and ministries, on discussions related to laws and rights	
Make use of the CBD/Aarhus Convention summary of tools and checklist on access to information ¹⁵	
Regularly promoting up-to-date access to information of websites and traditional tools to a wider-audience	
Promote access to information and best practices/awareness in particular to women	
Provide case studies in the BCH and through other means	
Take a certificate by participating in the module on access to information and set up procedures for information upon request and active dissemination of information, including make use of the national action plan template and other resources	
Use guidance materials produced by the Aarhus Convention, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Culture Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme and other organizations	
Provide training of government officials and the public, including women and local communities, on the right to access to information and to incorporate related laws	

¹⁵ The checklist and summary of tools are available at http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_art23/pa_main.shtml.

Programme element 4. Public participation			
Goal: To promote public participation in decision-making regarding living modified organisms (best practices)			
Priority Area 7	Sub-activities	Time frames	Actors
Mobilize the public and ensure gender-equality for a wider target audience to participate in the decision-making process	Define the public through stakeholder analysis and appropriate actions through situation analysis, including promoting the inclusive stakeholder participation, with particular attention to women and local communities	Within 1-5 years	Parties (e.g. NFPs, local and national government) Local and national organizations Local leaders Academia, Public Institutions Media
	Use effective tools for public participation targeted in particular to marginalized groups (e.g. advertisements, exhibits, publications, websites, briefings, focus groups, public hearings, citizens' juries, forms and guidelines) and notify the public of these in a timely manner (e.g. offline and online announcements)		
	Use effective mechanisms and procedures for public participation (e.g. early participation in the decision-making process regarding LMOs, recording inputs, designating/training staff, collaborate with organizations and incorporate key public inputs into decisions)		
	Use local languages in public participation processes		
	Facilitate training on public participation, including for women and local communities		
	Enhance the incorporation of public inputs into decisions or make public criteria and reasons for limited incorporation of inputs		
	Enhance equal public participation in the decision-making process regarding LMOs, in particular ensuring participation of women and local communities		
	Take a certificate by participating in the module on public participation regarding LMOs and set in place tools, procedures and mechanism, including make use of the national action plan template and other resources		
	Use guidance materials produced by the African Union, Aarhus Convention, Food and Agriculture Organization, Organization of American States, in particular the Aarhus Convention/CBD checklist and summary of tools and resources to support implementation document ¹⁶		

¹⁶ The checklist and summary of tools are available at http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_art23/pa_main.shtml.