

Ref: SCBD/SEL/DO

15 November 2000

Dear Madam/Sir,

**Subject: Signature and Ratification of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety**

In accordance with Article 36 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the Protocol will remain open for signature at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 5 June 2000 to 4 June 2001.

The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its fifth meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 15 to 26 May, 2000, by decision V/1, reiterated the call of decision EM-I/3 adopted by the first extraordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to all Parties to the Convention to sign the Protocol at the earliest opportunity, and to deposit instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval, or instruments of accession, as appropriate, as soon as possible and to States that are not Parties to the Convention to ratify, accept, approve or accede to it, as appropriate, without delay, thereby enabling them also to become Parties to the Protocol.

Following my letters of 30 May 2000 and 1 August 2000, respectively, on this issue, I am pleased to advise that to-date 78 Parties have signed the Protocol (see attached list). In addition, two countries have become Parties to the Protocol, namely Trinidad and Tobago on 5 October 2000 and Bulgaria on 13 October 2000.

Also, as you are aware, Article 29(6) of the Protocol provides that the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol shall be convened by the Secretariat in conjunction with the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties that is scheduled after the date of the entry into force of the Protocol. In accordance with Article 37(1), the Protocol shall enter into force on the ninetieth day after the date of deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

Furthermore, I also wish to remind you that the work plan for the Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol adopted by the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention was based on the planning assumption that the Protocol would enter into force in time for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol to be held in conjunction with the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. In order for the first meeting of the Parties to the Protocol to be convened in conjunction with the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention scheduled to take place in

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The Hague, The Netherlands, from 8 to 26 April 2002, the fiftieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession to the Protocol must, therefore, be deposited by 8 January 2002. In this regard, please note that the Host Country Agreement currently under discussion with the Government of The Netherlands concerning the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention includes, in addition, the hosting of the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.

In view of this, I once again urge Parties to the Convention who have not yet done so to sign the Protocol at the earliest opportunity and to deposit instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, as appropriate, as soon as practicable, so as to enable the Protocol to enter into force in time so that the first meeting of the Parties to the Protocol could be held in conjunction with the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

Sincerely yours,

Hamdallah Zedan  
Executive Secretary

To: All National Focal Points of the CBD

cc. All National Focal points for the ICCP