



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIODIVERSITY
PROTECT BIODIVERSITY IN DRYLANDS

22 May
2006



ACHIEVING THE 2010 TARGET!

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13 January 2006

Notification **New Biosafety Clearing-House Features** **13 January 2006**

As you may be aware, Article 20 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity establishes a Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) in order to facilitate the exchange of scientific, technical, environmental and legal information on, and experience with, living modified organisms; and to assist Parties to implement the Protocol.

The second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (COP-MOP) adopted a multi-year programme of work for the BCH, and the Secretariat is continuing to develop the Central Portal of the BCH to meet the objectives of this work programme, and other identified needs of its users. Accordingly, the Biosafety Clearing-House website has been revised and enhanced, and I am pleased to announce the launch of the new version of the Biosafety Clearing-House website.

Some of the new features include:

- A new “virtual notebook” function that allows registered users to save records of interest for later reference (it operates in a similar fashion to a shopping cart on a commercial site);
- Addition of a “country profile” section that will assist users in identifying what types of information are being reported by a particular government;
- The ability to export search results and records in xml for use at a local level;
- Search results that link the primary record of interest to related records that reference it; and
- Addition of several news services to complement the existing Current Awareness Service, including daily biosafety headlines, a technical listserv, and the ability for national governments to register local biosafety news items for distribution through the BCH.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many governments and organizations that have been making their information available through the BCH, which currently contains over 8000 records.

To: BCH National Focal Points

Cc: Cartagena Protocol National Focal Points (or CBD Focal Points where Biosafety Focal Points have not yet been nominated)



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I would also remind you that in paragraph 2 of decision BS-II/2, the COP-MOP urged Parties, governments and other users to provide relevant information to the Biosafety Clearing-House as soon as possible, including information pertaining to decisions on the release or import of living modified organisms taken prior to entry into force of the Protocol, and to undertake regular review of information previously made available in the BCH to ensure it has been accurately reported and categorized (Decision BS-II/2).

I encourage you to send any feedback and suggestions for improvement of the Biosafety Clearing-House to the Secretariat. The central portal of the BCH is accessible on-line at <http://bch.biodiv.org>.

Yours sincerely,

Ahmed Djoghlaif
Executive Secretary