



**CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL
DIVERSITY**

PRESS RELEASE

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**Governments to resume negotiations in Brazil on the
implementation of the international treaty on living modified
organisms**

Montreal, 7 March 2006 – More than two years ago, upon the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan stated that “the Protocol establishes a framework that will facilitate environmentally sound application and management of the products of modern biotechnology. It will enable us to derive maximum benefits from biotechnology while at the same time protecting biodiversity and human health from potential risks posed by living modified organisms”.

Next week in Curitiba, the ecological capital of Brazil, the 132 Parties to the Protocol will gather for their third meeting to further advance the objective of this treaty, which upon its adoption was hailed by the Executive Director of UNEP, Mr. Klaus Töpfer, as the first new legal environmental instrument of the twenty-first century.

“Indeed the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety makes a significant contribution to ensuring that major technological advance can be achieved while respecting human health and environment. The Biosafety Protocol is a unique tool designed to provide transparent safety and border control procedures which will allow the positive contribution that modern biotechnology can and should make for the socio economic welfare of mankind and its prosperity while protecting the environment.” said Ahmed Djoghlaif, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

“It is therefore important that all the pending issues are resolved, including those related to documentation for bulk shipments of commodities containing living modified organisms. This is necessary to put an end to the uncertainty in the international trade of those commodities generated by the lack of consensus,” he said.

Adopted in January 2000 as a supplementary agreement to the Convention on Biological Diversity Biosafety, the Biosafety Protocol aims at ensuring that the transboundary movement of living modified organisms, does not adversely affect biological diversity and human health.

The five-day meeting of the treaty’s governing body will review the progress achieved by Parties in the implementation of their agreed commitment as well the need for additional guidance on risk assessment and risk management and the need for establishing further subsidiary bodies under the Protocol to provide advice on scientific and technical issues.

“The expected decisions are essential to provide the operational guidance required to reap the full potential of biotechnology while protecting human health and the environment,” said Mr. Djoghlaif.

“I urge all Parties to seize the Curitiba moment to decisively advance the objectives for which the Protocol was adopted so as to contribute to translating the concept of sustainable development into reality for the benefit of present and future generations,” he said.

Notes for Journalists

1. The Protocol requires Parties to take necessary measures to ensure that LMOs which are subject to transboundary movement are handled, packaged and transported under conditions of safety. The documentation rules are intended to enable countries to take such measures.
 2. The Protocol (Article 18.2 (a)), provides that the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol shall take a decision on the detailed documentation requirements for shipments of LMOs that are intended for direct use as food or feed, or for processing, no later than two years after the date of entry into force of the Protocol. That timeframe expired on 11 September 2005.
 3. The Protocol entered into force on 11 September 2003 and so far 131 states as well as the European Community have ratified it.
 4. The first meeting of the Parties to the Protocol was held 23 to 27 February 2004 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and the second one was held 30 May to 3 June 2005 in Montreal, Canada.
 5. Further details about the third meeting, including background documents, are available on the Protocol website at: <http://www.biodiv.org/meetings/cop8mop3/default.shtml>
 6. Additional information about the Protocol is available at the following Web sites:
CBD Web site: <http://www.biodiv.org/biosafety> and
Biosafety Clearing-House: <http://bch.biodiv.org>.
Frequently asked questions are also available at: <http://www.biodiv.org/biosafety/faqs.asp>
- For further information, please contact David Ainsworth at +1-514-287-7025; david.ainsworth@biodiv.org or Erie Tamale at +1-514-287-7050; erie.tamale@biodiv.org.