

PRESS RELEASE

WORLD COMMUNITY ADOPTS A NEW UN TREATY ON LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS

Nagoya, 16 October 2010. At 6.15 p.m. Friday here in Japan, a new international treaty, “the Nagoya – Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety”, was adopted at one of the largest intergovernmental meetings ever held on the safe use of modern biotechnology.

The adoption of the new treaty came at the end of the five-day meeting of the governing body of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (known as the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol or COP-MOP 5) and concluded six years of negotiations.

The new supplementary Protocol provides international rules and procedure on liability and redress for damage to biodiversity resulting from living modified organisms (LMO). Setting the stage for its adoption, small group of government negotiators had resolved contentious issues and agreed on the text of the supplementary Protocol just six hours before the opening of the COP-MOP 5 meeting on Monday.

Mr. René Lefeber of the Netherlands, one Co-Chairs of the Group of the Friends that negotiated the text of the new treaty said: “It has been many years since the last global environmental agreement was agreed. The adoption of new supplementary Protocol during the International Year Biodiversity will give new impetus to multilateral environmental negotiations. This agreement will also make important contribution to the on-going work under the Convention on Biological Diversity to protect life on earth.”

The new treaty shall be open for signature at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 7 March 2011 to 6 March 2012 and will enter into force 90 days after being ratified by at least 40 Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. .

The historic meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, held in the city of Nagoya, in Aichi prefecture, Japan, adopted seventeen other decisions. These included adoption of a ten-year Strategic Plan for the implementation of the Protocol, a programme of work on public awareness, education and participation concerning LMOs, and further guidance on risk assessment and risk management.

At the closing ceremony of COP-MOP 5, Ms. Masayo Tanabu, Parliamentary Secretary of Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, speaking on behalf of the Government of Japan, stated: “The new supplementary Protocol is a turning point for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. There have been many challenges successfully overcome. Let us rekindle the spirit of cooperation to confront the biodiversity challenges as well.”

Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity praised Japan as an outstanding host and paid tribute to delegates for the outcomes of the meeting. He said: “I congratulate all of you on this remarkable achievement. We have dreamt of this event for more than six years. This is indeed a historic event not only for the biodiversity family but also for the world community at large.”

Notes for Journalists

1. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, a supplementary treaty to the Convention, seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, more than 120 countries have developed legal and administrative frameworks necessary to implement the Protocol and 159 countries and the European Community are party to the Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal.
2. Since the adoption of the Protocol on 29 January 2000, the COP-MOP has held five meetings – in Kuala Lumpur in February 2004; in Montreal in June 2005; in Curitiba, Brazil, in March 2006; in Bonn, Germany, in March 2008; and in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010.
3. Article 27 of the Protocol states that: “The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to this Protocol shall, at its first meeting, adopt a process with respect to the appropriate elaboration of international rules and procedures in the field of liability and redress for damage resulting from transboundary movements of living modified organisms, analysing and taking due account of the ongoing processes in international law on these matters, and shall endeavour to complete this process within four years.”
4. At its first meeting, the COP-MOP established an Ad Hoc Open Ended Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts on Liability and Redress to elaborate options for elements of international rules and procedures on liability and redress under the Protocol. At its fourth meeting, the COP-MOP on the basis of the final report of the Working Group further negotiated and produced proposed operational text for the international rules and procedures on liability and redress as the basis for further negotiations. To continue the process, the COP-MOP established a Group of the Friends of the Co-Chairs Concerning Liability and Redress in the Context of the Protocol.
5. The Group of the Friends of the Co-Chairs further negotiated the proposed operational texts and produced draft text for a supplementary protocol on liability and redress to the Biosafety Protocol. The draft text was further negotiated at second and fourth meetings of the Group. The fourth meeting of the Group was held in Nagoya from 6 to 11 October 2010, prior to COP-MOP 5 to resolve outstanding issues and finalize its work for subsequent submission to the COP-MOP 5.
6. The Protocol is one of the important instruments contributing to the protection of biodiversity from potential adverse effects of living modified organisms.

For more information visit www.cbd.int/biosafety

The 2010 International Year of Biodiversity: www.cbd.int/2010 or www.facebook.com/iyb2010

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