



PRESS RELEASE

WORLD MEETING ON THE SAFE USE OF LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS OPENS IN INDIA

Hyderabad / Montreal, 2 October 2012. The sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (or COP-MOP 6) opened yesterday at the International Convention Centre in Hyderabad, India. Some 1,200 delegates, including representatives from Government, civil society and industry, attended the opening session.

The meeting will review the implementation of the Protocol and adopt further decisions to ensure the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms (LMOs). Among other things, the delegates will discuss issues relating to capacity-building, risk assessment and socio-economic considerations concerning LMOs. The decisions taken on these issues are expected to contribute to the realization of the vision of the Strategic Plan of the Protocol: *Making biological diversity adequately protected from any adverse effects of LMOs*.

The meeting was opened by Mr. Masamichi Saigo, the Director General of Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, representing the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries who is the current President of the COP-MOP. Mr. Saigo highlighted the progress made under the Protocol over the last two years, which he said laid the groundwork for this week's discussions.

In her opening statement, Shrimati Jayanthi Natarajan, the Minister for Environment and Forests of the Government of India, outlined the progress achieved in the implementation of the Protocol in India and noted that major challenges remain. She expressed her sincere hope that the momentum built at COP-MOP 6 would help in resolving critical issues affecting the effective implementation of the Protocol.

Sri E. S. L. Narasimhan, the Governor of Andhra Pradesh, welcomed delegates to the city of Hyderabad and wished them fruitful deliberations. He said: "through new insights gained, a stronger charter and plan of action will emerge".

Mr. Bakary Kante delivered a message from the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Mr. Achim Steiner, who emphasized the importance of strengthening national capacities to implement the Protocol, the readiness of UNEP to assist in this regard, and his confidence that discussions over the week will reflect the firm commitment of all contracting Parties to ensure full momentum is realized for the Protocol's implementation.

Mr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity outlined the main issues to be addressed by Parties during COP-MOP 6. He urged Parties to take further steps towards full implementation of the Protocol so that the possible benefits from living modified organisms may be obtained in a way that does not adversely affect biological diversity. He said: "The safe application of modern biotechnology, and informed and transparent decision-taking on the transfer, use and release of LMOs as required by the Biosafety Protocol need to continue to be an integral part of our

resolve for sustainable development and the “Future We Want” for which we all renewed our commitment at the Rio+20 summit”.

Notes for Editors

1. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is a supplementary agreement to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Its objective is to contribute to ensuring the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms that may have adverse effects on conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health.

2. The Protocol was adopted on 29 January 2000 in Montreal, Canada and entered into force on 11 September 2003. To date, 163 countries and the European Union have ratified or acceded to it.

3. The Protocol is named after the Colombian city of Cartagena where the final round of its negotiations was launched.

4. The governing body of the Protocol, known as the Conference of the Parties to Convention on Biological Diversity serving as meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (or COP-MOP, in short), has held five meetings – in Kuala Lumpur in February 2004; in Montreal in June 2005; in Curitiba, in March 2006; in Bonn in May 2008; and in Nagoya, in October 2010.

5. 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.”

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Additional information is available at the following websites:

Protocol website: <http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/>

MOP 6 website: <http://bch.cbd.int/mop6/>

MOP 6 media website: <http://bch.cbd.int/mop6/media/>

Frequently asked questions: http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_faq.shtml