



**CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

CBD

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STATEMENT BY

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

TO

**TECHNICAL EXPERT MEETING ON HANDLING, TRANSPORT,
PACKAGING AND IDENTIFICATION OF LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS**

Paris, France, 13-15 June 2001

Distinguished Experts,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very pleased to welcome you all to Paris for this Meeting of Technical Experts on Handling, Transport, Packaging and Identification of Living Modified Organisms. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Governments of France, Canada and the United Kingdom for the financial support they have provided and to the Governments of France and Canada for, respectively, hosting and co-hosting the meeting. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is a highly technical agreement, not only because it has as its centrepiece the rapidly evolving world of modern biotechnology, but also because the means of implementation, such as information exchange, capacity-building and the subject matter of the present meeting, involve specialized areas in their own right.

As far as handling, transport, packaging, and identification are concerned, the negotiators of the Protocol laid down the general requirements in Article 18 of the treaty. The purpose of this meeting is to assist in developing the framework for those requirements to be met. Specifically, as requested by the Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol (ICCP), the meeting is to consider the needs and modalities for developing measures for Parties to the Protocol to meet their obligations under paragraphs 2 (b) and 2 (c) of Article 18 of the Protocol. These provisions cover two categories of living modified organisms:

- Those destined for contained use; and
- Those intended for intentional introduction into the environment.

The broad requirements for handling, transport, packaging and identification are spelled out in the relevant provisions of the Protocol. There is, for example, for both categories of organisms, the requirement that the accompanying documentation should clearly specify that the organisms concerned are living modified organisms; that it should specify any requirements for safe handling, transport, storage and use; and that contact points should be given for further information. The question is what is needed to meet these requirements, especially in terms of safe handling, transport, storage and use, and how are the Parties going to proceed.

Ultimately, of course, the decision on how to proceed can only be taken by the Parties. But, for them to take an informed and workable decision, the Parties need the input of experts who fully understand the complexities of the practical issues relating to handling, transport, packaging and identification. It would therefore be very useful if you could focus your discussions on what is feasible and what is not, on the basis of your knowledge and experience. In doing so, it is, I think, worth emphasizing that the subject matter of this meeting is central to the achievement of the objective of the Protocol, namely, to contribute to ensuring an adequate level of protection in the field of the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health, and specifically focusing on transboundary movements.

As requested by the ICCP, the Secretariat has prepared as a basis for your discussion, a synthesis of information received on existing practices, rules and standards relevant to handling, packaging, transport and identification of LMOs. As stated in the annotations to the provisional agenda, this note essentially builds on and updates the note

on the subject prepared for the first meeting of ICCP. That note is also available at this meeting. The document also attempts to propose options on a future process to address the issues.

I should emphasize here that the proposals on a future process are intended only to provide the meeting with a possible option, especially in case the recommendations or proposals that are developed here require further follow-up before they can be finalized.

Also available, as an information document, is a compilation of all the information received by the Secretariat as of end of April 2001, in response to the request of the ICCP. I believe that additional material is also available here from Governments who were not able to provide it to the Secretariat before the deadline for the finalization of the information document, and from individual experts. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Governments and organizations that responded and I trust that you will find the information provided to be of value in your discussion. I should point out, however, that although the mandate of this meeting is limited to paragraphs 2 (b) and (c), the information requested by ICCP relates to Article 18 in general.

I thank you for your attention and wish you a successful meeting.