

**Statement by
David Cooper
Acting Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity
on the occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of Entry into Force of
the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety
11 September 2023**

“20 Years of the Safe Use of Biotechnology”
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Twenty years ago, the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety entered into force.

This was a milestone achievement under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Today’s anniversary is an opportunity for the global community to celebrate the successes of the Cartagena Protocol and to look forward to consider how the Protocol will contribute to the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

The Cartagena Protocol is the key international instrument for ensuring an adequate level of protection in the field of the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology 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

173 States and the European Union are Parties to the Cartagena Protocol.

And most Parties -- almost 90% -- have taken at least partial measures to implement the Protocol, through national biosafety frameworks, laws, regulations or guidelines.

The fourth national reports submitted by Parties to the Protocol show that about 85% of Parties have at least one person trained in risk assessment, risk management and monitoring of LMOs in their country

A number of countries have launched projects, supported by the Global Environmental Facility, to build and strengthen human and institutional capacities in the safe use of biotechnology,

The Network of Laboratories for the Detection and Identification of LMOs has grown with now 165 participants.

The Biosafety Clearing-House, recently upgraded and on a new platform, facilitates the exchange of information on living modified organisms. It is the definitive global site for information on biosafety laws and regulations and for decisions regarding the importation or release of LMOs.

To date, there are about 16,000 records in the BCH, including about 2600 risk assessment records.

In addition to these achievements, the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress was negotiated and adopted under the Protocol, and it entered into force in 2018. This groundbreaking treaty requires that response measures are taken in the event of damage resulting from living modified organisms, or where there is sufficient likelihood that damage will result if timely response measures are not taken. Today, there are 54 Parties to the Supplementary Protocol.

As you can see we have reason to celebrate.

The adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework by the Conference of Parties to the Convention at its fifteenth meeting in Montreal in 2022 gives a further boost to the Protocol. The framework includes a target -- Target 17 -- with the specific aims to establish, strengthen capacity for, and implement in all countries, biosafety measures and measures for the handling of biotechnology and distribution of its benefits.

The Implementation Plan to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Capacity-Building Action Plan, also adopted in Montreal, will help guide and support Parties in their implementation of the Protocol to 2030.

However, as we move forward, the implementation of the Protocol will continue to face challenges.

Biosafety is a complex issue and many countries over the years have faced and continue to face limited human, financial and technical capacities to implement the Protocol.

Many Parties have still not fully introduced the necessary legal, administrative, and accompanying measures to implement their obligations.

But, as we know, biosafety measures are critical.

Technology, including biotechnology, is always changing.

Biotechnology should progress together with the effective biosafety measures that are necessary to safeguard biodiversity.

We must continue to enhance collaboration to ensure the safe use of biotechnology for sustainable development.

Let us renew our commitments and continue moving towards our goals and targets.

I wish you, and others around the world, a wonderful celebration.

I thank you. -----