



## CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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BUREAU OF THE CONFERENCE  
OF THE PARTIES  
Montreal, 17 October 2007

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES SERVING AS THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY HELD IN MONTREAL ON 14 OCTOBER 2007

#### INTRODUCTION

1. The meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP) Bureau was held on 14 October 2007 at the Headquarters of the Secretariat in Montreal. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Fernando Coimbra of the Ministry of External Relations of Brazil, representing the President of the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The following Bureau members attended the meeting:

Mr. Deon Stewart (Bahamas)  
Mr. Karma Nyedrup (Bhutan)  
Mrs. Mary Fosi Mbantenkhu (Cameroon)  
Ms. Andrea Stefan (Croatia)  
Ms. Margarita Palafox Uribe (Mexico)  
Mr. Ositadinma Anaedu (Nigeria)  
Ms. Tone Solhaug (Norway)  
Mr. Miguel Aymerich (Spain)  
Dr. Volodymyr Domashlinets (Ukraine)  
Mr. Abdul Hakim Aulaiah (Yemen)

2. The meeting was also attended by Ms. Nicola Breier of Germany (as host of the fourth meeting of the COP-MOP and the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties), as well as the Executive Secretary of the Convention, Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, and relevant staff from the Biosafety Division of the Secretariat.

#### ITEM 1 OPENING OF THE MEETING

3. The meeting was opened by Mr. Coimbra on behalf of the President of the Conference of the Parties, Her Excellency Ms. Marina Silva, Minister of Environment of Brazil. The Chair welcomed Bureau members, noting that this was the first COP-MOP Bureau meeting since COP-MOP 3, and indicated that Brazil was honoured to chair the Bureau in the preparation for the fourth meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

4. The Executive Secretary welcomed the Bureau members to their meeting and underlined that the Secretariat is honoured to host this first meeting of the Bureau of COP-MOP3 at the headquarters of the secretariat and to serve its members in the lead up to the fourth meeting of the COP-MOP4 in Bonn. He also took the opportunity to introduce Mr. Charles Gbedemah, the Head of the Biosafety Division, who joined the Secretariat earlier in 2007, bringing a wealth of experience and an impressive background to the service of the Protocol and its parties.

## **ITEM 2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

5. The Bureau adopted the following agenda as proposed by the Executive Secretary following consultation with the Presidency:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Preparations for, and the provisional agenda of, the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.
4. Status of the implementation of the biosafety work programme.
5. Other matters.
6. Closure of the meeting.

## **ITEM 3 PREPARATIONS FOR THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE COP-MOP**

6. The draft agenda of the fourth meeting of the COP-MOP that had been presented to the Bureau for its consideration was then addressed. Seeing no comments from the Bureau, the Chair requested one point of clarification from the Secretariat regarding why the item on Article 18, paragraph 2(a) was included in the provisional agenda of COP-MOP 4 as the issue seemed to have been settled by COP-MOP at its third meeting in Curitiba, Brazil. The Secretariat indicated that while the other aspects of paragraph 2(a) of Article 18 from the Curitiba decision are expected to be revisited in 2010, an item related to LMO sampling and detection techniques is required to be considered by COP-MOP 4 in accordance with paragraph 11 of decision BS-III/10. The Secretariat further noted that the third meeting of the COP-MOP has requested the submission of information regarding experience with the use of LMO sampling and detection techniques, and for the Secretariat to compile the information and prepare a synthesis report to be made available to COP-MOP 4. The Bureau was informed that notification has been issued requesting Parties, other Governments and relevant international organizations to submit their views on this issue, as well as a number of other issues pertaining to the agenda of COP-MOP 4.

## **ITEM 4 STATUS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BIOSAFETY WORK PROGRAMME**

7. The Chair requested the Secretariat to provide a brief description of the document under consideration. The Secretariat advised the Bureau that modest gains had been made in the execution of the Work Programme to date. The Secretariat highlighted that the principal challenge rests with the fact that some planned activities fall under the voluntary budget, which will render timely implementation very difficult and solicited the Bureau's advice on how to facilitate timely implementation of planned activities in line with the Work Programme timeline. The Secretariat also brought to the attention of the Bureau the fact that there had been a limited reaction from Parties with respect to the request for submissions, including national reports and solicited the Bureau's advice on this issue.

8. The Chair cited one reference in the report of the Compliance Committee regarding the review of cases of repeated non-compliance. He queried how this could be so, given the short life of the Protocol to date. The Secretariat recalled the relevant decision of the COP-MOP 3 (paragraph 2, decision BS-III/1) where the Compliance Committee has been requested to compile information on the experience of other multilateral environmental agreements regarding cases of repeated non-compliance for consideration at COP-MOP 4 with a view to address the issue of measures appropriate for such cases as anticipated in paragraph (d), section VI, Annex, decision BS-I/7.

9. The Representative from Nigeria proposed that when notification is sent out, it should be emphasized that a response is requested in order to maintain compliance.

10. The representative from the Government of Spain indicated his government's intent to support the work of the Secretariat relating to the Biosafety Protocol process by providing funding of 400,000 Euro over a 4 year period. The Executive Secretary thanked the Government of Spain for their generous support and expressed the gratitude of the Secretariat for the ongoing support shown by Spain for the CBD and its Protocol. This sentiment was warmly echoed by the representative of Nigeria.

#### **ITEM 5 OTHER MATTERS**

11. Under this item, the Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that the Biosafety Division had recently recruited a Fund Management Officer and that the Executive Director of UNEP had kindly agreed that UNEP would fully finance this post.

12. The Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that, as follow up to the letter dated 10 September 2007 related to the audit of the Secretariat's accounts, a letter had been sent to the United Nations Board of Auditors requesting that the audit be conducted in March 2008, despite the absence of the final financial statement for 2007. The audit report will be made available to MOP4 and COP9. A similar letter was also sent to the Chief, Budget and Financial Management Service of UNON.

13. The Executive Secretary also briefed the Bureau on the implementation of the MOU signed on 22 February 2007 with the International Civil Aviation Organization, acting as the lead United Nations Agency for the Secretariat of the Convention, as well as the substantial costs charged by the organisation for CBD meetings. He informed the Bureau that this issue is under discussion with the Secretary General of ICAO and the relevant host country authorities.

14. The Executive Secretary also briefed the Bureau on the unexpected strengthening of the Canadian dollar vis-à-vis the United States dollar and its serious negative impact on the operations of the Secretariat, particularly on staff salaries and local recurrent expenditures such as rental and maintenance of the Secretariat premises. This effect will be more evident in the future as the Secretariat has now filled all the vacant positions in the Secretariat, as requested by the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

15. Initial calculations show that for professional staff salaries alone there has been an increase of 37.4% in the Montreal post adjustment between January 2006 (when the 2007-2008 budget was prepared) and October 2007. This increase has had a significant impact on the Secretariat's budget for staff salaries and is due almost entirely to the exchange rate fluctuation. With the Cdn\$ at par with the US\$ for October 2007, and expected to strengthen even more in November 2007 and beyond, it is likely that the post adjustment multiplier for Montreal could increase even more, the consequent being further increases in salary costs. Expenditure on rent over the period January 2006 to December 2007 shows a loss of more than US\$200,000 due solely to exchange rate losses. Looking at other expenditures in Canadian dollars (not including rent) for the period September 2006 to October 2007, there has been a loss of more than US\$600,000 due only to exchange rate losses.

16. The Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that a notification will soon be sent to donors who, owing to the gain resulting from a more favourable exchange rate of their national currencies, may be in a position to pledge, on an exceptional basis, an additional voluntary contribution to the General Trust Fund of the Convention on Biological Diversity (BY) during 2008 to enable the Secretariat to offset some of the losses currently being experienced as a result of the currency fluctuations. The Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that an invitation had been dispatched to convene an Informal Donors Meeting on the budget for COP 9 and COP-MOP 4, to be held in Geneva immediately following the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing.

17. Bureau members expressed their utmost confidence, appreciation and their full support to the Executive Secretary for his outstanding performance and the measures he has taken since assuming his duty to enhance efficiency and cost effectiveness of the operations of the Secretariat, as well as for mobilizing additional financial resources and strengthening relations with major partner organizations. They further appreciated the visibility given to biodiversity in the global policy initiatives in the United Nations system, as well as the emphasis and focus on implementation, particularly in

addressing matters that concern poverty eradication and the Millennium Development Goals in general. They identified with the linkages and complementarity of biodiversity with other environmental conventions promoted by the Executive Secretary. They requested that their support to the Executive Secretary be recorded in the minutes of the Bureau.

**ITEM 6 CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

18. In closing the meeting, the representative of the President thanked Bureau members for their cooperation.

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