



**STATEMENT  
BY  
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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

**at the**

**OPENING OF THE SIXTH ASIAN BIOTECHNOLOGY AND  
DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE**

**HYDERABAD, INDIA**

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**Convention on  
Biological Diversity**

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COP 10 / MOP 5

Dr. Bhan, Dr. Rao, Dr. Dhar,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be here with you today to deliver the keynote address for this Sixth Asian Biotechnology and Development Conference. I wish to thank Dr. Dhar and the Research and Information System for Developing Countries for inviting me to take part.

As you know, we have just concluded the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. As I noted in my opening statement last Monday, the meeting was to take the grains of sand from the agenda and cultivate them into Hyderabad pearls in the form of decisions to be adopted at the end of the week. I am very pleased that we did indeed create a string of pearls with the decisions adopted in the closing plenary yesterday afternoon.

Two decisions stand out in particular. These are the decisions on risk assessment and risk management, and on socio-economic considerations. We knew heading into the week that these were likely to be the most challenging as well as the most exciting issues and we were not disappointed. They are also closely related to the themes you will be discussing over the next two days.

On risk assessment, MOP-6 commended the progress on the Guidance on Risk Assessment of Living Modified Organisms and encouraged Parties to test it. The Parties also agreed to continue work in an ad hoc technical expert group setting over the next two years to provide input to the testing process, among other things. This decision is significant because a number of countries continue to seek advice and guidance on conducting risk assessments in the context of the Biosafety Protocol. It also allows the Protocol to adapt to new technologies as they emerge and respond to the new challenges they present for biodiversity.

Regarding socio-economic considerations, I would first like to note the Workshop on Capacity-Building for Research and Information Exchange on Socio-Economic Impacts of Living Modified Organisms that was hosted by the Government of India in November 2011 and co-chaired by Dr. Chengappa from the Institute for Social and Economic Change. The conclusions from this workshop played an important role in the development of the decision that was adopted on Friday. In the end, the Parties have agreed to form an ad hoc technical expert group on socio-economic considerations that will seek to develop conceptual clarity on this issue. This is a major step forward in the development of the Biosafety Protocol as it is the first time the Parties have agreed to undertake truly substantive work in this area. We know that this has also been an important area of work for RIS and we look forward to your contributions in the discussions to come over the next two years.

While it may not be part of your agenda for this conference, I also wished to highlight the discussions on the Nagoya – Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress that took place during MOP-6. Not only did the MOP adopt a decision calling for Parties to expedite their efforts to ratify the Supplementary Protocol so that it may enter into force at the earliest opportunity, but the Secretariat also convened, in conjunction with the Governments of India and Japan, a side event where some of the key participants from the negotiations that

resulted in the Supplementary Protocol had the opportunity to share their experiences with their respective country's efforts towards ratification and national implementation of the Supplementary Protocol. I believe that the informal dialogue greatly increased understanding of the Supplementary Protocol and its importance. I am fully confident that we will see the number of ratifications of this instrument continue to rise and I very much hope that this will soon include ratification by our new Presidency, the Government of India.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The program of this conference is very timely. It seeks to make the transition from the sixth meeting of the Parties to the Biosafety Protocol to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. This question of the relationship between the Biosafety Protocol and the CBD is one we are hearing more and more frequently. How can we ensure mutual supportiveness while respecting the distinct characteristics of the two treaties? The issue of coherence and cohesiveness has become all the more critical with the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-Sharing at COP-10 in Nagoya in 2010. We need to develop strategies and approaches that will keep these instruments working together in harmony.

You have a busy two days before you with a distinguished list of speakers. I congratulate RIS for its initiative in putting this conference together. I wish you all the best in your deliberations and I look forward to seeing the outcomes of the proceedings.

Thank you.