

**CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY:
“LMOs that may have adverse effects on the
conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity”**

In over twenty years of development and commercial use of living modified organisms (LMOs), there is no scientifically sound information available that identifies LMOs with adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, including human health. As such, the Global Industry Coalition (GIC) takes the position that no work, workshops or guided processes can be undertaken under the Protocol on this issue until such scientifically sound evidence exists. Rather, the GIC is of the view that Parties and the Secretariat should focus efforts and the limited resources available on making the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) a high quality, practicable and useful tool for the submission and retrieval of accurate information on the biosafety of LMOs to facilitate information exchange.

A. Background and Experience to Date:

At their fourth meeting, the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety requested submissions on “scientifically sound information available at the time, on the identification of living modified organisms or specific traits that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable uses of biological diversity”, and directed the Executive Secretary to compile this information “for consideration by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group and Parties”. This decision was taken to support “[c]ollaboration in identifying living modified organisms that may have an adverse effect on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health” (Decision BS-IV/11). The GIC¹ supported this request by making an extensive submission of information that supports the conclusion that the LMOs currently marketed have no greater adverse effects on biodiversity and human health than the conventional counterparts from which they have been derived. In addition, the GIC is aware of much information that demonstrates that these same LMO plants are having beneficial effects on biodiversity and human health on a case-by-case basis.

Recently, the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) completed its work and proposed a three-part recommendation that included: (1) Parties submitting information on their experiences with LMOs and conducting risk assessments to the BCH; (2) the Secretariat undertaking regular analysis of this information and reporting it to the COP-MOP; and, (3) organizing workshops focused on analyzing this information “through a guided process”. [UNEP/CBD/BS/AHTEG-RA&RM/2/5, Annex IV.f.(i)-(iii)]

¹The Global Industry Coalition (GIC) for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety receives input and direction from trade associations representing thousands of companies from all over the world. Participants include associations representing and companies engaged in a variety of industrial sectors such as plant science, seeds, agricultural biotechnology, food production, animal agriculture, human and animal health care, and the environment.

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B. GIC Views on the Elements of the MOP-5 Draft Decision

- The GIC has always supported collaboration in information exchange among Parties, non-Parties and relevant stakeholders with legitimate experience in biosafety and regulation of LMOs. We continue to strongly support the goal of making the BCH a practicable and useful tool for submitting and retrieving accurate information on the biosafety of LMOs including risk assessment information.
- However, the GIC is of the view that the AHTEG recommendation fails to recognize the fact that currently *there is no scientifically sound information identifying the LMO plants known today with adverse effects on biological diversity and human health*. As such, any future work done in this area, such as workshops using guided processes, can only occur *after* scientifically sound evidence for adverse effects is available. Until such evidence becomes available, Parties and the Secretariat should focus on making the BCH a high quality tool for the submission and retrieval of accurate information on the biosafety of LMOs.