

DUTY LEAVE REPORT

1. Name Michael De Shield
2. Post Director Food Safety Services
3. Department Food Safety
4. Conference/Seminar/Meeting Attended THE THIRD MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY SERVING AS THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY (COP-MOP 3)
5. Location Curitiba Brazil
6. Date 13 – 17 March 2006
7. Objectives/Purpose of Meeting/Seminar/Conference

The main objective of the meeting was to give the necessary operational guidance for implementation of the Cartagena Protocol by all countries, thus minimizing any potential adverse effects on biological diversity of living organisms modified by modern biotechnology. Thus, the aim of the present meeting was to give practical, operational guidance and direction to the Protocol's provisions.

8. Background:

The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety addresses the safe transfer, handling and use of LMOs that may have an adverse effect on biodiversity, taking into account human health, with a specific focus on transboundary movements. It includes an advance informed agreement procedure for imports of LMOs for intentional introduction into the environment, and also incorporates the precautionary approach, and mechanisms for risk assessment and risk management. The Protocol establishes a Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) to facilitate information exchange, and contains provisions on capacity building and financial resources, with special attention to developing countries and those without domestic regulatory systems. The Protocol entered into force on 11 September 2003, and currently has 132 parties. Belize became a party to the Protocol on 12 May 2004.

9. General Discussion (summary of meeting/seminar conference, relevant issues discussed, etc.)

Several important decisions for implementation of the Cartagena Protocol had been taken at the previous meeting in Canada (MOP 2 - also attended by Belize), but no decision had been taken about the detailed requirements for identification of living modified organisms

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intended for direct use as food or feed, or for processing, as stipulated in the Protocol. Participants were urged not to leave Curitiba without having resolved that particular issue. Implementation of the Protocol was a challenging task, especially for developing countries, which looked upon the decisions of the meeting as a source of guidance in formulating domestic regulatory frameworks. This is crucial for countries like Belize who are in the midst of developing their National Biosafety Framework.

Approximately 1000 participants representing parties to the Protocol and other governments, UN agencies, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, academia and industry were present at the meeting. COP/MOP-3 considered several reports on ongoing activities within the Protocol's mandate and adopted 18 decisions on: requirements for the handling, transport, packaging and identification (HTPI) of living modified organisms (LMOs) destined for contained use or for intentional introduction into the environment; documentation requirements of LMO shipments for food, feed and processing (LMO-FFPs); risk assessment and risk management; liability and redress; compliance; the need to establish subsidiary bodies; monitoring and reporting; and assessment and review of implementation.

The main focus of the discussions

The main areas of disagreement included detailed requirements for documentation and identification of LMO-FFPs. (Article 18.2(a)), which parties discussed at length, and agreed to at 9:30 pm on Friday night. The discussions addressed criteria to determine whether commodity shipments "contain" or "may contain" LMO-FFPs, including the level of detail and detection, adventitious presence and thresholds, intent of the exporter and preserved identity systems. Belize was part of the Working Group (WG1) that discussed this contentious issue at length with Belize arguing for a "stand-alone" document to accompany the LMO shipment which would come to the competent authority rather than the use of a commercial invoice as the required documentation. The stand alone document would give more details of the shipment and help to identify more clearly shipments that contain LMOs. Other rather less controversial, yet significant issues discussed were the voting procedures of the Compliance Committee (consensus vs majority vote), which was not resolved, and the provision of adequate funding to implement national biosafety frameworks. Parties also swiftly reached agreement on other key issues, often agreeing to revisit them at future COP/MOPs, including on risk assessment, the rights and responsibilities of transit parties, the financial mechanism and capacity building. As the meeting came to a close, the adoption of the compromise package on LMO-FFP documentation requirements was heralded as a key step forward in the Protocol's implementation.

9. Resolutions/Recommendations/Outcomes/Follow up Activity(ies)

- a. Confirmation that there is no funding currently available from UNEP to be used for the implementation phase of the developed NBFs as funding will be dependent on the**

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Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council's review of a Biosafety strategy to be reviewed in June 2006 .

- b. **Election of Compliance Committee Members:** The COP/MOP addressed this issue on Friday when regional groups were asked to nominate candidates to replace Compliance Committee members who have resigned or whose terms will end in 2006. Belize was canvassed by CARICOM member states to become a member of this committee but Belize declined in favour of Lionel Michael from Antigua and Barbuda especially given the fact that Antigua had already completed its NBF. The COP/MOP thus elected the following members to the Compliance Committee: Lionel Michael (Antigua and Barbuda), José Alvaro Rodriguez (Colombia) and Victor Villalobos (Mexico) from Latin America and the Caribbean; Paul Roughan (Solomon Islands) from the Asia and Pacific Group; Jane Bulmer (United Kingdom) from the Western Europe and Others Group; Liina Eek-Piirsoo (Estonia) and Sergey Gubar (Ukraine) from CEE; and Bather Kone (Mali) from the African Group.
 - c. **Consultation with UNEP on the status of Belize NBF and plans for the UNEP Biosafety regional Coordinator to visit when Belize engages in public consultation on its NBF.**
10. **Benefits to the Organization and/or Belize**
- a. **Belize identified as a key participant in the development and implementation of provisions of the Biosafety protocols.**
 - b. **Update on international activities in Biosafety which will assist in the development of Belize NBF.**
 - c. **Linkages with other international initiatives and collaborative activities in Biosafety (met with FAO and GEF officials interested in Biosafety in Biosecurity framework - Future project for Belize)**
 - d. **Resource materials and samples of legislative framework for Belize to develop its own NBF.**
 - e. **Access to key UNEP and GEF personnel and networking.**
11. **Attachments/Relevant Supporting Documentation**
- f. **Final official report from CBD Secretariat (May 06)**
 - g. **Official documents of the meeting**
 - h. **Information notes for Belize Biosafety library**
 - i. **Sample brochures, posters, Biosafety information materials**
 - j. **Name and contact information of participants**

Michael De Shield

Signature

May 30th 2006
Date