

SOUTH AFRICA'S COMMENTS OF THE OVERVIEW OF THE POST-2020 PROCESS FOR THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY

(1) The structure and content of the Implementation Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety post-2020

The structure and content of the implementation plan for the Cartagena Protocol post 2020 should be developed in a manner that complements the global framework. In compiling this new framework it will be importance to learn from the successes and failures of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. There are several elements of that plan that remain applicable and important to the Parties' implementation efforts.

This process can be informed through a stock-taking of the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan for the Protocol as well as analysis of the 4th country reports.

South Africa is of the view that while significant achievements have been made towards the implementation of the Protocol; more effort is required for the activities that support the actual implementation of the Protocol. Many developing countries in the African region have developed national biosafety frameworks but now require support to undertake the actual implementation.

In this regard, Parties would be best served by retaining a focus on the elements of the 2011-2020 plan that remain relevant and are yet to be fully realized.

The focus in the Implementation Plan for the post-2020 framework should be on the operational aspects such as:

- risk assessment and risk management
- identification, detection and packaging
- Liability and redress
- Socio economic considerations
- Synthetic biology
- Public awareness and participation

Specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound (SMART) targets that respond to these elements in a comprehensive manner are required.

In addition, this framework needs to be extensive enough to include elements for implementation by a broad range of stakeholders.

(2) Possible elements of a specific action plan for capacity-building on biosafety, covering the Cartagena Protocol and its Supplementary Protocol

There is need to align the capacity building plan with the Implementation Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety post-2020. The action plan must be complementary to the long-term strategic framework for capacity-building beyond 2020 under the Convention.

(3) Relevant elements of the biosafety component of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

The Post 2020 global biodiversity framework needs to ensure a balanced approach to the three objectives of the convention, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable use and benefit sharing. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety responds to the sustainable utilization of biodiversity and in this regard could be incorporated into the framework under this broad objective.

Recalling that the Convention on Biological Diversity requires under Article 8 (g) requires Parties to “Establish or maintain means to regulate, manage or control the risks associated with the use and release of living modified organisms resulting from biotechnology which are likely to have adverse environmental impacts that could affect the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account the risks to human health” it is important to ensure that Protocol aspects are incorporated into the Post 2020 global biodiversity framework.

In addition, the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety plays an important role in providing global risk assessment and risk management frameworks for emerging technologies. It is therefore recommended that specific elements on integrating the work of the Convention and its protocols on responding to emerging technologies be incorporated. There have been many developments in the science of modern biotechnology since the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. In this regard, it may be

prudent to consider undertaking a specific review aimed at considering the appropriateness of the scope of the current legal instrument to respond to developments in the technology.

The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety responds to the vision of the current Strategic Plan of a world of “Living in harmony with nature” where “By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people”. In particular, the activities undertaken through the risk assessment and risk management provisions ensure that biodiversity is valued, conserved and ecosystem services are maintained.

Possible targets to be developed should be SMART and provide outcome oriented results that ensure conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. An example of such a target could be” By 2030, measures to safeguard biodiversity from the adverse effects that may arise from living modified organisms developed through modern biotechnology are in place”