FULL TRANSCRIPT OF THE ONLINE DISCUSSION GROUP ON THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF FURTHER GUIDANCE ON RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT OF LMOS (23 November - 14 December 2009)

Open questions [#1525]

dear All

I like to start the discussion with all the additional topics identified during the online discussions and the first AHTEG meeting in Montreal (see report). We had monitoring, transgenic trees, transgenic microorganisms and viruses, pharmaplants and synthetic biology organisms on our list - to mention a few. During our face to face meeting in Montreal there was the decision taken that we could only tackle additional three topics and that the others should be worked on later what would mean after MOP5 if there is such a decision taken. The forthcoming real-time online conferences could be used to get some input which of all these topics are deemed the most important.

As a second point I would like to raise the question how risk assessment could be better linked and reflect decisions taken by our mother convention, the CBD. Risk assessment is done in a comparative manner. That comparison links the use of LMOs and the accompanying management to current agricultural practises and their impact on biodiversity and the environment. The CBD recommends very clearly that there is the urgent need to improve the situation and for example stop the loss of biodiversity - to name one of the prominent recommendations. As a consequence there would be a need not only to link RA to a status quo but to develop criteria if and how RA could reflect these overarching goals and help or contribute to achieve these - at least that would be my understanding of the interlinkages between the Convention and the Protocol. In addition these questions have a lot to do with the choice of the appropriate comparator or comparision.

The second guiding question of this discussion topic is how to work on these very different issues. I think the mixture of internet based tools and face to face meetings as we have it for our current tasks is a good one - especially for all the open topics as referred to in the first para. The second may need another format like a broder workshop or online conference to identify the relevant decisions and recommendations of the convention as a first step.

Best regards

Beatrix

posted on 2009-12-09 06:10 by Beatrix Tappeser, Germany

RE: Open questions [#1528]

I agree with Beatrix that discussions on additional topics highlighted in Montreal should commence. Of interest to me are pharma plants. These present unique challenges that may not be addressed by the current road map. I have of late encountered a number of scientists who are already involved or contemplating research in pharma plants. Some of them believe that some apsects of this work are not covered by regulatory frameworks, and therefore do not require mandatory risk assessment.

In addition, because of their unique nature, pharma plants require to be segregated from other plants intended for food and agriculture. Unlike non-pharma plants whose cross pollination or adventitious presence on food commodities is not of environmental and food safety concerns, pharma plants may present new risks or risks at threshold levels that would have been unimportant had they been non-pharma. Consequently, the issues of adventitious presence and isolation distances may need to be revisted.

Abisai Mafa, Zimbabwe

posted on 2009-12-09 10:39 by Mr. Abisai Mafa, Zimbabwe