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The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission

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Date

Secretariat of the convention on Biological Diversity
United Nations Environmental Programme
413 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 800, Montreal,
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Subject: Submission of our views on post 2020 Biosafety implementation

Secretariat of the convention on Biological Diversity has invited us to submit our views on the structure and content of the implementation plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety post 2020, possible elements of a specific action plan for capacity-building on biosafety, covering the Cartagena Protocol and its Supplementary Protocol; and relevant elements of the biosafety component of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

As the parties to the convention, Ethiopia needs an independent functional structure consisting clear work and budget flow with less bureaucratic approach by its nature that supports the implementation of the biosafety protocol and its supplementary protocols. So far, there were communications and support by regional and international organizations (like NEPAD, ICGEB and COMESA) in terms of capacity building and technical advice actually with no clear strategy, action plan, time line and mandates. Hence, the structure has to give some directions and approach on how these organizations give support to parties so as to enhance their contribution. Furthermore, the structure has to give information on how parties enhance their coordination and collaboration among different entities dealing with biosafety and biotechnology related activities.

Ethiopia is on the right track towards implementation of biosafety protocol. The country has adopted functional biosafety proclamation, issued directives which support implementation of the proclamation and has also issued regulation on national and institutional biosafety advisory committee. Using above indicated policy instruments the country has grant special permit for GMO Maize (DT and BT) and Enset(Ensete ventricosum), gave environmental clearance for commercialization of BT-cotton. However, the country lacks well trained man power and well established infrastructure

for better implementation of the protocol. As the parties to the protocol, the country needs financial support on awareness creation at all level, short and long term training for regulatory experts and experience share with countries advanced in the implementation of biosafety system. Even though, we are doing our level best in establishing GMO detection lab, we still need up to date instruments for GMO detection, trained laboratory technicians and high level training for biotechnology researchers working in the area. Regarding GMO or Biotech lab, we also suggest that there should be regional lab with the center of excellence (for example 1 for East African, 1 for West African, 1 for South African and 1 for West African regions) in selected countries with full capacity to train our human resources, prove quality standards and serve African countries parties to the protocol to gain experience from these center of excellence lab in the post 2020 biosafety implementation framework.

As per agreement reached on the meeting of parties to the protocol, we suggest points to be considered in the post 2020 biosafety framework;

- ✓ Capacity building including human and infrastructure,
- ✓ Biosafety legislation new and emerging technologies (synthetic biology and gene editing),
- ✓ Resource mobilization,
- ✓ Detection & identification of living modified organisms
- ✓ Risk assessment and risk management
- ✓ Socio-economic considerations
- ✓ Liability and redress
- ✓ Public awareness, education and participation

With best regards


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Director, Biosafety & Invasive Alien Species regulation directorate

Cc

- Climate Change & Biodiversity Sector

