



Public participation and transparency in biosafety
Joint Aarhus Convention/Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety
Second round table on public awareness, access to information and public participation regarding living modified organisms/genetically modified organisms
15-17 November 2016, Geneva
Palais des Nations, Salle V

BILATERAL SESSION - NETWORKING

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND TRANSPARENCY IN BIOSAFETY: MATCHING NEEDS WITH AVAILABLE EXPERTISE

Wednesday, 16 November 2016

11.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m. and 2.30 – 3 p.m.

Note by the secretariats

The joint Aarhus Convention/Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety round table on public awareness, access to information and public participation regarding living modified organisms/genetically modified organisms (LMOs/GMOs) will feature a bilateral session/networking on matching countries' needs with available expertise.

Background documents

The following documents will serve as background material to facilitate the potential matching of countries' needs with available expertise. Participants can use these documents to review the initial situation and emerging good practices and lessons learned:

- Summary documents, based on the results of the survey on transparency and public participation regarding GMOs/LMOs circulated to the national focal points of the Aarhus Convention prior to the meeting and the survey on the Programme of Work on public awareness, education and participation concerning LMOs for the Cartagena Protocol circulated to the national focal points of the Cartagena Protocol;
- Checklist of key measures for ratification and implementation of the Aarhus Convention and the Cartagena Protocol in the context of LMOs/GMOs;
- Summary of tools and resources to support implementation of the Aarhus Convention and the Cartagena Protocol in the context of LMOs/GMOs.

All documents will be made available from the meeting webpage:

<https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=42179#/>

Format of the session

The session will consist of three themes as outlined below, and there will be three meeting points in the Salle V, i.e., one meeting point for each theme, marked as follows:

Theme I - Awareness-raising and education: Blue

Theme II - Access to information and public participation: Red

Theme III - Legislative frameworks and institutional arrangements: Green

Participants will be invited to discuss the above issues and come up with concrete suggestions for the future bilateral and international cooperation.

Initially, the Chair will suggest how to divide the participants into three discussion groups. Depending on available expertise and/or interest, participants may also decide to rotate and attend other groups if they wish to do so.

A facilitator will be appointed for each group as to assist the discussions. Facilitators and participants will be invited by the Chair to provide their feedback on these discussions at the plenary session, focusing on the usefulness of this exercise, key issues raised during the discussions and suggestions for future bilateral and international cooperation.

Thematic Focus

There will be following three thematic groups:

Theme I: Blue

Awareness-raising and education

The discussion will focus on tools and mechanisms that will help to improve communication with a wider audience and to strengthen biosafety education (e.g. through training-of-trainers programmes, media strategies, awareness surveys, local communities' training, educational package for schools, educational networks, synergies, communication plan template developed by the CBD secretariat).

Theme II: Red

Access to information and public participation

The discussion will focus on procedures and mechanisms for ensuring effective access to information and public participation (e.g. procedures and tools for providing effective access to information and public participation; incentivizing the public, benefits, ensuring effectiveness, inclusiveness and representation of all interested stakeholders, using e-learning modules on public participation and access to information).

Theme III: Green

Legislative frameworks and institutional arrangements

The discussion will focus on key challenges related to legislative frameworks and institutional arrangements and means that can help to improve them (e.g. existing institutional and regulative obstacles for law adoption and harmonization and ways to overcome them).
