

India Ratifies the Protocol on Biosafety on 17th January 2003

The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the first international regulatory framework for safe transfer, handling and use of living Modified Organisms (LMOs) was negotiated under the aegis of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Protocol seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. It establishes an advance informed agreement (AIA) procedure for ensuring that countries are provided with the information necessary to make informed decisions before agreeing to the import of such organisms into their territory. It further incorporates procedure for import of LMOs with respect to Food Feed and Product (FFP), Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework and Capacity Building.

The Protocol contains reference to a precautionary approach and reaffirms the precaution language in Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. The Protocol also establishes a Biosafety Clearing-House to facilitate the exchange of information on living modified organisms and to assist countries in the implementation of the Protocol.

The protocol was adopted on 29th January 2000. The protocol has been signed by 103 countries (except USA). The Cabinet (GOI) approved the proposal and India signed the Biosafety Protocol on 23rd January 2001. Subsequent to the Cabinet approval on 5th September, 2002, India has acceded to the Biosafety Protocol on 17th January 2003. So far 43 countries have ratified the protocol. The Protocol will come into force on the 90th day after the date of deposit of the fiftieth instrument for ratification by countries that are Parties to the Convention.