



## A periodic update on the activities of the UNEP-GEF Biosafety Projects

June 2005

### Newsflash

On 21<sup>st</sup> June 2005, the Executive Director of UNEP, Mr Klaus Toepfer, announced that the UN Secretary General, Mr Kofi Annan, has appointed Ahmed Djoghlaif as the next Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.



photo courtesy of IISD/ENB  
photographer: francis dejon (franz@iisd.org)

Mr Djoghlaif will take over from Mr Hamdallah Zedan on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006. Mr Toepfer said: "It will be a great loss for UNEP to see Ahmed Djoghlaif go. He has truly transformed our role within the Global Environment Facility and he will be sorely missed. But our loss is the CBD's gain. Mr Djoghlaif has the skills, the intellect and experience to take this important convention forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century". All of the biosafety team wish to congratulate Ahmed, and to thank him for the leadership and support he has provided to the biosafety projects – we look forward to a fruitful future collaboration!

### Updates in this issue include project highlights on:

1. **THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**
  - Status of the ongoing project;
  - Workshops
  - Add-ons
2. **THE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS**
  - Status of the ongoing projects;
  - Annual NPC meeting;
  - New projects
3. **THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING HOUSE PROJECT**
  - Status of the ongoing project;
  - Regional Coordinators;
  - Add-ons
4. **OTHER DEVELOPMENTS**
  - Activities and events
    - UNEP-GEF at CoP/MoP 2;
    - GEF Council June 2005;

#### Staff movements

Full details and outputs of the UNEP-GEF biosafety projects may be found on the project website <http://www.unep.ch/biosafety/>

## Introduction

Since Issue No 6 of the UNEP-GEF Biosafety Newsletter in September 2004, the following major activities have been completed:

- 41 countries now have National Biosafety Frameworks posted on the project website, including 7 new ones in May 2005;
- A Regional NBF Development Workshop was held in Mozambique for African Lusophone Countries in March 2005;
- 10 more countries have been approved to join the development project (see MILESTONE below);
- 8 new Medium-Sized Projects (MSPs) for implementation have been submitted to the GEF for approval;
- The add-on to the Biosafety Clearing House Capacity Building Project has been approved and up to 139 may now participate; and
- 3 new members of staff have joined the Biosafety Unit.

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### 1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL BIOSAFETY FRAMEWORKS PROJECT

The [UNEP-GEF Development of National Biosafety Frameworks Project](http://www.unep.ch/biosafety/developmentofnationalbiosafetyframeworksproject.htm) has continued to work with a total of 120 countries, as well as collaborating with 6 additional countries not receiving GEF support. For a full list of participating countries and project status, see <http://www.unep.ch/biosafety/participatingcountrieslist.htm>.

#### Current Status of the Development Project

- 120 developing countries are currently participating in the Project with 10 more just approved to join (see below);
- 41 final draft national biosafety frameworks (NBFs) have been posted on the project website (to access, go to <http://www.unep.ch/biosafety/news.htm#nbf>; select a country and scroll down);
- 50 more draft NBFs are expected by end 2005
- The Development Project is entering its final phase and has generated an enormous amount of experience on the

challenges of building national capacity for CPB implementation. UNEP has begun to document this experience internally with a preliminary case study on lessons learned which is now available at: <http://www.unep.ch/biosafety/development/devdocuments/UNEPGEFstudyVersion170605.pdf>

#### **MILESTONE:**

Ten more countries - **Angola, Brazil, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome & Principe, South Africa, Thailand, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan** - have been approved as eligible to join the global NBF Development project by the June 2005 GEF Council meeting so we encourage the remaining countries to apply.

### 2. THE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

All 8 of the UNEP [Demonstration Projects for Implementation of National Biosafety Frameworks](http://www.unep.ch/biosafety/demonstrationprojectsforimplementationofnationalbiosafetyframeworks.htm) are making good progress towards completion.

The annual National Project Coordinator's (NPCs) meeting was held in Geneva from 20-24 March 2005. NPCs from all 8 of the UNEP Demonstration Implementation projects, plus Mexico, which has a Demonstration project run by UNDP, attended along with participants from a number of other countries interested in developing similar Implementation projects.

Poland will become the first Implementation project to complete all of its scheduled activities in the next month or two. Four of the eight projects will finish before the end of 2005. Another four of the eight projects will finish by the end of 2005 and the remaining three will finish by mid-2006.

Up to May 2005, 8 additional projects for the Implementation of NBFs in Cambodia, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Estonia, Lithuania, Mauritius, Tunisia have been submitted to the GEF for review and approval.

Anyone interested in developing similar projects should contact UNEP via the address at the end of the newsletter or via [biosafety@unep.ch](mailto:biosafety@unep.ch).

### 3. THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING HOUSE PROJECT

#### **MILESTONE:**

The November 2004 GEF Council approved, in principle, the extension of the original (50 country) BCH project to now include 139 countries. Final approval was given in May 2005.

The "[Building Capacity for Effective Participation in the Biosafety Clearing House \(BCH\) of the Cartagena Protocol](#)", or BCH Capacity Building Project is an add-on project to the current UNEP-GEF project for Development of National Biosafety Frameworks.

#### **Ongoing Activities:**

Recent project activities have focused on 4 key components:

#### **Operational Handbook**

An "Operational Handbook" for country execution of the BCH project has been forwarded to the original 50 participating countries, and MoUs with participating countries are under discussion.

#### **BCH Training Package**

Preparation of the BCH Training Package was finalized during 2004 and reviewed by regional scientists/technical experts at a meeting held Geneva in December 2004. The Package, developed in collaboration with international experts, UNITAR and other partners contains many interactive elements, primers and workbooks and is available on request or for download at: <http://www.unep.ch/biosafety/bch.htm>.

#### **BCH Regional Advisors**

ToR for a network of BCH Regional Advisors (RAs) to assist countries to participate in the BCH were developed and a world-wide call for advisors was issued in October 2004. An RA curriculum and methodology for training was discussed at a meeting of regional experts in Geneva in December 2004, and a "training of trainers" workshop for 28 potential BCH Regional Advisors, in collaboration with the governments of Canada, Germany, Switzerland and USA, was held in Kuala Lumpur in Jan-Feb 2005. 24 of these participants have now been contracted.

#### **Regional Workshops**

A workshop for national project coordinators and BCH focal points from 14 Pacific Island countries was held in Samoa from 2-5 November 2004 to identify and discuss issues related to their regional BCH (meeting convened in collaboration with Environment Canada).

A BCH Training Workshop, convened by the Secretariat of the CBD, in collaboration with the UNEP-GEF Biosafety team, and sponsored by the Government of the Netherlands and the Global Industry Coalition was held in Montreal on 28-29 May 2005 just prior to CoP-MoP 2. Fifty-two national participants from 31 countries were trained in basic BCH operations.

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### 4. OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

#### **a) Activities and events**

#### **CoP-MoP 2**

At CoP-MoP 2 the biosafety team participated, in collaboration with the GEF and SCBD, in a BCH Training Workshop (see above), and three lunchtime side-events.

(i) **Development/BCH:** Over 130 persons, including the CoP-MoP Chairman, attended the first side-event on the Development/BCH project. The workshop was followed by an Award Ceremony for the 41 countries that had completed their NBFs in time for CoP-MoP 2.



Cyrie Sendashonga (SCBD) and Bather Kone (Mali)  
Photo: David Duthie

(ii) **Implementation:** Over 90 persons attended the side-event on the Implementation projects. Presentations were given by the UNEP-GEF Programme Manager, Fee Chon Low, and also by the National Project Coordinators from China and Uganda. A representative of the World Bank described their two

Implementation projects in Colombia and India and the National Project Coordinator for Mexico made a presentation on their implementation project with UNDP.

(iii) Evaluation of the GEF Initial Strategy on Biosafety: Over 50 persons attended this side-event organised by the GEF Office of Monitoring and Evaluation (OME). Presentations were made by evaluation team members, Jarle Haarstad (GEF OME) and Jeff McNeely (IUCN) describing the status of the evaluation, which will be considered by GEF Council in November 2005.

#### **GEF Council Meeting (June 2005)**

The interim approach to the financing of biosafety capacity building activities was reviewed and approved by GEF Council, pending completion of the evaluation of activities carried out under the initial strategy.

The interim approach will comprise approval of a cluster of up to 15 new projects for the implementation of NBFs, along with a number of regional projects.

The Council requested the GEF Secretariat to prepare a strategy for efficient and effective means of providing additional support to countries to strengthen their capacity to implement national biosafety frameworks, once the evaluation is completed, and in good time for the November 2005 Council meeting.

#### **b) Staff movements**

##### **Departed...**

- ♣ Ms Mallory Smuts has left the team to pursue other interests and we wish her every success.
- ♣ Ms Belinda Clarke, an intern from New Zealand, left us in mid-June after three months. We wish her good luck in her new work in corporate law back in Wellington.

##### **Arrived...**

We welcome the following new members of staff:

- In March 2005, Professor Leonard O'Garro joined the team as the Regional Coordinator for the Caribbean. Leonard is a Geneticist and has been Professor of Plant

Pathology at the University of the West Indies (UWI). He has also served on the Compliance Committee of the CPB. Leonard will be based in Barbados.

- In April 2005 Dr David Duthie has joined us in April 2005 from the UNEP DGEF Nairobi office as Information Officer. David has worked with UNEP Nairobi for the last 5 years as part of the UNEP-GEF Biodiversity team, managing their portfolio of projects supporting the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- In May 2005, Mr Ide Ahmed joined as Fund Management Officer (FMO) in the financial administration offices in Nairobi. Ide has over 5 years experience in audit and accounting of grassroots humanitarian projects via the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS).

For more details about any of the above, please visit our website <http://www.unep.ch/biosafety>, or contact us via:

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**Finally, CoP-MoP 3 will be held from 13-17 March 2006 in Curitiba, Brazil – See you all there!**