

# **THE AFRICAN UNION AND ITS PERSPECTIVES ON BIOSAFETY**

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**er States**

**gans:**

**The Assembly**

**The Executive Council**

**The African Union Commission**

**The Permanent Representative Committee**

**Peace and Security council**

**Pan-African Parliament**

**ECOSOCC**

**The Court of Justice**

**The Specialized Technical Committees**

**The Financial Institutions**

## Off-Budgetary

developed within the context of the  
sets minimum international standards  
for safety

implementation in developing countries  
supported through UNEP  
safety projects to develop NBFs

that all African countries  
participated in at least one of these projects

- However in February 1999- negotiations of the CPB were stalled

- The Group and the OAU-developed the African Biosafety in Biotechnology (AMLSB)

- provide for a harmonized approach to biosafety in Africa serving as a model legal instrument for developing national biosafety legislations

Further it was felt that the Protocol does not adequately deal with all the critical priority needs of African countries.

- OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2001-supported the further development of the AMLSB.

- The AMLSB was developed to be used by African States to support the implementation of the CPB and to address its weaknesses at an African context



- July 2003 in Maputo- the Exec. Council of the AU further passed a decision:

*Member States, in abiding by the provisions of the Cartagena Protocol, to use the African Model Biosafety Protocol prepared by the AU Commission as a basis for developing their national legal instruments in Biosafety, to take into account their national peculiarities, in order to harmonize the Africa-wide space and system in the regulation of Genetically Modified Organisms, their movement, transportation and importation in*

*July 2003, Decision on the Report of the Interim Chairperson  
on the Africa-wide Capacity Building in Biosafety  
EX/CL/Dec 26 (III)*

The decision further:

*RESSES the need for Member States to equip themselves with the necessary human and institutional capacities to deal with Biosafety within the framework of the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;*

*APPEALS to the developed countries, particularly Africa's development partners willing to assist Africa in its endeavour, to grant the necessary resources as well as financial and technical support towards the implementation of this programme;*

*July 2003, Decision on the Report of the Inter-African Group of Experts  
on the Africa-wide Capacity Building*

- **January 2006:** AU Biosafety Project  
initiated with the financial support of the  
German government as part of the  
under AU-German collaboration  
Project Aim:  
The topic of biosafety has been incorporated  
into the political and institutional framework  
of the AU and into its support services for  
Member States.

es performed to date:

Establishment of a biosafety unit at the  
Department of HRST,

Establishment of a TAC

Development of the African Strategy  
on Biosafety

Development of a Revised African Model  
on Biosafety (*Draft*)



## Activities performed to date (cont'd):

Organization of 3 meetings for the 5 geographical areas on the Biosafety Standing Committee the Revised Model Law

- Development of 7 issue papers on biosafety and a study on GMOs detection/identification and commodity flow

Organization of Prep. Meetings for Africa Initiators before COP-MOPs and the Liability and redress negotiations (9)

# Other AU Initiatives Related to Biosafety and Biotechnology

• CAPAD High Level Panel Report on Modern Biotechnology: « Freedom to Innovate»- encourages the safe application of biotechnology systematically focusing on the five regions of Africa by applying various fields of biotechnology to the priority needs of these regions.

- African Position on GMOs for Food and Agriculture-DREA initiated discussions on the subject matter calling for appropriate biosafety procedures in the use of GMOs

• African Union Consolidated Plan Action on Science and Technology (AUC-DHRST)

## PILLARS

1. Establishment and strengthening of institutional frameworks

2. Awareness raising and biosafety information exchange

3. Capacity building and preparedness consultations

4. Policy and Legal Frameworks

5. International cooperation

6. Sustainability mechanism

## OF THE AUC:

• Oversee and coordinate communication among regional economic communities (RECs) and National Focal Points

- Create a Biosafety Unit within the permanent structure of the AUC
- Coordinate and harmonize capacity building activities (standards, harmony, synergies)
- Organize preparatory meetings prior to major multilateral negotiations of relevance to biosafety, to form and harmonize positions



## OF THE RECS:

- Information dissemination and exchange
- Sub-regional preparatory meetings to harmonize sub-regional interests
- Develop standards, guidelines and requirements
- Identify sub-regional priorities for capacity-building and enhance sub-regional cooperation
- Mobilize their members to fulfill regional or international obligations
- Support sub-regional centres of excellence

## OF MEMBER STATES:

- Put in place and support the relevant personnel and institutional framework for Biosafety decision making and monitoring of GMOs
- Facilitate national scientists in biotechnology safety
- Identify and prioritize capacity needs
- Forge public-private partnerships
- Engage public in biosafety decision making

## OF DEVELOPMENT PARTNER

Supporting the strategy (provision of start-up funds)

Provision of equipments for biotechnology and GMO testing centers

Capacity building (training of trainees)

Provision of technical support

tion of a Biosafety co-ordination secretariat  
the AUC (Biosafety Unit);

2. Promotion of biosafety through the existing RECs-  
mainstreaming biosafety into their devp't agenda  
holding of regional preparatory meetings,  
international engagements;
4. Promotion of the Revised African Model Law on  
Biosafety among Member States-towards a  
harmonized legal system;
5. South to South Cooperation/exchange of  
expertise

allocating funds for the strategy (internally &  
externally).



**BROUKE ET AL. (DRAFT)**

## **Why the need to revise?**

- ✓ Developments at the international level
- ✓ Developments at the AU level
- ✓ Sub-regional initiatives
- ✓ National R&D, policy and legislative developments

## KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED

Recognizes the potential of modern technology

Recognizes the risks involved

Based on the Precautionary Approach

Recognizes the need to build capacity

With the nature and scale of knowledge

Potential risks of GMOs

## KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED (cont'd)

- Recognizes that African countries need to support of GMOs through aid or trade
- Recognizes the sovereign right of countries to have **GM free zones**
- Recognizes the need for an African Union Executive Council resolution to take on a **common approach** on matters pertaining to biotechnology and biosafety
- **Scope of application-all transactions of GMOs and products** that require safety (the making, import, export, transit, contained use, release or placing on the market)

## KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED (cont'd)

- Sets threshold levels for the adventitious presence of GMOs contained in non-GMO shipments (imported for aid food and placing on the market for FFPs)  
labelling, documentation and  
ification requirements
- Elaborates liability and redress procedures



## *(RECOMMENDATIONS)*

are exhaustive list of institutions  
ing with GMOs for networking  
oses

tify key partners in North and So

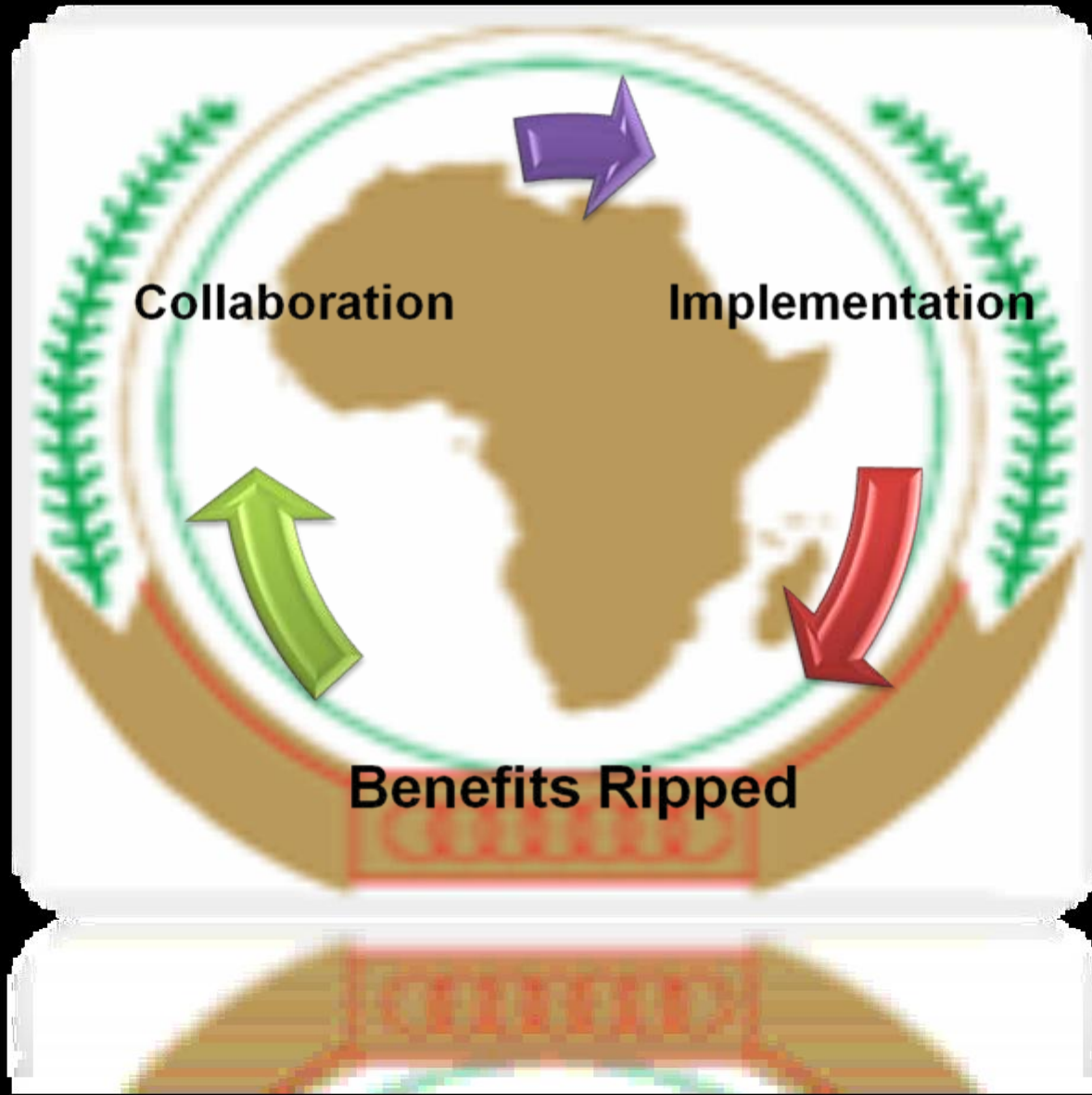
tify few reference labs for each

velop guidelines for information s

o updated list of countries adopt

crops or import

...and finally using interactive processes



# THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!



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