

Regional Workshop on LEGAL FRAMEWORKS FOR LIABILITY AND REDRESS FOR BIOSAFETY IN EAST AFRICA

Organized by the International
Environmental Law Research
Centre IELRC

NATIONAL BIOSAFETY FRAMEWORK

The Case of Uganda

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DEFINITION

- A National Biosafety framework is best described as “ a combination of policy, legal, administrative and technical instruments that is set in place to address safety for the environment and human health in the context of modern biotechnology” – often focus on living modified organisms – Charles Gbedemah
UNEP /GEF Office, Nairobi
“Harmonization of National Biosafety Frameworks – a Perspective”

COMPONENETS OF A BIOSAFETY FRAMEWORK

- Strategy
- Policy
- Guidelines
- Legislation
i.e. Acts
and/or
Regulations

Uganda's Biosafety Framework

- Comprises
- National Biotechnology Policy
- National Biosafety Policy
- Biosafety Regulations
- National Biosafety Guidelines

National Biotechnology Policy

Policy Vision: - To make Uganda a country fully and safely utilizing biotechnology in sustainable national development within the context of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan and the National Vision of Development

Scope of the Policy

- Status of biotechnology development in Uganda
- Human Resources Needs for Biotechnology Development
- Infrastructure
- Biotechnology Research and development
- Public Awareness
- Financing Biotechnology
- Legal and Regulatory Framework

Scope cont'd

- Institutional framework
- Industrial Application and Commercialization
- Bio-ethics
- Biosafety regulation
- Linkages and partnerships
- Biodiversity Conservation and utilization

Uganda's Biosafety Policy

- Scope of the Policy:
 - (I) Institutional and Administrative Arrangements
 - (II) Capacity Building
 - (III) Research and Development
 - (IV) Legal and Regulatory framework for biosafety
 - (V) Risk assessment and Risk management

Biosafety Policy cont'd

- Public information and communication
- Implementation strategy
- Funding mechanisms for biosafety
- Linkages and Partnerships

The Biosafety Regulations 2001

- Specific Provisions of the Regulations
- Definition Section – Definition of important concepts such as
- Advance Informed agreement
- Contained use
- Living modified organisms
- Modern biotechnology

Regulations cont'd

- Application of Regulations
- Import
- Contained use
- Release or place on the market
- export

Biosafety Regulations Cont'd

- Institutional Arrangements
- Application and Approval
- Risk Assessment and Risk management
- Identification and labeling
- Clear identification and labeling of any GMOs and /or its products
- Public participation
- Liability and Redress

Regulations cont'd

- Sanctions
- Exports
- Appeals

National Biosafety guidelines

- Objectives
 - (i) Ensure and guarantee public and environment safety
 - (ii) Determine the risk assessment
 - (iii) Promote opportunities or the application and exploitation of innovative biotechnology products

Guidelines cont'd

- Scope
 - (i) Genetically engineered microorganisms
 - (ii) Genetic transformation of plants and animals
 - (iii) Production and release of GMOs
 - (iv) Safety measures during experimentation
 - (v) Risk assessment and commercialization

Guidelines cont'd

- Why the guidelines
 - (i) rDNA technologies often result in new or modified life forms
 - (ii) Biotechnology raises ethical issues, fears & risks
 - (iii) Modification of organisms needs to be carefully assessed for risks to humanity before deployment. Thus the need for the biosafety guidelines

CONCLUSION

- While we have the basic components of a biosafety framework, there is still a lot of work going into these documents. In addition, Uganda is still working on coming up with a Biotechnology/Biosafety Strategy and Implementation Framework.