

to the Convention on Biological Diversity also held in Colombia in February 1999.

In the end, however, the participants were unable to reach agreement and considerable difficulties remain. Key among these is the treatment of commodities, i.e. those LMOs intended for use in the food, feed or processing industries, rather than LMOs destined for contained use, or for deliberate release (seed). While some argue that commodities should be subject to the AIA regime, others argue that this regime is impractical for commodities and oppose the imposition of labelling or extensive documentation requirements for commodities. Equally divisive is the question of the relationship between the Protocol and existing trade instruments. While some see the Protocol as offering additional opportunities to take measures to protect their domestic environments, others note that any such measures will still have to meet the disciplines imposed by existing trade instruments. At the end of the Cartagena meeting, the chair prepared a text to facilitate further discussions. Consultations resumed on an informal basis and at a conceptual level in Vienna in September 1999. On the basis of those discussion, the parties agreed to schedule a further negotiating session for Montreal in January 2000.

6. THE GLOBAL CONVENTION ON PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS

With the conclusion of the *Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution* in 1998, the focus has now moved to the negotiation of a global instrument under the auspices of UNEP (see UNEP GC Decision 19/13C). Negotiations commenced in June 1998 in Montreal. A second session of the Informal Negotiating Committee (INC) was held in Nairobi in January 1999 and a third session in Geneva in September 1999. A fourth INC is scheduled for February 2000. POPs are chemical substances that persist, bioaccumulate and pose a risk of causing adverse effects to human health and the environment. Global concern arises because of evidence of the long-range transport of these substances to regions where they have never been used or produced.

To this point, the substantive negotiations have focussed on three topics: (1) the identification of those chemicals that should be subject to the control regime of the Convention and the nature of that control regime including the precise language of the obligations to reduce\eliminate the production, use and trade of listed chemicals; (2) the procedure for adding new chemicals to the Convention; and (3) the availability of technical and financial assistance for developing countries.

The initial list of twelve POPs to be subject to the Convention regime can be grouped into three categories: (1) pesticides: aldrin, chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mirex and toxaphene; (2) industrial chemicals: hexachlorobenzene and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs); and (3) unintended byproducts: dioxins and furans. The procedure for adding new substances will likely be based upon a subsidiary body to be known as the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee with negotiations still to occur on the nature of the amending procedure to be adopted for adding new chemicals to the control regime. The issues of technical and financial assistance will be explored in greater detail at INC-4.

7. THE PROTOCOL TO ABATE ACIDIFICATION, EUTROPHICATION AND GROUND LEVEL OZONE

Under the framework of the *UN Economic Commission for Europe Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution Convention (LRTAP)*, negotiations were successfully concluded, in