

Submission of the Government of Australia

Views on items to be included in a medium-term programme of work of the COP/MOP (para 2, recommendation 2/6)

Australia's view is that the medium term program of work of the COP/MOP, to be identified at the first COP/MOP, should be focused on:

- Review of the Protocol's core operational elements, such as the Biosafety Clearing House and capacity building; and
- Those issues for which a decision is *required* under the Protocol, prioritised according to the timeframes set out in the Protocol, such as detailed documentation requirements (Article 18.2a) and liability and redress (Article 27).

The COP/MOP should concentrate efforts on the above to ensure that appropriate decisions are made in the interests of effective implementation of the Protocol and to avoid a false start. Experience with the Protocol is continuing to reveal the complexity of implementation issues and the need for considerable coordination at the national and international level. It is important that the COP/MOP not develop an over-ambitious program that would lead to rushed and potentially ill-considered decisions.

Accordingly, the inclusion of non-essential items on the COP/MOP programme of work should be considered once the essential work of the MOP has been completed (or near completed). This would also allow countries time to identify what further work the COP/MOP may usefully undertake, based on their experience implementing the Protocol.