

BLG-5/2  
28 September 2006

Convention on Biological Diversity  
Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species  
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora  
International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture  
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands  
World Heritage Convention

**Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-Related Conventions**

Fifth meeting, Gland, 14 September 2006

**REPORT**

**ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING**

1. The meeting was opened by Peter Bridgewater. Mr. Bridgewater recalled CBD decision VII/26 (para. 1 and 2), which led to the establishment of the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-Related Conventions. He emphasizes that, while there was significant collaboration and synergy between the convention secretariats, focal points within the countries are often in different departments, which makes coherent implementation at the national level of the provisions of the six conventions a challenge. He particularly welcomed Mr. José Esquinas-Alcázar representing the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture as the newest member of the Liaison Group.
2. Ahmed Djoghlaflaf thanked the Ramsar Convention for hosting the meeting and Mr. Bridgewater for chairing it. Being his first participation in the Liaison Group, he underlined his full commitment to achieve a vibrant partnership for the biodiversity agenda. Mr. Djoghlaflaf stressed that one should not think in terms of strong or weak institutions because no single organization can address all aspects of biodiversity. He said that it is therefore important to collaborate and avoid territoriality. Practical cooperation among conventions could particularly with regard to capacity development activities.
3. The meeting adopted the agenda as contained in Annex 1 to this report.
4. A list of participants is contained in Annex 2.

**ITEM 2. MATTERS ARISING FROM RECENT MEETINGS OF THE CONVENTIONS' GOVERNING BODIES AND SCIENTIFIC BODIES**

5. Since the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions was established in 2004 following a request of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD decision VII/26) the governing bodies of most biodiversity-related conventions have welcomed this mechanism and confirmed its mandate and composition (including CBD Decision VIII/16; CMS Resolution 8.11; Ramsar Resolution IX.5; World Heritage Convention Decision WHC-06/30.COM; International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (IT/GB-1/06/Report)).

*Item 2.1. The 2010 Biodiversity Target beyond 2010*

6. Mr. Djoghlafl argued that work should focus on achieving the 2010 target, not – at this stage – on strategies beyond 2010. He reported about the progress made in bringing together heads of agencies to join forces. In addition to the nine organizations that had signed the Memorandum of Understanding at CBD COP-8 in Curitiba (UNDP, UNCTAD, UNEP, CBD, Ramsar, CMS, WWF, IPGRI and IUCN) two more organizations would sign on 15 September 2006 at the occasion of the first task force meeting (CITES, UNITAR). While more partners go along with a broader involvement, it also means that failing to achieve the target will be a joint failure. Key to preventing failure is to engage organizations that work at the national level. The target can only be achieved if it is made a national priority in the countries. In this context Mr Djoghlafl reported on the ongoing process of revising national biodiversity strategy and action plans to include the 2010 biodiversity target.

7. Mr. Djoghlafl referred to the Secretary General's proposal to incorporate the 2010 biodiversity target as a new target under Goal 7 ("To ensure environmental sustainability") of the Millennium Development Goals as a major step to link biodiversity to the development agenda and to poverty alleviation. He also informed that meeting that the target was being referred to at the XIV Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement (Havana, Cuba, 14 September 2006).

8. Mr. Djoghlafl emphasized the importance of the International Biodiversity Day (IBD) as a means of informing and engaging the public. The theme for IBD 2007 (Climate Change and Biodiversity) is a common concern for all conventions both because of the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and because of the important role of biodiversity in mitigating climate change. Mr. Djoghlafl informed the meeting that Brazil is expected to submit a proposal to designate 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity. In preparation for these events, the CBD has convened a meeting with a consortium of museums, botanic gardens, and scientific institutions who will assist in preparing exhibitions on biodiversity. In this context, the Smithsonian Institution is preparing for 2007 an exhibition on oceans and the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew are planning an exhibition on biodiversity that can be duplicated in countries around the world.

9. Mr. Djoghlafl urged the meeting to seize opportunities where biodiversity-related conventions can jointly present activities related to the 2010 biodiversity target. He referred to the CBD publication Gincana, which seeks to involve heads of states and biodiversity-related conventions. He said that a special issue on the six biodiversity-related conventions is planned for early 2007.

**Agreed action:** All conventions will provide an article for the special issue of Gincana to be submitted by end of 2006 for publication in early 2007.

10. Mr. Bridgewater predicted that Governments were likely to declare the biodiversity outcome in 2010 a success, even though the target would be only partially achieved. He therefore reaffirmed the need for an agreed set of indicators and considerable efforts to reach out to and engage the public. He also felt that it would be important to start planning beyond 2010.

11. Mr. Wijnstekers recalled that the 2010 biodiversity target was agreed within the CBD without prior consultation with other processes. He said that the 2010 biodiversity target as well as the process to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were not central objectives in CITES implementation and that the CITES constituency was only beginning to take these on board. It would therefore be essential that the plan beyond 2010 was developed as a collective effort that fully engages all relevant processes.

12. Mr. Rao informed the meeting that UNESCO's Science Sector is the focal point for biodiversity. He also referred to a Memorandum of Cooperation between the CBD, the World Heritage Centre and the UNDP Small Grants Program, which focuses on the implementation of the CBD programme of work on

protected areas and makes reference to the 2010 biodiversity target. Activities of the Centre were focusing on promoting best practices and capacity development as well as the implementation of specific projects. The Centre also conducts studies on the impacts of climate change on World Heritage Sites, including site level adaptation measures and on indicators for assessing the effectiveness of protected area management.

13. Mr. Davidson said that abstract calls for conservation and the achievement of the MDGs would not resonate within the Ramsar constituency. The shift towards a focus on concrete ecosystem services, resulting from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), would facilitate understanding the links between biodiversity and human well-being, also within the donor community. Given the slow reaction and inertia of natural systems efforts to achieve the 2010 biodiversity target would need to continue beyond 2010. It would therefore be important to plan for the decade after 2010 and to develop something like a “2020 vision”.

14. Ms. Deda reported that the CMS community had fully embraced the 2010 biodiversity target. CMS COP-8 (November 2005) was held under the slogan “on the move to 2010”. She said CMS was investing significant efforts into capacity development, public relations and specific campaigns. In this respect, charismatic species as a focus are particularly attractive because people relate to them. CMS is in the process of beginning the Year of the Dolphin 2007 Campaign with a big media event (Prince Albert dives in Monaco's waters to protect dolphins). Ms. Deda informed the meeting that CMS had excellent experience with working with the private sector. In particular the collaboration with a major tour operator (TUI) was successful and reached a wide audience. With respect the IBD theme for 2007, she reported that CMS would launch in November 2006 a publication on the effects of climate change on migratory species.

15. Mr. Esquinas-Alcázar reported that, similarly to the CBD, the conservation, sustainable use and fair and equitable sharing of benefits are the main objectives of the Treaty, but these are specifically for “food security and sustainable agriculture”. He emphasized the special nature of biodiversity for food and agriculture, its specific problems, and the need for specific solutions, as recognized by the CBD. He explained that besides the Treaty there is a second specialized intergovernmental body dealing with biodiversity in FAO, the Intergovernmental Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, with 170 member countries. It deals with all genetic resources of interest to food and agriculture, including of crops, farm animals, forestry, and fisheries. The Commission works closely with the Treaty and is currently preparing, at the request of its member governments, a Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) for adoption in June 2007, which entails cooperation with both the Treaty and the CBD. Mr. Esquinas-Alcázar informed the meeting that the MYPOW will include a road-map with synchronized targets to promote synergy with other processes, such as the CBD and the MDGs.

16. Ms. Astralaga said that, although the 2010 Biodiversity Target had been included in Ramsar strategies in Latin American and Caribbean countries, and was endorsed by ministers of Andean Pact, there was a lack of understanding and ownership. She had observed a disconnect between decisions taken by intergovernmental processes and their implementation in day-to-day work.

17. Mr. Morgan agreed that there appeared to be a lack of buy-in and urged this meeting to think about strategies to overcome this disconnect.

18. Mr. Silva reported that the flexible framework for assessing progress towards the 2010 Biodiversity Target could also be applied at the national level.

19. In summarizing the discussion, Mr. Bridgewater concluded that there was an urgent need for major efforts in CEPA and outreach activities. The new idea of combining efforts in celebrating IBD was a significant step in the right direction. In this context it would be important to finalize the webpage for the Liaison Group and to develop a new webpage for the 2010 Biodiversity Target. Moreover, it would be important to inform focal points of all conventions using simple language. He specified that the Centre

and the Treaty were not representing UNESCO or FAO: instead they would contribute the important linkages between natural resources and their cultural context and the notion of agriculture as part of biodiversity instead of its foe. He suggested including the work for the decade beyond 2010 on the agenda of the next meeting.

**Agreed action:** CBD will prepare and share material for IBD 2007 with sister conventions. CBD will finalize webpage for the Liaison Group including a joint calendar of biodiversity-related conventions. CBD, in collaboration with partners, will develop a new webpage for the 2010 Biodiversity Target. A coordinated approach for the work beyond 2010 will be included on the agenda of the next meeting of the Liaison Group.

*Item 2.2. Sustainable use—Addis Ababa principles and guidelines*

20. Mr. Wijnstokers reported on the discussions at CITES COP-13 and the efforts to link the concept of non-detrimental use to the Addis Ababa principles and guidelines (AAPG). The Animals and Plants Committees had begun to examine the applicability of the AAPG on the basis of case studies submitted by Parties. He said, while many NGOs would prefer to avoid consumptive use of endangered species altogether, the development of procedures for CITES on the basis of the AAPG was an integral part of the workplan.

21. Mr. Davidson reported that Ramsar's STRP had invested significant efforts into updating definitions of wise use and the concept of maintenance of the ecological character of a site and in clarifying linkages between terminologies. The Ramsar toolkit on wise use had embraced the conceptual framework of the MA, using ecosystem benefits/services, and focusing interventions on drivers of change.

22. Mr. Esquinas-Alcázar emphasized the importance of the sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture for the achievement of Goal 1 of the MDGs. In this context, the First Session of the Treaty's Governing Body had discussed the implementation of Article 6 of the Treaty (sustainable use) and had decided that this should be a standing item on its agenda. He also noted that the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, at its Tenth Session, had supported FAO's role in the application and further elaboration of the AAPG, as they relate to food and agriculture.

23. Ms. Deda informed the meeting that CMS COP-8 had not endorsed the AAPG but has asked for additional scientific studies.

24. The meeting agreed that there was a common interest in further capacity development, training and information on the AAPG and their relevance in the context of each of the biodiversity-related conventions. This would help to understand linkages between partners and to identify gaps and thus prepare the road for a common framework.

**Agreed action:** CITES will act as lead partner in preparing a CD-ROM on the application of the Addis Ababa principles and guidelines within the biodiversity-related conventions. Relevant material should be provided to Marco Silva before CITES COP-14 (June 2007) to allow reviewing a draft product at the next meeting of the Liaison Group (tentatively scheduled for July 2007).

*Item 2.3. Protected areas—implementation of the programme of work adopted by the CBD*

25. CBD Decision VII/28 on the programme of work on protected areas includes specific goals time-bound targets and activities many of which are relevant to other biodiversity-related conventions (see for example the World Heritage Convention text; Ramsar Resolution IX.22; CMS Resolution 8.2—CMS Strategic Plan Objective 2, and existing Memoranda of Cooperation and joint work plans).

26. The second meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Protected Areas is scheduled to be held back-to-back with SBSTTA-13 (Rome, February 2008). This meeting provides an opportunity to share information on the contribution made to the implementation of the programme of work by related processes. It was therefore agreed that all Liaison Group members should prepare an information note showing progress made in the implementation of the programme of work.

**Agreed action:** All conventions will provide an information note on progress made in the implementation of the programme of work on protected areas to the CBD by end of 2006 and will update this document before the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Protected Areas (February 2008).

*Item 2.4. Indicators for assessing progress towards the 2010 Biodiversity Target*

27. The meeting welcomed the decision by the GEF Council to approve the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (2010BIP), coordinated by UNEP-WCMC. The project would deliver information relevant to all conventions by disaggregating data according to the components of biodiversity on which the conventions focus.

28. Mr. Davidson reported that only phase 1 of the 2010BIP was funded and that significant efforts were needed to develop story lines that would make the key messages accessible.

29. The meeting discussed specific expectations from each partner vis-à-vis the 2010BIP and their contributions to the process. It was agreed that the Liaison Group members should inform the project about their needs. It was also agreed to include the 2010BIP as a standing item on the agenda of the next meetings of the Liaison Group and that UNEP-WCMC should be invited to report on progress.

**Agreed action:** The 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership will be a standing item on the agenda of the next meetings of the Liaison Group. UNEP-WCMC will be invited to report on progress made in the development and implementation of the indicators.

**ITEM 3. COOPERATION AMONG SCIENTIFIC BODIES AND DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENTIFIC ADVICE**

30. Mr. Djoghlafl reported on the Brainstorming meeting of SBSTTA Chairs on ways and means to improve the effectiveness of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the CBD, held in July 2006 in Paris. This meeting had considered ways and means for the scientific bodies of biodiversity-related conventions and their representatives to interact and to collectively support to process towards the 2010 Biodiversity Target.

31. Mr. Morgan informed the meeting about the analysis carried out by CITES to review the effectiveness and efficiency of its committees.

32. The meeting agreed that a meeting of chairs of the scientific and technical bodies or advisory bodies of the conventions together with representatives of the secretariats and from UNEP should be organized prior to SBSTTA-12 and that a report of this meeting should be provided to SBSTTA. The chairs of the scientific and technical bodies or advisory bodies should also be encouraged to share information about their convention's activities and processes through side events at SBSTTA. Such a meeting of chairs of the scientific and technical bodies or advisory bodies of the conventions would ideally be the first of a series of regular meetings held back-to-back with relevant meetings of different conventions. Although efforts would be made to select venues in a strategic way and thereby maximizing the presence of participants, such meetings would require financial support. UNEP could be approached for this after the experience made in the first meeting.

**Agreed action:** Organize, prior to SBSTTA-12, a meeting of chairs of the scientific and technical bodies or advisory bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions together with representatives of the secretariats and from UNEP. Encourage the chairs of the scientific and technical bodies or advisory bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions to organize side events at SBSTTA-12. Consider a rotational scheme of similar meetings attached to relevant meetings of different conventions.

#### **ITEM 4. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT FOR MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENT AGREEMENTS**

33. Mr. Silva introduced the item and reported on the series of three back-to-back knowledge management meetings held on 13-16 June 2006 in Cambridge, UK. He reported that, after analysing each type of information, the Cambridge meeting recommended to embark on the following interoperability initiatives, which were considered of strategic relevance, and judged feasible given the existing budget and timeframe:

(a) *Contracting Parties*: a list displaying the status of ratification across conventions would be a useful reference for everyone;

(b) *National Focal Points*: improved exchange of contact information would increase communication between national focal points;

(c) *Strategic plans*: interconnecting the strategic plans would facilitate comparisons and contribute to the harmonized implementation of the conventions;

(d) *COP decisions*: interlinking the numerous decisions from various conventions would facilitate practical collaboration on specific issues.

34. Mr. Silva said that, in view of the joint activities towards the 2010 Biodiversity Target and the proposal to incorporate the target into the MDGs, it was the opportune time to start this project. He also considered it politically advantageous if the conventions were seen to take a leadership role in this initiative. He said that the relevant technology existed and technical expertise was available within the CBD and UNEP-WCMC. UNEP/DEC had decided to set up a Knowledge Management Programme for Multilateral Environmental Agreements and phase 1 of the project was now underway. To facilitate this, the Cambridge meeting had recommended the establishment of a technical group, which would ensure that unique products developed by individual conventions can be shared where appropriate.

35. Mr. Rao reported on knowledge management activities within the World Heritage Convention and proposed to consider UNEP's Issue-based modules (IBM) as a concept.

36. Mr. Silva explained that the IBM is a centralized system that was costly to implement and that the main value lies in the interpreted information, not necessarily the manually generated linkage of decisions. He said it was desirable to create an automated searchable system. In planning activities of this kind it is always important to consider the recurrent cost of maintaining the system after its establishment.

37. The meeting agreed that it would be useful if presentations on knowledge management could be given to inform entire secretariat staff. Moreover, each convention would designate a technical staff to act as focal point for these activities to be coordinated by CITES. The Liaison Group would receive progress reports at each of its next meetings.

**Agreed action:** Each convention designates a technical staff to act as focal point for knowledge management activities (typically the staff who was presented in Cambridge), which will be coordinated by CITES. CITES will provide progress reports at each of the next meetings of the Liaison Group.

## **ITEM 5. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR ACHIEVING THE 2010 BIODIVERSITY TARGET**

38. Mr. Djoghlafl introduced the item and discussed ways and means to increase the capability of developing countries to participate in convention processes, to increase the understanding about other conventions and to increase synergy at the national level. He reported that the CBD had made good experience with short training sessions for focal points and other delegates before major meetings and by inviting focal points to visit the Secretariat and interact with the staff.

39. Mr. Rao said the periodic reports required under the World Heritage Convention were useful in identifying capacity building needs.

40. The meeting discussed to what extent existing training modules from other conventions could be used to complement training activities. CITES has begun to prepare training modules on CD-ROM and hopes to establish elements for a virtual university on biodiversity. Both Ramsar and the CBD collaborate with UNITAR in developing E-learning modules with the goal of establishing a virtual biodiversity academy. The meeting agreed to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a virtual biodiversity academy that would satisfy the needs of all six conventions. As a first step, the meeting decided to prepare concept note on a common E-learning academy.

**Agreed action:** The next meeting of the Liaison Group will consider a concept note on the feasibility and contents of a common E-learning academy.

## **ITEM 6. UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

41. The meeting considered relevant upcoming meetings and the feasibility/desirability of mutual/joint representation of members of the Liaison Group. It was agreed that it would be desirable to have a mechanism through which conventions can be informed about intended participation in certain meetings to facilitate joint representation.

42. The meeting agreed on a coordinated approach to support IBD celebration by establishing an interagency outreach group. This group should also collaborate in preparing and organizing other conventions' days, e.g. Wetlands Day.

**Agreed action:** The joint calendar of the Liaison Group should include a mechanism to inform each other about intended participation to facilitate joint representation. In preparation of International Biodiversity Day 2007 and other relevant events, each convention will designate a focal point as part of the interagency outreach group.

## **ITEM 7. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

43. The meeting agreed that the next meeting of the Liaison Group should take place not later than at the margins of CBD SBSTTA-12 (July 2007 in Paris).

44. The meeting decided that this meeting should consider funding strategies to ensure that agreed programmes of work receive adequate funding. It was agreed that the Finance Officers of the biodiversity-related conventions should collaborate and prepare a short document by end of 2006. Other proposals for the agenda should be submitted to the CBD by end of 2006.

**Agreed action:** The sixth meeting of the Liaison Group is tentatively scheduled to be held back-to-back with SBSTTA-12 (Paris, July 2007). One of the agenda items will be funding strategies. Finance Officers of the biodiversity-related conventions will collectively prepare a short document by end of 2006.

Proposals for the agenda of the sixth meeting of the Liaison Group should be sent to the CBD Secretariat by end of 2006.

**ITEM 8. AOB**

45. Ms. Deda reported about fundamental concerns within CMS about the language and approach used in promoting a Type II partnership for the East Asian-Australasian flyway. Although CMS will officially support the agreement, expected to be endorsed in November 2006, the existence of, and compatibility with, regional CMS agreements would need to be acknowledged in the future.

46. The meeting took note of these concerns and agreed that such situations would require better and more immediate coordination.

47. The meeting was informed about the death of Mario Ramos, Senior Biodiversity Specialist and Acting Team Leader for Biodiversity in the GEF Secretariat. The CBD Secretariat had already sent a note of sympathy to the family. It was agreed that the Chair of the meeting should write to the Secretariat and family to express the condolences of the Liaison Group members.

**Agreed action:** On behalf of the Liaison Group, Peter Bridgewater will prepare a letter of sympathy to the GEF Secretariat and to Mario Ramos' family.

48. The meeting was closed at 4 pm on 14 September 2006.

Annex 1

**AGENDA**

- Item 1. Opening of the meeting
- Item 2. Matters arising from recent meetings of the Conventions' governing bodies and scientific bodies
  - Item 2.1. The 2010 biodiversity target beyond 2010*
  - Item 2.2. Sustainable use—Addis Ababa principles and guidelines*
  - Item 2.3. Protected areas—implementation of the programme of work adopted by the CBD*
  - Item 2.4. Indicators for assessing progress towards the 2010 biodiversity target*
- Item 3. Cooperation among scientific bodies and development of scientific advice
- Item 4. Knowledge management for multilateral environment agreements
- Item 5. Capacity development and technical support for achieving the 2010 biodiversity target
- Item 6. Upcoming meetings and events
- Item 7. Date and venue of next meeting
- Item 8. AOB

Annex 2

**List of participants**

*Convention on Biological Diversity*

Ahmed Djoghlaif  
Robert Höft  
Jaime Webbe

*Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora*

Willem Wijnstekers  
David Morgan  
Marcos Silva

*Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals*

Paola Deda

*International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*

José Esquinas-Alcázar

*Ramsar Convention on Wetlands*

Peter Bridgewater  
Nick Davidson  
Margarita Astralaga  
Lucia Scodanibbio  
Dorothea August

*World Heritage Convention*

Kishore Rao

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