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12 November 2013

NOTIFICATION

Follow-up to decisions X/33 and XI/20 in relation to climate-related geoengineering

Dear Madam/Sir,

The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), in decision X/33, paragraph 8, invites Parties and other Governments, according to national circumstances and priorities, as well as relevant organizations and processes, to consider the guidance listed in subparagraphs 8 (a) to (z), on ways to conserve, sustainably use and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services while contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Subparagraph 8 (w) contains the following guidance:

“Ensure, in line and consistent with decision IX/16 C, on ocean fertilization and biodiversity and climate change, in the absence of science based, global, transparent and effective control and regulatory mechanisms for geo-engineering, and in accordance with the precautionary approach and Article 14 of the Convention, that no climate-related geo-engineering activities that may affect biodiversity take place, until there is an adequate scientific basis on which to justify such activities and appropriate consideration of the associated risks for the environment and biodiversity and associated social, economic and cultural impacts, with the exception of small scale scientific research studies that would be conducted in a controlled setting in accordance with Article 3 of the Convention, and only if they are justified by the need to gather specific scientific data and are subject to a thorough prior assessment of the potential impacts on the environment.”

At its eleventh meeting, the COP reaffirmed paragraph 8, including its subparagraph (w), of decision X/33, and invited Parties to report on measures undertaken in accordance with this subparagraph (decision XI/20, paragraphs 1 and 9). In the same decision, the COP requested the Executive Secretary to compile this information reported by Parties and to make it available through the clearing-house mechanism (decision XI/20, paragraph 15 (a)).

Further to this request, I invite Parties submit to the Secretariat (by e-mail at: secretariat@cbd.int, or by fax at: +1 514 288 6588), **before 15 February 2014**, information on any measures they have undertaken in accordance with decision X/33, subparagraph 8(w). Parties may wish to provide information, for example, on:

- (i) general measures they have undertaken to implement subparagraph 8(w), in particular “to ensure [...] that no climate-related geo-engineering activities that may affect biodiversity take place, until there is an adequate scientific basis on which to justify such activities and appropriate consideration of the associated risks for the environment and biodiversity and associated social, economic and cultural impacts”; and/or
- (ii) general measures that address the exception for small scale scientific research studies contained in paragraph 8(w) and any information on their application to specific cases.

To: CBD National Focal Points



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Decision XI/20 also refers to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. I would like to inform you that the contribution of Working Group I to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2013: the Physical Science Basis, as approved by the Working Group, contains several references to geoengineering, in particular in chapters 6.5 and 7.7 (available at: <http://www.climatechange2013.org/>). The summary for policymakers contains the following statement:

“Methods that aim to deliberately alter the climate system to counter climate change, termed geoengineering, have been proposed. Limited evidence precludes a comprehensive quantitative assessment of both Solar Radiation Management (SRM) and Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR) and their impact on the climate system. CDR methods have biogeochemical and technological limitations to their potential on a global scale. There is insufficient knowledge to quantify how much CO₂ emissions could be partially offset by CDR on a century timescale. Modelling indicates that SRM methods, if realizable, have the potential to substantially offset a global temperature rise, but they would also modify the global water cycle, and would not reduce ocean acidification. If SRM were terminated for any reason, there is high confidence that global surface temperatures would rise very rapidly to values consistent with the greenhouse gas forcing. CDR and SRM methods carry side effects and long-term consequences on a global scale.”

Finally, in relation to decision XI/20, paragraph 10, which notes the relevant resolutions of the Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter 1972 (London Convention) and its 1996 Protocol (London Protocol), I would like to inform Parties that the Meeting of Contracting Parties to the London Protocol adopted, on 18 October 2013, resolution LP.4(8) on the amendment to the London Protocol to regulate the placement of matter for ocean fertilization and other marine geoengineering activities. The amendment is structured to allow other marine geoengineering activities to be considered and listed in a new annex in the future if they fall within the scope of the London Protocol and have the potential to harm the marine environment. The amendment will enter into force 60 days after two thirds of the Contracting Parties to the London Protocol have deposited an instrument of acceptance of the amendment with the International Maritime Organization.

Information on climate-related geoengineering and biodiversity, including the information mentioned above, is available on the CBD website at: <http://www.cbd.int/climate/geoengineering/>.

Please accept, Madam/Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias
Executive Secretary