

**MINUTES OF THE INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON THE SUGGESTED
DRAFT BUDGET FOR THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY FOR THE
BIENNIUM 2009-2010**

Geneva, 26 January 2008

1. The informal consultative meeting on the suggested draft budget for the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety for the biennium 2009-2010 was held at International Environment House, Geneva, on 26 January 2008. The meeting was attended by 26 representatives of the following Parties: Bahamas; Brazil; Cameroon; Chile; European Community; Finland; Germany; Japan; Mexico; Netherlands; Norway, Russian Federation; Slovenia; Spain; Switzerland; Ukraine; United Kingdom and Yemen, as well as by the two Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing. Seven members of the COP-8 Bureau attended the meeting. The meeting was opened by the representative of the President of the Eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Mr. Fernando Coimbra.

2. Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention, briefed the meeting on the measures since COP8 taken to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of the operations of the secretariat as well as action initiated to align SCBD processes with the established UN procedures. He highlighted the increase in voluntary funds received thanking in particular Norway, the Netherlands, Germany and the European Commission for their multi-year contributions to the Secretariat. He also noted that France, the FAO and UNDP are seconding staff to the Secretariat (both full-time and part-time) and that it is expected that UNESCO will also second someone on a part-time basis in the future. Dr. Djoghlaif also paid tribute to Mr Achim Steiner, the Executive Director of UNEP for agreeing to fund from the programme support costs two additional professional posts as well as the cost of the organization of two training workshops of staff on team building. He also thanked the Executive Director for agreeing on an exceptional basis and on a case by case basis to use the 13% from the voluntary fund for travel of participants to support additional participants to CBD meetings. He informed the participants that for the first time in the history of the convention an audit report prepared by the independent board of auditors of the United Nations General Assembly will be submitted to COP9 and the auditors team is expected in Montreal during the second week of March 2008.

3. Dr. Djoghlaif gave a brief description of the activities of the Secretariat including the Retreat, the travel policy for staff, the organization of Task Teams, the management review and the mobility planned for after COP-9. He also spoke of the MOUs entered into with ICAO and UNON with regard to conference servicing of SCBD meetings, noting that the Secretariat had convened 41 meetings in 2007 including six major meetings of established organs of the convention and its protocol.

4. Dr. Djoghlaif then introduced the suggested draft budget of the Convention noting that 3 new Professional posts were being requested as well as a number of General Service posts. He highlighted the losses to the Secretariat as a result of the devaluation of the US\$ vis-à-vis the Canadian\$ and stated that an informal host committee with the Canadian authorities has been established to discuss all issues including rent and security related to operations of the secretariat in Montreal. A meeting with the Canadian authorities will take place before the next meeting of COP.

5. Dr. Djoghlaif also introduced the draft budget for the Biosafety Protocol noting that three professional posts and 1 GS post from the shared costs have been moved 100% to the Biosafety budget in keeping with the reality of their work. He also highlighted the request for an increase

of two professionals and three general service posts to meet the increasing needs of the growing Biosafety Protocol.

6. The following constitutes the informal summary of the ensuing discussion, which took place in a very constructive atmosphere.

7. Participants welcomed the opportunity to hold this meeting and thanked the Executive Secretary for convening the informal meeting and for the measures taken to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the secretariat as well as for the action initiated to ensure transparency and accountability of the secretariat's activities. It was felt that a second informal meeting with donors should be held prior to COP-9 following the WGPA-2 meeting scheduled to take place in Rome in February 2008.

8. Discussions were held on the need to streamline CBD processes and prioritize the meetings that will be convened in the future – both the number of meetings and the source of their funding – whether the core budget or extra-budgetary funds.

9. Discussions were also held on the 13% programme support costs charged by UNEP and the justification for the flat rate of 13%. The Executive Secretary responded that the flat rate is the result of a United Nations General Assembly and this issue may be raised with UNEP directly during the discussion on the budget at COP9.

10. The issue of results based budgeting by the Secretariat was raised, and the Secretariat assured the meeting that this matter will be explored with UNEP with a view to presenting such a budget in the future.

11. On the Working Capital Reserve the question was asked about the necessity to change it from 5% to 15%. The Executive Secretary explained that this was in keeping the recommendation of the UN Controller and was to safeguard the operations of the Secretariat especially now that the surplus has been spent.

12. The disconnect between the negotiation of substantive decisions with serious financial implications and budget discussion was mentioned in the framework of COP Decision VIII/10 Annex 1 paragraph 1, and the Executive Secretary informed participants that the compilation of suggested draft decisions to COP9 will include a statement on their financial implications and the plenary of COP9 will be convened at the end of the first week to review the financial implication of the emerging draft decisions .

13. The Co-Chairs of the ABS Working group addressed the meeting, making reference to the recently concluded ABS-6 meeting and to all the work that would be needed in the run up to COP-10 in order to achieve the target. They highlighted the need for financial support for the intersessional consultations that will be needed in order to build awareness and strengthen the regional preparations, and appealed for funding to be allocated in the core budget for their travel during this period.

14. In keeping with the discussions during the meeting, the suggested budget for the consideration of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties will be revised to include the following:

(a) A zero nominal growth option together with a revised option 1 to take into account the comments of Parties.

(b) More detailed information on the status of the posts that have been filled since COP-8 and the new posts being requested.

15. For the budget of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, a zero nominal growth option will also be prepared together with a revise option from the Secretariat.

16. The meeting was closed at 1.10 pm.