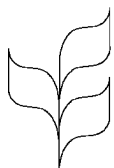




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**CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

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REGIONAL MEETINGS ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
First meeting
Lima, Peru
4 to 6 March 1998

REPORT OF

THE LATIN AMERICAN AND THE CARIBBEAN REGIONAL PREPARATORY
MEETING TO
THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Lima, Peru, 4-6 March 1998

Introduction

1. In accordance with Decision III/26, adopted at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in November 1996, and, at the kind invitation of the Government of Peru, the Latin American and the Caribbean regional meeting preparatory to the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention was held from 4 to 6 March 1998 in Lima, Peru.

Participation

2. The Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean, Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as observer Governments, agencies of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and special guests participated in the meeting. The list of participants appears as Annex II to the present Report.

Agenda Item 1: Inauguration Ceremony

3. The meeting began at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, 4 March 1998, with remarks by

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Mr. Alberto Giseke, on behalf of Mrs. Kim Bolduc, Resident Representative of the United Nations system in Peru; Mrs. Ana Clara Schenberg, representative of the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity; and Mr. Carlos Soldi, on behalf of Mr. Gonzalo Galdos, President of the National Environment Council of Peru.

Agenda Item 2: Opening of the Meeting

4. The formal work of the meeting began at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, 4 March 1998.

Agenda Item 3: Organization of the Meeting

5. The Government of Peru was elected by the participants to serve as President of the meeting, while the Government of Barbados served as Vice-president and the Government of Argentina served as Rapporteur.

6. As customary, the meeting adopted the Provisional Agenda, proposed by the secretariat, following observations on the specific topics to be given priority in dealing with items 6, 7 and 8 on the Agenda.

Agenda Item 4: Ways and Means of Strengthening in-situ Conservation

7. Under this agenda item, the representative of the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity took the floor to present its perspectives on the importance of in-situ conservation and introduced a draft document prepared by the secretariat to facilitate discussion on the topics regarding cooperation with other conventions, institutions and processes important to in-situ conservation, as well as general activities that should be adopted to improve implementation of Article 8 of the Convention.

8. The participants agreed on the importance of in-situ conservation to the region and on the need to address Article 8 of the Convention in a manner integrated with other articles and in particular with Article 10, so as to link conservation with the sustainable use of the components of biological diversity. They also agreed it was necessary to include the economic valuation of biological diversity, based on economic and social criteria.

9. It was noted with concern that the genetic diversity approach was not sufficiently included in the in-situ conservation activities and programmes, and that there was a need to define criteria for genetic resources zoning within and outside protected natural areas.

Agenda Item 5: Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity at the National Level

10. Under this agenda item, the participants at the meeting referred to various activities that have been conducted at the national level and particularly to the implementation of Article 6 of the Convention concerning the preparation of

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national strategies on biological diversity. The participants made reference to the importance of promoting institutional strengthening and environmental legislation as priority activities to ensure conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources. They also expressed concern regarding the importance of having flexible access to additional financial resources to implement national strategies and to promote an increase in national funds allocated to environmental activities in the matter. In that regard, the representative of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) referred to the funds allocated to implement biological diversity conservation activities and underscored the need for the Conference of the Parties to define priority subject areas to be funded by GEF, since there were insufficient funds to implement all the national activities that fell within the framework of the Convention.

Agenda Item 6: Ways and Means of Strengthening Regional Cooperation

11. Under this agenda item, the participants indicated the importance of regional cooperation through specific actions, such as the establishment of an information exchange network, the application and assessment of common methodologies for the economic valuation of natural resources and the inventories of neo-tropical flora of biological and economic importance.

12. The participants expressed the need to build institutional capacity, including the training of human resources. In defining regional priority activities, note was made of the need to distinguish activities of strictly national priority from others that were of a regional nature and could consequently be implemented through regional and subregional strategies.

13. It was agreed that information exchange at the regional and subregional levels should fall within the framework of the clearing-house mechanism (CHM).

Agenda Item 7: Preparations for the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity

14. Under this agenda item, the representative of the secretariat of the Convention reported on pertinent arrangements for holding the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, as well as arrangements for the distribution of working documents, in accordance with the practices established in the United Nations system. She also expressed her concern regarding the lack of sufficient funds to finance the participation of two governmental representatives of developing countries Parties to the Convention and reported on the steps being taken by the secretariat to obtain additional funds.

15. The representative of Antigua and Barbuda, a member of the Bureau of the third Conference of the Parties noted his concern regarding the lack of available funds to ensure the participation of representatives of developing countries, since it would put some countries at a disadvantage during the negotiations of the Conference of the Parties, and he requested the countries of the region to provide the names of their candidates as soon as possible, so the secretariat could evaluate funding possibilities. He also informed the participants of the meeting that the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community endorsed the candidacy of the Government of Jamaica to form part of the Bureau of the fourth

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meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Agenda Item 8. Matters Pending in the Work of the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties

16. The representative of the secretariat of the Convention introduced document UNEP/CBD/COP/4/3 regarding matters pending from the work of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which included the rules of procedures for the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and the financial rules for the administration of the Trust Fund of the Convention.

17. The participants discussed the options and implications of the decisions to be adopted. They agreed on the need for each of the countries of the region to conduct a pertinent analysis prior to the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in order to present a well-defined position at that meeting and thereby contribute to settling the pending issues.

Agenda Item 9: Financial Aspects of the Implementation of the Convention

18. The representative of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) presented a report on the activities and decisions of the Facility, including a detailed presentation of the financial resources allocated so far to implement activities linked to the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, as well as the funding of projects to support the implementation of the Convention. He also noted that the recommendations of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention had been included in the GEF operational programmes and that a study on the assessment of the Facility's activities had been completed. The representative of the Facility underscored the need for clear and detailed guidelines on eligibility criteria for access to financial resources. Finally, he indicated that the restructuring of the Facility has been completed and that the replenishment of the Facility would soon be concluded.

Agenda Item 10: Review of the Convention Operations

19. The participants examined the operation of current structures for implementing the Convention and possible alternatives for improving its workability. In particular, they discussed the periodicity of the meetings of the Conference of the Parties, specific issues that should be examined in the sphere of the Convention's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and the need for more detailed agendas and work programmes based on national priorities. The participants noted with concern that the excessive range of issues to be dealt with at the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties would hinder the full participation in the negotiations of the countries with small delegations.

20. They also underscored the importance of filling the vacancies in the secretariat of the Convention as soon as possible on the basis of equitable geographical representation to provide the secretariat with the human resources necessary to fulfil its mandates, including the financial resources to carry out

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its work.

21. Finally, the participants exchanged ideas and points of view on the substantive issues that could be considered of priority to the region.

Agenda Item 11: Protocol on Biosafety

22. Under this agenda item, the representative of the secretariat of the Convention introduced document UNEP/CBD/BSWG/4/4 which contained the report of the fourth meeting of the open ended ad hoc working group on biosafety, held in Montreal from 5 to 13 February 1998. Consideration was given to the advisability of supporting a special meeting of the Conference of the Parties to deal with the proposal negotiated in relation to the Protocol on Biosafety prepared by the working group, and the interest of the Governments of Colombia and Barbados in forming part of the bureau of that group was noted. Some delegations expressed concern regarding the impossibility of their attending the meetings of the group, owing to budgetary reasons, and the need to ensure that the reports on the group's work were widely distributed.

Agenda Item 12: Implementation of Article 8 (j) and Related Provisions

23. The participants considered the document UNEP/CBD/TKBD/1/3 and the options regarding the future programme of work to be adopted at the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties. They also exchanged views on the option of establishing an open-ended ad hoc working group to draft the programme of work to implement Article 8 (j). Whichever option is adopted by the Conference of the Parties, it should take pertinent provisions for adequate resources to support the task, and also this group must have a specific mandate and report the results of its work directly to the Conference of the Parties. In this regard, the participants reiterated their support for the provision of adequate resources to ensure the full participation of the developing countries in the negotiations.

Agenda Item 13: Trust Fund of the Convention

24. The participants noted the importance to the region of their full participation in the negotiation process on the trust fund budget, so that the decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties will have the necessary human and financial resources for their implementation. They also underscored the need to ensure the availability of financial funds to carry out inter-sessional activities and processes, which are now hindered by their dependence on voluntary contributions.

Agenda Item 14: Clearing-House Mechanism

25. Under this agenda item, and, in accordance with the concepts already expressed under previous agenda items, there was agreement on the importance of the full implementation of the clearing-house mechanism, and it was considered advisable to support SBSSTA recommendation III/6 on the topic. It was also agreed that regional and subregional initiatives should be promoted and developed in the framework of the clearing-house mechanism, making major efforts to combine such

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initiatives in order to optimize human and financial resources. Finally, an appeal was made to the secretariat of the Convention to make the information available in all the official languages of the United Nations system.

Agenda Item 15: Regional Positions on Key Topics

26. The participants exchanged views on key topics directly linked to the conservation of biological diversity and particularly to the El Niño phenomenon, its environmental impact and the importance it may have in the implementation of biological diversity management and restoration programmes as a way of minimizing its adverse impacts in the region. Note was made of the complexity of the topic, which is a clear example of the necessary linkage among the Convention on Biological Diversity and other conventions such as the Convention on Climate Change and the Convention to Combat Desertification, as well as the importance of strengthening inter-agency cooperation among all organizations that are conducting studies and research on the topic.

Agenda Item 16: Pending Topics

27. Under this agenda item, the participants expressed their concern regarding the information contained in the draft document UNEP/CBD/COP/4/13, since it applied global approaches and does not appropriately reflect the priorities and situations existing at national and regional levels. In relation to in-situ conservation, the participants underscored the need for more in-depth research linked to the genetic studies of populations and studies on traditional varieties used by local farmers.

Agenda Item 17. Other Matters

28. Under this agenda item, the participants underscored the importance of giving consideration to the results of the Latin America Congress on Parks and other Protected Areas, held in Santa Marta, Colombia, in May 1997.

Agenda Item 18: Approval of the Report and Closure of the Meeting

29. The President of the meeting presented the draft final report for consideration. It was approved by the participants, once the necessary modifications were made. The recommendations of this regional preparatory meeting of Latin America and the Caribbean on Biological Diversity are contained in Annex I to this report.

30. The participants expressed their gratitude to the Government and people of Peru for their hospitality and efforts which contributed to the success of the meeting.

Agenda Item 19: Closure of the Meeting

31. The Meeting was officially closed at 9:30 p.m., 6 March 1998.

Annex I

Recommendations of the
Regional Preparatory Meeting of Latin America and
the Caribbean on Biological Diversity

Upon concluding their deliberations, the governmental representatives of the Latin American and the Caribbean countries participating in the Regional Meeting Preparatory to the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity agreed to formulate the following recommendations.

The GRULAC,

1. Urges the Parties at the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to reach agreement on Article 40, paragraph 1, of the Rules of Procedures of the Conference of the Parties and on Articles 4 and 16 of the Financial Rules of the Trust Fund for the Convention on Biological Diversity;
2. Urges that the rigidity of the structure and budgetary constraints of the Global Environmental Facility Enabling Activities be reviewed, so they may take into account the particular characteristics and needs of the countries when financing requests are submitted;
3. Requests greater support from the Global Environment Facility for the development of national strategies on biological diversity and the implementation of their action plans in the countries of the region;
4. Strongly supports the holding of technical meetings for the exchange of information on experience gained during the preparation and implementation of national strategies on biological diversity and for making use of the facilities that should be established through the clearing-house mechanism for their dissemination;
5. Urges the Conference of the Parties to promote and strengthen activities for the economic, social and cultural valuation of biological diversity;
6. Urges that the importance of the Global Programme to Support Biological Diversity Planning be recognized;
7. Calls for the building and strengthening of national capacities within the framework of the clearing-house mechanism, including human and institutional resources; the facilitating of technology transfer, in accordance with Article 16 of the Convention; and the establishment of joint programmes for the development of technologies pertinent to the objectives of the Convention;
8. Supports recommendation III/6 of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and requests the Conference of the Parties to issue a clear mandate to the Global Environment Facility on criteria for

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financing the implementation of the clearing-house mechanism;

9. Urges revision of the terms under which the project on enabling activities to initiate the clearing-house mechanism pilot phase in the region was elaborated, since these terms do not adequately reflect either the provisions of decision III/4 of the Conference of the Parties, or the needs and conditions of the countries of the region regarding the implementation of the clearing-house mechanism at the national level;

10. Strongly supports the recommendations of the regional workshop of the clearing-house mechanism held in Cartagena, Colombia, and requests the Conference of the Parties to issue a clear mandate to the Global Environment Facility on the criteria for financing the implementation of the clearing-house mechanism, taking into account its recommendations.

11. Recognizes the need to strengthen existing decision-making, advisory and working bodies in the Convention and the need for the Conference of the Parties to clearly and efficiently assign responsibilities for implementing its decisions;

12. Suggests that the work of the Conference of the Parties be organized in two ways: the first aimed at discussing standing and substantive multilateral issues; and the other to deal with issues on which the Conference of the Parties has already taken decisions which should be reviewed by its various organs and by existing national and regional bodies;

13. Calls for the strengthening of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, and asks that Body to promote greater linkage with the scientific and technical community;

14. Strongly recommends that the inter-sessional activities of the Conference of the Parties be strengthened;

15. Strongly recommends that the inter-sessional activities of the Conference of the Parties be supported with sufficient financial resources from Part A of the Convention budget, so as to ensure and strengthen such activities;

16. Calls for greater support for the participation of delegates of developing countries in the Convention activities, in accordance with recommendation III/7 of the Convention's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical And Technological Advice;

17. Urges that the Convention budget ensures sufficient financial resources for the effective and efficient operation of all its instruments and to implement all the activities in the programme of work which will be approved at the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

18. Recommends that the meetings of the Conference of the Parties be biennial and preceded by meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, which should be held at least six months in advance;

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19. Requests, in accordance with decision III/13 of the Conference of the Parties, that greater attention be given to mountain ecosystems in the future programme of work of the Conference of the Parties, in view of their critical importance to the region;
20. Urges the Parties to the Convention, to fulfil their financial commitments assumed at the Conference of the Parties;
21. Urges the secretariat of the Convention to complete the provision of staff approved by the Conference of the Parties, taking into account adequate geographical distribution;
22. Requests that the recommendations of the open-ended working group on biosafety be adopted for the holding of two additional meetings of that group, as well as the holding of a special meeting of the Conference of the Parties to discuss, review and approve the draft Protocol on Biosafety;
23. Calls on the Conference of the Parties to support the elaboration and implementation of a work plan for developing Article 8 (j) of the Convention;
24. Requests the secretariats of the Conventions on Biological Diversity and Climate Change to join efforts in carrying out a broad study on the relationship between the El Niño phenomenon and biological diversity, including, among other aspects, an analysis of the impacts of El Niño on the environment and the importance of biological diversity in mitigating the effects of this phenomenon and in the recovery of ecosystems and economic activities that have been adversely affected; and also to request that other relevant international institutions and initiatives be invited to participate in this effort;
25. Requests the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean to endorse these recommendations and to promote the preparation of a regional programme of action for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

Annex II

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ANNEX III

Agenda

1. Inauguration Ceremony
2. Opening of the Meeting
3. Organization of the Meeting
4. Ways and Means of Strengthening in-situ Conservation
5. Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity at the National Level
6. Ways and Means of Strengthening Regional Cooperation
7. Preparations for the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.
8. Matters Pending in the Work of the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties
9. Financial Aspects of the Implementation of the Convention
10. Review of the Convention Operations
11. Protocol on Biosafety
12. Implementation of Article 8 (j) and Related Provisions
13. Trust Fund of the Convention
14. Clearing-House Mechanism
15. Regional Positions on Key Topics
16. Pending Topics
17. Other Matters
18. Approval of the Report
19. Closure of the Meeting

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