

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
Fourth meeting
Bratislava, Slovakia
4-15 May 1998

REPORT OF THE REGIONAL WORKSHOPS ON THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM

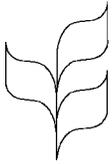
Note by the Executive Secretary

In its decision III/4, the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties, requested Governments and relevant financial, scientific and technical institutions to facilitate, including through the provision of voluntary contributions, regional workshops of the Clearing-House Mechanism. The aim of the workshops was to attain a clear definition of country and regional-level scientific and technical information needs and priorities identified and modalities to deliver information and evaluate national capacities for the implementation of the Convention.

Such workshops were expected also to review experience in scientific and technical co-operation in support of the objectives of the Convention and to identify ways by which the clearing-house mechanism could best facilitate such co-operation.

Consequently, the Secretariat of the Convention organised four regional workshops of the Clearing-House Mechanism for Latin American and the Caribbean (Colombia, from 13 to 15 October 1997); Central and Eastern Europe (Hungary, from 27 to 29 October 1997); Asia (Malaysia, from 3 to 5 December 1997) and Africa (Kenya, from 5 to 7 March 1998).

The respective reports are attached for information and consideration.



CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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23 October 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM
REGIONAL WORKSHOPS
First Meeting
Cartagena de Indias, Colombia
13 to 15 October 1997

REPORT OF THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM REGIONAL WORKSHOP
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with Decision III/4 of the Conference of the Parties, the Clearing-House Mechanism Regional Workshop for Latin America and the Caribbean, hosted by the Government of Colombia, was held in Cartagena de Indias, from 13 to 15 October 1997.
2. The meeting was attended by representatives of Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico and Peru, as well as representatives of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and observers from the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), US Geological Survey, Biological Resources Division, Central American Commission for the Environment and Development (CCAD), BirdLife International/BCIS. A full list of participants is attached as Annex I.

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting

3. The meeting was opened at 09:00 on 13 October 1997 by the representative of the Secretariat, Mr. Marc Auer, Programme Officer of the Clearing-House Mechanism, who welcomed the participants on behalf of the Executive Secretary, Mr. Calestous Juma. In his welcoming address, read to the meeting, the Executive Secretary expressed his gratitude to the Government of Colombia for its offer to host the regional workshop and for its continued efforts to promote the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM or Clearing-House). He also thanked the Governments of Germany and Australia for their additional voluntary contributions. He noted that the meeting would lay the basis for further cooperation and synergy among those who are developing their national biodiversity information and cooperation capacities. The Executive Secretary recalled the importance of the first regional workshop of the Clearing-House Mechanism in the development of the CHM pilot-phase. He said the workshop will provide recommendations to the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in May 1998.

4. Mr. Cristián Samper welcomed the participants on behalf of the Government of Colombia. He also expressed his satisfaction that the first regional workshop of the Clearing-House Mechanism was being held in Colombia, and his appreciation for the close cooperation between the Government of Colombia and the Secretariat of the Convention in the organization of the workshop. He read the statement of Mr. Fabio Arjona, Vice-Minister for the Environment. After thanking the Secretariat and the Governments of Germany and Australia, he stressed the need to discuss the relationship between the CHM and regional initiatives and the identification of elements particular to the region.

Agenda Item 2: Election of the Chairperson

5. Mr. Cristián Samper (Colombia) was elected Chairperson and Ms. Dalia Salabarría (Cuba) was elected Rapporteur of the meeting.

Agenda Item 3: Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

6. The provisional agenda as contained in document UNEP/CBD/CHM/RW/1/1 was adopted. The provisional organization of work, contained in document UNEP/CBD/CHM/RW/1/1/Add.1, was also adopted. The agenda is attached as Annex II and the list of documents for the workshop is attached as Annex III.

Agenda Item 4: Introduction and background

7. The Secretariat made a presentation on the state of the art of the CHM introducing document UNEP/CBD/CHM/RW/1/2. This background document was prepared by the Secretariat for the purpose of facilitating the First Regional Workshop on the Clearing-House Mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity, recalling the recommendations and decisions related to the Clearing-House Mechanism. To further assist the regional workshops, the document restates the terms of reference of the Meeting, as formulated by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. These define national and regional scientific and technical information needs, priorities identified, modalities to deliver information and evaluation of national capacities for the implementation of the Convention. The regional workshops should also review experience in scientific and technical co-operation in support of the objectives of the Convention, in order to identify ways for the Clearing-House Mechanism to facilitate best such co-operation.

8. The representative of the Secretariat stressed the latest developments of the CHM pilot phase as of June 1997, with respect to the guidance provided by the Convention's bodies, partners and target group, concept and current status, regional workshops and prospects and expectations.

9. Ms. Beatriz Torres (SCBD) made a presentation on the CHM Technology Evaluation.

Agenda Item 5: Preliminary exchange of views

10. The delegations of Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Cuba, Ecuador, Costa Rica and Jamaica made interventions. It was stated, *inter alia*, that the Clearing-House Mechanism was supposed to be more than an information system and should be clearly focused on the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention.

11. Participants also stressed that the CHM should facilitate and promote technical and scientific cooperation.

Agenda Item 6: Presentation of country experiences

12. The representatives of the following countries made presentations about the state of their Clearing-House Mechanism activities as well as about the implementation of the Convention: Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico and Peru.

Agenda Item 7: Presentation of regional experiences

13. Representatives of the Interamerican Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN) and the Central American Commission for the Environment (CCAD) made presentations on regional initiatives.

Agenda Item 8: Presentation of thematic experiences

14. The representative of Biodiversity Conservation Information System (BCIS) made a presentation on thematic experiences.

Agenda Item 9: Presentation on information content

15. Mr. Vanderlei Canhos (Brazil) made a presentation on information content.

Agenda Item 10: Presentation on information structure

16. Mr. Hesiquio Benítez (Mexico) spoke on information structure.

Agenda Item 11: Presentation on capacity building

17. Mr. Arturo Martínez (Argentina) spoke about capacity building.

Agenda Item 12: Presentation of the Global Environment Facility:
Support for the national implementation of the CHM

18. Mr. Gonzalo Castro, stressed the interest of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in financing projects for the implementation of the Convention and the development of the CHM. He presented a wide array of options to gain access to GEF funding. He also noted the need for regional perspectives and the importance of integrating CBD projects with initiatives of other international and regional treaties.

Agenda Item 13: Discussion of agenda items 9, 10 and 11

19. Participants discussed agenda items 9, 10 and 11 on October 14 and October 15.

Agenda Item 14: Presentation of results and recommendations of agenda items 9, 10 and 11

General recommendations

20. The Clearing-House Mechanism must be designed to promote and facilitate scientific and technical cooperation, and contribute to the implementation of all three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
21. Information systems are an important component of the Clearing-House Mechanism. In addition, it should provide other services, including implementation of the provisions of Article 12 of the Convention.
22. The implementation of the Clearing-House at the national level requires the strengthening of national capacities.
23. The Clearing-House should be needs-driven, and based on an assessment of needs for technical and scientific cooperation by potential user groups.
24. Benefits of the Clearing-House include better data for decision making, support faster access to existing knowledge, promote technical and scientific communication and avoid duplication of efforts, allow additional comparisons among existing data and generation of new information, and a more effective and efficient implementation of the Convention.
25. The implementation of the Clearing-House Mechanism will require, *inter alia*, access to metadata and databases, information technology, institutional strengthening, human resources and training.
26. Potential users of the Clearing-House Mechanism include national governments, research and training institutions, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector and communications media.
27. Data used for the Clearing-House Mechanism needs to be organized, standardized and made available, in order to integrate, interpret and summarize them according to needs.
28. Ownership of all information made available through the Clearing-House Mechanism shall remain with the provider of the information. Restrictions to access may exist according to terms and conditions agreed upon with the provider.
29. Benefits should be shared with the providers of the information, especially information related to the use of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of local and indigenous communities, in accordance with Article 8(j) of the Convention.

30. Data quality and updating is an essential component of information management, and shall be the responsibility of the provider of the information at the national level.

31. Information exchange should take advantage of information technology including, *inter alia*, the use of the internet, CD-ROMs and diskettes.

32. Financial resources need to be made available to support the implementation of the CHM, through bilateral and multilateral funding institutions and other international donors. The GEF, as the interim financial mechanism, should maintain a range of funding options that are flexible and meet national needs in accordance with Decision III/4 of the Conference of the Parties and SBSTTA recommendations III/6.

Content

33. Contents of the Clearing-House should include information and technical and scientific cooperation provided by the Convention on Biological Diversity and Parties, and also among different users at the national level, and should be a two-way mechanism.

34. At the multilateral, regional, sub-regional and bilateral levels, the content of the Clearing-House should include the content of national strategies, programs and plans, and can also include, but not necessarily be restricted to:

a. Full text of the Convention

The importance for National Focal Points to make available the convention provisions and decisions in the native language (making an appeal so that all UN official languages will be in the Secretariat's page) and the interpretation (national and in non technical language) of resolutions and opportunities, is recognized.

b. Information on the Country Studies, National Strategies and Reports, including, *inter alia*, case studies and practices, to the COP. This information besides complying with COP mandates has the function of being highly informative at national level.

c. Opportunities for international, regional and multilateral cooperation.

d. National information on other international and regional treaties related to biological diversity of which the country is member. This information is useful at national level, because it identifies points of contact among different conventions and facilitates synergy between the country different commitments. The importance of establishing links among different conventions is recognized. Moreover, each party shall identify existing national focal points in each convention and shall identify the ratification procedures.

e. Case studies referring to activities related to the implementation of the Convention.

35. In order to promote scientific and technical co-operation at the national and regional level, common needs and priorities from other parties should be clearly identified. Examples at the regional level include shared ecosystems, migratory species and invasive species. Also information about markets, biological collections, maps and satellite images, clean technologies, training opportunities and funding sources.

36. The content of the Clearing-House at the national level may include, but not necessarily be limited to the following items, depending on national priorities and capacities:

a) National Legislation, i.e.:

- Biodiversity conservation
- Sustainable use
- Access to genetic resources
- Access to transfer of technology
- Patents
- Biosafety
- Environmental legislation (list of threatened species, both national and international)
- Incentive measures
- Threatened and endangered species
- Intellectual property rights

b) Biodiversity Information and Practices:

- Components of biological diversity, including:
- Described genes and genomes
- Species and communities at different levels, spatial (nation, state) and temporal
- Ecosystems and habitats
- Data-monitoring activities
- In-situ conservation (National Protected Areas, Priority Areas)
- Ex-situ conservation (plants, animals, micro-organisms)
- Sustainable use of biological resources
- Incentive measures
- Transgenic species
- Introduced species

c) Information on indigenous and local communities knowledge, innovations and practices

d) Technological Information

- Technology (available, required)

e) Direct and Indirect Threats:

- f) Directory of Institutions and experts
 - Researchers
 - Scientific collections
 - Research Institutes
- g) Economic Valuation of biodiversity and incentives for its sustainable use
- h) Markets and trade of goods and services related to biodiversity
- i) Environmental impact assessment and management
- j) Services including, training, surveys, technology experts or other specialties

Structure

37. The need for a clear structure shall be identified to promote scientific, technical and technological cooperation within the CHM. Further, it is proposed that a common structure based on agreed elements be used by the CHM National Focal Points (NFPs) and the Secretariat of the Convention. This would create a shared CHM-identity among the national CHMs. The CHM National Focal Points should be linked with the National Focal Points of the Convention. These CHM National Focal Points should also serve as Focal Points for regional and other similar initiatives related to the activities of the CHM.

38. On a general scale two distinct "roles" can be identified emphasizing the tasks of information structuring (content) of:

- (a) the Secretariat and
- (b) the CHM National Focal Points.

39. The Secretariat should be responsible for summarizing and facilitating information at the global level, while the NFPs should focus on information at the national level.

40. The Secretariat should assist in linking the unconnected CHM National Focal Points to the world wide web.

41. National Focal Points of the CHM should facilitate access to information, conduct surveys of information needs and information providers at the national and local levels, produce directories that promote better communication, avoid duplication of efforts and promote scientific and technical cooperation.

42. National Advisory Committees could be established to assist the National Focal Points in establishing needs and priorities, as well as to monitor the impact of the Clearing-House Mechanism on the implementation of the Convention at the national level.

43. The following options can be taken into account when establishing the CHM National Focal Point:

- (a) A single organization with an Advisory Committee;
- (b) A Commission or a Steering Committee;
- (c) A Network of Organizations.

44. The role of the Clearing-House Mechanism may be transactional between information providers and users.

45. In order to facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences in the development of the CHM it is proposed to establish a CHM-NFP e-mail group including the currently 169 NFPs, moderated by the Secretariat.

46. The following recommendations could guarantee access to information for non-web-connected NFPs:

- (a) Establish facilitator roles for non-web-connected NFPs by those NFPs who have access to Internet and additional space on their server for this kind of bilateral collaboration. This also would help to create CHM identity among the parties. It is recommended that the Secretariat explore with the GEF modalities to enable non-web-connected NFPs to submit their information to the facilitating NFP.
- (b) Explore ways and means to present CBD-related requests submitted via various "traditional" media, e.g. e-mail, telephone, fax, letter, to the Secretariat, NFPs or the relevant institutions.
- (c) Present the "CHM" on a CD-ROM.
- (d) Provide a list of CBD-related CD-ROMs which are relevant to the different articles and thematic areas identified by the Convention.

47. To improve synergy with regard to information exchange with other CBD-related conventions (e.g. CMS, CITES, RAMSAR, Convention on Desertification, Climate Change, WTO), between CHM and other information management initiatives (e.g. MAB-UNESCO, UNDP-SNDP, UNEPnet, OECD, G7), the avoidance of duplication of efforts is recommended.

Capacity Building

48. In order to promote and facilitate co-operation between Parties, for implementing the Convention, capacity building in areas concerning its three objectives is needed. In this sense Article 12 of the Convention provides guidance on how to promote and facilitate the development of human resources and institutional enhancement, taking into account the needs of developing countries.

49. In addition, the CHM in compliance with Article 18 (3), should not only enhance capacity in data management, but also assist Parties to

prioritize country-driven areas of research, education and training. This increasing scientific, technical and technological capacity shall promote both North-South and South-South cooperation.

50. As it is implied in Article 12 (c), financial support by the Financial Mechanism of the Convention is required in order to implement both the human resource development and the institutional strengthening.

51. Cooperation in capacity building shall include, but not be limited to:

A. Human Resource Development

- I. Information Technologies and Management for promoting and facilitating cooperation in:
 - a) Biodiversity data and information management including data search capabilities;
 - b) Information exchange capabilities;
 - c) New communication technologies;
 - d) Tool-kit development and test phase, and training for using the tool kit;
 - e) Non-electronic communication technologies;
 - f) Information on policy and management issues relevant to the implementation of the Convention.
- II. Other capacity building needs for promoting and facilitating cooperation in:
 - a) Developing national strategies, plans and programs for the three objectives of the Convention;
 - b) Improving existing capacity by sharing experiences of country-driven projects and case studies on conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing of benefits;
 - c) Developing joint research programs and training in policy research, and joint ventures for the developing of technologies according to Article 18;
 - d) Enhancing NFPs capacity to facilitate the identification of needs, weaknesses and strengths of users and providers.

B. Institutional Strengthening

- I. Information Technologies and Management
 - a) Internet connectivity: hardware and software
 - b) Compatibility and harmonization of formats and standards
 - c) Compatibility of software
 - d) Internet support to other countries without Internet capabilities
 - e) Development of an Internet home page

f) Adequate computer and server capabilities.

II. Relationships

- a) Technical and scientific cooperation within regions
- b) Accessibility of information outside the country and repatriation of information
- c) Sharing of experiences
- d) International encouragement and support for the development of the national Clearing-House Mechanism
- e) Learning and feedback experience
- f) Contact with the Secretariat to ensure the CHM is developing in line with current decisions of the COP
- g) Building of a Biodiversity network with other CHM Focal Points
- h) Information centres

III. Other Institutional Strengthening Needed

- a) Permanent base to operate from
- b) Publishing Capacity
- c) Organizational structure including specialized staff and financial resources (e.g. meeting facilitator)

Agenda Item 15: Finalisation of the report and recommendations

52. The meeting invited the Secretariat to draft the final report.

Agenda Item 16: Adoption of the report

53. On 15 October 1997, the participants considered the draft final report. Amendments were considered and agreed. The draft final report was adopted.

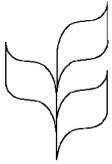
Agenda Item 17: Other matters

54. Delegates also recommended that regional initiatives should be considered in future regional CHM meetings.

Agenda Item 18: Closure of the meeting

55. The Chairperson closed the meeting at 9:10 p.m. on 15 October 1997. The delegates thanked the local organizing committee of the meeting and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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29 October 1997

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CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM
REGIONAL WORKSHOPS
Second Meeting
Gödöllő, Hungary
27 to 29 October 1997

REPORT OF THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with Decision III/4 of the Conference of the Parties, the Clearing-House Mechanism Regional Workshop for Central and Eastern Europe, hosted by the Government of Hungary, was held in Gödöllő, Hungary, from 27 to 29 October 1997.
2. Delegates from Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine attended, as well as a representative from the Global Environment Facility. A full list of participants is attached as Annex I.

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting

3. The meeting was opened at 10:00 on 27 October 1997 by the representative of the Secretariat, Mr. Marc Auer, Programme Officer, Clearing-House Mechanism, on behalf of Mr. Calestous Juma, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Mr. Auer welcomed

the participants and read a statement by the Executive Secretary, who was unable to attend the meeting. In his statement, the Executive Secretary expressed his gratitude to the Government of Hungary for hosting the meeting and to the Government of the Netherlands for its additional financial support. He stressed that the meeting would lay the foundation for further cooperation and synergy among those who are developing their national biodiversity information and cooperation capacities. Mr. Juma recalled the importance of the first regional workshop of the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) in the development of the CHM pilot-phase. He said the workshop will provide recommendations to the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in May 1998.

4. Mr. Ervin Balázs welcomed the participants on behalf of the Government of Hungary. In his opening remarks he stressed the importance of implementing the provisions and decisions of the Convention, in areas such as agro-biodiversity, biosafety and the development of its protocol. He emphasized the importance of the Clearing-House Mechanism to implement the Convention and wished the meeting every success. He also underscored the generous support of the Government of the Netherlands.

Agenda Item 2: Election of the Chairperson

5. Mr. Ervin Balázs (Hungary) was elected Chairperson and Ms. Gordana Beltram (Slovenia) was elected Rapporteur of the meeting.

Agenda Item 3: Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

6. The provisional agenda as contained in document UNEP/CBD/CHM/RW/2/1 was adopted with amendments. The provisional organization of work, contained in document UNEP/CBD/CHM/RW/2/1/Add.1, was also adopted with the request by the participants to have one working group. The agenda is attached as Annex II and the list of documents for the workshop is attached as Annex III.

Agenda Item 4: Introduction and background

7. The Secretariat made a presentation on the state of the art of the CHM introducing document UNEP/CBD/CHM/RW/2/2. This background document was prepared by the Secretariat for the purpose of facilitating the Regional Workshops on the Clearing-House Mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity, recalling the recommendations and decisions related to the Clearing-House Mechanism. To further assist the regional workshops, the document restates the terms of reference of the Meeting, as formulated by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. These define national and regional scientific and technical information needs, priorities identified, modalities to deliver information and evaluation of national capacities for the

implementation of the Convention. The regional workshops should also review experience in scientific and technical cooperation in support of the objectives of the Convention, in order to identify ways for the Clearing-House Mechanism to facilitate such cooperation.

8. The representative of the Secretariat stressed the latest developments of the CHM pilot phase as of June 1997, with respect to the guidance provided by the Convention's bodies, partners and target group, concept and current status, regional workshops and prospects and expectations.

9. Ms. Beatriz Torres (SCBD) made a presentation on the CHM Technology Evaluation.

10. Mr. Stefan Karpis (Slovakia) made a presentation on the results of the CHM Experts' Meeting: "Building the Clearing House," Bonn, Germany, 25-29 June 1997.

11. The Secretariat presented the results of the First Regional Workshop of the Clearing-House Mechanism for Latin America and the Caribbean held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, 13-15 October 1997.

Agenda Item 5: Preliminary exchange of views

12. The delegations of Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine made interventions.

Agenda Item 6: Presentation of country experiences

13. The representatives of the following countries made presentations about the state of their national Clearing-House Mechanism activities as well as about the implementation of the Convention: Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine.

Agenda Item 7: Presentation of the Global Environment Facility: Support for the national implementation of the CHM

14. Mr. John Hough (UNDP) stressed the importance of the enabling activities of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in financing projects for the implementation of the Convention and the development of the CHM. He explained the process of accessing GEF funding. He also noted the importance of nominating the CHM National Focal Points.

Agenda Item 8: Discussion of information content, information structure
and capacity building

15. Discussion of agenda item 8 was conducted on October 28. Taking into consideration the results of the First Regional Workshop of the CHM and the CHM Experts' Meeting, the following recommendations were discussed:

General recommendations

16. The Clearing-House Mechanism must be designed to promote and facilitate scientific and technical cooperation and contribute to the implementation of all three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

17. Information systems are an important component of the Clearing-House Mechanism. In addition, the CHM should provide other services which facilitate the implementation of the Convention.

18. The implementation of the Clearing-House at the national level requires the strengthening of national capacities.

19. The Clearing-House should be needs-driven, and based on an assessment of needs by potential user groups.

20. The main benefits of the Clearing-House are to:

- Provide data for decision making;
- Support faster access to existing knowledge;
- Promote technical and scientific communication;
- Avoid duplication of efforts;
- Allow additional comparisons among existing data;
- Generate new information;
- Support a more effective and efficient implementation of the Convention.

21. The implementation of the Clearing-House Mechanism will require, *inter alia*, human resources and continuous training, access to metadata and databases, information technology, and institutional strengthening.

22. Potential users of the Clearing-House Mechanism include national governments, universities and other research and training institutions, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector and the media.

23. Data used for the Clearing-House Mechanism needs to be organized, standardized and made available, in order to integrate, interpret and summarize them according to needs.

24. Ownership of all information made available through the Clearing-House Mechanism shall remain with the provider of the information.

Restrictions to access may exist according to terms and conditions agreed upon with the provider.

25. Benefits should be shared with the providers of the information, especially information related to the use of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of local and indigenous communities.

26. Data quality and updating is an essential component of information management, and shall be the responsibility of the provider of the information at all levels.

27. Information exchange should take advantage of the latest information technology including, *inter alia*, the use of the Internet, CD-ROMs and diskettes.

28. While the maintenance of the CHM at the national level is a national responsibility, additional financial resources need to be made available to support the development of the CHM, through bilateral and multilateral funding institutions and other international donors. The GEF should maintain a range of funding options that are flexible and meet national and in accordance with Decision III/4 of the Conference of the Parties and SBSTTA recommendations III/6.

Content

29. Contents of the Clearing-House should include information, as well as, technical and scientific cooperation required by the Convention on Biological Diversity and Parties, and also among different users at the national level, and this should be a two-way mechanism.

30. The national CHM should make available in English:

- a. Information on Country Studies, National Strategies and Reports, including, *inter alia*, case studies and practices, to the COP. This information, besides complying with COP mandates, has the function of being highly informative at national levels.
- b. Opportunities for international, regional and multilateral cooperation.
- c. National information on other international and regional treaties related to biological diversity of which the country is member. This information is useful at national level, because it identifies points of contact among different conventions and facilitates synergy between different commitments the country's has. The importance of establishing links among different conventions is recognized. Moreover, each party shall identify existing national focal points in each convention and shall identify the ratification procedures.

d. Case studies referring to activities related to the implementation of the Convention.

31. In order to promote scientific and technical cooperation at the national, sub-regional and regional levels, common needs and priorities from other parties should be clearly identified. Examples at the regional and sub-regional levels include shared ecosystems, migratory species and invasive species. Also information about markets, biological collections, maps and satellite images, clean technologies, training opportunities and funding sources.

32. The content of the Clearing-House at the national level may include, but not necessarily be limited to the following aspects, depending on national priorities and capacities:

a) The convention provisions and decisions in the national language(s). English should be used to present core information. In addition, the use of a common style of title (introductory page to the CHM homepage) is recommended.

b) National Legislation, i.e.:

- Biodiversity conservation, including threatened and protected species and their habitats
- Sustainable use
- Access to genetic resources
- Biodiversity-related sectoral legislation
- Incentive measures
- Access to transfer of technology
- Biosafety
- Patents
- Intellectual property rights

c) Biodiversity Information and Practices

Spatial and temporal information on the components of biological diversity, including:

- Described genes and genomes
- Species, populations and communities
- Ecosystems and habitats
- Monitoring activities
- In-situ conservation (Protected Areas, Priority Areas)
- Ex-situ conservation (plants, animals, micro-organisms)
- Sustainable use of biological resources
- Incentive measures
- Endemic and indicator species
- Introduced, including invasive species
- LMOs

d) Information on local and indigenous communities' knowledge, innovations and practices.

e) Technological Information

- Technology (available, required)
- f) Threats
 - g) Directory of
 - Researchers
 - Research institutes and universities
 - Scientific collections
 - Other experts
 - h) Values of biodiversity and incentives for its conservation and sustainable use
 - i) Markets and trade of goods and services related to biodiversity
 - j) Environmental impact assessment and management
 - k) Services including, training, surveys, technological expertise or other areas of expertise

Structure

33. The need for a clear structure shall be identified to promote scientific, technical and technological cooperation within the CHM. Further, it is proposed that a common structure based on agreed elements be used by the CHM-National Focal Points (NFPs) and the Secretariat of the Convention. This would create a CHM-identity among the national CHMs. The CHM National Focal Points should be linked with the National Focal Point of the Convention. These CHM National Focal Points should also serve as Focal Points for regional and other similar initiatives related to the activities of the CHM.

34. On a general scale distinct "roles" can be identified emphasizing the tasks of information structuring (content) of:

- (a) the Secretariat;
- (b) the CHM National Focal Points;
- (c) the CHM Regional Focal Points;
- (d) the CHM Thematic Focal Points.

35. The Secretariat should be responsible for summarizing and facilitating information at the global level, while the NFPs should focus on information at the national level. The identification of information through the CHM is presented as follows:

Secretariat	National Focal Points
<p><u>Basic elements</u></p> <p>(see also the Secretariat's Internet homepage: http://www.biodiv.org)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COP • SBSTTA • List of National Focal Points • Thematic Focal Points • Top issues • GEF and additional financial resources • Related conventions 	<p><u>Basic common elements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National CBD implementation process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • article structure and related implementation of provisions • thematic areas and • National Report, National Strategy • Services (e.g., collections, research, projects, bibliography, thematic areas, national institutions, national financial mechanisms) • Regional Focal Point News • News • Secretariat "site map"

36. National Focal Points of the CHM should facilitate access to information, conduct surveys of information needs and information providers at the national and local levels, produce directories that promote better communication, avoid duplication of efforts and promote scientific and technical cooperation.

37. National Advisory Committees could be established to assist the National Focal Points in establishing needs and priorities, as well as to monitor the impact of the Clearing-House Mechanism on the implementation of the Convention at the national level. The following options can be taken into account when establishing the CHM National Focal Point:

- (a) A single organization with an Advisory Committee;
- (b) A Commission or a Steering Committee;
- (c) A Network of Organizations.

38. The role of the Clearing-House Mechanism may be transactional between information providers and users.

39. In order to facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences in the development of the CHM it is proposed to establish a CHM-NFP e-mail listserver including the currently 169 NFPs, moderated by the Secretariat.

40. The following recommendations could guarantee access to information for non-web-connected NFPs:

- (a) Establish facilitator roles for non-web-connected NFPs by those NFPs who have access to Internet and additional space

on their server for this kind of bilateral collaboration. This also would help to create CHM identity among the parties. It is recommended that the Secretariat explores with the GEF modalities to enable non-web-connected NFPs to submit their information to the facilitating NFP.

- (b) Explore ways and means to present CBD-related requests submitted via various "traditional" media, e.g. mail, telephone, fax.
- (c) Present the "CHM" on a CD-ROM.
- (d) Provide a list of CBD-related CD-ROMs which are relevant to the different articles and thematic areas identified by the Convention.

41. To improve synergy with regard to information exchange with other CBD-related conventions and other information management initiatives, the avoidance of duplication of efforts is recommended.

Capacity Building

42. In order to promote and facilitate cooperation between Parties, for implementing the Convention, capacity building in areas concerning its three objectives is needed. The Convention provides guidance on how to promote and facilitate the development of human resources and institutional enhancement, taking into account the needs of Central and Eastern European countries, too.

43. In addition, the CHM in compliance with Article 18 (3), should not only enhance capacity in data management, but also assist Parties to prioritize country-driven actions including research, education and training.

44. Financial support by the Financial Mechanism of the Convention is required in order to implement both the human resource development and the institutional strengthening.

45. Cooperation in capacity building shall include, but not be limited to:

A. Human Resource Development

- I. Information Technologies and Management for promoting and facilitating cooperation in:
 - a) Biodiversity data and information management including data-search capabilities;
 - b) Information exchange capabilities;
 - c) New communication technologies;
 - d) Tool-kit development and test phase, and training for using the tool kit;
 - e) Non-electronic communication technologies;

- f) Information on policy and management issues relevant to the implementation of the Convention.

II. Other capacity building needs for promoting and facilitating cooperation in:

- a) Developing national strategies, plans and programs for the three objectives of the Convention;
- b) Improving existing capacity by sharing experiences of country-driven projects and case studies on conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing of benefits;
- c) Developing joint research programs and training in policy research, and joint ventures for the developing of technologies according to Article 18;
- d) Enhancing NFPs capacity to facilitate the identification of needs, weaknesses and strengths of users and providers.

B. Institutional Strengthening

I. Information Technologies and Management

- a) Internet connectivity: hardware and software
- b) Compatibility and harmonization of formats and standards, including compatibility of software
- c) Internet support to other countries without Internet capabilities
- d) Development of an Internet home page
- e) Adequate computer and server capabilities.

II. Relationships

- a) Technical and scientific cooperation within regions and sub-regions
- b) Accessibility of information outside the country and repatriation of information
- c) Sharing of experiences
- d) International encouragement and support for the development of the national Clearing-House Mechanism
- e) Learning and feedback experience
- f) Contact with the Secretariat to ensure the CHM is developing in line with current decisions of the COP
- g) Building of a biodiversity network with other CHM Focal Points
- h) Information centers

III. Other institutional strengthening needed

- a) Permanent base to operate from
- b) Publishing capacity
- c) Organizational structure including specialized staff and financial resources (e.g. meeting facilitator)

Agenda Item 9: Formulation of regional priorities

46. In accordance with Decisions II/3 and III/4 of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention, the following priority actions for the Central and Eastern European region are proposed:

- a) Urge Contracting Parties of the region to nominate their Clearing-House Mechanism National Focal Points by the end of 1997.
- b) Contracting Parties in the region should make every effort to make their Clearing-House Mechanism National Focal Points operational before the end of the pilot phase of the CHM.
- c) CHM Regional Focal Point(s) should be nominated and established before the end of the pilot phase. This issue could be discussed as an agenda item of the next Regional Preparatory Meeting before the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
- d) According to regional needs, Thematic Focal Points could be designated.
- e) The preparation and submission of a Regional Pilot Project to the Financial Mechanism of the Convention should be considered a priority by Central and Eastern European Contracting Parties.

47. The participants recognized the importance of the following common regional concerns which could be considered in the implementation of the CHM:

- a) East-East communication should be strengthened.
- b) Facilities to make existing information available in electronic ways using standardized formats.
- c) Sharing examples of good practices and experiences (e.g. drafting of legislation, forest issues, application of clean technologies, environmental standards, etc).
- d) EMERALD, corresponding to Natura 2000 network, could be commonly applied in CEE countries.

Agenda Item 10: Adoption of the report

48. On 29 October 1997, the participants considered the draft final report. Amendments were considered and agreed. The draft final report was adopted.

Agenda Item 11: Other matters

49. No other matters were considered.

Agenda Item 12: Closure of the meeting

50. The Chairperson closed the meeting at 4 p.m. on 29 October 1997. The delegates expressed their gratitude to the Government of Hungary, particularly the Ministry of Environment and Regional Planning, to Professor Ervin Balázs and his supporting staff and to the Secretariat, for its organizational work and efforts to ensure a successful regional meeting. The participants also thanked the Government of the Netherlands for its generous financial support.

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**CONVENTION ON
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REGIONAL MEETINGS ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
Fourth meeting
Haikou, People's Republic of China
26 - 28 March, 1998

REPORT OF THE ASIAN REGIONAL MEETING ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Introduction

1. The meeting was organized pursuant to decision III/26 of the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). At the kind offer of the Government of the People's Republic of China, it took place from 26 to 28 March 1998 in Haikou, Province of Hainan, People's Republic of China.
2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following Parties to the Convention: India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kiribati, Republic of Korea, Lebanon, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, Pakistan, People's Republic of China, Philippines, and Sri Lanka. An observer from Saudi Arabia attended the meeting. The following organisations also participated in the meeting: Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), IUCN (the World Conservation Union) and the World Wide Fund for Nature, Malaysia.

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting

3. The formal meeting was opened by Mr. R. Bani Hani (Jordan), Vice-President of the Third Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity on 27 March 1998 at 10:00 am. Mr. Bani Hani presented Mr. Wang Houhong, Vice-Governor of the Province of Hainan. The Vice-Governor welcomed participants to the Province of Hainan. Hainan was the youngest province of China as well as the largest special economic zone. The province was blessed with rich biological, mineral and tourism resources. The local authorities attached great importance to environmental protection and had earmarked for it 3.68 billion yuan in the Ninth Five-Year Plan. The provincial government had adopted a complete ban on logging of tropical natural forests since 1994 and facilitated afforestation activities.

4. Mr. Bani Hani invited Mr. Cheng Weixue, Deputy Director General for International Co-operation Department, for an address on behalf of Mr. Xie Zhenhua, Minister, National Environment Protection Administration of the People's Republic of China. Mr. Cheng underscored, *inter alia*, that China, with a population of 1.2 billion people, was seeing rapid economic development that could impose great strains on the biological diversity of the country. The Government was aware that the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components had a bearing on the socio-economic sustainable development. He described the achievements made by the Government of the People's Republic of China in implementing the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity. He expressed the wish that the regional meeting would provide a good opportunity for Asian countries to exchange information on experiences gained in protecting the environment and implementing the Convention. He also underscored the importance of international co-operation for implementing the Convention through financing and transfer of technology.

5. A representative of the Secretariat of the CBD indicated that the Convention had been ratified by 172 Parties. The emphasis of the work has thus shifted from ratification towards implementation at the national and international levels by using an ecosystem approach. An overview of achievements made since the third meeting of the Conference of Parties in Buenos Aires (Argentina) in 1996 was presented. The representative also underscored that the objectives of regional meetings were evolving from a preparatory process for forthcoming meetings of the Conference of Parties to an exchange of views on how to foster regional co-operation in implementing the Convention.

Agenda Item 2: Organisational matters

2.1 Election of the officers

6. Mr. Cheng Weixue (People's Republic of China) and Mr. R. B. Bista (Nepal) were unanimously elected Chairperson and Rapporteur of the Meeting, respectively.

2.2 Adoption of the agenda

7. The agenda was adopted as proposed in document UNEP/CBD/RG.As/3/1. In recognition of the particular role of the meeting in preparing for the fourth meeting of the Conference of Parties, it was decided to examine agenda item 5 before items 3 and 4, which were parts of the provisional agenda of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

2.3 Organisation of work

8. A field excursion had been organised on 26 March. The meeting held its formal sessions on 27 and 28 March 1998.

Agenda Item 3: Implementation of the Convention at the national level

9. Under this agenda item, participants referred to various activities that had been conducted at the national level and particularly to the implementation of Article 6 of the Convention concerning the preparation of national strategies on biological diversity. It was apparent that there existed great variations in sizes of countries but the Asian region was hosting a great richness in both terrestrial and marine biological diversity. Soil erosion and deforestation caused by diverse factors such as population growth, poverty, as well as rapid economic growth, were

among the major threats to the biological diversity of the region. National plans and national biological diversity strategies were often established or in an advance stage of preparation. Relevant national institutions had been established in most countries and were able to provide overall policy advice. In many countries conservation was pursued as a step towards ensuring sustainable development. Several delegations underscored that access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing were the core of the CBD. Delegations expressed the hope that during the fourth meeting of the Conference of Parties those issues will receive adequate attention.

10. Participants were invited to present the status of their national reports. In the course of the presentations, issues were raised on the provision of financial resources for the preparation of national reports and on the consideration of these reports by the Conference of the Parties. The contribution of national reporting to the country-level implementation of the Convention was also emphasized. Several delegations indicated that sufficient level of funding for priority activities identified in existing action plans was essential. One country reported that it had adopted legislative framework for access to genetic resources. Several participants indicated that bilateral co-operation was playing an important role in implementing projects for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

Agenda Item No 4: Ways and means to foster regional co-operation

11. IUCN made a brief presentation on the results of the Global Biodiversity Forum that had taken place in Haikou prior to the regional meeting. At that opportunity, an exchange of views occurred on the concept of "ecosystem approach". One participant was of the opinion it was not entirely consistent with the Convention because it was focusing on one specific level, i.e. ecosystem, and that "biodiversity approach" would be more appropriate. Other participants in the meeting expressed the view that "ecosystem approach" should be understood as a way to examine issues in a holistic manner, taking into account the broad context of the Convention rather than just at a specific level.

12. Participants indicated the Asian region could further develop co-operation in the following manner:

- 1) making a more effective use of existing sub-regional co-operative fora, such as ASEAN, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), the Economic Co-operation Organization (ECO), and the Asian regional office of IUCN;
- 2) Sharing information by making full use of the clearing-house mechanism and other available information networks;
- 3) stimulating capacity building through an exchange of expertise among countries of the region as a way to bridge the gaps;
- 4) examining areas of potential common concerns such as access to genetic resources and benefit sharing, in order to develop regional synergies;
- 5) enhancing bi- or tri-lateral co-operation endeavours with a view to resolving transboundary issues; and
- 6) convening, prior to, and during the meetings of the Conference of Parties, regional meetings aiming at developing common positions on specific issues.

Agenda Item No 5: Preparations for the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties

a) Logistical preparation for the fourth meeting of the Conference of Parties

13. The Secretariat introduced the Provisional Agenda (UNEP/CBD/COP/4/1), and explained the Suggested Organization of Work contained in Annex 1. It also reported on arrangements made for holding the fourth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention as well as for the Ministerial Roundtable convened by the Government of Slovakia. The Secretariat indicated that so far additional voluntary contributions made available for the participation in the meeting would only permit limited participation of delegates from Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States and that the Executive Secretary had launched an appeal to all Governments for providing additional voluntary contributions in order to enable full participation in the meeting.

14. Several delegations exchanged views about the Ministerial Roundtable and questions were raised as to its status in regard of the meeting of the Conference of Parties as the understanding was that it was no longer an integral part of the meeting but an event closely linked with the meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Concerns were also raised as to the themes to be discussed at the Ministerial Roundtable and the opportunity for Heads of delegations to deliver statements in the plenary of the Conference of the Parties.

b) Administration and budget of the Convention

15. The Secretariat informed the meeting that the report by the Executive Secretary was in final stage of preparation. It will cover the following issues: Governance, Executive Direction and Management; implementation of the decisions of the second and third meetings of the Conference of Parties; and a final chapter on lessons learned and recommendations. The latter part will address mainly such issues as the role and functions of regional meetings, the handling of offers to host meetings as well as the designation of focal points.

16. The staff of the Secretariat consisted now of 35 persons. Since the third meeting of the Conference of Parties, the Secretariat had organized and serviced 19 international meetings. In 1997, Parties to the Convention had paid to the core budget of the Convention an amount of US\$ 5.1 million. Additional voluntary contributions amounted to US\$ 2.3 million and were provided by 17 Parties. About one million had been used to ensure participation in meetings held in 1997. Most of the rest was earmarked for future meetings of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Biosafety.

c) Third meeting of the SBSTTA

17. The Secretariat briefly reviewed the outcome of the third meeting of the SBSTTA by introducing the report of the meeting (UNEP/CBD/COP/4/2). Annex I of the report contained seven recommendations put forward by the SBSTTA. The Secretariat reviewed briefly the recommendations adopted by the SBSTTA.

18. Attention was drawn to Annex 3 of the report which contained the report of an informal meeting on "Issues dealing with the operation of the SBSTTA". This issue had a bearing on item 13 of the provisional agenda of the fourth meeting of the COP, "Review of the operations of the Convention".

d) Clearing-house mechanism

19. Recommendation III/6 of the third meeting of the SBSTTA was on clearing-house mechanism. All regional workshop had taken place since then, including the Asian regional workshop on the clearing-house mechanism, which was held in Kuala Lumpur from 3 to 5 December 1997 at the invitation of the Government of Malaysia with the support of the Republic of Korea. The document prepared for the fourth meeting of the COP (UNEP/CBD/COP/4/8) reflected the outcome of regional workshops. It was noted that the pilot phase of the clearing-house mechanism would terminate at the end of 1998 and that the Conference of the Parties will have to decide on future work in this respect.

e) Biosafety

20. Since the third meeting of the Conference of Parties, the Open-Ended *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Biosafety had met three times in April and October 1997, and February 1998. The meetings held in 1997 had allowed the development of a consolidated draft text which had served as the basis for negotiations in the fourth meeting held in February 1998. In order to allow completion of work, that meeting had been extended to 8 working days. It resulted in refinements to, and increased clarification of, or resolution on several key issues. The Working Group had expressed optimism on its ability to negotiate a draft text for a protocol by the end of 1998, as mandated by decision II/5 of the Second meeting of the Conference of Parties. However, it indicated that it would need a two-week meeting in August and an additional one week meeting in late 1998. These developments had increased the urgency of ensuring full participation of all Parties in the process. As the budget adopted by the Third meeting of the Conference of Parties had provisions only for two one-week meetings in 1998, the Secretariat had launched a full-scale appeal for additional voluntary contributions in order to allow the *Ad Hoc* Working Group to fulfil its mandate by the end of 1998 as well as to ensure full participation in its endeavour.

21. The Secretariat also indicated that the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of Parties will have to discuss several political issues related to Biosafety, in particular: the composition of the Bureau; the financial implications of holding an extended meeting and an additional meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group; and the recommendation of the Working Group that a meeting of the Conference of Parties be held in late 1998, and in any event no later than February 1999, for considering the adoption of the draft protocol.

f) Implementation of Article 8(j)

22. In introducing this subject, the Secretariat indicated that decision III/14 of the Third Meeting of the Conference of Parties had decided to launch an inter-sessional process to advance future work on the implementation of Article 8(j) and related provisions of the CBD. A Workshop on "Traditional Knowledge and Biological Diversity" had been held in Madrid, 24-28 November 1997, at the invitation of the Government of Spain. It had been attended by representatives from 62 Parties and Governments as well as 76 indigenous and local communities organisations and several UN agencies and specialised agencies. The Report of the Workshop (UNEP/CBD/TKBD/1/3) was made available to the meeting. The Secretariat drew particular attention to Annex II of the report which contained advice to the Conference of the Parties regarding, *inter alia*, priorities for future work; the development of a work plan; and actions at the national and international levels.

Agenda Item No 6: Financial aspects of the implementation of the Convention

23. GEF briefed the meeting on its biological diversity activities, in particular in Asia-Pacific region. Biological diversity programmes consisted of four key operational programme areas: arid and semi-arid zone ecosystems; coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems; forest ecosystems; and mountains ecosystems. In addition, operational programme on agricultural biological diversity was being developed. Three key programming categories were long-term projects, enabling activities and short-term response. Financing modalities included: grants and concessional funding; small grants programme; and medium-sized grants. Key funding criteria were: consistency with COP guidance;

satisfaction of agreed incremental costs for agreed global benefits; CBD ratification; and the project being country-driven. Since the Third meeting of the COP, GEF engaged in 149 programmes and activities, with GEF finance of \$270.64 million. Co-financing amounted to \$711.35 million, resulting in the leverage ratio of 1:2.62.

24. Since the pilot phase of the GEF, biological diversity focal area accounted for 46 per cent of total GEF allocation. Asia-Pacific region accounted for 18 per cent of GEF biological diversity allocation, while co-funding was 39 per cent. In Asia, forest operational programmes accounted the largest portion of biological diversity co-funding projects, reaching 41 per cent, while coastal, marine and wetlands accounted for 22 per cent. For medium-sized projects in biological diversity focal area, Latin American region accounted more project concepts, while Africa was by far the largest recipient of enabling activities. Asia-Pacific region was characterized by the largest leverage ratio.

25. UNDP, then, made a presentation of the proposed global project entitled "Biodiversity Planning Support Programme". The project would be implemented by UNDP and UNEP. The project aimed to enhance the capacity of the Parties to the CBD to prepare National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP) in response to Article 6 of the Convention. Activities under this project would go beyond the technical and managerial support of the GEF Implementing Agencies and strengthen the biodiversity planning process through the provision of information services, preparation of technical and advisory materials, enhancing exchange and co-operation among Parties, and providing training programmes. The estimated financing from the GEF is approximately \$3.1 million and was expecting the co-financing from the Government of Switzerland and UNITAR of \$400,000. The project was already approved for PDF block B funding. The project would be guided by a small Steering Committee and would constitute a Panel of regional country representatives. It was hoped that the selection of panel members could take place at the fourth meeting of the COP. The representative of UNDP invited delegates to comment on the project proposal. Delegates preferred to respond to the proposal after consultation at the government level through the GEF focal points.

26. An exchange of views took place between the participants and clarification was sought from the representatives of GEF and UNDP. A delineation was made on the role of the GEF as an environmental funding agency and its role as the interim funding entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention. One of the main issues raised was the clarification of the role of Implementing Agencies vis-a-vis the GEF. It was suggested that special recognition be given to Least Developed Countries for implementing priority activities of the Biodiversity Action Plan. One delegate recalled that preambular paragraph 8 of decision III/5 recognized the difficulties encountered with the GEF and the Implementing Agencies. It was also stated that the first operative paragraph of the same decision urged the Implementing Agencies to enhance cooperation to increase efforts to improve the processing and delivery systems of the GEF. The question of applicability of the concept of incremental costs to biodiversity project was also raised. It was also observed that the concept of leveraging was subject to interpretation. Another issue was what constituted the new and additional financial resources: GEF finance, ODA, the private sector investment, and other sources. It was pointed out that while the issue of new and additional financial resources should be considered from all the perspectives, Article 20 of the Convention should not be lost sight of.

Agenda item 7: Regional positions on key issues

27. Government representatives met in closed session on 28 March 1998 in order to discuss regional positions on key issues before the fourth meeting of the COP. It was reported that during discussion of this item of the agenda, the following matters were discussed:

a) procedural matters:

- candidatures for the Bureaux of the Conference of Parties and the Open-Ended *Ad-Hoc* Working Group on Biosafety;
- the Group agreed to meet as a regional group prior and during the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
- matters related to the Ministerial Roundtable convened by the Government of Slovakia: possibility for the Ministers to be accompanied by an expert; authority issuing invitations for the Ministerial Roundtable to the relevant government entities.

b) substantive issues: the Group identified areas of special concern for the fourth meeting of the Conference of Parties as follows:

- the protocol on biosafety should be finalized and adopted as soon as possible and decisions relating thereto postponed until adoption;
- matters related to access to genetic resources and equitable sharing of benefits: consideration of document UNEP/CBD/COP/4/22, concerns over other agencies making decisions on these matters; access to ex-situ collections as contained in paragraph 7 of decision III/15, implementation of Article 8(j) of the Convention, keeping the objectives of the Convention as the central focus;
- matters related to coastal and marine biological diversity: further work on the implementation of the Jakarta Mandate;
- matters related to national reports: consideration of the information provided and of the national reports, synthesis of national reports, financial aspects;
- matters related to the functioning of the COP and of the SBSTTA: *inter alia*, frequency of meetings, role of the respective bureaux, longer-term programme of work;
- matters related to the review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism of the Convention.

c) other matters: the delegation of Sri Lanka reported on recommendations from the South and Southeast Asia Regional Workshop on Access to Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge held in Chennai (India) from 22 to 25 February 1998. It was agreed that the recommendations of that Workshop be attached to the present report.

Agenda Item No 8: Conclusions and recommendations

28. The meeting considered that its conclusions and recommendations were included in the text of the previous agenda items of this report.

Agenda Item No 9: Other matters

29. Participants expressed gratitude to the Government and the people of the People's Republic of China, and to the Provincial Government of the Province of Hainan, for the warm and generous hospitality which was extended to them during the regional meeting.

Agenda Item No 10: Adoption of the report of the meeting

30. The report of the Asian regional meeting on Biological Diversity was adopted on 28 March 1998.

Agenda Item No 11: Closure of the meeting

31. The meeting was closed on 28 March 1998 at 5:30 pm.

* * *

Annex I

Recommendations from the South and Southeast Asia Regional Workshop
on Access to Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge
22 - 25 February, 1998, Chennai, India

- Urges COP 4 to take urgent action to harmonize the provisions of TRIPS agreement with CBD provisions.
- Urges Parties to immediately introduce steps, such as codes of conduct for research, pending enactment of legislation.
- Requests examination of measures already enacted (e.g. Philippine Executive Order, Andean Pact) for lessons, as PIC/ABS have to be simple and practical.
- Urges Parties to take initiatives to introduce appropriate legislative and non-legislative measures and use the existing regional mechanisms such as ASEAN, SAARC, etc.
- Encourages to introduce operational procedures for the private sector.
- Urges Parties to strengthen national capability in the conservation, cataloguing and the use of microbial biodiversity.
- Urges the establishment of a network of experts to assist countries in the preparation of legislative and other actions.
- Urges developed countries to enact legislation to support implementation of PIC/ABN.
- Urges Parties to seek maximum stakeholder participation in the preparation of new legislation.
- Requests Parties and other agencies to enact a moratorium on IPR claims in relation to seeds held for public good in *ex-situ* gene banks established prior to CBD coming into operation.

Annex 2

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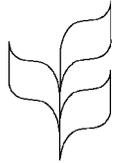
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Page 16

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REGIONAL MEETINGS ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Second Meeting
Nairobi, Kenya
9-11 March 1998

REPORT OF THE AFRICAN REGIONAL MEETING ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Introduction

1. Pursuant to decision III/26, adopted at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held at Buenos Aires, in November 1996, the African Regional Meeting on Biological Diversity was held at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, from 9 to 11 March 1998.

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries: Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Seychelles, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. Observers from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Global Environment Facility (GEF), Permanent Mission of Kenya to UNEP, National Environment Secretariat, National Council for Science and Technology, Ministry of Water Resources of Kenya, Ministry of Research and Technology of Kenya, Kenya Forestry Research Institute, Kenyatta University, Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD), World Conservation Union (IUCN), World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), African Centre of Technological Studies (ACTS), Kenya Industrial Property Office (KIPO), Environment Liaison Centre International (ELCI), East African Wildlife Society, Wildlife Clubs of Kenya and Society for Protection of Environment in Kenya (SPEK) were also present.

I. OPENING OF THE MEETING

3. The meeting was opened by Mr. Marc Auer, Programme Officer (clearing-house mechanism) of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, who welcomed all participants on behalf of Mr. Calestous Juma, Executive Secretary of the Convention. In his statement, he underscored the importance of the African Regional Meeting in the preparations for the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to be held in May 1998 in Bratislava, Slovakia. He noted that the 1998 focus for the Conference of the Parties was the biological diversity of inland waters. The meeting's aim was to promote the ecosystem approach, leading to a better understanding of the effects of human activities and population trends on freshwater biological diversity.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

4. Mr. Bather Kone (Mali) was elected Chair of the meeting and Mr. George Ondeng'e (Kenya) Vice-Chair. Ms. Botsalano Coyne (Botswana) and Ms. Idiату Camara (Guinea) were elected rapporteurs.

5. The provisional agenda and organization of work were adopted with amendments.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

6. Representatives from Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Seychelles, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania made statements on this agenda item.

7. The following concerns were raised:

(a) The guidelines for national reports produced as a follow-up of decision II/17 were too complex to follow;

(b) Many countries lacked the necessary capacities, necessitating the hiring of international consultants;

(c) Owing to time constraints, consultants devoted too little time to the important issue of capacity-building and the transfer of know-how to the host country.

8. Ms. Cyriaque Sendashonga and Ms. Carmen Tavera (UNEP) presented a draft project proposal on the "Biodiversity Planning Support Programme", a joint UNEP/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) initiative aimed at enhancing the capacity of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to prepare national biodiversity strategies and action plans in response to article 6 of the Convention. The project will provide information services, technical and advisory materials and enhance exchange and cooperation among Parties. It will also provide training programmes on specific themes identified by a number of Parties.

9. Participants were invited to discuss the proposal with their biodiversity strategies and action plan teams and to provide UNEP and UNDP with comments at the earliest opportunity.

IV. FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

10. In the discussion of this item, representatives stressed that the core budget of the Convention should contain a provision to allow more than one representative from developing countries and countries with economies in transition to attend meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

11. Mr. Walter Lusigi, representative of the Secretariat of the GEF briefed the meeting on the activities undertaken by GEF in response to the guidance given by the Conference of the Parties at its third meeting, in Buenos Aires.

12. He said that the GEF Council had approved funding for five work programmes to a total of \$246 million. The Council had also approved expedited procedures for the financing of medium-size projects. In addition, it had approved principles for GEF financing for targeted research. The report of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) workshop on land degradation, outlining priorities for activities in land degradation, was also approved.

13. He also said that the Council had also approved expedited procedures for enabling activities, which had been expanded to include the clearing-house mechanism, biosafety and capacity-building in taxonomy. To date, 27 per cent of the GEF projects in biodiversity and 17 per cent of the total GEF expenditure had been directed towards Africa.

14. In their discussion, representatives raised the following concerns:

(a) The effectiveness of some GEF implementing agencies was questioned;

(b) All agencies should play a facilitating rather than an implementing role;

(c) Adequate funds should be made available for the preparation of national strategies, action plans and national reports and their disbursement should be effected in a timely manner;

(d) There was a lack of clear guidelines for accessing funds from the GEF implementing agencies, once funding had been approved;

(e) The overheads for GEF projects conducted by implementing agencies should be separate from a country's submitted budget;

(f) All implementing agencies' should attend regional meetings under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

V. PREPARATION FOR THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

15. The representative of the Secretariat introduced the provisional agenda and the proposed organization of work for the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, as set forth in document UNEP/CBD/COP/4/1. Mr. Mbongu-Sodi (Democratic Republic of the Congo), speaking in his capacity as Rapporteur of the third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), introduced the recommendations of that meeting and stressed their relevance for the African region.

16. The meeting strongly supported and recommended the adoption of the recommendations by SBSTTA at its third meeting to the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

17. In addition, representatives of the African region were encouraged to prepare adequately for the agenda items, which would be discussed in concurrent working groups during the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

VI. WAYS AND MEANS TO FOSTER REGIONAL COOPERATION

18. The group of African countries recommended that, at its fourth meeting, the Conference of the Parties consider the importance of regional and subregional cooperation strategies and action plans in the regional and subregional coordination of the implementation of the Convention, and

requested the Conference of the Parties to call upon GEF, its implementing agencies and international non-governmental organizations to facilitate such regional and subregional cooperation strategies and action plans. The implementing framework of the regional and subregional strategies and action plans should include mechanisms for ensuring implementation, monitoring and progress evaluation.

19. The group further recommended that the Conference of the Parties urge the secretariats of such international instruments as the Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), etc., to develop and implement strategies, with a view to creating synergy between the various instruments.

20. In addition, the group requested IUCN and other non-governmental organizations, such as the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), to provide financial support, so as to promote regional and subregional cooperation.

VII. REGIONAL POSITIONS ON KEY ISSUES

21. In the discussion under this item, the following key issues were identified:

- (a) Biological diversity of inland water ecosystems and options for its conservation and sustainable use;
- (b) Marine and coastal biological diversity;
- (c) Agricultural biological diversity;
- (d) Forest biological diversity;
- (e) Assessment and review of the operation of the clearing-house mechanism;
- (f) Issues related to biosafety;
- (g) Implementation of Article 8 (j) and related provisions;
- (h) Review of the operations of the Convention;
- (i) Financial resources and mechanism;
- (j) Incentive measures: consideration of measures for the implementation of Article 11;

(k) Public education and awareness: consideration of measures for the implementation of Article 13;

(l) Matters related to access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing; and

(m) Other issues including capacity-building and intellectual property rights.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Biological diversity of inland water ecosystems and options for conservation and sustainable use

The meeting

Strongly supports recommendation III/1 of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice on the biodiversity of inland waters and, noting the importance of all elements of recommendation III/1, including integrated catchment management, alien invasive species, impact assessments and the involvement of local communities, recommends to the Conference of the Parties that, at its fourth meeting, it consider the immediate implementation of recommendation III/1.

B. Marine and coastal biological diversity

The meeting

Strongly supports recommendation III/2 of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and, in particular, recommends that the following components be implemented:

(a) Integrated marine and coastal area management:

- (i) Review of the existing legal and other instruments relevant to integrated marine and coastal areas management and their implications for the implementation of the Convention;
- (ii) Development of guidelines for ecosystem evaluation and assessment, paying attention to the need to identify and select indicators, including social and abiotic;

(b) Marine and coastal living resources: Promotion of ecosystem approaches to the sustainable use of marine and coastal living resources, including the identification of key variables on interactions for the purpose of assessing and monitoring;

(c) Marine and coastal protected areas:

- (i) Efforts to facilitate research into and monitoring of the value and the effects of marine and coastal protected areas and similarly restricted management areas on the sustainable use of coastal and marine living resources;
- (ii) Development of guidance on criteria and action and operational aspects of marine and coastal protected areas in collaboration with relevant intergovernmental, national and non-governmental organizations;

(d) Mariculture: Assessment of the consequences of mariculture on marine and coastal biological diversity and promotion of techniques which minimize adverse impacts;

(e) Alien species and genotypes:

- (i) Achievement of a better understanding of the impact on coastal and marine biological diversity of the introduction of alien species and genotypes, with particular attention to the characteristics of the species and of the recipient ecosystem;
- (ii) Identification of gaps in existing and proposed legal instruments and guidelines related to the introduction of alien species and genotypes, including a process to deal with the accidental or deliberate introductions of alien species and genotypes;
- (iii) Establishment of a national reporting process on alien species;

(f) General:

- (i) Compilation of a database of ongoing case studies through a cooperative approach with relevant bodies and organizations at national, subregional and regional levels, with special emphasis on integrated marine and coastal areas management;
- (ii) Development and maintaining of a database of experts, starting with a roster of experts.

C. Agricultural biological diversity

The meeting

Requests the Conference of the Parties, at its fourth meeting, to ensure the speedy implementation of decision III/11 within the framework of the programme of work on agricultural biodiversity, and further urges the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to expedite progress in the renegotiation of the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources.

D. Forest biological diversity

The meeting

Recalls recommendation III/3 of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice on forest biodiversity and, noting the need for consistency between the programme on forest biological diversity and that of other related forums, calls upon the Conference of the Parties and related forums, in particular the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, to ensure this consistency.

E. Assessment and review of the operation of the clearing-house mechanism

The meeting

1. Endorses the recommendations of the Clearing-house Mechanism Regional Workshop for Africa held in Nairobi from 5 to 7 March 1998, as contained in document UNEP/CBD/COP/4/Inf.6, and recommends that the Conference of the Parties, at its fourth meeting, give effect to those recommendations;

2. Requests that the Clearing-house Mechanism be established as soon as possible, taking into account the reality of each country.

F. Issues related to biosafety

The meeting

1. Requests the Global Environment Facility at its next Council meeting in November 1998 to consider the progressive expansion of the UNEP/GEF Pilot Biosafety Enabling Activities Project to cover at least 25 additional developing countries, with effect from January 1999, and a further 30 countries, with effect from January 2000, so that a critical mass of countries is attained to enhance safety in biotechnology in developing countries;

2. Requests the United Nations Environment Programme, as the implementing agency of the UNEP/GEF Pilot Biosafety Enabling Activities Project, to provide a progress report to the Council of the Global Environment Facility at its meeting in November 1998, to facilitate the Council's consideration of the progressive expansion of the project;

3. Recommends, in view of the importance and the complexity of the issues related to biosafety to be considered at the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, that the Secretariat of the Convention should facilitate the effective participation of developing countries in the negotiation of the protocol on biosafety which is to take place from 17 to 28 August 1998 in Montreal;

4. Supports the recommendations of the Ad-hoc Working Group on Biosafety on the holding of two more meetings and a meeting of the Conference of the Parties to adopt the protocol on biosafety.

G. Implementation of Article 8 (j) and related provisions.

The meeting,

Recognizing the recommendations made by the delegates attending the Madrid Workshop on Traditional Knowledge and Biological Diversity:

1. Recommends that intellectual property rights be studied so as to protect the interests of local communities and to ensure that local communities have access to genetic resources and that their traditional innovations and practices are protected and that these resources should be managed on the basis of the consent of local communities;

2. Further recommends that, since the participation of local communities is of fundamental significance in the operation of national action plans for the conservation of biological diversity, local communities should participate and be fully involved in the implementation of such action plans for the conservation of biological diversity;

3. Also recommends that the Parties should undertake to clarify and recognize the rights of local communities.

H. Review of the operations of the Convention

The meeting,

Taking note of the need to review the modus operandi of the Convention on Biological Diversity and further taking note of the recommendations of the

Workshop on the Review of the Operations of the Convention on Biological Diversity, convened on this issue by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,

Urges the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting, to ensure a suitable mechanism for sufficient scientific input into the work of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and further requests the Conference of the Parties, in view of the already heavy workload, to consider a long-term programme of work that will not unduly expand the amount of work involved.

I. Financial resources and mechanism

The meeting

Recommends that the Conference of the Parties assess the effectiveness of the implementing agencies.

J. Incentive measures: consideration of measures for the implementation of Article 11

The meeting,

Noting that incentives are crucial to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and convinced that policies intended to promote incentive measures should take into account the underlying causes of biodiversity loss including perverse incentives;

1. Recommends that, at its fifth meeting, the Conference of the Parties, call upon the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, at its fourth meeting to recommend a 3-5 year programme of work on incentive measures;

2. Requests that the Conference of the Parties direct the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, at its fourth meeting, to provide advice on the elaboration of the programme of work and guidance to the Parties on the design and implementation of incentive measure programmes;

3. Recommends that financial mechanisms, such as the Global Environment Facility and the multilateral banks, should facilitate the implementation of incentive measures by providing sufficient and stable funding to establish the mechanisms while aiming at capacity-building and while avoiding the creation of dependencies;

4. Requests the Global Environment Facility to develop expedited procedures for the support of projects on incentive measures, including training and capacity-building ; to the management of incentive projects.

5. Recommends that the sustainability of programmes and projects designed to promote incentives should be encouraged and that the local communities should be made aware of the problems and benefits of conserving biodiversity and should be encouraged to participate fully in the projects from the initial stage.

K. Public education and awareness: consideration of measures for the implementation of Article 13

The meeting

1. Recommends that countries should promote, encourage and support public awareness and education, both formal and informal, for indigenous and local communities, the private sector, decision makers, in particular, politicians, and institutions, as a priority measure in fostering a better awareness and understanding of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

2. Requests the Global Environment Facility to provide financial assistance to Parties to update their education and publication materials for awareness campaigns;

3. Recommends that Parties be encouraged to incorporate a biodiversity component into school curricula, and in social science subjects, as well as in the curricula of institutions of higher education, in particular, teacher training colleges.

L. Matters related to access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing

The meeting,

Taking note of decisions III/15, of the Conference of the Parties;

1. Urges the Conference of the Parties to request Parties to move beyond the sharing of experiences on best practices and to put in place legislative, policy and institutional measures on the regulation of access to genetic resources and benefit sharing and to report on the progress achieved at the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

2. Also urges the Conference of the Parties to request the Secretariat and other relevant international bodies to develop and promote the use of guidelines for the development and implementation of national measures on access regulation and benefit sharing;

3. Recommends that the Conference of the Parties should call upon the Global Environment Facility and other funding agencies to provide financial support to Parties to develop their national measures on access and benefit sharing and should urge the Global Environment Facility to consider the development of such measures as part of the enabling activities for the implementation of the Convention;

4. Further recommends that the Conference of the Parties should call upon international bodies such as the World Conservation Union, the World-Wide Fund for Nature, the United Nations Environment Programme, the African Centre of Technological Studies and the World Resources Institute to develop and conduct training and capacity-building programmes to assist Parties to develop and implement appropriate measures on access and benefit sharing ;

5. Requests the Conference of the Parties, in accordance with Article 19 of the Convention on Biological Diversity and decision II/18 of the Conference of the Parties, to call upon Parties to enact legislation and to develop other measures to promote the distribution of benefits from biotechnology;

6. Further requests the Conference of the Parties to call upon the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat and other international bodies to develop guidelines and capacity-building programmes to promote the distribution of benefits from biotechnology;

7. Also requests the Conference of the Parties to call upon the Global Environment Facility and other funding agencies to support efforts to implement Article 19 on the distribution of benefits from biotechnology.

F. Other recommendations

The meeting,

Noting that most Parties have expressed concern regarding their inadequate capacity to implement various provisions of the Convention, in particular Article 6,

Noting further that Article 12 on research and training calls upon Parties to strengthen their capacity on research and training,

1. Urges Parties to conduct national assessments, as appropriate, on the available capacity and to identify gaps in the area related to the Convention on Biological Diversity, such as taxonomy, legal aspects, sociology, biotechnology, economics and incentive measures;

2. Calls upon the Conference of the Parties to direct the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, the Secretariat and other international entities to prepare a background document for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its next ordinary meeting on strategies for implementing Article 12, with emphasis on policy and social science research and training;

3. Further calls upon the Conference of the Parties to direct the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to provide advice to the next ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties on ways and means of enhancing national capacities in social science, research and training.

XI. OTHER MATTERS

22. No other matters were raised by the meeting.

X. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

23. The report of the meeting was adopted with amendments.

XI. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

24. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the meeting was closed at 1:30 p.m.
