



**CONVENTION ON
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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
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Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

**DRAFT POLICY FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATIONS TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

Note by the Executive Secretary

At its meeting held in Granada, Spain, on 3 February 2006, the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties considered the attached draft policy for the accreditation of non-governmental organizations to the Convention on Biological Diversity and it was agreed that the draft should be submitted for review and adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting.

* UNEP/CBD/COP/8/1.

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DRAFT POLICY FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

1. Paragraph 5 of Article 23 of the Convention provides that any body or agency, whether governmental or non-governmental qualified in fields relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity which has informed the Secretariat of its wish to be represented as an observer at a meeting of the Conference of the Parties, may be admitted unless at least one third of the Parties present object. It further stipulates that the admission and participation of observers shall be subject to the rules of procedure adopted by the Conference of the Parties.

2. Rule 7 of the rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties, adopted by decision I/1, require the Secretariat to notify any body or agency whether governmental or non-governmental qualified in fields relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity which has informed the Secretariat of its wish to be represented, of meetings of the Conference of the Parties so that they may be represented as observers.

3. To date and since the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties, NGOs have been admitted to meetings under the Convention process on an ad hoc basis and at request of such observers to participate in specific meetings. The NGOs are major stakeholders in the Convention. To this end and in accordance with the United Nations established practice and the procedure followed by other Rio-related conventions, a proper NGO accreditation procedure to the Convention on Biological Diversity needs to be established. Annex I below provides a summary of practice in such other processes. The Executive Secretary therefore recommends an accreditation procedure in accordance with the criteria and process described in the following paragraphs. In this regard, annex II contains a draft decision that may be considered by the Conference of the Parties for adoption at its eighth meeting.

4. From the relevant provisions, it is clear that representation is reserved to bodies or agencies, governmental or non-governmental “qualified in the fields relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.” The term “qualified” must be interpreted broadly given the nature of the Convention and the range of its stakeholders. In effect, “qualified” should not be interpreted in the classical scientific sense since there are many community-based organizations (CBOs) as well as indigenous and local community organizations implementing practical conservation and sustainable use measures at the local level but which might not necessarily be “qualified” in that sense.

5. In view of the foregoing, accreditation should be open, upon formal request for accreditation to the Convention and its related legal instruments to all relevant national, regional and international educational, scientific and research organizations; civil society organizations, including NGOs and CBOs; and private sector organizations qualified or working in the fields of conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

6. The Executive Secretary shall issue a notification to all interested bodies or agencies informing them to address a formal request for accreditation as an observer to meetings of the Conference of the Parties or the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The notification should require the bodies or agencies to specify qualifications, interests and work in the field of conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources.

7. The bodies or agencies should forward to the Executive Secretary its statutes/by-laws/rules or terms of reference as well as any relevant information such as brochures, work plans or other information regarding activities pertaining to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources.

8. The Executive Secretary will prepare a list of applicant organizations and submit this to the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties for its review. After review, the Bureau will submit a recommendation thereon to the Conference of the Parties for its approval.

9. Once accredited, an organization does not need to apply for accreditation for subsequent sessions. Accreditation to the Conference of the Parties or the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety shall be valid for the respective subsidiary bodies of the Convention on Biological Diversity. An updated list of accredited non-governmental organizations shall be submitted on a regular basis to the regular meetings of the Conference of the Parties or of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.

Annex I

PRACTICE REGARDING ACCREDITATION IN OTHER INTERNATIONAL PROCESSES

1. Accreditation procedures for non-governmental organizations have been established, inter alia, by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention on Desertification (UNCCD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

2. Under the UNFCCC an organization wishing to be accredited formally applies to the Secretariat and provides official documents proving it is a legally recognized non-profit organization competent in climate change issues. The Bureau of the COP reviews lists of applicant organizations and submits a recommendation to the COP for approval. Once accredited, an organization does not need to apply for accreditation for subsequent sessions of the Conference of the Parties. At each meeting of the Conference of Parties a list of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations is submitted to the Conference for approval (see for example FCCC/CP/2000/2/Add.1).

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

3. Under the UNCCD accreditation requests are received and evaluated by the Executive Secretary. The Executive Secretary prepares a list of such organizations and recommends to the Conference of the Parties to accredit as observers the organizations listed (see ICCD/COP(4)/9/Add.1). Upon consideration of the list, the COP then adopts a decision accrediting the relevant organizations (see for example Decision 26/COP.1)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

4. UNEP revised its NGO policy and accreditation procedure pursuant to decision SS.VII/5 of the seventh special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, which called for enhanced involvement of civil society organizations in the work of UNEP. Under the current practice, a NGO seeking accreditation forwards a letter of request, including proof of non-profit status and interest in the environment, a detailed account of international scope of its activities, and a copy of accreditation to other United Nations bodies and agencies. The application is examined by the Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch of UNEP and a recommendation is made to the Office of the Secretariat for Governing Bodies for its decision. The Office notifies the NGO of its decision.

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

5. NGOs can apply for a consultative status with the ECOSOC. The requirements for obtaining consultative status are defined in ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31. In order to obtain such a status an organization must have the aims and purposes in conformity with the spirit, purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The application is reviewed by the Committee on NGOs of the ECOSOC. The Committee is composed of 19 Member States of the United Nations. The recommendation of the Committee is forwarded to the full ECOSOC meeting, which makes the final decision.

Annex II

DRAFT DECISION SUBMITTED BY THE BUREAU OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling Article 23 of the Convention and rule 7 of the rules of procedure for meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity,

1. *Decides* to adopt the policy for the accreditation of non-governmental organizations to the Convention on Biological Diversity contained in the note by the Executive Secretary on the subject (UNEP/CBD/COP/8/30) and annexed to the present decision and to accredit to the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties the non-governmental organizations listed in the annex to the present decision;*

2. *Decides also* that such accreditation shall apply to subsequent meetings of the Conference of the Parties as well as meetings of its subsidiary bodies;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to prepare lists of new applicant organizations for review by the Bureau and consideration by subsequent meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

* This list will be completed and circulated during the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.