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  CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
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PARTICIPATORY MECHANISMS FOR INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN THE WORK OF THE CONVENTION

Note by the Executive Secretary

INTRODUCTION

1.   At its eighth meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopted several decisions relevant to the participation of indigenous and local communities in the work of the Convention. In decision VIII/5 D, section II, paragraph 6(b), the Executive Secretary was requested to monitor the use of the Convention website and in particular, the Traditional Knowledge Information Portal (TKIP), and to consult with indigenous and local communities and their organizations, that are participating in the work of the Convention to identify gaps or shortcomings and to report to the fifth meeting of the Working Group on Article 8(j). Decision VIII/5 D, section II, paragraph 6(a), also requested the Executive Secretary to convene, subject to availability of financial resources, regional and sub-regional workshops on new information and web-based technologies to assist indigenous and local communities in their use and to facilitate the establishment of communication networks.

2.   Along the same lines, activity 1.1.1 of the strategic plan of the clearing-house mechanism (CHM) established pursuant to Article 18, paragraph 3 of the Convention (decision VIII/11, annex II), requests the Executive Secretary to "organize joint technical hands-on workshops with partners and international thematic focal points on new information and web-based technologies to assist in the implementation of the Convention, taking into account the special needs of indigenous and local communities".

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*   UNEP/CBD/WG8J/5/1.

3.   In accordance with these decisions, the Executive Secretary convened a Capacity-building Workshop on Networking and Information Exchange for National Focal Points and Indigenous and Local Communities in the Latin America and the Caribbean Region, in Quito, Ecuador, from 14 to 16 December 2006, with the support of the Governments of Spain and the Netherlands. The purpose of the workshop was to improve the capacity of the countries in the region through the sharing of experiences in networking and information exchange, including new information and web-based technologies, with a focus on the special needs of indigenous and local communities. The workshop also provided countries and indigenous and local communities of the region with an opportunity to discuss the development and implementation of initiatives by the clearing-house mechanism to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation at the national and regional levels with regard to the Convention's programme areas and cross-cutting issues, particularly the 2010 target, the transfer of technology and traditional knowledge, innovations and practices. Furthermore, the workshop participants provided the Secretariat with useful and practical advice on further developing mechanisms to improve the effective participation of indigenous and local communities in the work of the Convention. The report of the workshop is available as an information document (UNEP/CBD/WG8J/5/INF/12).

4.   Issues related to the clearing-house mechanism, the Article 8(j) homepage and the Traditional Knowledge Information Portal, as well as other matters of relevance to the effective participation of indigenous and local communities in the work of the Convention were also discussed at length by the Workshop. Participants emphasized the need for the further enhancement of existing participatory mechanisms and other participatory mechanisms including the further development of information sharing-tools such as a Traditional Knowledge Information Portal (TKIP) 1/ aimed to promote awareness and enhance access by indigenous and local communities to information on issues relating to Article 8(j) and Related Provisions under the Convention.

5.   Section II of this document examines recent progress in the development of mechanisms and tools to facilitate communications and effective participation if indigenous and local communities in the work of the convention. Finally, section III proposes draft recommendations for the consideration of the Working Group.

II.   THE DEVELOPMENT OF MECHANISMS AND TOOL TO FACILITATE THE EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF INDINGEOUS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN THE WORK OF THE CONVENTION

6.   In line with advice provided through the Informal Advisory Group to the clearing-house mechanism, the Advisory Group to Article 8(j) and related provisions, and the Capacity-building Workshop on Networking and Information Exchange, the Secretariat is in the process of developing a number of parallel participatory mechanisms in an effort to ensure full and equitable participation by indigenous and local communities in the work of the Convention. In particular, detailed advice and recommendations are provided through the report of the Capacity-building Workshop on Networking and Information Exchange (refer UNEP/CBD/WG8J/5/INF/12) and for convenience, the recommendations emerging from this workshop are contained in the annex to this document.

7.   The first mechanism under continuing development is electronic and makes use of web-based systems, attempting to incorporate many communication and interactive components in an effort to facilitate dialogue, exchange of ideas and dissemination of knowledge and information among indigenous and local communities. The second mechanism relies on alternative more traditionally based communication tools, including fax, hard-copy, regular mail and other traditional means of

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1/   Web-based and available at http://www.cbd.int/tk/default.shtml

communication and information exchange, including the Article 8(j) newsletter, *Pachamama*. 2/ Finally, the third mechanism is the voluntary fund for indigenous and local community participation in meetings, which is now fully operational.

A.   *Web-based systems*

8.   The Article 8(j) homepage introduces Article 8(j) and related provisions and offers information about: the participation of indigenous and local communities, including through the recently established voluntary fund for ILC participation in meetings held under the Convention;   Article 8(j) decisions including the programme of work and the plan of action for the retention of traditional knowledge; the outcomes of Article 8(j); and related information regarding Article 8(j) related meetings and documents and notifications; as well of an entry point into the Traditional Knowledge Information Portal.

9.   The new revised Article 8(j) homepage was launched on the International Day for Biological Diversity, 22 May 2007 and is currently being translated into Spanish, with the intention, subject to the availability of funds, of translating it into French and the other three United Nations languages. It is available at http://www.cbd.int/traditional/default.shtml   The translation of the Convention's web-pages, including Article 8(j) homepage and the Traditional Knowledge Information Portal into Spanish, is financed through a generous contribution by the Government of Spain and the work is ongoing.

10.   Electronic participatory mechanisms are integrated through an Internet-based portal located on the Convention's website at: http://www.cbd.int/tk/default.shtml and is referred to as the Traditional Knowledge Information Portal (TKIP). An Internet-base portal is a specialized website that provides a variety of services including Web searching, news, calendaring, discussion groups, interactive information exchange mechanisms, etc., developed for indigenous and local communities in support of the goals and objectives of the Convention. Parties, organizations and indigenous and local communities were notified of the activation of the Portal on 16 December 2005 and the TKIP was updated, revised and reactivated on 22 May 2007.

11.   The Traditional Knowledge Information Portal has eight different components, including:

(a)   A calendaring system where users are able to plan, organize and discuss virtual or face-to-face meetings;

(b)   A number of discussion forums where it is possible to initiate new discussions, reply to existing comments and communicate on issues of relevancy to the community;

(c)   Background material where users may submit to the Secretariat for posting documents, reports, articles, etc.;

(d)   A section related to the programme of work on Article 8(j): Traditional Knowledge, Innovations and Practices where users may comment on activities, request information and communicate with Programme Officers;

(e)   A subscription service to the various information dissemination services offered by the Secretariat, and to other services offered by indigenous and local communities;

(f)   A section on relevant websites, networks and other resources where users are able to submit new entries and links;

2/   Pachamama is available in colour hardcopy or electronically at http://www.cbd.int/doc/newsletters/news-8j-01-low-en.pdf. Pachamama means mother Earth (pacha: earth, mama:mother) in the Quecha /Aymara languages. The Earth is a divinity venerated by the Incas and other inhabitants of the Andean plateau such as the Aymara and the Quecha peoples.

(g)	A really simple syndication service (RSS, an XML (eXtended Markup Language) format designed for sharing web content such as information on new notifications, final reports, upcoming meetings and latest news from the Convention on Biological Diversity. Using this service, websites are able to harvest automatically needed information from the website of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

(h)	An electronic information centre where users are able to more easily locate information related to Article 8(j): Traditional Knowledge;

14.	Using these electronic tools, indigenous and local communities can

(a)	Research for information about traditional knowledge, innovations and practices and issues surrounding this subject;

(b)	Check calendar of events;

(c)	Post community blogs (web-information);

(d)	Participate in online electronic conferences.;

(e)	Subscribe to receive information about this area.

15.	All in all, the portal is intended to be a collaborative tool for use by indigenous and local communities, where users are able to interact and foster dialogue regardless of temporal and spatial constraints.

16.	However, effective use of the portal depends on infrastructure and adequate capacity, human and financial, at the community level and acculturation to new information and web-based technologies by those unfamiliar with their use and application. This is best achieved through community level technical workshops and hands-on training.

17.	Finally, pursuant to decision VIII/5 D, section II, paragraph 6(b), the Executive Secretary put in place, in early 2007, infrastructure to monitor visits to the Convention homepage, the Article 8(j) homepage and the Traditional Knowledge Information Portal. These statistics will be collected on a yearly basis to assist in monitoring the effectiveness of communication and participation mechanisms and to establish trends in use.

18.	From the 1 January 2007 to 12 July 2007, when this report was finalized the following statistics were recorded:

(a)	Article 8(j) homepage
 http://www.biodiv.org/traditional/default.shtml 2684 hits, 2163 visitors.
 http://www.cbd.int/traditional/default.shtml 2757 hits, 1962 visitors.
 Total: http://www/traditional/default.shtml 5441 hits, 4125 visitors.

(b)	Traditional Knowledge Information Portal (TKIP)
http://www.biodiv.org/tk/default.shtml 1631 hits, 1223 visitors.
http://www.cbd.int/tk/default.shtml 836 hits, 504 visitors.

(c)	Total: http://www/tk/default.shtml 2467 hits, 1727 visitors.

(d)	Convention Homepage/webpage
http://www.biodiv.org/default.shtml 464602 hits, 228148 visitors.
http://www.cbd.int/default.shtml 376041 hits, 126579 visitors.

(e)	Total: http://www/default.shtml 840643 hits, 354727 visitors.

B.   *More traditional forms of communication*

18.   With regard to alternative means of promoting effective participation of indigenous and local communities in the work of the Convention, the Secretariat is developing a number of less-technology intensive applications for use by traditional and local communities. These applications include:

(a)   A fax-server to disseminate postings, information and other news to users without access to new information and web-based technologies;

(b)   Text-based email services for users with access to the Internet, but lacking new equipment and bandwidth;

(c)   A mailing list of communities and users who may benefit from receipt of hard-copy documents and publications;

(d)   Creation of CD-ROMs able to archive the information content available on the portal.

(e)   An Article 8(j) newsletter called "Pachamama", as well as

(f)   Packages of printed resources relevant to indigenous and local communities, which are available from the Secretariat on request.

19.   It should be recognized, however, that these services do not offer the level of interactivity and access to resources as those available through web-based mechanisms. For example, it is difficult if not impossible, for users without access to web-based technologies to retrieve resources located on other websites and networks.

C.   *Voluntary Fund for the participation of Indigenous and Local Communities* 3/

20.   In decision VIII/5 D, section I, the Conference of the Parties adopted the criteria for the operation of the voluntary fund, which is available at http://www.cbd.int/traditional/fund.shtml along with application forms which are available in the six United Nations languages. In the criteria for the operation of the fund, the Conference of the Parties requested that the Executive Secretary establish a selection committee nominated by indigenous and local communities. The selection committee is established in notification SCBD/SEL/VN/GD/58785 (2007-075). The Convention is the first governing body of a multilateral environmental agreement to establish a voluntary funding mechanism specifically for the participation of indigenous and local communities in meetings held under the Convention.

III.   DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS WITH REGARD TO PARTICIPATORY MECHANISMS FOR INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN THE WORK OF THE CONVENTION

The Ad Hoc Open-Ended Inter-Sessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions may wish to recommend that the Conference of the Parties, at its ninth meeting, adopt the following decisions:

1.   *Notes* with appreciation the revitalization of the Article 8(j) homepage and the Traditional Knowledge Information Portal, related initiatives and the operationalization of the voluntary fund for indigenous and local communities' participation in meetings held under the Convention, by the Secretariat;

2.   *Notes* the draft recommendations of the capacity-building workshop on networking and information exchange (refer annex) as a useful basis for future work;

3/   The official name of the new Trust Fund is "General Trust Fund for Voluntary Contributions to Facilitate the Participation of Indigenous and Local Communities in the Work of the Convention on Biological Diversity" and the symbol is the VB Trust Fund.

3.   *Decides* to increase the core budget for the translation of documents, into the six official languages of the United Nations, so as to include the notifications and other information resources for indigenous and local communities, as appropriate,

4.   *Invites* Parties, Governments and relevant funding institutions and mechanisms to donate to the General Trust Fund for Voluntary Contributions to Facilitate the Participation of Indigenous and Local Communities in the Work of the Convention on Biological Diversity (VB Trust Fund)

5.   *Requests* the Executive Secretary to:

(a)   Convene, subject to the availability of financial resources, regional and sub-regional workshops on new information and web-based technologies to assist local and indigenous communities in their use and to facilitate the establishment of communication networks;

(b)   Continue to develop and translate the various electronic communication mechanisms, including the Article 8(j) homepage and the Traditional Knowledge Information Portal and to report on progress to the next meeting of the Working Group; and to

(c)   Monitor the use of the Convention website and in particular, the Article 8(j) homepage and the Traditional Knowledge Information Portal, and to consult with indigenous and local communities that are participating in the work of the Convention, through the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity to identify any gaps or shortcomings and to report to the next meeting of the Working Group.

Annex I

DRAFT RECOMENDATIONS OF THE CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP ON NETWORKING AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE FOR NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS AND INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN THE LATIN AMERICAN AND THE CARIBBEAN REGION FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON ARTICLE 8J AND RELATED PROVISIONS

A.　　*Finance and resources*

The Conference of the Parties

(a)　　Will consider presenting the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and other funding and implementing bodies with a global strategy to activate all national clearing-house mechanisms to create a global information dissemination and exchange network in order to achieve the goals of the Convention and the 2010 Biodiversity Target, and especially objective 10 related to traditional knowledge;

(b)　　*Requests* the Secretariat of the Convention to identify potential donors and financial resource providers for regional, national and sub-national projects by governments, indigenous and local community organizations, including non-governmental organizations and to provide advice and contact information to national focal points and clearing-house mechanism focal points and indigenous and local communities regarding this matter through the clearing-house mechanism;

(c)　　*Encourages* Parties to allocate and manage financial resources to strengthen the capacities of indigenous and local organizations to raise awareness about the Convention and in particular matters related to Article 8(j);

(d)　　*Encourages* lateral strengthening with other environmental treaties and bodies to promote more efficient use and harmonization of technical and financial resources to achieve mutual goals;

(e)　　*Encourages* Parties to promote a full and effective coordination between ministries regarding national policies for indigenous and local communities, biodiversity, environmental protection and sustainable development;

(f)　　*Requests* the Executive Secretary and the Parties to involve the private sector as a socially responsible ally and a potential donor;

(g)　　*Requests* the Executive Secretary to provide advice to the Parties on funding opportunities for the translation and dissemination of information in national and indigenous languages, in partnerships with indigenous and local communities, at the sub-national level, and to publish it through the clearing-house mechanism;

(h)　　*Encourages* Parties to consider alternative mechanisms to the Web as a priority and, consequently, to allocate and manage financial resources to develop them and to allow the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities.

B.　　*Capacity-building*

The Conference of the Parties

(a)　　*Requests* the Executive Secretary to facilitate more capacity-building workshops on Article 8(j) and related matters;

(b)　　*Requests* the Executive Secretary to develop and continue to deliver regional and sub-regional capacity-building workshops for national focal points, clearing-house mechanism focal points and indigenous and local communities to build capacity in using web-based resources and alternative ways of disseminating information and promoting information exchange, based on their needs;

(c)   *Requests* the Executive Secretary that the clearing-house mechanism of the Secretariat continues to provide practical and technical support to national clearing-house mechanisms based on needs analysis;

(d)   *Encourages* Parties to recognize the importance of stability, continuity and consistency in the policy and support of all National focal points;

(e)   *Encourages* Parties to consider appointing, with advice from indigenous and local communities, focal points for indigenous and local communities to work in partnership with national and clearing-house mechanism focal points to achieve the common goals of the Convention;

(f)   *Encourages* Parties, the Executive Secretary and the national and clearing-house mechanism focal points to ensure the full and effective participation of women in the strengthening and capacity-building process regarding communication and information, in the use of new technologies, related to the Convention on Biological Diversity;

(g)   *Encourages* Parties to strengthen their capacity through South-South cooperation and exchange of experiences in the implementation of the clearing-house mechanism and of Article 8(j), with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, in cooperation with other sectors of civil society;

(h)   *Encourages* Parties to develop and strengthen the infrastructure of indigenous and local communities regarding communication networks;

(i)   *Requests* that the Executive Secretary and the Parties clarify the role of all actors (focal points, indigenous and local communities, etc.) and to inform of their existence through various communication means;

(j)   *Requests* the Executive Secretary to promote awareness regarding the importance and role of national and clearing-house mechanism focal points.

C.   *Communication, education and public awareness*

The Conference of the Parties

(a)   *Recommends* that all Parties and Governments consider incorporating environmental science (awareness), the respect, protection and preservation of traditional knowledge, as well as cultural diversity, with the involvement and collective prior informed consent of indigenous and local communities as knowledge holders, into compulsory schooling curricula and public awareness;

(b)   *Recommends* that Parties and other Governments promote the respect, the protection and the preservation of the rights of the owners of traditional knowledge, and of the owners themselves;

(c)   *Recommends* that the clearing-house mechanism be used to promote information about good/best practices at national and sub-national levels biodiversity to raise awareness about biodiversity and the environment, such as targeting programmes for youth, annual awareness raising events such as International Biodiversity Day or appropriate national and local events (such as Mangofest in Antigua and Barbuda);

(d)   *Recognizing* the limitations of web-based technologies, *encourages* Parties and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, through the Global Initiative on Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) and the clearing-house mechanism to develop and encourage the development by others parties, of alternative means of communication of public information, in plain language and diverse community friendly-formats such as videos, DVDs, tapes for community radio, songs, posters, theatre/drama, film, slogans to empower the public, including indigenous and local communities to change behaviour to environmentally friendly practices, in support of the goals of the Convention;

(e)	*Requests* Parties to support the development by indigenous and local communities of their own media tools, regarding community-awareness strategies, dissemination of information and promotion of a discussion that respects and promotes traditional knowledge, biodiversity and environment;

(f)	*Requests* Parties and the clearing-house mechanism, through various means, taking into account diverse national circumstances, to develop youth initiatives and to encourage young leaders to promote and disseminate information about the importance of the environment, biodiversity, and traditional knowledge;

(g)	*Requests* Parties and the clearing-house mechanism to consider the use of celebrities and high-profile individuals, including religious leaders and churches, as good-will ambassadors and strategic partnerships for biodiversity and the environment;

(h)	*Requests* the clearing-house mechanism to provide inputs on information and cooperation needs to Parties so that they make informed decisions about the biodiversity, environment, sustainable development, and the respect for the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities;

(i)	*Requests* the Executive Secretary to work in partnerships with national focal points, clearing-house mechanism focal points, and indigenous and local communities to target and build partnerships with diverse and alternative media, including indigenous and local community media to raise awareness and engage their assistance and expertise in dissemination information about biodiversity and the environment;

(j)	*Requests* the Executive Secretary to facilitate the preparation of documentation in United Nations languages in sufficient time to allow for national consultations where appropriate and the dissemination of information at the sub-national level;

(k)	*Recommends* that Parties and Governments include all interested parties, especially indigenous and local communities, in the elaboration of national reports and to disseminate the draft national reports, in order to gather inputs before its submission to the Secretariat;

(l)	*Requests* the Secretariat and national focal points provide information on decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the various government agencies, to civil society and other interested parties, especially, to indigenous and local communities.

### D.	Advice regarding the Convention's clearing-house mechanism website, the Article 8(j) homepage and the Traditional Knowledge Information Portal

The Conference of the Parties

(a)	*Requests* the clearing-house mechanism to structure the Convention's web pages so that navigation is simple and logical, and provided in the six United Nations languages, based on available resources;

(b)	*Encourages* the clearing-house mechanism and the programme on CEPA to use plain accessible language and adapt it to each target audiences, as appropriate;

(c)	*Requests* the clearing-house mechanism to make web pages available in the six United Nations languages, prioritizing languages depending on needs and available resources;

(d)	*Requests* the Executive Secretary through such mechanisms as CEPA and the clearing-house mechanism to establish links with existing networks and in particular networks of indigenous and local communities to disseminate information and communication;

(e)	*Requests* that the Traditional Knowledge Information Portal (TKIP) be used to support and encourage cultural diversity and to preserve and promote indigenous and local languages, distinct

identities, and the respect of knowledge, innovations and practices relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of diversity, with pedagogical tools such as blogs, forums, interactive maps, etc.;

(f)   *Requests* that the Traditional Knowledge Information Portal continue to adapt by taking into account regional and sub-regional differences and the respect for cultural diversity between and within local and indigenous communities;

(g)   *Recommends* that the participation of indigenous and local communities in the portal be considered as an ongoing project, and that the Secretariat and the clearing-house mechanism establish a monitoring mechanism of positive and negative impacts of the implementation and use of the Portal.