



## Convention on Biological Diversity

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### AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

Fifth meeting

Montreal, 16-20 June 2014

Item 12 of the provisional agenda\*

### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

#### I. INTRODUCTION

1. This note is prepared to assist the fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation (WGRI) of the Convention in its consideration of the effective engagement of major groups and stakeholders in the relevant processes of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in order to strengthen their contribution to the objectives of the Convention, its Protocols and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. Other aspects of stakeholder engagement are included in documents under other items of the agenda of this meeting. These include document UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/12 on improving the efficiency of structures and processes under the Convention and its Protocols; document UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/3/Add.1 on scientific and technical cooperation; document UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/8 on cooperation with other conventions, international organizations and initiatives; document UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/9 on engagement with subnational and local governments; document UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/10 on engagement with business and; document UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/3 on review of progress in providing support in implementing the objectives of the Convention and its Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

2. Section II of this note presents background information on the issue. Section III summarizes and reviews current forms of participation and engagement of major groups and stakeholders in meetings and processes of the Convention and its Protocols. Section IV presents possible ways to enhance the effectiveness of engagement of major groups and stakeholders in those meetings and processes. Section V briefly presents the potential for enhanced engagement of major groups and stakeholders in support of the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. Finally, section VI contains for consideration by the Working Group, draft elements of recommendations to the Conference of the Parties on how such collaboration and engagement may be further promoted.

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\*\* Reposted on 13 May 2014 for technical reasons.

\* UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/1.

## II. BACKGROUND

3. The Parties to the Convention have long recognized the importance of major groups and stakeholders in the implementation of the Convention. In the preamble of the Convention, Contracting Parties stress, “the importance of, and the need to promote, international, regional and global cooperation among States and intergovernmental organizations and the non-governmental sector for the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components”. Parties also recognize “the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity”. Similarly, one of the fundamental principles of the programme of work on Article 8(j) is to ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities at all stages and levels of the implementation of the Convention. Additionally, Article 10(e) of the Convention encourages cooperation between governmental authorities and the private sector in developing methods for sustainable use of biological resources, and Article 13 states that Parties shall cooperate with international organizations in developing education and public awareness programmes.

4. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 states that the Strategic Plan “will be implemented primarily through activities at the national or subnational level, with supporting action at the regional and global levels”. Its Goals A and E each refer to the importance of addressing “the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity *across government and society*” and to “Enhance implementation through *participatory planning...*” All the Aichi Biodiversity Targets require some form of awareness and engagement of major groups and stakeholders at various levels. In its support mechanisms, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 recognizes the importance of partnerships and initiatives to enhance cooperation including with subnational governments, cities and local authorities.

5. At the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention, several decisions further highlighted the role of major groups and stakeholders in the achievement of the objectives of the Convention, Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and the importance to further engage with major groups and stakeholders.<sup>1</sup>

6. In paragraph 10 of decision XI/2, Parties requested the Executive Secretary to continue promoting and facilitating, in partnership with relevant organizations, activities to strengthen implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

7. In paragraph 3 (a) of decision X/2, the Conference of the Parties urged Parties to enable participation at all levels to foster the full and effective contributions of women, indigenous and local communities, civil-society organizations, the private sector and stakeholders from all other sectors in the full implementation of the objectives of the Convention and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

8. Further, in paragraph 2 of its decision XI/10, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Bureau, to prepare a proposal on improving the efficiency of structures and processes under the Convention and its Protocols. Through notification 2013-120 (Ref. No. SCBD/OES/OJ/moc/82999), dated 19 December 2013, Parties, Governments, international organizations, indigenous and local communities and stakeholders were invited to submit views and suggestions related to the processes under the Convention and its Protocols, as well as elements for improvement of efficiency including on the role and participation of stakeholder groups in meetings. As such, elements outlined in this document are also relevant to potential measures to improve the efficiency of structures and processes under the Convention and its two Protocols outlined in document UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/12 (agenda item 13).

9. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), in its outcome document, “The future we want”, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution A/RES/66/288, underscored that “broad public participation and access to information and judicial and administrative

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<sup>1</sup> Including: decision XI/2, paragraph 4; decision XI/2, paragraph 24; decision XI/6, paragraph 10; decision XI/7, paragraph 3(a) and 5(a); decision XI/8 A, paragraph 5, decisions XI/8 B and C and decision XI/8 D, paragraph 1.

proceedings are essential to the promotion of sustainable development. Sustainable development requires the meaningful involvement and active participation of regional, national and subnational legislatures and judiciaries, and all major groups” (paragraph 43). In the same paragraph, the Conference agreed “to work more closely with the major groups and other stakeholders, and encourage their active participation, as appropriate, in processes that contribute to decision-making, planning and implementation of policies and programmes for sustainable development at all levels”.<sup>2</sup>

### *Terminology*

10. *Agenda 21*, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 established the concept of the nine “major groups”: farmers (including small-scale farmers, fisherfolk, pastoralists and foresters); women; scientific and technological community (including research and academia); children and youth; indigenous peoples and their communities; workers and trade unions; business and industry; non-governmental organizations; and local authorities.

11. “Major groups and other stakeholders” is the formulation adopted in “The future we want”: “major groups” refers to the nine major groups identified in *Agenda 21*; while the other stakeholders include “local communities, volunteer groups and foundations, migrants and families as well as older persons and persons with disabilities”.<sup>3</sup>

12. The Secretariat and the Convention have been referring to “major groups”, “stakeholder and major groups”, or “stakeholders” interchangeably to include certain “observer” categories such as academia, the private sector and international NGOs. For the purpose of the consideration of this agenda item, the expression “major groups and stakeholders” is used to designate all actors of civil society. Indigenous and local communities have special measures in place for their contribution to the Convention including the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions which considers matters of particular relevance to them.

## **III. CURRENT FORMS OF PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT OF MAJOR GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS IN MEETINGS AND PROCESSES OF THE CONVENTION AND ITS PROTOCOLS**

### **A. Rules of procedure for meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention**

13. Rules 7.1 and 7.2 of the rules of procedure for meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD<sup>4</sup> define the conditions under which non-governmental entities can participate in its meetings:

“1. The Secretariat shall 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, in meetings of the Conference of the Parties so that they may be represented as observers unless at least one third of the Parties present at the meeting object.

2. Such observers may, upon invitation of the President, participate without the right to vote in the proceedings of any meeting in matters of direct concern to the body or agency they represent unless at least one third of the Parties present at the meeting object.”

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<sup>2</sup> General Assembly resolution A/RES/66/288, “The future we want” refers to involvement of civil society and stakeholders in paragraphs 42 to 55 of Section 2/C on Engaging major groups and other stakeholders. Available online at: [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E).

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Resolution A/RES/66/288, “The future we want” refers to involvement of civil society and stakeholders in paragraphs 42 to 55 of Section 2/C on Engaging major groups and other stakeholders, *idem*.

<sup>4</sup> Rules of procedure for meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD are available at: <http://www.cbd.int/convention/rules.shtml>

### ***B. Admission of bodies and agencies***

14. In decision IX/29 the Parties to the Convention adopted steps for admitting qualified bodies and agencies, whether governmental or non-governmental, as observers to meetings of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies without prejudice to Article 23, paragraph 5, of the Convention and rule 7 of the rules of procedure:

- (i) Any interested body or agency should inform the Executive Secretary of its wish to be represented as an observer to meetings of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, and include its statutes/by-laws/rules or terms of reference, as well as any other relevant information.
- (ii) The Executive Secretary will prepare a list of bodies and agencies which have informed him of their wish to be represented, and have provided the information referred to in paragraph 2 above. The Executive Secretary will submit that list to each meeting of the Conference of the Parties for its information. The list will also be provided, in advance of the meeting, to the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties for information.
- (iii) Once listed, a body or agency need not re-submit the information provided under paragraph 2 above. Bodies and agencies should notify the Secretariat of any relevant change in the information provided under paragraph 2 that may affect their admission as an observer.

15. Individuals without an institutional affiliation cannot be admitted as observers to Convention meetings. Observer organizations are assigned to the most relevant category based on the information provided as part of their request for accreditation.

### ***C. Indigenous and Local Communities***

16. Indigenous and local communities (ILC) are given particular recognition in the Convention and specific measures have been established to enable their full and effective participation in the processes of the Convention. The Conference of the Parties established the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8 (j) and Related Provisions which is responsible for the development and implementation of the related work programme with the full participation of indigenous and local communities. The Working Group on Article 8(j) includes an enhanced participation mechanism for ILCs, including the nomination of an indigenous co-chair to assist the Chairperson of the meeting, as well as an indigenous and local community bureau, co-chairs for sub-working groups and contact groups, and enhanced opportunities to make interventions on all agenda items. A voluntary funding mechanism is also established to facilitate the participation of ILCs in all relevant meetings held under the Convention.

### ***D. Forms of participation in meetings of the COP and its subsidiary bodies***

17. For the purpose of registration and badge identification, civil society organizations participating as observers at meetings of the Convention and its subsidiary bodies are categorized under groups that include the following: Children and Youth (Youth), Indigenous and Local Communities (IDG), Non-governmental organizations (NGO), Local Authorities (LA), Business and Industry (IND), and Education (EDU). The category NGO is used to encompass a diversity of groups, including Women, Workers and Trades Unions, and ranges from small national NGOs to regional and international NGOs.

18. Admission to participate as an observer organization at the meetings provides representatives with specific opportunities.

- (i) At the meeting, observer organizations may:
  - have access to the published pre-session and in-session documents of the meeting;
  - occupy assigned seats, organized by categories, in the meeting room;
  - on invitation, at the Chair's discretion, make statements on agenda items during formal sessions of open-ended meetings;
  - on invitation, on the basis of their competencies, expertise and experience, participate in relevant informal panels and sessions;

- (ii) At events in the margins of the meeting, observer organizations may:
  - following procedures established for applications prior to the meeting, co-organize or hold side-events (details in the next section);
  - participate in other side-events and parallel meetings taking place in the margins of the conference;
  - on invitation, on behalf of their constituent group, provide a statement at the High-level segment of the meeting.
- (iii) To facilitate the effective participation of observer organizations at the meeting, the Secretariat may:
  - provide a meeting room to a constituency group, including NGOs, ILCs, Youth, the Women's Caucus and Business, to enable them to work or meet during the period of the meeting;
  - provide orientation or briefing sessions by Secretariat staff.
- (iv) In preparation towards the meeting, organizations that are registered with the Secretariat:
  - receive relevant electronic communications issued by the Secretariat;
  - on invitation, in response to notifications issued by the Executive Secretary, may submit views that may contribute to the preparation of documents for the meetings.

***E. Activities taking place in the margins of the Conference of the Parties***

19. In addition to holding daily coordination meetings, media events and side-events, major groups and stakeholders can organize or contribute to a large programme of events that take place prior to or in parallel with the meetings of the Convention and its Protocols. Many of these take place during the weekend between the meetings of the Protocol and the Convention, i.e. between meetings of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (COP-MOP) and the meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, or during the weekend between the first and second week of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Similar types of activities take place in the margins of the meetings of subsidiary bodies under the Convention.

20. Some major group and stakeholder's events and meetings are designed to bring members of the constituency group together to focus on how their own actions and measures related to biodiversity can contribute to the objectives of the Convention and its Protocols, for example city biodiversity summits, involving representatives of city and subnational governments; business and biodiversity events, involving members of the business community; parliamentarian forums, children and youth conferences, education for sustainable development conferences, and workshops on legal preparedness involving legal professionals. Others involve a multiplicity of stakeholders around biodiversity-related themes or forums, for example the Rio Conventions Pavilion, island summits, the Fair on Communication, Education and Public Awareness, initiatives related to sustainable oceans, events on south-south cooperation, national biodiversity strategies and action plans, access and benefit-sharing, biotechnologies, cultural and biological diversity, etc.

***F. Challenges related to the current forms of participation and engagement of major groups and stakeholders in meetings***

21. Activities involving major groups and stakeholders in the margins of meetings of the Convention and its Protocols bring rich discussions on issues of relevance to the Parties, including innovative and efficient ways to implement the Convention, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and Aichi Biodiversity Targets at all levels. However, these valuable inputs are often not effectively shared with Parties at the meetings.

22. The following aspects related to the current forms of participation and engagement of major groups and stakeholders may limit the potential for major groups and stakeholders to truly contribute to the Convention and its Protocols' strategic objectives:

- Government delegates do not often have the possibility to attend events taking place in the margins of or in parallel with the Convention and Protocols' meetings;
- Topics and themes discussed during major groups and stakeholders' activities are not always directly linked to agenda items;
- Objectives of the major groups and stakeholders and objectives of government delegates may not converge towards common goals;
- Expertise and experiences of major groups and stakeholders may not be well known to government delegates;
- Major groups and stakeholders are generally invited, at the Chair's discretion, to present short statements at the end of the consideration of an item on the agenda of the meeting, which limits their value;
- The format of the meetings does not include any opportunity for dialogue or discussions between Parties and major groups and stakeholders;
- Concrete partnership arrangements are often not known to Governments and stakeholders;
- The Secretariat routinely requests summaries from major groups and stakeholders about activities such as side events, but generally the outcomes are not made available in time to be considered during to the meetings of the Convention and its Protocols.

23. Other approaches could allow Parties to (i) better benefit from the expertise and experiences of major groups and stakeholders; (ii) be better informed and focus on practical mechanisms to implement the Convention and Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020; (iii) prepare decisions that take into account the strength of implementing partners and have decisions better informed by lessons learned at the community, subnational and national levels.

#### **IV. POSSIBLE WAYS TO ENHANCE ENGAGEMENT OF MAJOR GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS IN MEETINGS OF THE CONVENTION AND ITS PROTOCOLS**

##### *A. Learning from the Global Biodiversity Forum (1992 to 2006)*

24. The Global Biodiversity Forum (GBF) was a stakeholder engagement mechanism that complemented intergovernmental processes of the biodiversity-related conventions. It aimed at providing an independent, open and strategic mechanism to foster analysis, dialogue and debate among all interested parties to address issues related to the options for action to conserve biodiversity and use biological resources sustainably and equitably<sup>5</sup>. The first phase of the GBF started in 1992 and the last session took place on the margins of the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in March 2006, in Curitiba, Brazil. The GBF received funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as well as co-financing

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<sup>5</sup> Initial sessions of GBF were all convened prior to meetings of the COP to the CBD, and their outcomes were presented at the opening plenaries of the Conference. In later years, forums were also organized intersessionally: at national and regional levels, in association with CSD meetings, in parallel with UNFCCC or UNCCD meetings, prior to CBD SBSTTA, prior to Ramsar or CITES COPs etc. Typically, the Forum would run for two days and with between three and six thematic workshop sessions. Fifty percent of the Forum was devoted to open discussion among all participants. The Forum was coordinated by a team located within IUCN, and would make publications and documents available on the Forum website. Participants would register online. According to the terminal evaluation of UNEP/GEF project "Global Biodiversity Forum (Phase III)", the project achieved a number of objectives including the expansion of the CBD constituency: "From having been a Convention which was very government dominated and had limited participation of NGOs and other civil society the GBF was able to engage on average NGOs (45%), Governments (29%), the private sector (10%), academia (10%) and local and indigenous communities (6%) in the GBF." Project recommendations included the "need for adapting any future GBFs to current needs in order to ensure that they will add value. This could include continuing to conduct the fora in relation to other convention processes such as Ramsar, UNCCD, WTO, continue the regionalization and providing a more science-oriented forum which focuses in depth on particular issues that are of concern."

and sponsorships from participating and host organizations, including the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which hosted the coordinating team.

25. The evaluation carried out as part of the UNEP/GEF project “Global Biodiversity Forum (Phase III): Multi-Stakeholder Support for the Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity” considered that the first achievement of the GBF was to provide “an informal mechanism where the CBD Parties and major stakeholder groups could explore and strengthen analyses and debate the central issues around CBD implementation”. The second achievement was the expansion of the Convention constituency. The evaluation also presented some challenges and lessons learned: the impact of an approach focussed on dialogue rather than concrete action proved difficult to measure and to some extent possibly led to ineffectiveness as the increased understanding and capacity was not concretely tied to shared action”.<sup>6</sup> Elsewhere, observers noted that the dialogues did not have clear linkages to the Conference of the Parties or did not clearly contribute to its strategic objectives.

26. A dedicated forum such as the GBF could be used as one possible model in exploring and developing innovative ways to engage major groups and stakeholders under the Convention and its Protocols in the context of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. Cost assessment for implementing such a model would have to take into account, for example, the need to facilitate participation of stakeholders through voluntary contributions or other financial mechanisms and costs of hosting such a gathering.

### ***B. Learning from other approaches***

27. Following the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20),<sup>7</sup> the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has been exploring ways to enhance active participation of all relevant stakeholders, particularly those from developing countries and to develop new mechanisms to promote transparency and the effective engagement of civil society in its work and that of its subsidiary bodies. A draft policy that builds on best practices of stakeholder engagement in multilateral organizations will be presented at the first session of the United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA) of UNEP in June 2014. In preparing for this, UNEP Secretariat released, among other documents, a *Review of Current Practices of Stakeholder Engagement in Multilateral Organizations* including a description and assessment of current practice at UNEP.<sup>8</sup> The document provides a useful summary of the practice and processes in sixteen multilateral organizations.

28. The upcoming UNEA will be preceded by a two day Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum. In addition, on the second and third day of the UNEA, day-long thematic symposia on the Rule of law and on global finance will bring together a wide range of actors from both the public and private sectors and civil society for discussions to raise awareness, provide solutions and mobilize partnerships for promoting the rule of law and financing a green economy. This may also serve as a useful model for the Convention and its Protocols.

29. The Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) for Relations with the Committee on World Food Security aims at facilitating civil society participation in agriculture, food security and nutrition policy

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<sup>6</sup> Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project GF/2010- 02-02 “Global Biodiversity Forum (Phase III): Multi- Stakeholder Support for the Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity”, UNEP, June 2009. Online: [http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/gef\\_prj\\_docs/GEFProjectDocuments/MandE/PIR/2009%20PIR/UNEP/Biodiversity/Biodiversity\\_Terminal\\_Evaluations/1486\\_TE\\_Global\\_Biodiversity\\_Forum/1486%20GBF%20Evaluation%20Final.pdf](http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/gef_prj_docs/GEFProjectDocuments/MandE/PIR/2009%20PIR/UNEP/Biodiversity/Biodiversity_Terminal_Evaluations/1486_TE_Global_Biodiversity_Forum/1486%20GBF%20Evaluation%20Final.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Paragraph 88 of the Outcome Document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, The Future We Want, specifically invited the General Assembly to adopt a resolution strengthening and upgrading UNEP to “Ensure the active participation of all relevant stakeholders drawing on best practices and models from relevant multilateral institutions and exploring new mechanisms to promote transparency and the effective engagement of civil society”. United Nations Resolution A/RES/66/288, on line: [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E).

<sup>8</sup> On line: [http://www.unep.org/civil-society/Portals/24105/documents/resources/stakeholder\\_engagement/Review\\_of\\_current\\_practices\\_of\\_stakeholder\\_engagement\\_in\\_multilateral\\_organisations\\_30July\\_2013.pdf](http://www.unep.org/civil-society/Portals/24105/documents/resources/stakeholder_engagement/Review_of_current_practices_of_stakeholder_engagement_in_multilateral_organisations_30July_2013.pdf).

development at national, regional and global levels in the context of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). The mechanism aims to support civil society organizations to influence policy processes and outcomes at the global level by facilitating civil society participation in CFS mechanisms. It also seeks to enable civil society organizations to influence policy processes at regional and national levels by facilitating their participation in regional inter-governmental events and processes. Through participation in the CSM, members have access to information, dialogue with other civil society groups and develop common positions and complementary strategies and ways of working. The work of the CSM is facilitated by a small Secretariat.<sup>9</sup> One of the main characteristics of this mechanism is to enable civil society organizations to develop common positions, when possible, and to help communicate divergent positions where there is no consensus, in order to effectively contribute to the CFS Plenary Sessions, Open-ended Working Groups, Task Teams, the CFS Advisory Group and other mechanisms such as the FAO regional conferences.

30. The World Conservation Congress (WCC) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) brings together leaders of all levels – from Governments and international NGOs to academia and local association to discuss conservation issues. In 2012, the Congress adopted a new format, aiming for “greater coherence and cross-fertilization between the public forum and the members’ assembly”.<sup>10</sup> The Forum is a hub of public debates that takes place during the first five days (one full day and four almost full days) of the IUCN Congress. It includes many different types of events including the World Leaders Dialogues. Members are organized and prepare their interventions through six IUCN commissions and thematic programmes of work. The main messages of each day of the Forum are presented to the Assembly the following morning.

31. The Members’ Assembly is IUCN’s highest decision-making body, a “global environmental parliament” that involves Governments and NGOs – large and small, national and international – taking joint decisions. It meets every morning, starting on the second day of the Congress, and for the last three days. The fact that the outcomes of the Forum inform the Member’s Assembly around thematic programmes helps in building linkages between observer organizations and member organizations, and in bringing parties to share common objectives.

**C. *Possible approaches for improving effectiveness of engagement of major groups and stakeholders in the processes and meetings of the CBD, its Protocols and subsidiary bodies***

32. Taking into account the lessons learned from the GBF and practices from other multilateral organizations, the inter-governmental nature of the CBD processes and that the decision-making, along with responsibility for implementing decisions from the Conference of the Parties remains the prerogative of Parties, innovative ways to enhance the effectiveness of engagement of major groups and stakeholders could include the following:

(a) A major groups and stakeholders’ forum or conference focusing on issues related to the implementation of the Convention, its Protocols and Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, to take place prior to the meetings of the Conference of the Parties, its Protocols and subsidiary bodies. The forum or conference topics would be aligned to the agendas of the Conference of the Parties and subsidiary bodies. It could provide an opportunity for stakeholders to engage with government delegates and to better consolidate their views. It could also provide an opportunity for stakeholder groups to coordinate their inputs to the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and subsidiary bodies.

Meetings of specific groups, such as business, cities, youth, would still be encouraged. These would take place in parallel with the forum, or in the first days of the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and subsidiary bodies, in order for all forum and meeting outcomes to inform delegates early during the meetings.

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<sup>9</sup> More information on the Civil Society Mechanism at: [http://www.csm4cfs.org/files/Pagine/1/csm\\_proposal\\_en.pdf](http://www.csm4cfs.org/files/Pagine/1/csm_proposal_en.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Programme of the World Conservation Congress. Online:  
[http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/wcc\\_2012\\_programme\\_english\\_pdf.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/wcc_2012_programme_english_pdf.pdf)

(b) A multi-stakeholder dialogue on implementation within the formal proceedings of the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and subsidiary bodies, facilitated by the Secretariat. Topics would be determined in collaboration with co-chairs, the Bureau and stakeholders, as well as indigenous and local communities and would focus on experiences, lessons learned and issues of implementation. Government delegates and representatives of major groups and stakeholders would be invited to engage in direct exchanges and dialogue but would not engage in negotiations. A summary document of the dialogue or special session would be made available to inform proceedings.

(c) Special short session(s) within the formal proceedings of the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and subsidiary bodies during which outcomes of side-events and other events described under paragraphs 21 and 22 above would be presented to the Conference of the Parties.

(d) Online fora and virtual meetings where Parties may discuss/debate specific issues with major groups and stakeholders in preparation for regular meetings of the Convention and its Protocols.

33. The above are preliminary proposals only and are consistent with options outlined in the document UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/12 on improving the efficiency of structures and processes under the Convention and its Protocols. Any of these options can be an opportunity for major groups and stakeholders to bring relevant accounts and outputs, from activities carried out throughout the intersessional period, at the subnational, national and regional levels to the global meeting.

34. A test “pilot” of a dialogue, described under option (b) above, will take place during the fifth meeting of the Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention. Lessons learned from this experience will be very useful inputs for future practice, including at the upcoming meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

35. The annotated agenda of the upcoming twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention plans for a special information session/dialogue to take place in the afternoon of Monday, 6 October 2014 (the first day of COP-12) in Working Group I. The session, described under option (b) above, is aimed at identifying challenges and opportunities towards achieving the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets and will inform the deliberations of the meeting, including the high-level segment.

36. The Working Group is invited to take note of these preliminary proposals, share additional experience related to engagement of major groups and stakeholders, and provide recommendations to the Conference of the Parties on how such engagement may be further promoted.

## **V. POTENTIAL FOR ENHANCED ENGAGEMENT OF MAJOR GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR BIODIVERSITY 2011-2020**

37. Major groups and stakeholders play an important and active role in implementing measures to achieve the objectives of the Convention and its Protocols, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and, at the national level, national biodiversity strategies and actions plans.

38. It is the outputs and results of these actions and experiences that can valuably inform the discussions of the meetings of the Convention, its Protocols and subsidiary bodies, as addressed in the previous section.

39. The Secretariat of the Convention liaises with a diversity of major groups and stakeholders ranging from businesses to ILCs, local and subnational authorities, children and youth, academic and scientific/research institutions, through relevant networks and a variety of mechanisms. This engagement helps many such groups to orient actions towards the objectives of the Convention and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and to better prepare and coordinate their contribution to the processes and meetings of the Convention and its Protocols.

40. There are many other aspects of engagement of stakeholders in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and ways to strengthen such engagement, including by

improving linkages and collaboration between partner institutions and Parties, and increasing the capacity of the Secretariat in facilitating these linkages. The Secretariat is in the process of examining how these partnerships can be strengthened.

41. The Working Group is invited to consult and consider other documents that impinge on aspects of partnerships and collaboration with such groups and how they can contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including on scientific and technical cooperation (UNEP/WGRI/5/3 Add.1), cooperation with other conventions, international organizations and processes (UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/8) as well as communication, education and public awareness and United Nations Decade on Biodiversity (UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/INF/2).

## VI. SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATION

42. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention may wish to recommend that the Conference of the Parties, at its twelfth meeting, adopt a decision along the following lines:

*The Conference of the Parties,*

*Recalling* articles of the Convention related to major group and stakeholder engagement and participation, including Article 8(j), Article 10 (e) and Article 13,

*Recalling also* decision X/2 on the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and in particular paragraph 3 (a) on enabling participation at all levels of major groups and stakeholders in the full implementation of the objectives of the Convention and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020,

*Noting* paragraph 43 of the annex to United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/66/288, “The future we want”, in which the conference agreed to work more closely with the major groups and other stakeholders, and encourage their active participation, as appropriate, in processes that contribute to decision-making, planning and implementation of policies and programmes for sustainable development at all levels,

*Recognizing* the richness and relevance of experiences of major groups and stakeholders related to the Convention and its Protocols and the opportunities provided by their respective meetings to promote effective implementation,

*Noting* the efforts of the Secretariat and major groups and other stakeholders’ institutions to enhance support for Parties in the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols, and the potential for enhanced engagement in support of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020,

1. *Welcomes* the special informal session/dialogue aimed at identifying challenges and opportunities towards achieving the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, that informed the deliberations of the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, including the high-level segment;

2. *Welcomes also* the development of appropriate and innovative ways, means and mechanisms to enhance engagement of major groups and stakeholders in meetings and processes of the Convention, its Protocols and subsidiary bodies, and to better inform Parties of opportunities, experiences and expertise that major groups and stakeholders can provide;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to include appropriate and innovative practices and mechanisms to enhance engagement of major groups and stakeholders in processes and future meetings of the Convention, its Protocols and subsidiary bodies.