



Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions

Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
 Convention on Biological Diversity
 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
 Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
 Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat
 International Plant Protection Convention
 International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
 International Whaling Commission

Meeting of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions Friday 21 February 2025, FAO Headquarters, Rome

Chair's report

Introduction

1. The 2025 ordinary meeting of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions was held on 21 February 2025 at the Headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome. It was hosted by the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).
2. Ms. Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity, chaired the meeting. The list of participants is available as Annex I of this document.

Opening of the meeting

3. Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, Director of the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, FAO, welcomed participants on behalf of FAO. He also highlighted his appreciation for the resumed session of the sixteenth meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP16.2) to be convened at FAO Headquarters, stressing the complementarity of the food security and biodiversity agendas.
4. The Chair welcomed the appreciation expressed by FAO and reiterated the importance of biodiversity for the work of FAO. In this context, synergies shall be promoted, also based on relevant decisions on cooperation with other conventions and international organizations.
5. The Chair thanked the ITPGRFA and IPPC for hosting the meeting. The meeting participants adopted the agenda.

Debrief on CBD COP16, COP MOPs and resumed sessions

6. The Chair provided an overview of the outcomes of CBD COP 16 in Cali as well as relevant elements of the pending decisions to be addressed at CBD COP16.2 in Rome from 25 to 27 February 2025.
7. COP 16 was the largest meeting of the CBD to date, with unprecedented participation of observers. The meeting had some positive outcomes, also due to the strong support from the Colombian Presidency. Of particular relevance to the BLG, the Chair noted the following:
 - Decision 16/4 on the programme of work on Article 8(j) and other provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity related to indigenous peoples and local communities to 2030.
 - Decision 16/5 on institutional arrangements for the full and effective participation of IPLCs.
 - Decision 16/6 on the role of people of African descent.

- Decision 16/2 on digital sequence information on genetic resources.
 - Decision 16/16 on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs).
 - Decision 16/19 on biodiversity and health.
8. The Chair also mentioned that the CBD COP16 was preceded by an open-ended forum for voluntary country review of implementation conducted under SBI5, during which Parties to the Convention had the opportunity to exchange views on the development and update of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), a key tool for the implementation of the Convention and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The forum was successful as participants were also able to showcase solutions and learn from one another.
 9. The Chair highlighted relevant items to be addressed at the resumed session of CBD COP 16, including the consideration and adoption of draft decisions on:
 - resource mobilization.
 - the financial mechanism.
 - mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and review, including the global review of collective progress in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and the monitoring framework.
 - cooperation with other conventions and international organizations.
 10. The Chair invited participants to consult the joint calendar of events as well as the compilation of decisions of relevance to BLG members that were distributed to the Group by the CBD Secretariat prior to the meeting.

Updates on relevant work under the respective conventions

11. The Chair invited the participants to provide updates on significant outcomes of recent meetings of the governing bodies and items to be addressed at forthcoming meetings, as well as ongoing work of relevance to the Liaison Group, including actions in response to adoption of the KMGBF.
12. The Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) underlined the importance of the global review, the 9th replenishment cycle of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the draft decision on cooperation with other conventions and international organizations, among the elements to be addressed at COP16.2. In relation to CMS processes, it was highlighted that different themes are guiding the work of the Convention with other organizations, such as the ongoing work on avian flu in collaboration with FAO. In this regard, it was also noted that the outcomes of the recent climate change and migratory species workshop will feed into the CMS COP, to be held in March 2026 in Brazil. She concluded by giving an overview of upcoming meetings and highlighting the importance of cross-cutting issues such as connectivity in support of Target 2 and 3 of the KMGBF, and illegal and overexploitation of species linked to Targets 5 and 9 of the KMGBF.
13. The Executive Secretary of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) remarked that, as a key outcome of the 69th meeting of the Commission last September, Resolution 2024-2 details IWC's mandate to work on synergies with CBD and the new Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ). The Resolution calls for closer collaboration with the CBD, the GEF, as well as with CITES and CMS. It was stressed that key areas of cooperation include monitoring and NBSAPs, scientific research, resource mobilization, capacity building, by-catch, IPLCs, biodiversity mainstreaming, plastics and climate change. Furthermore, she explained that a conservation committee has been created, and its work is aligned with the KMGBF. She also informed participants that the next meeting of the Commission will be held in 2026 and will be chaired by Australia. Under IWC, in-depth scientific assessments are underway; a key objective is to present this information in an accessible, yet accurate manner. In this regard, much of the work of IWC is relevant to the global review to be conducted under the CBD as well as the Clearing House Mechanism. Beyond data and information, the work of IWC remains of interest to many of the targets under the KMGBF, but also to CMS, especially in the context of its transboundary species plan.
14. The ITPGRFA Secretary stressed the importance of digital sequence information (DSI) for the work of the Treaty and informed participants of the upcoming eleventh session of the Governing Body, to be held from 24 to 29

November 2025 in Peru. An important element of discussion will be the outcome of CBD COP16. It was also reported that an expansion of the scope of the Treaty is being considered. Beyond DSI and a clear interface with the Nagoya Protocol, important cross-cutting issues that are relevant to other BLG members include farmers' rights as well as funding. He concluded by saying that common messaging from the BLG is an important matter and that a statement or similar communication product could be drafted as a concrete outcome of this meeting. The Chair endorsed this proposal.

15. The Deputy Director of the UNESCO's World Heritage Centre, which serves as Secretariat to the World Heritage Convention (WHC), reported that the 47th session of the WHC's Governing Body be held in July 2025. The Body will consider over two hundred reports on sites under threat. It was also said that the KMGBF is now being considered under the processes of the Convention, and it will be addressed under the agenda item on activities with other bodies at the upcoming session of the Governing Body. Furthermore, she underlined important ongoing cooperation with CITES and CMS, while remarking the mandate given to WHC to explore synergies in the context of the KMGBF. It was stressed that the 5th Congress of the Man and the Biosphere Programme will be held in Hangzhou, China, from 22 to 25 September 2025, during which the Strategic Action Plan will be addressed. During the Congress, the World Network of Biosphere Reserves will also reflect on their contribution to the KMGBF. The Congress will be followed by the World's Conservation Congress of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, to be held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, from 9 to 15 October 2025.
16. The Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands informed participants the next Ramsar COP will be held from 23 to 31 July 2025 at Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. She remarked that Victoria Falls are both a Ramsar site and a World Heritage site, thus showing the interconnectedness of biodiversity-related conventions. The COP will focus on biodiversity loss, triple planetary crisis and ecosystem restoration. There will be opportunities for the Liaison Group to contribute to the process including through common messages. A Resolution on cooperation will address, among other matters, the Biodiversity Liaison Group. She concluded by underlining Ramsar's availability to meaningfully contribute to the global review process.
17. The Officer in Charge from the International Plant Protection Convention provided an update on issues that would be addressed by the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM), held at FAO Headquarters in Rome from 17 to 25 March. Among the items on the agenda would be the consideration of monitoring needs as part of One Health. She further elaborated on cooperation initiatives including with the CBD, and development of e-learning courses including in Artificial Intelligence (AI). It was mentioned that the Convention's monitoring process is supported by the Phytosanitary Capacity Development Strategy. Joint resource mobilization efforts such as through common projects funded by the GEF and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) were recognized as worth considering. She also highlighted that joint messaging in various fora can be helpful.
18. The Chief of Governing Bodies Unit represented the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES). She mentioned that the meeting of the CITES Standing Committee (SC78) took place just recently from 3 to 8 February 2025 in Geneva, Switzerland. The CITES CoP20 in Samarkand will be from 25 November to 5 December 2025. The Mapping of the CITES Strategic Vision against the KMGBF is currently being reviewed and will be published on the website. The Standing Committee requested the Secretariat to monitor the development of any additional indicators for KMGBF, including for Target 5 which is of particular importance to CITES. Some of the key topics discussed at SC78 include marine species and high seas fisheries including in the context of the BBNJ Agreement, as well as tree species and captive-bred and ranched specimens. She noted the Convention's budgetary discussions coupled with growing workloads are of increasing concern towards CoP20. It was stressed that collaboration among BLG members can be a means to share know-how and discover new efficiencies.

Looking ahead, BLG future actions (part 1)

19. After the round of updates from each member, discussion ensued on future actions. The Chair suggested that members discuss areas of future collaboration such as common priorities and actions, building on elements mandated by the respective governing bodies as well as the initial informal discussion in Cali during COP 16 which included information exchange and common messaging.
20. Feedback on these focused on thematic and strategic suggestions for common messaging and branding. These included alignment with the KMGBF, the importance of biodiversity, visibility of synergies and relevant bilateral

work among conventions, outreach beyond the conservation community including users of biodiversity and Ministries of Finance, risks associated to biodiversity loss, and biodiversity mainstreaming across sectors.

21. Participants also welcomed the invitation contained in the draft decision on the financial mechanism (which was later adopted as decision 16/33 at the resumed session of COP16), by which the CBD COP invites the biodiversity-related conventions to participate in and provide input under the inter-secretariat consultations to be convened by the CBD Secretariat when developing its inputs to the draft programming directions and policy recommendations for the negotiations for the ninth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund.

Actions:

1. BLG members to identify opportunities for joint messaging in the context or beyond their processes and to pursue a more coordinated approach to communications.
2. CBD Secretariat to share relevant outcomes of COP 16.2 regarding the contribution of BLG members to GEF 9 replenishment negotiations and other GEF-related matters.

BLG dialogue with IPBES and FAO

22. After the lunch break, generously provided by the ITPGRFA Secretariat, the members heard presentations from IPBES and FAO. Ms. Simone Schiele, Programme Officer, IPBES Secretariat, gave a presentation on the new Transformative Change Assessment and Nexus Assessment as well as the ongoing and upcoming work of IPBES in relation to CBD COP decision 16/11. A Q&A session followed, during which BLG members underlined how the language contained in the IPBES assessments needs to be translated into actionable suggestions for policymakers, and potentially quantifying the financial impacts of inaction to such suggestions.
23. Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, Director of the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment of FAO provided a briefing on FAO's work related to biodiversity and in support of the KMGBF, including the recently launched agri-NBSAPs Support Initiative. He elaborated on the need to leverage partnerships and sought suggestions for better engagement. He noted that many KMGBF targets link to agriculture and noted such a focus had begun even before the adoption of the KMGBF.

Looking ahead, BLG future actions (part 2)

24. The group returned to discussing the item on future work. The Chair cautioned to focus on actions that were feasible to undertake. Issues discussed related to the GEF, the forthcoming MEA day at the 7th session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 7) and UNEP's mid-term strategy. The chair suggested that the BLG could consider taking a proactive role in providing inputs for the agenda of MEA Day. There was discussion on a Chair-backed proposal to have a UNEA Resolution on synergies. However, BLG members did not reach an agreement on this. Therefore, it was suggested that it would be useful for members to discuss relevant matters with UNEP's management, including the Deputy Executive Director. Several members felt that a joint integrated calendar would be useful. Many suggestions were made on how to increase synergies including on joint capacity building.
25. The idea of a learning academy to provide training on issues of relevance to BLG members was mentioned. Some members referred to the FAO e-learning academy as an interesting model, but also underlined how that platform speaks to a different audience. The CBD felt the Group could consider this further including in the context of BLG members' capacity-building activities as well as the KMGBF. The global review of collective progress in the implementation of the KMGBF was also talked about, with several members stressing their interest in contributing to it. The CBD Secretariat reassured BLG members that they will be informed in due course regarding their contribution to the global review process.

Actions:

1. CBD Secretariat to provide guidance on how BLG members can contribute to the global review process.
2. BLG Members to consider practical avenues towards a learning academy based on current work and resources.
3. BLG members to identify opportunities for joint capacity building activities.

4. CBD Secretariat to re-share an updated calendar and BLG members to complement it with additional information, as relevant.
5. BLG members to collaborate on UNEA-7 MEA Day¹.

Other matters, conclusions and next steps

26. When the meeting turned its attention to other matters, in light of the many issues under discussion by the BLG and proposals for joint events, the CBD Secretariat pointed out that, during COP 16 in Cali, providing support to BLG activities proved to be very challenging. A suggestion was made that future activities of the BLG would be led by a BLG member that is not the one hosting the meeting in the margins of which the BLG event is being planned.
27. It was also noted that when the BBNJ will enter into force, as a biodiversity-related convention, it's secretariat should be invited to become a member of BLG.
28. In relation to the next BLG meeting the chair suggested that a meeting could be held in September or early next year. Furthermore, the next meeting, based on rotation, would be chaired and hosted by CITES in Geneva. She also noted that the IPPC has not yet chaired the Group, and that it could volunteer to do so at any time that it wishes to do so.
29. The CBD Secretariat noted that the BLG Modus Operandi would benefit from an update. including with reference to the KMGBF. This could be done by circulating a draft updated version via email to all BLG members.
30. Just prior to the conclusion of the meeting the chair noted the pending retirement of Neil Pratt, long-standing Senior Programme officer at the CBD Secretariat. The meeting recognized Mr. Pratt with appreciation for his substantial contributions to the BLG during his tenure and wished him every success in retirement.
31. The meeting closed at 18:10.

Action:

1. CBD Secretariat to share an updated draft of the Modus Operandi.

¹ The CBD Executive Secretary discussed this action with various counterparts during her mission to Nairobi in March 2025. UNEP confirmed its openness to receive proposals from the BLG for future events. As a potential option that emerged from such discussions, the BLG could consider focusing an event on the themes (as yet to be confirmed) of the leadership dialogues and showcase how the conventions contribute to such themes.

Annex I – List of Participants

Participants

Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage	Jyoti Hosagrahar, Deputy Director, World Heritage Centre (online) Sule Urun, Expert, World Heritage Centre (online)
Convention on Biological Diversity	Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary Asad Naqvi, Head, Economic and Trade Policy Team, United Nations Environment Programme (incoming Director, Implementation Support Division, Convention on Biological Diversity) Neil Pratt, Acting Director, Implementation Support Division Maria Morgado, Special Assistant to the Executive Secretary Jacopo Pasquero, Associate Programme Management Officer Sandra Meehan, Senior Programme Management Assistant
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species	Haruko Okusu, Chief of Governing Bodies Unit
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals	Amy Fraenkel, Executive Secretary Laura Cerasi, Programme Management Officer
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands	Musonda Mumba, Secretary General (online) Jerker Tamelander, Director, Science and Policy
International Plant Protection Convention	Sarah Brunel, Officer in Charge
International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture	Kent Nnadozie, Secretary Francisco Lopez, Treaty Technical Officer
International Whaling Commission	Martha Rojas Urrego, Executive Secretary

Invited participants

Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	Kaveh Zahedi, Director
Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)	Simone Schiele, Programme Officer