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IMPLEMENTATION OF OPTIONS TO ENHANCE SYNERGIES AMONG THE BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its thirteenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted decision [XIII/24](#) on cooperation with other conventions and international organizations, including options to enhance synergies among biodiversity-related conventions. It welcomed the options for enhancing synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions at the national level contained in annex I to the decision, and the road map for enhancing synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions at the international level 2017-2020, contained in annex II to the decision.

2. In decision XIII/24, paragraph 14, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at its second meeting on the implementation of the actions of the road map. In the same decision, it requested the Executive Secretary to provide information to the Subsidiary Body on progress to enhance coherence and cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions (para.18).

3. The present document responds to these requests. Section II summarizes progress in enhancing coherence and cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions. Section III reports progress in implementing the road map for enhancing synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions at the international level 2017-2020, including the work undertaken in this regard by the informal advisory group on synergies established through decision XIII/24. Section IV provides proposals for further work.

4. Possible recommendations of the Subsidiary Body, including recommendations for a decision by the Conference of the Parties at its fourteenth meeting, are contained in the note by the Executive Secretary on cooperation with other conventions, international organizations and partnerships ([CBD/SBI/2/10](#)). The report of the informal advisory group on synergies to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation is presented in the information document CBD/SBI/2/INF/14.

II. PROGRESS IN ENHANCING COHERENCE AND COOPERATION AMONG BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS

5. This section reports on action and progress during the biennium 2017-2018 towards enhancing coherence and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions through the governing bodies of the conventions, bilateral cooperation between conventions, the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions, and through other inter-agency coordination mechanisms.

* [CBD/SBI/2/1](#).

A. Governing bodies

6. A key step towards enhancing cooperation and synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions is that reciprocal attention and coherence of guidance is given by the governing bodies of the conventions. Since the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, issues related to cooperation have been substantively addressed by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and by the Standing Committee of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention).

7. At its twelfth meeting (Manila, 23-28 October 2017), the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals adopted [Resolution 11.10 \(Rev.COP12\)](#) on synergies and partnerships. The resolution provides comprehensive and wide-ranging guidance by the Conference of the Parties for CMS Parties and the Secretariat among others, in order to strengthen cooperation and synergies with other biodiversity-related conventions and organizations, including in the framework of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its follow-up, the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Among other things, the Conference of the Parties to CMS welcomed the decision on cooperation, coordination and synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its thirteenth meeting.

8. In paragraph 10 of the resolution, the Conference of the Parties to CMS requested the CMS Secretariat to prepare proposals to strengthen cooperation, coordination and synergies, with other biodiversity-related conventions for consideration at its future meetings. It extended several invitations for the attention of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions (e.g. paras. 17-20). In paragraph 23, the Conference of the Parties urged Parties to establish close collaboration at the national level between the focal point of CMS and the focal points of other relevant conventions in order for governments to develop coherent and synergistic approaches across the conventions and increase the effectiveness of national efforts, for example by developing national biodiversity working groups to coordinate the work of focal points of relevant multilateral environmental agreements and other stakeholders, inter alia through relevant measures in national biodiversity strategies and action plans, harmonized national reporting and adoption of coherent national positions in respect of each multilateral environmental agreement.

9. At its seventh session (Kigali, 30 October–3 November 2017), the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) adopted resolutions concerning its relationship with the Convention on Biological Diversity (resolution [9/2017](#)) and its cooperation with other international bodies and organizations (resolution [12/2017](#)). In resolution 9/2017, the Governing Body welcomed annexes I and II to decision XIII/24, invited Contracting Parties to consider supporting the implementation of the options for enhancing synergies among biodiversity-related conventions, and requested the Secretary to undertake relevant actions foreseen in these options, particularly in the context of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions, joint work programmes with other relevant international instruments, information and knowledge management, reporting and monitoring, public communication and capacity-development activities.

10. In the same resolution, the Governing Body welcomed the decision by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its thirteenth meeting to reflect elements of advice from the Treaty in the four-year framework of programme priorities for the Global Environment Facility. It took note of the decision by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to develop strategic guidance for the eighth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund. It also recognized the opportunity in the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 to further enhance coherence and cooperation between the International Treaty and the Convention. In addition, it requested the Secretary to continue to collaborate with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant partners, in other areas, including digital sequence information, access and benefit-sharing, Article 8(j) of the Convention, and Article 10 of the Nagoya Protocol.

11. In resolution 12/2017, the Governing Body requested its Secretary to continue and further strengthen and expand the collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the ABS Capacity Development Initiative and other capacity-building providers, in support of implementation of the instruments in a harmonious and mutually supportive manner. In the same resolution, the Governing Body requested the Secretary to continue participating actively in the relevant activities of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions, and urged Contracting Parties to take measures to enhance synergies in their implementation of or participation in biodiversity-related conventions to promote policy coherence, improve efficiency and enhance coordination and cooperation at all levels. It also invited international organizations and donors to provide financial resources to support efforts that encourage synergies in policy development and the fulfilment of obligations under the biodiversity-related conventions.

12. At its 53rd meeting (Gland, Switzerland, 29 May–2 June 2017), the Standing Committee of the Ramsar Convention requested that the Ramsar Convention Secretariat review the actions in annexes I and II to decision XIII/24 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity that were relevant for the Ramsar Convention, and provide inputs to the synergy process as appropriate (see decision SC53-19).¹

B. Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions

13. A meeting of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions was held by videoconference on 25 January 2017 to report on the outcomes of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and recent developments under other conventions. This included significant attention and discussion on decision XIII/24. The twelfth ordinary meeting of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions was held at the premises of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome on 28 September 2017. The meeting was chaired by the Secretary of ITPGRFA. The meeting also addressed decision XIII/24 as well as the contribution of the conventions to the process for development of the post-2020 biodiversity framework, among other matters. The Liaison Group highlighted the increased quality and number of practical actions taken by the secretariats to enhance cooperation and synergies in the last few years, and welcomed further opportunities to cooperate, including through bilateral collaboration and joint work plans and activities.

14. On 29 September 2017, the Secretariat convened a meeting between the members of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions and the organizations that provide their secretariats. The meeting was chaired by the Executive Secretary. The meeting discussed opportunities for strengthening inter-agency coordination and cooperation in support of the biodiversity and sustainable development agendas, particularly implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions at the national level, through mutually supportive activities, including capacity-building. This was considered in the context of implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its follow-up. It was agreed that a similar meeting, involving a wider group of organizations, would be held in conjunction with the meeting of the Liaison Group in 2018. As a follow-up to one of the meeting's recommendations, the Secretariat has established an ongoing consultation with the capacity development coordinators of biodiversity-related convention secretariats and relevant international organizations to advance implementation of decision XIII/23. Further information on this meeting and that of the Liaison Group is provided in information document CBD/SBI/2/INF/12.

C. Bilateral cooperation

15. The conventions cooperate through numerous bilateral relationships among themselves aimed at leveraging enhanced benefits through synergies in areas of intersect between the conventions concerned. This is an area recognized by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention as important to enhancing synergies in the implementation of the conventions, and is reflected as a desirable key action in the road

¹ See https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/sc53_decisions_e.pdf

map for enhancing synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions at the international level 2017-2020. Recent examples of such cooperative efforts are outlined below.

16. The Standing Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Conference of the Parties to CMS have approved a CITES-CMS Joint Work Programme 2015-2020.² With the support of a CMS/CITES Joint Programme Officer, generously funded by the Government of Germany, and operational since July 2015, the CITES Secretariat has been cooperating with the secretariats of CMS and its sister agreements on a number of issues:

(a) Cooperation with the Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) on the Black Sea bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus ponticus*);

(b) Cooperation with the Secretariat of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia in preparing a study on the illegal trade in marine turtles;

(c) Cooperation with the CMS Secretariat on the African lion (*Panthera leo*), including the development of a lion web portal to permit, among other things, the sharing of information and voluntary guidance on the sustainable use of African lions;

(d) Cooperation with the Secretariat of the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga* spp.).

17. In this context, for example, the CMS and CITES secretariats convened a joint meeting to discuss broadly the continent-wide conservation of the African lion while at the same time facilitating the implementation of CMS Resolution 11.32 and discussing appropriate listings of the species under CITES and CMS. The meeting was held in Entebbe, Uganda, on 30 and 31 May 2016 and issued a communiqué which calls for concerted efforts to conserve this species. Based on this joint work, the secretariats developed a proposal for a Joint CITES-CMS African Carnivores Initiative, which was adopted by the Conference of the Parties to CMS at its twelfth meeting, in November 2017. In addition, other resolutions advancing cooperation between the two secretariats on specific species, including elephants, have been endorsed.

18. The CMS and CITES secretariats also closely collaborate on sharks and rays, Central Asian species, eels, great apes and elephants.

19. The CMS Secretariat has also established synergies with the International Whaling Commission with regard to the joint development of an Online Whale Watching Handbook which responds to a request by the Parties to both treaties.

20. Cooperation between CMS and CBD is currently guided by a Joint Work Plan for the CBD and CMS secretariats for the period 2016-2018. This includes their continued cooperation in the context of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions and, in response to CBD Conference of the Parties decision XII/6 and CMS Conference of the Parties Resolution 11.10, their joint contribution to the party-led process to enhance collaboration and improve efficiencies among the conventions. Activities under the Joint Work Plan are set in the framework of their contribution to the targets of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. They cover such areas as: communications; area-based conservation measures; energy sector developments with migratory species conservation; reciprocal attention to the issues of underwater noise and marine debris addressed under the two conventions; fisheries and sustainable wildlife management; cooperation with respect to other relevant aspects of marine biodiversity, including the process for the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs). With regard the latter, for example, the CMS Office in

² CITES-CMS Joint Work Programme 2015-2020: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/common/disc/sec/CITES-CMS-wp-en.pdf>

Abu Dhabi supported the organization of a CBD regional workshop to facilitate the description of EBSAs in the North-West Indian Ocean and adjacent Gulf areas in April 2015.

21. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity organized, with the participation of the secretariats of CMS, CITES and Ramsar, a side event at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS, focused on the opportunities for all the biodiversity-related conventions to contribute to the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention organized with the CMS Secretariat a side event at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS focused on concrete mechanisms for synergies, such as the Ramsar Regional Initiative for High Andean Wetlands and the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on High Andean Flamingos.

22. Within the framework of the 5th CBD-Ramsar Joint Work Plan 2011-2020, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat has continued to work and strengthen collaboration with the Convention on Biological Diversity, providing inputs to various processes, including the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, EBSAs, synergies, and capacity-building.

23. Through decision [III/21](#) of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ramsar Convention has a lead role regarding wetlands vis-à-vis the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Ramsar Convention Secretariat is in the process of analysing national reports submitted by its Contracting Parties and will prepare, for its thirteenth meeting of the Parties, global and regional implementation reports, including the contribution of the Ramsar Convention to specific areas of the Joint Work Plan and to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

24. In line with relevant decisions of their governing bodies, the secretariats of the Ramsar Convention, CBD and CMS have been collaborating in the area of the restoration of coastal wetland ecosystems, and in the context of the “Caring for Coasts” initiative. Under the World Heritage Convention, several intertidal wetlands have received World Heritage Site designation. Follow-up will be provided in respect of Resolution 12.25 of the CMS Conference of the Parties, which requested the CMS Secretariat to explore with the secretariats of other multilateral environmental agreements a global “coastal forum” and requested the Scientific Council to seek an input from the scientific subsidiary bodies of other multilateral environment agreements, to establish a multi-stakeholder working group under the proposed coastal forum.

25. The World Heritage Centre and the Ramsar Convention Secretariat continued their contribution to a joint project, which was concluded through the publication of the report *Ramsar and World Heritage Conventions Converging towards Success*.³ On the occasion of the report’s release in 2017, the World Heritage Centre launched a new website to inform on the cooperation between the World Heritage Centre and the Ramsar Convention Secretariat.⁴ The report illustrates through case studies how conservation of cultural and natural values can benefit from dual designations under the Ramsar and World Heritage conventions and how community participation can contribute to positive conservation outcomes. The joint project has built on the recent IUCN study *Managing MIDAs - Harmonising the Management of Multi-Internationally Designated Areas: Ramsar Sites, World Heritage sites, Biosphere Reserves and UNESCO Global Geoparks*,⁵ released in 2016, and has focused on identifying opportunities to enhance synergies at the local and regional levels, including with respect to multiple internationally designated areas (MIDAs), which also corresponds to CBD decision XIII/24 B.

26. The World Heritage Centre has further continued its close cooperation with regard to the “state of conservation” of several properties which are heavily affected by the impacts of the illegal wildlife trade. As a good example of cooperation, the Centre held several consultations with the CITES Secretariat on the state of conservation of the islands and protected areas of the Gulf of California (Mexico), where

³ McInnes R., Ali M. and Pritchard D. (2017). [Ramsar and World Heritage Conventions Converging towards Success](#). Ramsar Convention Secretariat.

⁴ WHC website: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/920>

⁵ See <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1550>

illegal fishing for the endemic totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*) is endangering the vaquita porpoise (*Phocoena sinus*), the most endangered whale species in the world. Both species are listed on CITES appendix I. The Centre participated in August 2017 together with the CITES secretariat in a trilateral meeting organized by Mexico with China and the United States in Ensenada, Mexico, on how to better address the illegal totoaba trade. The Centre also held several consultations with CITES on the organization of the reactive monitoring mission to the property and was consulted on the implementation of a study on the illegal totoaba trade and its impacts on the vaquita, requested in Decision 17.149 of the CITES Conference of the Parties. Other examples include the CITES “Minimizing the Illegal Killing of Elephants and other Endangered Species” (MIKE) Programme, which has been supporting law enforcement in a number of properties in Africa affected by the illegal ivory and rhino horn trade, and in others to curb the illegal trade in sharks, affecting several marine World Heritage sites, and the illegal trade in rosewood species. Subject to available resources, the World Heritage Centre is committed to continuing and further strengthening these concrete joint efforts.

27. The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity have long-standing cooperation through their secretariats, focusing on the areas of invasive alien species and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. In September 2017, the two secretariats signed a Joint Work Plan for Cooperation for the biennium 2017-2018, which will be reviewed and updated, as appropriate, for the next biennium 2019-2020. Activities in the Joint Work Plan to be addressed, subject to the availability of resources, are: (a) ensuring the reciprocated participation and reporting of the two secretariats at the meetings of their respective governing bodies; (b) cooperation in training events of the Global Taxonomy Initiative and in expert meetings regarding e-commerce; (c) work on the comparison of terms used in the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the Glossary of Phytosanitary Terms and other relevant instruments; (d) support by the two secretariats to their Parties in project formulation for appropriate funding mechanisms; and (e) cooperation in the communication of public information, including in the context of the International Year of Plant Health 2020 and the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity. Relevant information is provided in the reports of the CBD Secretariat to the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures at its twelfth and thirteenth sessions, held in 2017 and 2018 respectively, reflected in the reports of the IPPC Secretariat.⁶

28. The relationship of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture with CBD is established through Articles 1.2, 19.3 (l) and 20.5 of the International Treaty. Cooperation between the two secretariats is implemented in the framework of a memorandum of cooperation established in 2010. The two secretariats also agreed on a Joint Initiative for the Harmonious Implementation of the International Treaty and the Convention and its Nagoya Protocol. The Joint Initiative identifies a number of concrete actions related to access and benefit-sharing; on-farm conservation, and the sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. The focus of recent cooperative activities has been on projects for mutually supportive implementation of ITPGRFA and the Nagoya Protocol. The Secretariat of CBD and the Secretariat of ITPGRFA collaborated with a number of partners to undertake different activities.

29. Details of cooperation between ITPGRFA and CBD over the past biennium are given in the report on Cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity⁷ and the report of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity on Cooperation with the International Treaty,⁸ each submitted to the Governing Body of the International Treaty at its seventh session. Particular progress has been made in capacity-development activities, information and knowledge management, and in supporting

⁶ Twelfth session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures, Incheon, Republic of Korea, 5-11 April 2017: Report from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CPM 2017/CRP/03); International Cooperation - IPPC Secretariat cooperation with relevant organizations (CPM 2017/30). Thirteenth session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures, Rome, 16-20 April 2018: Report of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CPM 2018/CRP/09); Report from the IPPC Secretariat - Report on the International Cooperation (CPM 2018/31).

⁷ IT/GB-7/17/19 (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-mu388e.pdf>).

⁸ IT/GB-7/17/Inf.14 (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-bs781e.pdf>).

implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. The two secretariats collaborated on the development of indicators as part of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets. This work focused on indicator 15.6.1, which will assess progress towards Target 15.6 (to promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed).

D. Other inter-agency groups

30. The secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions are also active members of other inter-agency coordination mechanisms that foster cooperation and synergies in specific thematic or cross-cutting areas.

31. These include: (a) the Environment Management Group (EMG) of the United Nations, of which CBD, CITES, CMS and Ramsar are members and in which IPPC, ITPGRFA and the World Heritage Centre are represented through FAO and UNESCO; (b) the Multilateral Environmental Agreement Information and Knowledge Management Initiative (MEA IKM), of which CBD, CITES, CMS, IPPC, ITPGRFA, the Ramsar Convention and the World Heritage Convention are members; (c) the Inter-agency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species, of which CBD, CITES and IPPC are members; (d) the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership, of which CBD, CITES, ITPGRFA and the Ramsar Convention are members and in which IPPC and the World Heritage Centre are represented, respectively, through FAO and UNESCO; and (e) the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management, of which CBD, CITES and CMS are members. Further relevant information on some of these initiatives is provided in information document CBD/SBI/2/INF/12.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ROAD MAP FOR ENHANCING SYNERGIES AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL 2017-2020

32. This section of the document summarizes action and progress during the biennium 2017-2018 in implementing the road map for enhancing synergies at the international level 2017-2020, including the work of the informal advisory group established through decision XIII/24.

A. Actions taken by the Executive Secretary, partner organizations and Parties to the Convention

33. The Executive Secretary undertook significant work in this biennium to support the implementation of the road map. Among the many activities, the Executive Secretary provided the secretariat services for the informal advisory group, as described in section B, below, and contributed to the work described below involving partner organizations and Parties to the Convention.

34. With regard to engagement of other biodiversity-related conventions, the Secretariat: (a) provided information concerning decision XIII/24 and its follow-up, as well as on other relevant decisions of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to the secretariats of other biodiversity-related conventions; (b) convened a meeting of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions by videoconference in January 2017 and the twelfth ordinary meeting of the Liaison Group on 28 September 2017; (c) it convened a meeting between the members of the Liaison Group and the organizations that provide their secretariats on 29 September 2019; and (d) it sought and gained inputs of the other secretariats to the review and update of the table contained in annex II to decision XIII/24, and their contributions to outputs of the work described in paragraph 35 below.

35. The implementation of several key actions in the road map has been advanced through work undertaken in partnership between the Secretariat, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC). This work has resulted in the following outputs:

(a) Three compendia of guidance synthesising information available on the following topics as a means to make them more accessible to users:

(i) Synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions at the national level;

- (ii) Capturing, managing and using data and information;
- (iii) Key global databases related to the biodiversity-related conventions;
- (b) A report providing an overview of initiatives for enhancing coordination and collaboration at various levels across biodiversity-related conventions;
- (c) Case studies sourced in response to a CBD notification, as well as outreach and a side-event held in the margins of the twenty-first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, held in December 2017 in Montreal;
- (d) Development of initial ideas for the creation of an online library of case studies/success stories on synergies among biodiversity-related conventions as a means to share experience;
- (e) Development of an updated presentation with notes and a concept for a webinar on the UNEP Sourcebook of opportunities for enhancing cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions at national and regional levels, in order to facilitate further sharing of experiences;
- (f) Recommendations on how to enhance access to data and information related to cooperation and synergies among biodiversity-related conventions;
- (g) Recommendations on possible next steps to help address CBD decision XIII/24.

36. Information on the objectives and outputs of this work, including its report entitled “Recommendations on possible next steps and activities to enhance cooperation and collaboration among the biodiversity-related conventions, and delivering on COP decision XIII/24”, is provided in information document CBD/SBI/2/INF/13. Components of this work are complemented and being built upon by UNEP through a project that aims to strengthen synergies and support the implementation of CBD decisions XIII/24 (cooperation), XIII/22 (communications), XIII/23 (capacity-building) and XIII/27 (national reporting), as well as related resolutions of the United Nations Environment Assembly, in particular resolution 2/17, and decisions of other biodiversity-related conventions. Further information is provided in information document CBD/SBI/2/INF/13.

37. Several Parties to the Convention contributed to the case studies noted above. Several other national institutions contributed content and review to the compendiums of guidance. Three Parties contributed voluntary funding, either through the Secretariat of the Convention or UNEP, to support the implementation of relevant activities. Finally, some Parties contributed to gaining reciprocity in the decisions of the governing bodies of other biodiversity-related conventions, for example the resolution on synergies and partnerships adopted by the Conference of the Parties to CMS at its twelfth meeting (section II, A, above).

B. Actions undertaken by the informal advisory group on synergies among biodiversity-related conventions

38. In paragraph 15 of decision XIII/24, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the COP 13 Bureau, and subject to availability of resources, to establish an informal advisory group on synergies consisting of Party representatives with balanced representation, including regionally, to provide advice to the Executive Secretary, the Bureau and the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions, as relevant, on (a) further prioritization of actions in the table contained in annex II of the decision, and (b) implementing the prioritized actions, and to report to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at its second meeting.

39. This section of the document reports on the work of the informal advisory group on synergies and the outcomes of its work. Further details about the informal advisory group and its work are provided in the report of the Group to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (CBD/SBI/2/INF/14).

1. Establishment, composition and activities of the informal advisory group

40. In response to decision XIII/24 and in support of the mandate of the informal advisory group, the Secretariat:

(a) Issued a notification inviting Parties to submit nominations of qualified representatives,⁹ compiled and analysed nominations received and consulted with the Bureau in selecting the membership, and; issued a notification on 3 November 2017 to inform Parties of the composition of the informal advisory group;¹⁰

(b) Liaised regularly with the informal advisory group and convened, facilitated and provided inputs to the meetings of the Group and supported its Chair;

(c) Prepared and provided an online discussion platform and relevant material to support and facilitate the deliberations of the informal advisory group, which included: an introductory note on the informal advisory group; agendas and reports of five meetings; a calendar of relevant international events; a list of members of the informal advisory group and their expertise on biodiversity-related conventions; a description of bottlenecks and difficulties for the implementation of desirable key actions; a note on the timeline for preparation of synergies documents; an overview of the CBD Secretariat/UNEP-WCMC project and activities to support implementation of the desirable key actions; draft possible advice of the informal advisory group to the Executive Secretary, bureau and Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions; a note on the report of the informal advisory group; and a draft report of the Group to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation.

41. As requested in decision XIII/24, paragraph 15, the informal advisory group consists of Party representatives with balanced representation, including regionally. It is composed of 19 members with representation from Africa (four members), Asia and the Pacific (four members), Latin America and the Caribbean (four members), Central and Eastern Europe (two members (one from the European Union)), the Western Europe and Others Group (four members (two from the European Union and two from JUSCANZ)), and the European Commission (one member). The full membership is provided in annex III of the Group's report (CBD/SBI/2/INF/14). The Group elected Mr. Hesiquio Benitez of Mexico as its Chair.

42. Experts from UNEP and UNEP-WCMC have been involved in the work and activities of the informal advisory group. The Group considered the need to identify, involve and consult other relevant experts but, considering the expertise contained in the Group, as demonstrated in annex III of its report (CBD/SBI/2/INF/14), concluded that no other expertise was required to execute its mandate.

43. With the support of the Secretariat, the Group conducted most of its work through the cost-effective means of online videoconferencing, with a two-day in-person meeting convened in Montreal on 17 and 18 December 2017. Online meetings were held on 7 December 2017, 7 February 2018, 15 March 2018 and 30 April 2018. A task team of four members designated to undertake some remaining tasks held an online meeting on 7 May 2018.

2. *Formulating advice on prioritization of actions in the table contained in annex II of decision XIII/24 and on implementing the prioritized actions*

44. In order to fulfil its mandate, with support from the Secretariat, the informal advisory group executed the following tasks:

- (a) Developed a process for the conduct of its work;
- (b) Analysed the desirable key actions contained in the table in annex II of decision XIII/24;
- (c) Developed notes containing observations and suggestions regarding the implementation of the desirable key actions;
- (d) Considered any potential difficulties and bottlenecks in implementing desirable key actions;

⁹ Notification 2017-081, 28 August 2017, available at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2017/ntf-2017-081-cooperation-en.pdf>

¹⁰ Notification 2017-114 available at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2017/ntf-2017-114-iag-en.pdf>

- (e) Prioritized actions by scoring the desirable key actions;
- (f) Identified relevant activities additional to the desirable key actions that could be complementary and helpful to their objectives;
- (g) Considered the outcomes of the work conducted in collaboration between the Secretariat, UNEP and UNEP-WCMC to support key actions of the road map, 2017-2020 (section III above and CBD/SBI/2/INF/13);
- (h) Developed elements of advice on the implementation of the desirable key actions, applicable to the Executive Secretary, the Bureau and the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions;
- (i) Prepared and finalized a report of its work and conclusions for submission to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation.

45. At its meeting held on 17 and 18 December 2017, the Group reviewed and discussed the desirable key actions contained in the table in annex II of decision XIII/24 and made observations relevant to their implementation. Their notes arising from this discussion, containing observations and suggestions regarding the implementation of the desirable key actions, form the initial basis of their advice. Onto this, the group also recognized that its advice should take account of any difficulties and bottlenecks hindering the implementation of some of the actions and requested the Secretariat to identify these for consideration at its subsequent meetings.

46. The Group undertook to prioritize the desirable key actions on the basis of the notes developed at its meeting held on 17 and 18 December, and taking account of difficulties and bottlenecks to their implementation identified by the Secretariat. At the request of the Chair, each member identified five priority actions which were submitted to the Chair, who compiled the inputs with support from the Secretariat. The summary table of the results is available in annex I of the Group's report.¹¹

47. Following the prioritization exercise, the Group requested the Secretariat to formulate draft elements of possible advice to the Executive Secretary, the Bureau and the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions relevant to the implementation of the desirable key actions, based upon the observations and suggestions developed by the Group and addressing difficulties and bottlenecks to their implementation that were identified. The draft advice was reviewed by the Group at its fourth online meeting and by the task team created to undertake remaining tasks at its meeting on 7 May 2018. Based on the work and recommendations of the task team, a final formulation of the advice was proposed by the Chair and circulated, together with a final draft of the report, for the review and agreement of the Group, which was concluded on 8 June 2018.

48. The outcome of the work undertaken by the Group on further prioritization and implementation of actions listed in the table contained in annex II of decision XIII/24 is presented in the report of the Group.¹¹ This includes a table that summarizes the Group's notes and observations in relation to the implementation of each of the desirable key actions, the status of implementation and any bottlenecks and difficulties identified, and the advice of the Group arising from consideration of these.

3. Advice of the informal advisory group

49. The advice of the informal advisory group to the Executive Secretary, the Bureau of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and the Liaison Group on Biodiversity-related Conventions on the implementation of the desirable key actions of the road map is presented in the Group's report to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation.¹¹

50. While the desirable key actions that received the highest scores during the Group's prioritization exercise are identified, the Group considers that all of them are important and that all should be

¹¹ CBD/SBI/2/INF/14.

implemented. Advice has therefore been provided for the implementation of each of the key actions, rather than only for some that have been prioritized.

51. The Group recognizes that a number of desirable key actions have been either advanced or completed or are ongoing, and, in several such cases, its advice provides suggestions on how to build on the results of these activities. In many cases, these key actions have been advanced by the project executed by UNEP-WCMC supporting implementation of CBD decision XIII/24. In these cases, the Group's advice to the Executive Secretary and the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions includes a recommendation to build upon the outputs of this work.

52. The implementation of several of the key actions may require a dedicated project or initiative to support their advancement or completion. This is particularly so with respect to key actions related to collaboration in the management of information and knowledge and alignment in national data gathering, reporting, monitoring and indicators.¹² For that reason, on such key actions, the advice to the Executive Secretary and the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions includes a recommendation to catalyse funding and appropriate implementation arrangements for a project or initiative to undertake the key action or related work. In such cases, the informal advisory group also advises the Executive Secretary to consider including the action in the activities and associated voluntary budget of the Convention proposed for the biennium 2019-2020 for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties at its fourteenth meeting.

53. While the majority of its advice is directed to the Executive Secretary and members of the Liaison Group on Biodiversity-related Conventions, the Group included one recommendation that is directed to the CBD Bureau. This is advice that the Bureau consider ways for Parties to the conventions, perhaps through their bureaux, standing committees or equivalent bodies, or through other mechanisms, to liaise with the Liaison Group on Biodiversity-related Conventions. The same advice is provided to the Liaison Group on Biodiversity-related Conventions.

54. A representative of the Group will present the Group's advice to the Executive Secretary and to the Bureau at the meeting of the Bureau to be held in July 2018 in Montreal, and will present its advice to the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions at the next meeting of the Liaison Group, planned to be held in the fall of 2018, prior to the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

4. Additional recommendations of the informal advisory group

55. In reviewing the desirable key actions in the road map 2017-2020, the informal advisory group also identified a number of additional actions that could contribute to enhancing coherent implementation and synergies among biodiversity-related conventions. These additional actions would be complementary to the desirable key actions contained in the table in annex II of decision XIII/24. A list of the additional desirable actions identified by the Group is presented in its report. The Group recommends that the Executive Secretary and the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions review these additional actions with a view to taking some of them forward, as appropriate.

56. The Group also recommends that the Executive Secretary and the members of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions review the recommendations that were prepared as an output of the project supporting implementation of decision XIII/24, as contained in the project's report entitled "Recommendations on possible next steps and activities to enhance cooperation and collaboration among the biodiversity-related conventions, and delivering on COP decision XIII/24" (CBD/SBI/2/INF/13), with a view to their potential follow-up and implementation.

57. In addition, in the event that the Conference of the Parties decides to extend the Group's mandate, the Group recommends that opportunities be provided to strengthen cooperation and consultation between the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions and the informal advisory group on synergies. Such consultation could contribute to actions that the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions

¹² Activity 2.1 of the road map.

may take to enhance the efficiency of the work and processes of the Liaison Group, as outlined in the road map, such as actions to strengthen collaborative work of their counterpart staff in specific thematic areas, actions to involve other relevant organizations in its work and discussions, and actions to facilitate the consultative mechanism of the Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Bodies of Biodiversity-related Conventions.

58. Given that many of the key actions of the road map would be undertaken in collaboration with other relevant organizations, the Group also recommends that the advice it has provided to the Executive Secretary, the Bureau of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions, should also be shared with other relevant organizations.

59. The informal advisory group also contributed to the formulation of the draft recommendations related to its work that are presented for the consideration of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at its second meeting (CBD/SBI/2/10).

IV. POSSIBLE FURTHER WORK

60. The Conference of the Parties has also emphasized the important role of Parties in promoting coherence across the governance of related conventions and organizations, for example by coordinating their national positions among the various conventions and other international forums in which they are involved and establishing close collaboration between focal points to develop coherent and synergistic approaches across the conventions.¹³

61. Further consideration could be given to the potential benefit and viability of a mechanism, such as a joint informal committee of all the biodiversity-related conventions, to serve in an advisory capacity, which would provide an opportunity for direct liaison by Parties across the governing bodies of the conventions.¹⁴

62. In addition, with regard to national implementation, the Conference of the Parties has frequently requested Parties to promote coordination among the national focal points for the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant conventions with a view to achieving synergies on common and cross-cutting issues and enhancing national implementation of the conventions and efficiencies and effectiveness among them.¹⁵ Consideration could be given to mechanisms at the international level that could provide support to the development or strengthening and implementation of such national coordination and relevant institutional mechanisms at the national level, including through the implementation of relevant key actions of the road map for enhancing synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions at the international level 2017-2020.

¹³ Decision VIII/16, para 1; Decision IX/27, para 12.

¹⁴ For example, initiation of a joint informal committee across the conventions, to serve in an advisory capacity, which would build on experience gained through a workshop organized in 2016 in response to decision XII/6, which convened representation of the Parties to each of seven global biodiversity-related conventions, drawn from among their bureaux, standing committees or equivalent bodies (UNEP/CBD/COP/13/15).

¹⁵ Decision VIII/16, para 2; decision X/20, para 5; decision XI/6, para 10; decision XIII/24, para 11. This has been emphasized in the options for enhancing synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions at the national level contained in annex I of decision XIII/24.