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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
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REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY AND THE NAGOYA PROTOCOL ON ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING FOR THE BIENNIUM 2017-2018, INCLUDING THE BUDGET FOR THE TRUST FUNDS

I. Introduction

1. At its thirteenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, in decision XIII/32, paragraph 45, to report to it at its fourteenth meeting on income and budget performance as well as any adjustments made to the Convention budget for the biennium 2017-2018. Corresponding requests were made by the Parties to the Protocols through decisions CP-8/7 and NP-2/13.
2. The present document thus reports, in section II, on the financial and administrative performance of the Secretariat since the last meetings. In section III, it gives an update on the previous biennium, 2015-2016. It should be read in conjunction with the note by the Executive Secretary on the proposed budget for the programme of work for the biennium 2019-2020 (CBD/COP/14/4). Additional information on the status of contributions to the BY, BE and BZ and VB trust funds as of 31 August 2018, the status of the BY, BE, BZ and VB trust funds as of 31 August 2018 and the financial statements for 2016 and 2017 will be issued as an information document (CBD/COP/14/INF/17).
3. The Secretariat has made a conscientious effort to streamline and improve the planning and budgetary process to better support decision-making and increase the transparency of information in line with the Secretary-General's reform proposal, and these efforts have led to several changes in format of the present document, aiming at refining elements of the results-based-budgeting framework and strengthening performance reporting. Efforts have also been made to realign this report with other United Nations Secretariat official budget and financial report documents with a view to having these uploaded to the United Nations Official Document System (UNODS) in order to garner better visibility for the work of the Secretariat of the Convention.

II. Income and financial performance for the biennium 2015-2016

4. Prior to the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, in December 2016, the programme of work and budget for the Convention, the Cartagena Protocol and the Nagoya Protocol were

* CBD/COP/14/1.

determined separately by the respective governing bodies. Thus, the Secretariat is reporting separately for each of the Trust Funds for the biennium 2015-2016, as provided below in subsections A to C.

A. Status of the General Trust Fund for the Convention on Biological Diversity (BY Trust Fund)

5. In its decision XII/32, the Conference of the Parties approved a core programme budget of \$14,472,500 for the year 2015 and \$14,153,800 for the year 2016, amounting to \$28,626,300 for the biennium 2015-2016.

6. As can be seen from table 1 below, after the deduction of savings from prior periods (\$1,265,100) and the contribution by the host country (\$2,413,500), the amount assessed on the Parties to the Convention in line with the scale of assessment set out in the annex to decision XII/32 amounted to \$24,947,700 for the biennium. In addition, new Parties pledged \$1,100, bringing the total to \$24,948,800. As of 31 August 2018, approximately 2.2 per cent or \$548,200 remains unpaid.

Table 1. Status of assessed contributions for the biennium 2015-2016

<i>Resources (thousands of United States dollars)</i>	
<i>Funding source</i>	<i>2015-16</i>
Approved budget	28,626.3
Host country	(2,413.5)
Savings from prior year	(1,265.1)
Additional Parties to the Convention	1.1
Total assessment	24,948.8
Amount received as of 31 August 2018	24,400.6
Unpaid balance	548.2

7. Table 2 below provides details on the expenditures incurred by object of expenditure. As can be seen below, total expenditures incurred in the biennium amounted to \$23,103,200, inclusive of programme support costs, resulting in an unencumbered balance of \$4,758,000 for the period. This variance is explained in detail in paragraphs 8 and 9 below.

Table 2. Summary of expenditures

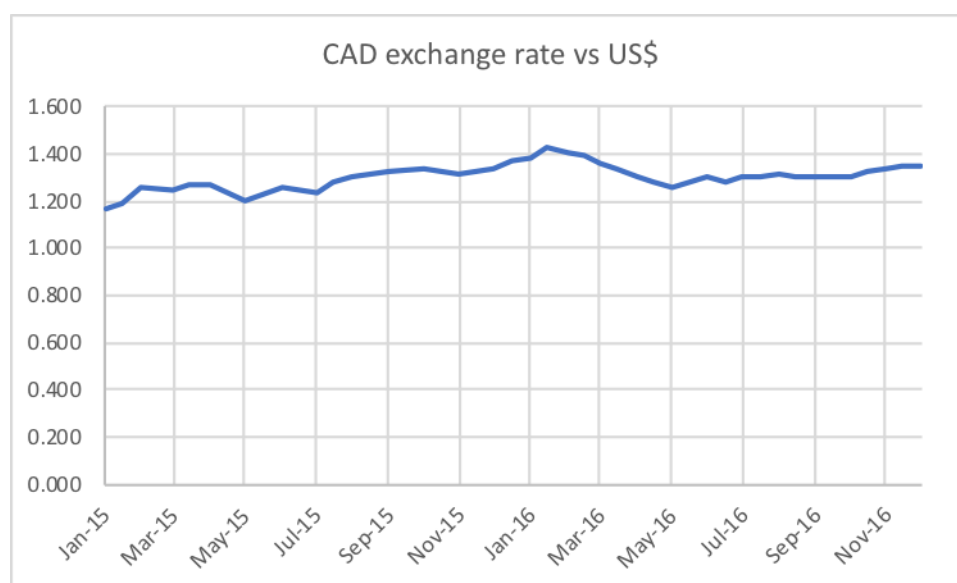
<i>Object of expenditure</i>	<i>2015-2016 budget</i>	<i>2015 expenditures</i>	<i>2016 expenditures</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Staff costs	17 136.4	7 429.8	7 084.2	14 513.9	2 622.5
Bureau meetings	250.0	65.3	61.2	126.4	123.6
Travel on official business	800.0	340.9	343.1	684.0	116.0
Consultants/subcontractors	200.0	51.0	29.5	80.5	119.5
Meetings	2 799.7	501.7	1 793.3	2 295.0	504.7
Public awareness material	180.0	-	82.6	82.6	97.5
Rent and associated costs	2 382.7	1 093.5	1 026.9	2 120.5	262.3
General operating expenses	837.1	254.3	224.2	478.5	358.6
Training	10.0	1.7	5.8	7.6	2.4
CHM IAC	40.0	14.7	(14.7)	-	40.0
Translation of clearing-house mechanism website	20.0	9.0	(5.5)	3.5	16.5
Participation cost of least developed countries and small island developing States at thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties	-	-	53.0	53.0	(53.0)
Subtotal	24 655.9	9 761.8	10 683.5	20 445.4	4 210.5
Programme support costs	3 205.3	1 491.2	1 166.7	2 657.9	547.4
Total	27 861.2	11 253.1	11 850.2	23 103.2	4 758.0

Working capital reserve	765.1
Grand total	28 626.3

8. The variance of \$2,622,500 under staff costs is due in part to the fact that, while the budget had assumed full incumbency, several posts, such as the Deputy Executive Secretary (D-1), the Programme Officer for Inland Waters (P-3) and one General Service post, were vacant for several months during the reporting period.

9. Furthermore, the appreciation of the United States dollar against the Canadian dollar (an increase of about 16 per cent across the reporting period) resulted in lower salary costs incurred for General Service staff as well as locally procured goods and services under general operating expenses. In addition, the purchase of goods and services was delayed due to the roll-out of Umoja in the Secretariat and related changes in requisitioning and procurement procedures and roles. Figure 1 below shows the currency fluctuations of the Canadian dollar vis-à-vis the United States dollar.

Figure 1. Currency fluctuations between the United States dollar and the Canadian dollar from January 2015 to December 2016



B. General Trust Fund for the Biosafety Protocol (BG Trust Fund)

10. In decision BS-VII/7, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol approved a core programme budget of \$3,243,500 for the year 2015 and \$3,190,400 for the year 2016, amounting to a total of \$6,433,900 for the biennium, of which an amount of \$175,500 was transferred to the Working Capital Fund.

11. As can be seen from table 3 below, after the deduction of savings from prior periods (\$400,000) and the contribution by the host country (\$477,000), the amount assessed on the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol in line with the scale of assessments set out in table 5 of decision BS-VII/7 amounted to \$5,381,400 for the biennium. As of 31 August 2018, an amount of \$117,900 remains unpaid, representing approximately 2.2 per cent. In addition, new Parties pledged \$1,100, bringing the total to \$5,382,500.

Table 3. Status of contributions for the biennium 2015-2016

<i>Resources (thousands of United States dollars)</i>	
<i>Funding source</i>	<i>2015-16</i>
Approved budget	6,258.4
Host country	(477.0)

Savings from prior year	(400.0)
Additional Parties to the Protocol	1.1
Total assessment	5,382.5
Amount received as of 31 August 2018	5,264.6
Unpaid balance	117.9

12. Table 4 below provides details on expenditures incurred by object of expenditure. As can be seen, total expenditures incurred in the biennium amounted to \$4,166,200, inclusive of programme support costs or 66.5 per cent of the approved resources, resulting in an unencumbered balance of \$2,092,200 for the period.

Table 4. Trust Fund expenditure incurred in the biennium 2015-2016

<i>Object of expenditure</i>	<i>2015-2016 approved budget</i>	<i>2015 expenditures</i>	<i>2016 expenditures</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Staff costs	3,980.2	1,288.8	1,480.8	2,769.6	1,210.6
Biosafety Bureau meetings	45.0	-	27.7	27.7	17.3
Travel on official business	100.0	15.8	51.7	67.5	32.5
Consultants/subcontractors	60.0	-	-	-	60.0
Biosafety Clearing-House Informal Advisory Committee meetings	55.0	-	22.9	22.9	32.2
Compliance Committee meeting	90.0	42.1	24.7	66.8	23.2
Eighth meeting of the Parties	400.0	-	354.4	354.4	45.6
Translation of BCH website	70.0	6.2	53.8	60.0	10.0
Temporary assistance/overtime	20.0	-	-	-	20.0
Meeting of the Liaison Group on Capacity-building	60.0	-	18.2	18.2	41.8
Biosafety Clearing-House expert meeting	80.0	-	-	-	80.0
Biosafety Clearing-House equipment	10.0	1.4	1.4	2.8	7.2
General operating expenses	568.2	153.3	198.7	352.0	216.2
Prior years adjustments	-	(54.9)	0	(54.9)	54.9
Subtotal	5,538.4	1,452.7	2,234.2	3,686.9	1,851.5
Programme support costs	720.0	188.8	290.4	479.3	240.8
Total	6,258.4	1,641.5	2,524.7	4,166.2	2,092.2

13. As with the case of the Convention budget, referred to in paragraphs 8 and 9 above, the variance under staff costs is due largely to staff vacancies, the appreciation of the United States dollar against the Canadian dollar, and delays due to the roll-out of Umoja in the Secretariat and related changes in requisitioning and procurement procedures and roles.

C. General Trust Fund for the Nagoya Protocol (BB Trust Fund)

14. In decision NP-1/13, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol approved a core programme budget of \$290,184 for the year 2015 and \$98,512 for the year 2016, totalling \$1,275,696 for the biennium and payable by the Parties in accordance with the approved scale of assessments for the period. In paragraph 8 of its decision NP-1/13, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol also decided that the pro rata contributions of Parties for which the Nagoya Protocol entered into force after 1 January 2015 would be used in the first instance to build the required working capital reserve. The difference between the actual assessed contributions and the approved budget for 2015-2016 represents the assessed contributions of the new Parties that ratified the Protocol during the biennium 2015-2016.

Table 5. Status of contributions as at 31 August 2018

<i>Funding source</i>	<i>Resources (thousands of United States dollars)</i>
	<i>2015-2016</i>
Approved budget	1,275.7
Host country	0.0
Savings from prior year	0.0
Additional Parties to the Protocol	380.1
Total assessment	1,655.8
Amount received as of 31 August 2018	1,594.5
Unpaid balance	61.3

15. Table 6 below provides details on the expenditures incurred by object of expenditures. As can be seen below, total expenditures incurred in the biennium amounted to \$603,700 inclusive of programme support costs or 47.2 per cent of the approved resources, resulting in an unencumbered balance of \$672,000 for the period. This variance is explained in detail in paragraph 16 below.

Table 6. BB Trust Fund expenditure in 2015-2016

<i>Object of expenditure</i>	<i>2015-2016 approved budget</i>	<i>2015 expenditures</i>	<i>2016 expenditures</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Staff costs	600.0	26.3	122.5	148.8	451.2
Bureau meetings	70.0	-	26.1	26.1	43.9
Compliance Committee meeting	30.0	-	75.1	75.1	(45.1)
Clearing-House Informal Advisory Committee meetings	60.0	17.7	9.7	27.4	32.6
Second meeting of the Parties	328.9	-	251.1	251.1	77.8
ABS Clearing-House translation costs	40.0	-	5.8	5.8	34.2
Printing and publications	-	4.1	(4.1)	-	-
Subtotal	1 128.9	48.1	486.1	534.2	594.7
Programme support costs	146.8	6.3	63.2	69.5	77.3
Total	1 275.7	54.4	549.3	603.7	672.0

16. As with the case of the Convention budget, referred to in paragraphs 8 and 9 above, the variance under staff costs is due largely to staff vacancies, the appreciation of the United States dollar against the Canadian dollar, and delays due to the roll-out of Umoja in the Secretariat and related changes in requisitioning and procurement procedures and roles.

III. Income and financial performance for the biennium 2017-2018

A. Income

17. By its decision XIII/32, the Conference of the Parties adopted an integrated programme of work and a budget for the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya

Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing. In paragraph 2 of the same decision, the Conference of the Parties also decided to share all costs for Secretariat services among the Convention, the Cartagena Protocol and the Nagoya Protocol on a ratio of 76:16:8 for the biennium 2017-2018. The budgets were also approved by the meetings of the Parties to the Protocols in decisions CP-VIII/7, and NP-2/13.

18. The integrated budget of US\$ 18,361,600 and US\$ 18,794,200 was approved for 2017 and 2018, respectively, amounting to US\$ 37,155,800 for the biennium 2017-2018. This is inclusive of programme support costs of 13 per cent. The individual budgets for the Convention and the Protocols, as approved by the respective governing bodies, are shown in table 7 below.

Table 7. Summary of resources approved, by trust fund

<i>Trust Fund</i>	<i>Approved budget for 2017</i>	<i>Approved budget for 2018</i>	<i>Total approved budget for biennium 2017-2018</i>
<i>(Thousands of United States dollars)</i>			
Convention on Biological Diversity (BY Trust Fund)	13 954.8	14 283.6	28 238.4
Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (BG Trust Fund)	2 937.9	3 007.1	5 945.0
Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (BB Trust Fund)	1 468.9	1 503.5	2 972.4
Total	18 361.6	18 794.2	37 155.8

Note: Approved budgets include a provision of 13 per cent programme support costs.

19. As can be seen by table 8 below, after the deduction of savings from prior periods (\$1,713,900) and the contribution by the host country (\$2,457,200), the amount assessed on the Parties to the Convention in line with the scale of assessments set out in the annex to decision XIII/32 amounted to \$32,984,656 for the biennium. In addition, new Parties pledged \$159,400, bringing the total to \$33,144,100 for the period. As of 31 August, \$7,547,100 remains unpaid.

Table 8. Status of assessments for the biennium 2017-2018

<i>Resources (thousands of United States dollars)</i>	
<i>Funding source</i>	<i>2017-2018</i>
Approved budget	37 155.8
Host country	(2 457.2)
Savings from prior year	(1 713.9)
Additional Parties to the Protocol	159.4
Total assessment	33 144.1
Amount received as of 31 August 2018	25 597.0
Unpaid balance	7 547.1

Table 9. Status of contributions to the Convention and the Protocols

<i>Assessed contributions (thousands of United States dollars)</i>					
<i>Trust Fund</i>	<i>Amount assessed</i>	<i>Amount received</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Amount unpaid</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
The Convention (BY Trust Fund)	25 068.4	19 694.5	78.6	5 373.9	21.4
Cartagena Protocol (BG Trust Fund)	5,281.2	3 813.8	72.2	1 467.4	27.8
Nagoya Protocol (BB Trust Fund)	2,794.5	2 088.7	74.7	705.8	25.3
Total	33 144.1	25 597.0	77.2	7 547.1	22.8

20. As shown in table 9, as of 31 August 2018, 77 per cent of total assessed contributions for the 2017-2018 biennium were paid by the Parties. A total of 112 Parties to the Convention paid in full or in part their 2017-2018 assessed contributions. A total of 90 Parties to the Cartagena Protocol and 48 Parties to the Nagoya Protocol did the same.

Table 10. Status of payment of contributions

<i>Trust Fund</i>	<i>Number of Parties</i>	<i>Number of Parties that have paid in full or in part</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
The Convention (BY Trust Fund)	196	112	57.1
Cartagena Protocol (BG Trust Fund)	171	90	52.6
Nagoya Protocol (BB Trust Fund)	103	48	46.6

21. As at 31 August 2018, late payments received during 2017-2018, for 2014 and prior years, for the Convention and the Protocols amounted to \$380,440 and advance payments for 2019 and future years amounted to \$478,878.

22. With the introduction of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) in January 2014, provisions for doubtful debt are being made for contributions that are overdue for 12 months or more, thus reducing the trust fund balances and the amount available for the use of Parties. As at 31 August 2018, 9 Parties (3 small island developing States and 6 least developed countries) have never paid their assessed contributions to the Convention, 14 Parties (5 small island developing States and 9 least developed countries) have never paid their assessed pledges to the Cartagena Protocol and 25 Parties (4 small island developing States and 21 least developed countries) have never paid their assessed contribution to the Nagoya Protocol, since becoming Parties. As at 31 August 2018, the outstanding arrears for the Parties that have never paid are as follows: \$40,177 for the Convention, \$35,481 for the Cartagena Protocol and \$82,404 for the Nagoya Protocol.

23. As at 31 December 2017, a cumulative amount of \$1,006,502 representing the provision for doubtful debt is reflected in the financial statements of the three trust funds:

Table 11. Outstanding payments or bad debt

<i>Trust Fund</i>	<i>Amount outstanding (bad debt) (thousands of United States dollars)</i>
The Convention (BY Trust Fund)	789.1
Cartagena Protocol (BG Trust Fund)	171.4
Nagoya Protocol (BB Trust Fund)	46.0
Total	1 006.50

Table 12. Expenditure in 2017-2018 by programme

<i>Programme</i>	<i>2017-2018 budget</i>	<i>2017-2018 expenditures as of 31 August 2018</i>	<i>Projected expenditures September-December 2018</i>	<i>Estimated total expenditures 2017-2018</i>	<i>Balance</i>
Office of the Executive Secretary	4 329.3	3 223.5	795.7	4 019.3	310.0
Scientific and Policy Support	10 409.5	7,270.2	1 290.3	8 560.5	1 849.0
Mainstreaming, Cooperation and Outreach Support	4 155.9	3 334.9	785.0	4 119.8	36.1
Implementation Support	6 160.9	4 561.5	987.0	5 548.6	612.3
Administration, Finance and Conference Services	7 716.9	4 256.6	2 096.4	6 353.0	1 363.9
Subtotal	32 772.5	22 646.7	5 954.5	28 601.2	4 171.3
Programme support costs (13%)	4 260.4	2 944.1	774.1	3 718.2	542.3

Total	37 033.0	25 590.8	6 728.5	32 319.3	4 713.6
Working capital reserve	122.8	-			
Grand total	37 155.8	25 590.8	6 728.5	32 319.3	4 713.6

Table 13. Expenditure in 2017-2018 by object of expenditure

<i>Object of expenditure</i>	<i>2017-2018 budget</i>	<i>2017-2018 expenditures as of 31 August 2018</i>	<i>Projected expenditures September-December 2018</i>	<i>Estimated total expenditures 2017-2018</i>	<i>Balance</i>
Staff costs	22 915.4	16 135.4	3 490.0	19 625.4	3 290.0
Bureau meetings	365.0	201.6	70.0	271.6	93.4
Travel on official business	850.0	672.9	177.1	850.0	
Consultants/subcontractors	150.0	114.4	35.7	150.0	
Meetings	3 433.6	2 241.1	1 192.5	3 433.6	
Public awareness material	100.0	16.0	84.0	100.0	
Temporary assistance/overtime	200.0	140.7	59.3	200.0	
Rent and associated costs	2 497.3	2 177.0	320.3	2 497.3	
General operating expenses	1 706.2	683.3	400.0	1 083.3	622.9
Training	10.0	3.5	6.5	10.0	
Expert meeting	415.0	205.5	44.5	250.0	165.0
Translation of BCH/CHM NP CH websites	130.0	55.4	74.6	130.0	
Subtotal	32 772.5	22 646.7	5 954.5	28 601.2	4 171.3
Programme support costs	4 260.4	2 944.1	774.1	3 718.2	542.3
Total	37 033.0	25 590.8	6 728.5	32 319.3	4 713.6
Convention on Biological Diversity share of the integrated budget (76%)	28 145.1	19 449.0	5 113.6	24 562.7	3 582.3
Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety share of the integrated budget (16%)	5 925.3	4 094.5	1 076.6	5 171.1	754.2
Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing share of the integrated budget (8%)	2 962.6	2 047.3	538.3	2 585.5	377.1

24. From January 2017 to August 2018, a total amount of \$25,590,807 was spent (tables 12 and 13). An additional \$6,728,500, of which \$5,720,170 is for staff costs, rental of premises and conference costs for the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the ninth meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol and the third meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol, is committed and will be spent by the end of 2018, bringing the estimated total expenditure for the biennium at \$32,319,300. This amount represents 87.3 per cent of the funds approved by the Conference of the Parties for the 2017-2018 biennium.

Staff costs

25. The Conference of the Parties approved 78 posts (49 Professional posts and 29 General Service posts) for the consolidated core budget of the three Trust funds (BY, BG and BB Trust Funds) for the biennium 2017-2018 in its decision XIII/32. This is reflected, mutatis mutandis, in decisions CP-VIII/7 and NP-2/13.

26. A variance of \$3,290,000 is estimated under staff costs at the end of 2018, representing 14 per cent of the total approved staff cost budget. The savings are mainly due to an average vacancy rate of 16 per cent for Professional posts and 8 per cent for General Service posts for the period from January 2017 to August 2018. The actual vacancy rate per month for core posts is attached in annex I. As can be seen from this table, the Executive Secretary took up her position in March 2017, while two other key managerial positions at the D-1 level remained vacant throughout 2017.

27. There was a total of 13 vacancies to be filled during reporting period. One of the main reasons for the delays in recruitment, in addition to limited human resources capacity in the Secretariat, is the cumbersome administrative arrangement between the Secretariat, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Office at Nairobi, which introduces many layers of administrative bureaucracy in the cycle of recruitment administration, resulting in an average of about 300 days to establish and fill positions in the

Secretariat of the Convention. This resulted in an extremely lengthy and time-consuming recruitment process for the 13 posts to be filled in the Secretariat during the period.

28. Furthermore, staff costs are budgeted using estimated standard costs based on assumptions contained in the note by the Executive Secretary on the proposed budget for the programme of work of the Convention and the protocols for the biennium 2017-2018 (UNEP/CBD/COP/13/23). They include both salaries and common staff costs and were calculated at full cost without the application of any vacancy rate or delayed recruitment factor. Given that these costs are based on standard costings used by the United Nations, actual expenditures vary from one duty station to another, depending on the fluctuations in the post adjustment and other factors such as the number of dependents, education grant for dependent children, home leave travel and repatriation grant as well as the vacancy rate that is applied to the estimate for salary costs.

29. As can be seen in table 14 below, adjustments have been made to the staffing level of three core posts in line with the authority given to the Executive Secretary in decision XIII/32, paragraph 9, as follows:

(a) The Programme Management Officer–clearing-house mechanism (P-4) post was reclassified to a Senior Programme Management Officer (P-5) who will be responsible for advising the Executive Secretary on strategic, political and technical matters, including supporting the Executive Secretary in the preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework;

(b) The Programme Management Officer–Conservation and Sustainable Use (P-4) post was reclassified to Senior Programme Management Officer (P-5) following a review by the Human Resource Division of the United Nations Office at Nairobi;

(c) The post of Special Assistant to the Executive Secretary (P-3) was upgraded to P-4 to reflect additional responsibilities following the adjustments of the structure of the Secretariat with a view to strengthening the operative efficiency of the organization and building its capacity in the lead-up to 2020 and beyond. The adjusted Secretariat structure will be presented to the Conference of the Parties in the context of the budget for the biennium 2019-2020 (CBD/COP/14/4).

Table 14. Post incumbency for the biennium 2017-2018

<i>Category</i>	<i>Authorized core budget for 2017-2018</i>	<i>Actual incumbency 2017- 31 August 2018</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Professional and higher			
ASG	1	1	–
D-2	–	–	–
D-1	4	4	–
P-5	8	10	2
P-4	13	12	-1
P-3	13	12	-1
P-2/1	10	10	–
Subtotal	49	49	–
General Service	29	29	–
Subtotal	29	29	–
Total	78	78	–

30. In addition to the 78 posts approved under the core budget, 30 posts were funded in 2017-2018 from other sources, comprising 19 posts funded from programme support costs (1 P-5, 2 P-4, 1 P-3, 15 GS), 5 posts from the Japan Biodiversity Fund (1 D-1, 2 P-4, 2 GS), 3 posts from the European Union grant (3 P-3), and 2 posts funded by the Republic of Korea (1 P-4, 1 GS). Japan has also seconded one junior professional officer (JPO) to assist the Secretariat in the implementation of its programme of work.

31. To ensure effective and efficient legal advice at a time of surging workload, the Secretariat has obtained additional legal support through a financial agreement with the United Nations Office for Project

Services (UNOPS) from June to December 2018 in the amount of \$100,000 based on the Memorandum of Understanding for the Provision of Services by UNOPS for Project Services to UNEP signed on 7 December 2017. This legal support is provided temporarily, for six months, and on a part-time basis by a UNOPS staff member who is the Head of Commercial and Institutional Law Practice at UNOPS and has an environmental law background in addition to United Nations corporate law experience.

32. The Secretariat maintains a joint liaison arrangement with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) at United Nations Headquarters in New York in line with United Nations General Assembly resolution S-19/2 of 28 June 1997, in which the Assembly invited convention secretariats, in response to requests from the respective conferences of the parties, to explore, where appropriate, modalities for suitable liaison arrangements in Geneva and/or New York for the purpose of enhancing linkages with delegations and organizations at those United Nations centres. Under the current arrangement, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity covers 50 per cent of the cost of one P-4 and one General Service staff members as well as 30 per cent of the office expenses of the Liaison Office from the programme support overhead costs. To respond to the growing need and opportunities in the lead-up to 2020, specifically to build political engagement and position the biodiversity agenda strategically within the United Nations Headquarters in New York, a temporary job opening for a Senior Programme Management Officer at the P-5 level was established in New York.

33. The list of all current posts in the Secretariat as well as the vacancy status of the established posts will be available in document CBD/COP/14/INF/17.

Travel on official business

34. From 1 January 2017 to August 2018, a total of 182 trips were undertaken by Secretariat staff and charged to the core budget, amounting to \$672,900. This includes missions to promote awareness of the Convention and the challenges of biodiversity in high-level meetings in the United Nations, civil society and business forums, and participation in relevant technical meetings and intergovernmental processes. Additionally, the participation of staff in other meetings and events was funded through the voluntary funds, while some participation was paid by the organizers. In line with the efforts to reduce the carbon dioxide emission-related impacts of the Secretariat's activities, staff members were encouraged to participate in meetings via video- or teleconferencing or other online methods to the extent possible, thus reducing travel. Furthermore, the Executive Secretary introduced a more rigorous policy of approving mission travel based on established priorities and quarterly travel planning.

Consultancies/subcontractors

35. During the period under review, the Secretariat spent \$114,400 for consultancy services in the areas of financial mechanism, transformational change, health, and access and benefit-sharing, and to carry out such tasks as the following:

(a) Establishing a liaison between the Secretariat and various financial institutions, for example the Inter-American Development Bank (IABD) to explore options for mobilizing public-private expertise on latest trends, emerging issues and opportunities to mainstream biodiversity in the finance and investment sectors (\$12,000);

(b) Preparing a strategic document, including briefing notes, think pieces and presentations, to complement the note by the Executive Secretary on proposals for a comprehensive and participatory process for the preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (CBD/SBI/2/17). The work also consisted of research, examining types of governance approaches, policy levers and creative disruption that have influenced changes in behaviour at the levels of producers and consumers, governments and businesses. Further work entailed workshop discussions, presentations and group exercises, including case examples of ways to facilitate transformational change in desired pathways that are biodiversity neutral and/or positive (\$45,000);

(c) Researching and preparing guidelines and training materials on biodiversity and human health and capacity development for countries to achieve Aichi Target 14, other relevant Aichi Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals (\$13,700);

(d) Providing assistance in promoting and facilitating coordination and cooperation in the implementation of the strategic framework for capacity-building and development, and supporting the effective implementation of the Nagoya Protocol (\$19,000);

(e) Engaging the services of a part-time speech writer and communication consultant in order to provide executive communication support for the Executive Secretary and strategic support at special events and meetings (\$19,600).

Meetings

36. The overall conference costs for the open-ended meetings for the period 2017-2018 (\$3.3 million) will remain within the approved budget provision of \$3,433,600. However, the twenty-first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the tenth meeting of the Working Group on Article 8(j), which were held back to back in Montreal in December 2017, cost \$640,000, exceeding the amount of \$560,000 budgeted for these two meetings. The higher costs for these meetings were mainly due to (a) the holding of the meetings in the Palais des Congrès of Montreal (a commercial entity) rather than at the headquarters of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) (which operates on a cost recovery basis) because the ICAO facilities were unavailable for the required period and (b) additional security measures that were required in order to comply with United Nations security operating standards.

37. From January 2017 to July 2018, three meetings of the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and four meetings of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties were convened, of which one meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties was held in Chexbres, Switzerland, and funded through voluntary contributions by the Government of Switzerland. Fewer meetings of the two bureaux were convened during the biennium 2017-2018 as compared to the period 2015-2016, during which eight meetings of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties and six meetings of the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body were held. This explains the lower budget execution for Bureau meetings for the period 2017-2018.

Public awareness material

38. The Public Awareness Materials budget for 2017 and 2018 was used for the materials related to the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations of the entry into force of the Convention on Biological Diversity. A dedicated commemorative high-quality album has been produced. Other activities included a video project and publications (co-funded by the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility).

Temporary assistance/overtime

39. The Secretariat has used the services of several short-term staff to assist with the additional workload in various programmes of work during the preparation of intersessional meetings as well as the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the eighth meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol and the third meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol. Short-term staff have also been recruited to assist in areas where regular posts were vacant and under recruitment, such as the G-6 Programme Assistant for ABS capacity-building, the P-3 Programme Officer on inland water/agriculture and the P-2 Associate Programme Officer on Article 8(j).

Rent and associated costs

40. The rent and associated costs of the Secretariat's existing office space in Montreal have been paid by the Government of Canada and the government of the Province of Quebec on a 75/25 cost-sharing basis under an existing host country grant agreement that was signed on 21 January 2014 for the period from 1 January 2014 to 30 September 2019, when the current lease expires.

General operating expenses

41. The Secretariat continued its efforts to reduce publication and dissemination costs, which resulted in an underspending on General Operating Expenses. In addition, the upgrading of the meeting servicing equipment intended to enable the Secretariat to hold more virtual meetings was placed in abeyance since the Secretariat has been exploring, with the Government of Canada and the government of the Province of Quebec, the possibility of moving the office to new premises.

42. Due to recent changes in United Nations policies regarding the Web content management, the Secretariat is currently adapting its website engine and moving the content to an open-source software.

Training

43. In September 2018, the Secretariat incurred \$3,500 for a training on gender that was charged to the core budget. A series of other trainings and courses, online and computer-based, were also provided for staff members through the United Nations Office at Nairobi for which costs are not directly charged to the Secretariat. Those include language courses and training on leadership, report writing, performance management and career coaching.

Expert meeting

44. One Liaison Group meeting, instead of two as initially budgeted for, was held during the biennium 2017-2018 as the relevant issues to be discussed could all be placed on the agenda of a single meeting. The twelfth meeting of the Liaison Group was held in September 2018.

45. The meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House and the expert meeting on the Biosafety Clearing-House were not convened due to staff shortages.

Translation of the clearing-house mechanism, Biosafety Clearing-House and Nagoya Protocol Clearing-House websites

46. The Secretariat is currently in the process of creating a new website. Therefore, most of the translation of the website content is on hold until the process is complete. A heavy translation burden is expected after the launch of the new website, which is planned between the last quarter of 2018 and first quarter of 2019.

Working capital reserve

47. The total cumulative working capital reserve approved by the Parties over the period 2003-2018 for the three core trust funds amounts to US\$ 2,777,300, broken down in table 15 below.

Table 15. Cumulative working capital reserve for the three core trust funds, 2003-2018

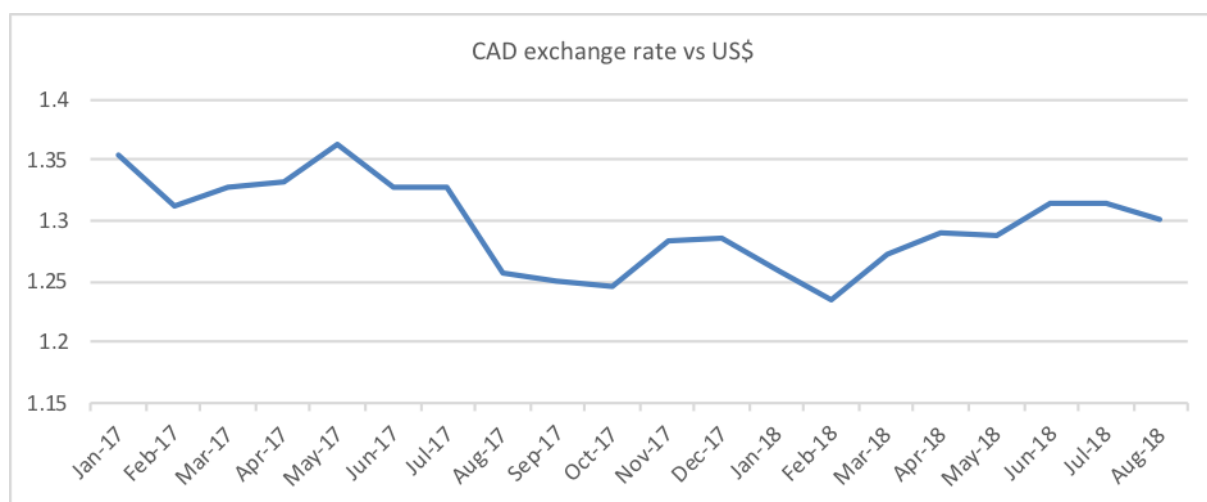
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	2003-04	2005-06	2007-08	2009-10	2009-10*	2011-12	2013-14	2015-16	2017-18	Total
BY Trust Fund	878.3	183.4	55.7	28.6	102.3	(9.8)	86.0	765.1	93.3	2,182.9
BG Trust Fund	-	192.6	41.5	38.6		11.7	9.4	175.5	19.7	489.0
BB Trust Fund	-							95.5	9.8	105.3
Total	878.3	376.0	97.2	67.2	102.3	1.9	95.4	1,036.3	122.8	2,777.3

* Unspent balance – extraordinary working capital reserve replenishment approved by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its ninth meeting.

48. The working capital reserve is calculated each biennium cumulatively so that the total in the reserve is equivalent to 7.5 per cent of the biennium total, including programme support costs. The level of the working capital reserve was increased from 5 per cent to 7.5 per cent from the biennium 2015-2016 following the recommendation of the Office of the Internal Oversight Services. The purpose of the working capital reserve is to ensure continuity of operations of the Convention's Secretariat in the event of a temporary shortfall of cash. Draw-downs from the working capital reserve are restored from contributions as soon as possible.

Figure 2. United Nations operational rate of exchange for the Canadian dollar during 2017-2018 (August)



B. Special Voluntary Trust Fund for Additional Voluntary Contributions in Support of Approved Activities under the Convention on Biological Diversity (BE Trust Fund)

49. For 2017-2020, a total of \$24,080,300 was approved under the BE Trust Fund by the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth meeting. As at 31 August 2018, the Secretariat has received pledges for additional approved activities totalling \$7,981,353, of which contributions of \$7,624,408 have been paid. In addition to the contributions pledged and received in 2017-2018, the Government of Japan has pledged and paid in prior years \$3,693,030 to the BE Trust Fund for additional approved activities for the period 2017-2018. Thus, the total voluntary funds available for the biennium were \$11,317,438.

50. A total expenditure of \$6,857,747 was incurred from January 2017 to 31 August 2018 out of the pledges received by the Secretariat in 2017-2018. The expenditures were incurred mainly for the activities described in the table below:

Activities	Expenditures (United States dollars)
	2017 through 31 August 2018
Bio Bridge Initiative	210 285.0
Biodiversity and business	15 411.5
Biodiversity and human health	89 622.5
Cartagena Protocol	146 949.2
Clearing-house mechanism	132 699.1
Climate change and biodiversity	155 439.3
Communication	16 350.3
Digital sequence information	63 817.7
Forest restoration	622 980.0
Forests, sustainable wildlife and restoration	50 964.9
Gender Plan of Action	66 395.8
Global Island Partnership	118 461.8
Global Strategy for Plant Conservation	168 619.7
GTI-Filling Technology	316 980.8
IAS-Island Initiative	104 890.7
Invasive alien species	23 998.7
Legal affairs	28 491.0
Mainstreaming	156 763.5
Marine and coastal biodiversity	1 665 423.7

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Expenditures (United States dollars)</i>
	<i>2017 through 31 August 2018</i>
Nagoya Protocol	653 082.0
Peace and Biodiversity Initiative	71 081.5
Protected areas	117 987.6
Science and policy support	461 879.1
Strategic Plan	214 410.5
Consultations on post-2020	271 248.0
Sustainable development	94 357.3
Synthetic biology	75 189.3
Traditional knowledge	348 491.6
Youth	389 474.6
Total	6 857 747.0

C. Trust Fund for Additional Voluntary Contributions to Facilitate the Participation of Parties in the Process of the Convention on Biological Diversity (BZ Trust Fund)

51. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Parties to the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols have consistently emphasized the importance of the full participation of developing country Parties, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as Parties with economies in transition, in the work of the Convention and the Protocols, most recently in decision XIII/32 of the Conference of the Parties. A total of \$11,752,000 was approved under the BZ Trust Fund by the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth meeting and the respective meetings of the Protocols for the period 2017-2020. This corresponds to \$5,876,000 for the current biennium. As at 31 August 2018, the Secretariat has received pledges totalling \$917,192.

52. The Secretariat spent \$631,000 in 2017-2018 for the participation of 129 delegates from developing countries to attend the twenty-first and twenty-second meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, the tenth meeting of the Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions, and the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation.

53. The status of payments to the BZ Trust Fund vis-à-vis the budget approved by the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth meeting is reflected in CBD/COP/14/INF/17.

54. The allocation to the BZ Trust Fund for the current biennium included \$2,000,000 that the Conference of the Parties determined would be required to facilitate the participation of Parties in the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the concurrent meetings of the protocols. The Secretariat has made regular calls to potential donors to provide sufficient resources and the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties has been kept regularly informed of progress. As of 15 August 2018, the resources in the BZ Trust Fund stood at US\$ 464,000. Given the exceptional circumstances arising from substantial shortfall in the resources available in the BZ Trust Fund despite the fund-raising efforts of the Secretariat, the Executive Director, further to decision XIII/32, paragraph 10, authorized the use of up to \$395,000 (a sum that had been set aside by the Conference of the Parties from the operating budget surplus for the previous biennium), to support the participation of developing country Parties, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as Parties with economies in transition, in the upcoming meetings. The use of the funds was authorized on the condition that they would be reimbursed once sufficient contributions had been made to the BZ Trust Fund. Since 15 August, further contributions to the BZ fund amounting to \$339,000 have allowed all requests to date from eligible Parties to be met without recourse to the use of the sum set aside from the operating budget surplus. An updated report on this matter will be made available to the Conference of the Parties.

D. Special Voluntary Trust Fund for Contributions to Facilitate the Participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (VB Trust Fund)

55. The Conference of the Parties, in its decision VIII/5, adopted the mechanism for promoting the effective participation of indigenous and local communities in meetings held under the Convention and established the General Voluntary Trust Fund for Facilitating Participation of Indigenous and Local Communities in the Work of the Convention on Biological Diversity (VB Trust Fund).

56. A budget of \$1,130,000 was approved under the VB Trust Fund by the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth meeting for the period 2017-2020. As at 31 August 2018, the Secretariat has received pledges totalling \$272,358.

57. Expenditure totalling \$135,000 was incurred in 2017-2018 to cover the travel costs of 30 participants from indigenous and local communities to attend the twenty-first and twenty-second meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, the tenth meeting of the Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions, and the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation.

58. The status of payments to the VB Trust Fund vis-à-vis the budget approved by the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth meeting is reflected in CBD/COP/14/INF/17.

Annex

Actual versus authorized staffing levels for the Secretariat
1 January 2017 to 31 August 2018

Actual	Actual incumbency																			
	31 Jan	28 Feb	31 Mar	30 Apr	31 May	30 Jun	31 July	31 Aug	30 Sept	31 Oct	30 Nov	31 Dec	31 Jan	28 Feb	31 Mar	30 Apr	31 May	30 Jun	31 July	31 Aug
Professional category and above																				
ASG	—	—	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Authorized	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Vacancy rate percentage	100.0	10.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
D-2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Authorized	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vacancy rate percentage	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
D-1	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	4
Authorized	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Vacancy rate percentage	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	25.0	—	—	—	—	—	—
P-5	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Authorized	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Vacancy rate percentage	(125)	(125)	(125)	(125)	(125)	(125)	(125)	(125)	(125)	(125)	(125)	(125)	(125)	(125)	(125)	(125)	(125)	(125)	(125)	(125)
P-4	11	11	11	11	11	11	12	12	12	12	12	12	11	11	10	10	10	10	9	9
Authorized	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Vacancy rate percentage	15.4	15.4	15.4	15.4	15.4	15.4	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	15.4	15.4	23.1	23.1	23.1	23.1	30.8	30.8
P-3	10	10	10	10	10	10	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
Authorized	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Vacancy rate percentage	23.1	23.1	23.1	23.1	23.1	23	15.4	15.4	15.4	15.4	15.4	15.4	15.4	15	15.4	15.4	15.4	15.4	15.4	15.4
P-2/P-1	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	9	8
Authorized	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Vacancy rate percentage	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10.0	10.0	20.0
Subtotal	43	43	44	44	44	44	45	45	45	45	45	45	44	45	45	45	45	44	43	42
Authorized	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49
Vacancy rate percentage	12.2	12.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	10.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	10.2	12.2	14.3
General Service category																				
Other levels	28	28	28	28	28	28	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	25	25	25	25	25
Authorized	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29
Vacancy rate percentage	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	10.3	10.3	10.3	10.3	10.3	10.3	10.3	10.3	10.3	13.8	13.8	13.8	13.8	13.8
Subtotal	28	28	28	28	28	28	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	25	25	25	25	25
Total	71	71	72	72	72	72	71	71	71	71	71	71	70	71	71	70	70	69	68	67
Authorized	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78
Vacancy rate percentage	9.0	9.0	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	10.3	9.0	9.0	10.3	10.3	11.5	12.8	14.1