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SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC,  
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### OPTIONS FOR POSSIBLE ELEMENTS OF WORK ON THE LINKS BETWEEN NATURE AND CULTURE IN THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

#### INTRODUCTION

1. The Conference of the Parties has recognized that the Joint Programme of Work on the links between biological and cultural diversity has been a useful platform for collaboration between the Secretariat and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in pursuit of common objectives with respect to nature and culture (see paragraph 25 of decision [14/30](#) on cooperation with other conventions, international organizations and initiatives).<sup>1</sup>
2. The Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to consult with the Secretariat of UNESCO with a view, subject to the availability of resources, to preparing options for possible elements of work on the links between nature and culture in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, for consideration by the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) at its eleventh meeting, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at its twenty-third meeting, and the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at its third meeting, as well as the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, so that possible elements of work could be considered along with other proposals in order to develop a fully integrated programme of work on Article 8(j) and related provisions in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (decision 14/30, para. 26).<sup>2</sup>
3. The Executive Secretary has consulted with UNESCO, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and other partners, and invited Parties, Governments, indigenous peoples and local communities, relevant international organizations, in particular other biodiversity-related conventions, and interested stakeholders to submit views, among other matters, on options for possible elements of work on the links between nature and culture in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (as per decision 14/30). The Executive Secretary solicited such views through notification

\* CBD/WG8J/11/1.

\* CBD/SBSTTA/23/1.

<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.cbd.int/lbcd/>

<sup>2</sup> For ease of reference, the original programme of work welcomed in decision X/20, paragraph 16, is available at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/cop/cop-10/information/cop-10-inf-03-en.pdf>

SCBD/SSSF/AS/JS/MLS/87830, dated 24 January 2019. The views received are compiled and reproduced in CBD/WG8J/11/INF/2.

4. In order to assist the subsidiary bodies with this task, and drawing on the extensive consultations undertaken and submissions received, the present document provides, in section I, an overview of work on biological and cultural diversity across the international system and, in section II, provides a rationale for an inter-agency approach to strengthening the links between biological and cultural diversity in pursuit of complementary goals in the post-2020 era. Section III considers options for possible elements of work on the links between nature and culture in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, as a continuation of a broader Joint Programme of Work on the links between biological and cultural diversity.<sup>3</sup>

5. Finally, section IV provides a draft recommendation, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fifteenth meeting, building on the existing Joint Programme of Work, concerning options for possible elements of work aimed at a reintegration of nature and culture in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, so that possible elements of work can be considered along with other proposals, in order to develop a fully integrated programme of work on Article 8(j) and related provisions in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Accompanying the draft recommendation is an annex which provides possible elements of work post-2020.

## **I. BIOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY ACROSS THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM**

### **A. The Convention on Biological Diversity and Article 8(j) and related provisions: indigenous peoples and local communities**

6. In the last 25 years, the Convention on Biological Diversity has gained traction as a major global forum to discuss nature conservation and sustainable use. There followed the process of discussing how to implement the Convention's Article 8(j) and related provisions.

7. Article 8(j) and related provisions, Articles 10(c), 17.2 and 18.4 of the Convention address: (a) the respect, preservation, maintenance and promotion of the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities;<sup>4</sup> (b) protecting and encouraging customary sustainable use;<sup>5</sup> (c) encouraging the exchange of information, including indigenous and traditional knowledge and where feasible repatriation;<sup>6</sup> as well as (d) methods for the development and use of technologies, including indigenous and traditional technologies.<sup>7</sup> These articles are regarded as cross-cutting and therefore relevant across all areas of work of the Convention.

8. Article 8(j) in particular, requires each Contracting Party "...subject to its national legislation, to respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the

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<sup>3</sup> For the text of the Programme of Work, see [UNEP/CBD/COP/10/INF/3](#).

<sup>4</sup> Article 8(j): "Subject to its national legislation, to respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices."

<sup>5</sup> Article 10(c): "Protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements."

<sup>6</sup> Article 17.2: "Such exchange of information shall include exchange of results of technical, scientific and socio-economic research, as well as information on training and surveying programmes, specialized knowledge, indigenous and traditional knowledge as such and in combination with the technologies referred to in Article 16, paragraph 1. It shall also, where feasible, include repatriation of information."

<sup>7</sup> The Contracting Parties shall, in accordance with national legislation and policies, encourage and develop methods of cooperation for the development and use of technologies, including indigenous and traditional technologies, in pursuance of the objectives of this Convention. For this purpose, the Contracting Parties shall also promote cooperation in the training of personnel and exchange of experts.

holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices.

9. Further to this issue, the Conference of Parties adopted, at its fourteenth meeting, the Mo'otz kuxtal voluntary guidelines<sup>8</sup> for the development of mechanisms, legislation or other appropriate initiatives to ensure the “prior and informed consent”, “free, prior and informed consent” or “approval and involvement” traditional knowledge, that were intended to provide guidance for potential users of traditional knowledge, to obtain the free, prior and informed consent from such indigenous and local communities. The guidelines specifically identified “...community protocols that may contain but are not limited to information about: Community identity; Community history; and Community territoriality”. This includes: the use of culturally important practices relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, as well as social organization and decision-making processes (which are often collective decision-making procedures at the community level).

10. Additionally, the Conference of the Parties, in decision 14/13, adopted the voluntary glossary of key terms and concepts within the context of Article 8(j) and related provisions, which establishes the following understandings on biological and cultural diversity and the emerging concept of “biocultural diversity”:

<b>Term or concept</b>	<b>Understanding of the term or concept within the context of the Convention</b>
Biocultural diversity	Is considered as biological diversity and cultural diversity and the links between them.
Biocultural heritage	Reflects the holistic approach of many indigenous peoples and local communities. This holistic and collective conceptual approach also recognizes knowledge as “heritage”, thereby reflecting its custodial and intergenerational character. Cultural landscapes inscribed under the World Heritage Convention are examples of biocultural heritage.
Cultural heritage	Includes the physical (tangible) and/or non-physical (intangible) manifestation of the cultural heritage of indigenous peoples and local communities, in accordance with the traditional inheritance and transmission. Tangible cultural heritage includes but is not limited to cultural landscapes, sites, structures and remains of archaeological, architectural, historical, religious, spiritual, cultural, or aesthetic value or significance, human remains. Intangible cultural heritage includes but is not limited to traditional knowledge, including for medicine, traditional food preparation and diets, as well as species and ecosystem management, and practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. The concept can also include gender-specific heritage values.

11. These cultural aspects are encompassed in the discussions under the Convention on Biological Diversity, specifically within the context of the work with indigenous peoples and local communities.

### **B. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization**

12. The unique mandate of UNESCO in education, sciences, culture and communication highlights the key role of biological and cultural diversity, natural, cultural as well as tangible and

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<sup>8</sup> Decision XIII/18.

intangible heritage, languages, identities, values, spirituality, learning, knowledge systems and the empowerment of local stewards to sustaining, regenerating, conserving and governing biodiversity and ecosystems. The mandate of UNESCO supports interdisciplinary scientific research, inter-university cooperation, learning, diverse knowledge systems and diverse value systems and recognizes that our relationships with biodiversity are structured by them. UNESCO supports interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research leading to constructive dialogue between science and diverse knowledge systems and in relation to national policymaking. UNESCO supports the inclusion of indigenous knowledge systems in policymaking in the environmental field.<sup>9</sup> UNESCO, as the only United Nations agency with a specific mandate in the field of culture, carries this responsibility notably through its six culture conventions.<sup>10</sup> The advocacy efforts of UNESCO for the culture and development approach over the last decade resulted in three milestone resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2010, 2011 and 2013 which acknowledge the role of culture as an enabler and a driver of sustainable development. This process culminated in culture being integrated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015. Since 2017, UNESCO has also been developing the Thematic Indicators for Culture in the 2030 Agenda (Culture|2030 Indicators), which establish a methodology for demonstrating and making visible culture's impact on the Sustainable Development Goals in a way that helps decision makers.<sup>11</sup> Prior to the Joint Programme of Work between the Convention on Biological Diversity and UNESCO, the UNESCO programme on "Reinforcing Linkages between Cultural Diversity and Biodiversity for Sustainable Development"<sup>12</sup> was launched in 2004 as a concrete follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in 2002.

13. Since 2004, UNESCO hosts the Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems programme, currently in the Natural Sciences Sector, which is dedicated to the study of indigenous and local knowledge in relation to biodiversity and climate change. LINKS in turn hosts the IPBES Technical Support Unit on Indigenous and Local Knowledge. LINKS seeks a rapprochement between different knowledge systems and cultures, including between indigenous knowledge and formal sciences, between social, human and natural sciences, and supports knowledge actors to provide the "best possible knowledge" to policymakers.

14. The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO includes in the definition of "intangible cultural heritage" under its article 2, elements of indigenous and local knowledge and practices. While the word "culture" does not actually appear in Article 8(j)

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<sup>9</sup> Through the LINKS programme for instance.

<sup>10</sup> The 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention; the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property; the 1972 Convention concerning the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage; the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage; the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage; and the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

<sup>11</sup> The purpose of the Culture|2030 Indicators is to measure and monitor the progress of culture's enabling contribution to the national and local implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As a set of thematic indicators, it is intended to support and complement the global indicators agreed upon within the 2030 Agenda and foster linkages between different Goals and Targets. Implementation is on a voluntary basis by countries and cities and building on an in-depth analysis of the multiple ways in which culture contributes to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development, the Culture|2030 Indicators provides evidence of culture's transformative role, making it more visible and tangible. The development of a new framework for measuring and collecting data on culture is foundational both for advocacy of culture in the Sustainable Development Goals as well as for integration into development plans and policies at the national and urban levels and within the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF). The conceptual framework, methodology and implementation mechanisms of the Culture|2030 Indicators relies as much as possible on existing data sources, using qualitative and quantitative data to assess the contribution of culture, integrate data from reporting on UNESCO culture conventions and programmes, develop instruments at both national and urban levels, prioritize capacity-building of relevant agencies, facilitate cooperation across institutions, propose a framework adaptable to different statistical capacities. The Culture|2030 Indicators aims to reap the benefits of the unique expertise of UNESCO in collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data in the field of culture.

<sup>12</sup> International Workshop on Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity: Concepts, Methods and Experiences, Paris, 2007.

of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the words “knowledge, innovations and practices” open possibilities of synergies with the important issues that could be considered under culture and specifically as intangible cultural heritage.

**C. Man and the Biosphere programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization**

15. The Man and the Biosphere programme is an intergovernmental scientific programme that highlights and demonstrates the interdependencies and interactions between people and biodiversity through its research and sustainable development activities. It builds on scientific, local and indigenous knowledge and practices to implement sustainable development in very diverse socioeconomic, cultural and ecological systems. Biosphere reserves are complex socio-ecological systems that aim to reconcile conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use. The management of these connected landscapes and seascapes builds on knowledge, know-how, values, practices and innovation skills of people and communities to address complex issues such as the climate change and biodiversity crises. The World Network of Biosphere Reserves (701 sites in 124 countries) acknowledges that culture and nature are intertwined, interconnected and co-productive and that there is a diversity of possible transformational pathways and sustainable solutions.

**D. World Heritage Convention of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (1972)**

16. The idea of biocultural systems has grown through the “Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage” (hereafter “World Heritage Convention”) (UNESCO, 1972) and the impetus that emerged from that international agreement. The World Heritage Convention recognizes, from the outset, the linkages between natural and cultural heritage. It is also one of the eight biodiversity-related conventions which are members of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions. Along with the “mixed sites,” i.e. sites fulfilling both natural and cultural criteria, the World Heritage Convention also embraces the concept of “cultural landscape”, a category for inscription on the World Heritage List since 1992. Defined as the combined work of nature and people,<sup>13</sup> the concept of cultural landscapes has allowed an enhanced recognition of the diverse ways in which people interact with their natural environment. Cultural landscapes often reflect specific techniques of sustainable land use, considering the characteristics and limits of the natural environment in which they are established, and a specific spiritual relation to nature. The 2011 UNESCO recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape<sup>14</sup> also recognizes the important interconnections between cultural heritage and the natural environment.

17. Accordingly, the Operational Guidelines and the Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention, adopted by the 20th session of the General Assembly of States Parties in 2015 further promote a thorough shared understanding of World Heritage properties and their socioecological context by all stakeholders as well as traditional and indigenous knowledge held by local communities and indigenous peoples, explicitly recognizing that biological diversity and cultural diversity are closely linked and interdependent.

18. The connection between nature and culture has also come to the fore as a powerful dynamic for transformation of the World Heritage Convention, through innovative projects, including Connecting Practice and World Heritage Leadership.

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<sup>13</sup> Article 1 of the World Heritage Convention; Paragraph 47 of the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2017 edition). See also Annex 3 for the three main categories of cultural landscapes, namely: (i) landscape designed and created intentionally by people, (ii) organically evolved landscape, and (iii) associative cultural landscape.

<sup>14</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/uploads/activities/documents/activity-638-98.pdf>

### **E. Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2003)**

19. Having acknowledged that the existing international agreements, recommendations and resolutions concerning the cultural and natural heritage needed to be effectively enriched and supplemented by new provisions specifically dedicated to the intangible cultural heritage, in 2003 UNESCO adopted the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage<sup>15</sup> (hereafter “the 2003 Convention”). This instrument, which explicitly recognizes the deep-seated interdependence between the intangible cultural heritage and the tangible cultural and natural heritage, has allowed the international community to define this new concept as the “practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage”.

20. The 2003 Convention emphasizes that intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. “Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe” have also been explicitly included among the domains in which intangible cultural heritage can be manifested. Furthermore, Chapter VI of the Operational Directives for the Implementation of the 2003 Convention,<sup>16</sup> approved by the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention at its sixth session, in 2016, is dedicated to the “safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development at the national level”. It includes a full set of provisions (Chapter VI.3) to highlight the contribution of the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage to environmental sustainability and to recognize that environmental sustainability, which requires sustainably managed natural resources and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, is intricately linked to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

### **F. UNESCO-CBD Joint Programme of Work on the links between biological and cultural diversity**

21. Looking for a broader societal approach, the mandate of the joint programme between the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and UNESCO on the links between biological and cultural diversity<sup>17</sup> arose from an international conference co-organized by UNESCO and the Secretariat and held in June 2010,<sup>18</sup> which examined the links between biological and cultural diversity and pressed for biological and cultural diversity to be genuinely integrated into development cooperation strategies and programmes.

22. The Conference resulted in the 2010 Declaration on Biocultural Diversity and the Joint Programme of Work between UNESCO and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.<sup>19</sup> This joint programme (2011-2020) was acknowledged by the World Heritage Committee at its meeting in Brasilia in July 2010 and welcomed by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its tenth meeting<sup>20</sup> as a useful coordination mechanism for

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<sup>15</sup> <https://ich.unesco.org/en>

<sup>16</sup> [https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ICH-Operational\\_Directives-7.GA-PDF-EN.pdf](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ICH-Operational_Directives-7.GA-PDF-EN.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Links include but are not limited to: (a) Indigenous traditional and/or local languages; (b) [Knowledge, technology and innovation](#), Knowledge (local, traditional and indigenous knowledge); (c) [Material culture](#), Objects created from or representing biodiversity; (d) Technology, techniques and innovation through practice and adaptation; (e) [Modes of subsistence](#); (f) Resource based livelihoods; (g) Land/sea use and management; (h) Plant/animal domestication and selective breeding; (i) [Social and economic relations](#); (j) Sense of identity and attachment to place; (k) Social roles in resource use; (l) Sharing and management; (m) Gender considerations; (n) Political and economic relations and legal institutions; (o) Worldviews and [belief systems](#); (p) Rites and rituals; (q) Sacred natural sites; (r) Mythologies, worldview, cosmologies, and spirituality, and [values](#).

<sup>18</sup> Report of the International Conference on Biological and Cultural Diversity for Development (Advanced Unedited Version) (20 June 2010) <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=ICBCD>

<sup>19</sup> See <https://www.cbd.int/lbcd/resources>

<sup>20</sup> Decision X/20, paragraph 16.

advancing the implementation of the Convention to deepen global awareness of the interlinkages between cultural and biological diversity.

23. Since the establishment of the joint programme of work, Parties have led the various initiatives through a series of regional conferences – hosted by Italy (European region) 2014; Japan (Asia-Pacific region) 2016; and, in May 2019, the first North American Conference on Biocultural Diversity – hosted by Canada (through Parks Canada), the Canadian Commission for UNESCO and McGill University.

24. In addition to these regional conferences, the Secretariat, in partnership with Parties, international organizations and indigenous peoples and local communities, organized nature and culture summits at the thirteenth and fourteenth meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

25. Declarations by participants emanated these events, as well as lists of actions that could be taken at various levels to strengthen the links between biological and cultural diversity (not limited to): languages; material culture such as objects created from or representing biodiversity (tangible cultural heritage); knowledge (local, traditional and indigenous knowledge); technologies, including techniques and innovation through practice and adaptation; modes of subsistence; resource-based livelihoods; land/sea use sustainable management approaches; unique and diverse plant/animal domestication and selective breeding; social and economic relations; sense of identity and attachment to place; social roles in resource use, sharing and management; gender considerations; political and economic relations and legal institutions; unique and diverse worldviews and belief systems and related rites and rituals, sacred natural sites, mythologies, cosmologies, spiritualities, and values.<sup>21</sup>

26. Going beyond research, these events have brought together governments and the proponents of biocultural diversity and have been instrumental in understanding how best to turn policies into practice for nature and culture-based solutions. The developing methodologies suggest the need to recognize biocultural assets or heritage within eco-cultural landscapes and the importance of recognizing “intangible cultural heritage”<sup>22</sup> or traditional knowledge, as it is commonly referred to under the Convention on Biological Diversity, in the management of those land and waterscapes.

## **G. Inter-agency cooperation**

27. In pursuing the above-mentioned objectives, the Joint Programme of Work is also a natural platform for like-minded initiatives, including the Nature and Culture Journeys under the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and IUCN, the Satoyama Initiative,<sup>23</sup> Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) under the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO),<sup>24</sup> and the Ramsar Culture Network.<sup>25</sup> It has, from time to time, contributed to their work and is likely to continue to do so post-2020.

28. As well as the Convention on Biological Diversity, UNESCO, IUCN, other important entities and partners are also championing and exploring the added value of biocultural approaches to common goals.

### *I. International Union for Conservation of Nature*

29. The linkages between biological diversity and cultural diversity have been identified by IUCN, as well as the Convention on Biological Diversity and UNESCO, as one of the untapped potentials for new dynamics to achieve an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Through its long-standing work under the World Heritage Convention, IUCN has developed strong

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<sup>21</sup> More information about the Joint Programme of Work is available on the webpages at: <https://www.cbd.int/lbcd/>

<sup>22</sup> Term used under UNESCO, refer to: <https://ich.unesco.org/>. Also note that IPBES used the term “indigenous and local knowledge”.

<sup>23</sup> <https://satoyama-initiative.org/>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.fao.org/giahs/en/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.ramsar.org/activity/culture-wetlands>

and growing partnerships with the culture sector, including UNESCO, ICOMOS and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM). In 2019, IUCN has launched the Nature-Culture Initiative to develop proposals to bring this World Heritage experience to the wider IUCN programme, and to identify all of the IUCN connections to culture and the opportunity to build an ambitious new set of partnerships.

30. At the same time, IUCN and ICOMOS developed, together with UNESCO and ICCROM, a collaborative Nature-Culture Journey, uniting diverse synergies, at the IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC) and ICOMOS General Assembly.

31. In 2019, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, UNESCO and IUCN discussed cooperation at the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention towards an initiative for the creation of an international alliance for nature and culture, to be launched at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Such an alliance could be multi-faceted, include mechanisms for inter-agency coordination and provide a platform for the sharing of lessons learned and ongoing work as well as creative fund-raising (such as philanthropy) for projects aimed at strengthening the links between biological and cultural diversity towards achieving the common goals of both biodiversity-related conventions and culture related conventions.

## *2. Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*

32. Important in this dialogue about biological and cultural diversity is the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) which is the intergovernmental body that assesses the state of biodiversity and of the ecosystem services it provides to society. UNESCO is one of the four United Nations partners of this platform and provides the services of a Technical Support Unit on Indigenous and Local Knowledge for the purposes of the assessments.

33. In 2016 IPBES approved the [Summary for Policymakers](#) from its Assessment on Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production, and adopted the following definition biocultural diversity, for the purposes of the assessment, is “biological diversity, cultural diversity and the links between them”.

34. The 2019 *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* of IPBES provided an analysis of the transformative change required to meet the global challenge for Nature opens the opportunity for a central place to mobilize action through engaging in culture. Solutions require the joint consideration of the needs to also respond to the climate crisis and to deliver conservation approaches rooted in human rights. Action focused on place-based solutions, and on leverage points such as diverse visions of a good life, the mobilization of values and the practice of justice and inclusion, all connect to the need for culture to be at the heart of a world that lives in harmony with nature, in harmony with the climate, and in harmony with the diversity of humanity.

35. In view of the crises facing biodiversity, more effective incorporation of biocultural heritage to address the drivers of biodiversity loss, as identified within the IPBES Global Assessment is clearly desirable. The IPBES Global Assessment is a watershed in emphasizing the need for synergies in human development, mobilizing of indigenous and local knowledge, and successful conservation and restoration of ecosystems and biodiversity, including valorizing practices in connected landscapes and seascapes reconciling conservation with development such as in biosphere reserves. To deliver the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030, while responding urgently to the global crisis of climate change and biodiversity loss, requires a major reconfiguration of how we live and work together, and within natural and modified ecosystems.

## *3. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*

36. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has recently also become interested in this topic and biocultural diversity and its impacts on and from climate change are likely to be in future assessments, and possibly joint products with IPBES/IPCC.



## II. RATIONALE FOR AN INTER-AGENCY APPROACH TO STRENGTHENING THE LINKS BETWEEN BIOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY FOR COMPLEMENTARY GOALS

37. The relationships between nature and culture, and between biodiversity and cultural diversity, have been the subject of research and debates over recent decades. A fundamental issue that has triggered debates in nature conservation is the relationship between human culture, heritage and history, and nature expressed as ecology or biodiversity.

38. At times, nature conservation has been pursued separately from aspects of culture; a situation which is counter-intuitive when we consider the importance of customary sustainable use, and more broadly traditional and local resource management, in the maintenance of biodiversity in many areas now 'protected' for nature.

39. Over the last decade, within the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity and UNESCO, this conversation has been facilitated under the auspices of the Joint Programme of Work on biological and cultural diversity.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, ICOMOS and IUCN have championed the issue through the "Nature Culture Journey" highlighting the interconnectedness of nature and culture, which began at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawai'i, United States of America, in 2016, and continued as "Culture-Nature Journey" at the General Assembly of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), which was held in New Delhi in 2017. IUCN and ICOMOS – both Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Convention – will launch a report on the joint project, Connecting Practice, which explores new methods and practical strategies for recognizing the connection between natural and cultural heritage in World Heritage sites.

40. Most recently, in 2019-20, IUCN has launched the Nature Culture Initiative, to develop proposals to bring this World Heritage experience to the wider IUCN programme, and to identify all of IUCN's connections to culture and the opportunity to build an ambitious new set of partnerships.

41. Related to this, the FAO flagship programme Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems continue to highlight long term sustainable and diverse traditional agricultural and animal production systems and lessons learned for modern agriculture.

42. Considering the breadth of activities across the international system promoting biological and cultural diversity and the benefits that such innovated approaches potentially hold for addressing the current dramatic loss of biodiversity, related and continuing loss of cultural diversity, as well as the possible contribution to sustainable development, human resilience and climate action (through nature-based solutions), there is a convincing argument that biological and cultural diversity or biocultural approaches should be incorporated or mainstreamed across the post-2020 global biodiversity framework if the Convention is to meet its three goals and its 2050 Vision.

43. Additionally, given the diverse range of actors beyond the founding partners of the Joint Programme of Work on the links between biological and cultural diversity (CBD and UNESCO), some form of inter-agency coordination will be needed to bring coherence to the international efforts towards the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the 2050 Vision, as well as to ensure that culture and biocultural approaches (nature- and culture-based solutions) are taken into account in sustainable development and climate action. As mentioned, coherence and complementarity, while avoiding overlap and duplication, could be found through the establishment of an international alliance for nature and culture. For this reason, at the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in Egypt, the Executive Secretary proposed to UNESCO and IUCN to discuss an initiative, which was welcomed by the Parties to the Convention, to work towards the establishment of an international alliance for nature and culture. Subject to the availability of resources, such an alliance would encompass other entities working on nature and culture and is proposed as a natural extension of a decade of joint efforts under the SCBD-UNESCO programme of work, in understanding the links

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<sup>26</sup> See decision X/20, paragraph 16, in which the Conference of the Parties welcomed the SCBD-UNESCO Joint Programme on the links between biological and cultural diversity (2011-2020). It was also acknowledged by the World Heritage Committee at its meeting in Brasilia in July 2010.

between biological and cultural diversity, in order to strengthen the integration of culture and nature in international policy and environmental practices.

44. As proponents of both cultural and biological diversity, indigenous peoples and local and traditional communities have a special role to play, but the concept of an international alliance is to build a broad coalition of the willing, and to invite all cultures to reflect on their relationship with nature – to bring nature and all cultures together in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, in order to contribute to the goals of the Convention and its 2050 vision, humanity living in harmony with nature.

45. Additionally, the emerging nature-culture framework for cooperation could include a much wider array of actors, including Parties, other Governments, national and subnational governments, international organizations, programmes and funds, and non-State actors, such as religious and spiritual organizations and custodians dealing with lands and territories, diverse urban communities and their contemporary / consumption-based cultures which are highly influential for the behaviour of the private sector. There is also the body of actors on food production, nature and cultural systems, including such grass-roots organizations as the Slow Food Movement.<sup>27</sup>

46. UNESCO and the Joint Programme of Work have provided valuable lessons that warrant serious consideration in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, particularly if the framework is to achieve its vision and be relevant to broader global commitments, including sustainable development and climate action.

47. Culture is one of the main pillars of development and sustenance of communities and no society can progress in its absence. The undertakings of culture contribute to an increase in the intellectual potential and build a conscious, open, tolerant and sustainable society. Culture has shaped land and waterscapes and the biodiversity therein for millennia.

48. Cultural diversity is necessary for sustainable development. Accepting cultural diversity and understanding cultures other than one's own will contribute to the prevention of conflict, the building of peace and development. Intimately woven together, cultural diversity and biological diversity provide the resilience that ecosystems and human communities need in the face of change. For example, nature-based solutions rooted in diverse human cultures are increasingly being promoted as successful local actions to address climate change.

49. The Convention on Biological Diversity is often mistakenly considered through the narrow lens of conservation; however, the reality of the Convention<sup>28</sup> is that it is a framework for sustainable development. If achieving sustainability is first and foremost about making wise use of the planet's resources, then culture must be at the centre of development strategies, since cultures frame people's relationship with others in their society and the world around them, including the natural environment, and condition their behaviours.

50. Conservation and development initiatives and approaches which take local conditions and cultures into account are likely to result in more context-sensitive and equitable outcomes, while also enhancing ownership by target beneficiaries. Integrating culture into conservation and development policies and programmes, therefore, fundamentally contributes to their effectiveness and sustainability.

51. Moreover, as sectors of activity, heritage and the creative industries, contribute significantly to the objectives identified by stakeholders in the wake of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development: from green jobs and more sustainable consumption and production patterns, to resilient communities that are able to better cope with disasters and have safe access to water and food, thereby reducing imbalances and poverty across regions and strengthening sustainability.

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<sup>27</sup> Refer to: <https://www.slowfood.com/>

<sup>28</sup> With its three goals: conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

52. Further to this point, cultural heritage has been absent from the sustainable development debate despite its crucial importance to societies and the wide acknowledgment of its importance at the national level. It has also been absent despite the wide ratification of the UNESCO cultural conventions by the organization's Member States and the near universal ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity. From cultural heritage to cultural and creative industries, culture is both an enabler and a driver of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Promoting cultural diversity and biological diversity is key to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

53. These important lessons learned over the last decade through the Joint Programme of Work provide Parties with food for thought in developing an ambitious, creative global biodiversity framework, truly reflective of on-the-ground realities, and that can be locally implemented, to achieve the 2050 Vision of humanity living in harmony with nature.

### **III. OPTIONS FOR POSSIBLE ELEMENTS OF WORK AIMED AT REINTEGRATION OF NATURE AND CULTURE IN THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK**

54. This section proposes options for possible elements of work aimed at the integration of nature and culture in international policy and environmental practices, with a focus on strengthening the links between biological and cultural diversity, in the context of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

55. The SCBD-UNESCO Joint Programme of Work on the links between biological and cultural diversity, together with the results of the related initiatives held between 2010 and 2019, and the submissions received, provide a useful starting point for discussing options for possible elements of work, and how lessons learned could be fully integrated or mainstreamed into the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

56. Given the breadth of work across the international system on biological and cultural diversity, an inter-agency approach for this work post-2020 could be to develop a common strategy across biodiversity related multilateral environmental agreements and culture related Conventions, other agreements and instruments, to stop the ongoing decline in global diversity of both nature and culture, and to advance complementary goals across conventions. It may be interesting, recalling General Assembly resolution 65/161, which refers to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 as a universally agreed framework for action on biodiversity and a foundation for sustainable development for all stakeholders, including agencies across the United Nations system, to explore the extent to which the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, currently under development, can add value to this inter-agency approach, in close cooperation with the culture-related and other relevant conventions.

57. In order to assist the Convention's subsidiary bodies in considering possible elements of future work on the links between biological and cultural diversity, the Executive Secretary solicited views of Parties, international organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities, and stakeholders through notification SCBD/SSSF/AS/JS/MLS/87830, dated 24 January 2019. The Secretariat, jointly with partner organizations, organized an Online Forum on Future Work on Traditional Knowledge<sup>29</sup> which included matters related to elements of work related to a reintegration of nature and culture in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The views received are compiled and reproduced in CBD/WG8J/11/INF/1.

58. Based on the result from the views received, the Online Forum (webinar and survey) and the lessons learned from Parties' initiatives from 2010 to 2019, elements and tasks are identified and

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<sup>29</sup> Refer to the compilation of views on possible elements of a future programme of work on Article 8(j) and related provisions as part of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (CBD/WG8J/11/INF/1) and the compilation of declarations on links between nature and culture (CBD/WG8J/11/INF/2).

included in the annex to the present document for the consideration of the Parties regarding options for possible elements of work on nature and culture in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

59. Taking into account the new work proposed and the inter-agency nature of the work required, an overarching goal for the post-2020 joint programme of work, could be something along these lines:

“To recognize cultural and natural heritage and diversity as enablers and drivers of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and a pathway to the global biodiversity framework’s Vision of Living in Harmony with Nature by 2050, the Sustainable Development Goals, and climate action, with a commitment to strengthening the links between cultural and natural diversity and mainstreaming lessons learned across the work of the Convention and other relevant processes”.

#### IV. SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

60. In the light of the proposals contained herein, Parties may wish to consider the following elements of a draft recommendation by the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions at its eleventh meeting and the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at its twenty-third meeting for further submission to the third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework at its second meeting, and subsequently for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fifteenth meeting:

##### **Options for possible elements of work aimed at an integration of nature and culture in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework**

*The Conference of the Parties,*

*Recalling* decision X/20, paragraph 16, in which it welcomed the Joint Programme of Work between the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, on the links between biological and cultural diversity, and decision 14/30, in which it recognized the Joint Programme of Work as a useful coordination mechanism for advancing the implementation of the Convention and deepening global awareness of the interlinkages between cultural and biological diversity,

*Welcoming* the lessons learned from the international and regional initiatives conducted under the auspices of the Joint Programme of Work 2010-2020,<sup>30</sup>

*Noting that the Joint Programme of Work remains relevant for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework,*

1. *Decides* to renew its commitment to the Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity, to be promoted by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Union for Conservation of Nature as well as other relevant partners, taking a whole-of-society view, and an integrated approach, with the aim of (a) mainstreaming lessons learned across the work of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and (b) supporting national and subnational implementation, fully incorporating the added value of biocultural approaches, building on biological and cultural heritage, and strengthening the links between biological and cultural diversity, in order to achieve the goals of the Convention at all levels and its 2050 vision of humanity living in harmony with nature;

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary and *invites* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Union for Conservation of Nature, along with other relevant international agencies, to explore and consider, subject to the availability of resources, inter-agency mechanisms to ensure complementarity of efforts, respecting individual mandates, avoiding overlap and duplication and maximizing efficiencies, and promoting lessons learned at a relevant scale towards the goal of the post-2020 joint programme;

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<sup>30</sup> See the compilation of declarations on links between nature and culture (CBD/WG8J/11/INF/2).

3. *Calls upon* Governments and Parties to all the relevant conventions, including the 1972 World Heritage Convention, the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, as well as relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, including the International Council on Monuments and Sites and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property, academia, indigenous peoples and local communities, the private sector and civil society, to strengthen collaboration and coordination and to contribute to and support the joint programme on the links between biological and cultural diversity, drawing on the elements and tasks contained in the annex to the present decision, and to fully incorporate lessons learned, in mainstreaming biological and cultural diversity considerations throughout their respective work;

4. *Welcomes* the elements and tasks described in the annex to the present decision, which build on the existing Joint Programme of Work, for enhancing collaborations across the international system in pursuit of mutually supportive goals;

5. *Requests* the Executive Secretary and *invites* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and other relevant international agencies, Parties and other Governments, along with a broad coalition of partners, to advance, subject to the availability of resources, the elements and tasks described in the annex to the present decision, and to report on progress to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation and other mechanisms, as appropriate.

#### *Annex*

### **ELEMENTS AND TASKS RELATED TO THE JOINT PROGRAMME OF WORK ON THE LINKS BETWEEN BIOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

*Goal:* To recognize cultural and natural heritage and diversity as enablers and drivers of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and a pathway to the global biodiversity framework's vision of living in harmony with nature by 2050, the Sustainable Development Goals, and climate action, with a commitment to strengthening the links between cultural and natural diversity and mainstreaming lessons learned across the work of the Convention and other relevant processes.

#### **Element 1**

**A common strategy to stop the ongoing and often dramatic decline in global diversity of both nature and culture**

#### **Task 1**

The Secretariat of the Convention, together with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and other relevant bodies will develop a common strategy across conventions and agreements related to biological diversity (multilateral environment agreements) and culture, to stop the ongoing and often dramatic decline in global diversity of both nature and culture.

#### **Element 2**

**Science dialogue, equivalence of knowledge systems, indicators and monitoring efforts**

#### **Task 2.a**

The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions, together with the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, will review and update the four

adopted traditional knowledge indicators<sup>31</sup> in the light of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the ongoing work on biological and cultural diversity and human well-being.

#### **Task 2.b**

The Executive Secretary of the Convention will continue international efforts to operationalize the indicators and to explore the full potential of community-based monitoring and information systems (CBMIS) as methods and tools for monitoring the achievement of the global biodiversity framework, in particular the elements of most relevance to indigenous peoples and local communities, and explore synergies in the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals and other global processes.<sup>32</sup>

#### **Task 2.c**

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, UNESCO and IUCN, along with other relevant partners, and Parties, with the effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, and relevant organizations, will create events, spaces and platforms to promote the transmission of knowledge and exchange of experiences, values, methods and results between scientific and traditional knowledge systems and to develop and promote open frameworks for knowledge dialogues at the international, national and regional levels.<sup>33</sup>

### **Element 3**

#### **Biocultural diversity and linkages between nature and culture in integrated socio-ecological systems**

##### **Task 3.a**

The Executive Secretary, in partnership with UNESCO, IUCN, Parties, other relevant organizations and indigenous peoples and local communities, will collaborate on initiatives to strengthen the links between biological and cultural diversity, in line with the Joint Programme.<sup>34</sup>

##### **Task 3.b**

The Secretariat of the Convention, in partnership with UNESCO, IUCN, Parties and relevant organizations, will develop, support and implement specific efforts to record, document, protect and transmit traditional languages, including indigenous languages, as a vehicle of intangible cultural heritage and related traditional knowledge, with a focus on threatened languages.<sup>35</sup>

### **Element 4**

#### **Develop new approaches to communication, education and public awareness (CEPA)**

##### **Task 1**

The Secretariat of the Convention together with UNESCO, IUCN and other relevant bodies, will develop communication and educational materials to raise awareness, across society, and all sectors, of the interdependence and interlinkages between biological, cultural and linguistic diversity, for human well-being and environmental sustainability.

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<sup>31</sup> In decision XIII/28, the Conference of the Parties adopted the following indicators for status and trends in the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities: (a) Trends of linguistic diversity and numbers of speakers of indigenous languages; (b) Trends in land-use change and land tenure in the traditional territories of indigenous and local communities; (c) Trends in the practice of traditional occupations; and (d) Trends in degree to which traditional knowledge and practices are respected through: full integration, participation and safeguards in national implementation of the Strategic Plan.

<sup>32</sup> As proposed by the European Union, IIFB, Asian Regional Workshop on Traditional Knowledge in CBD/COP/14/INF/5/Rev.1, Sami Parliament of Sweden in CBD/WG8J/11/INF/8.

<sup>33</sup> As proposed by South Africa, IIFB in CBD/COP/14/INF/5/Rev.1, Venezuela in CBD/WG8J/11/INF/8.

<sup>34</sup> As proposed by the European Union, IIFB in CBD/COP/14/INF/5/Rev.1, Sami Parliament of Sweden in CBD/WG8J/11/INF/8.

<sup>35</sup> Recalling that UNESCO is the lead agency on languages, as proposed by participants of the Online Forum on the integration of Article 8(j) and provisions related to indigenous peoples and local communities in the work of the convention and its protocols.

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