



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Seventh meeting
Kuala Lumpur, 9–20 February 2004
Agenda item 20.2

**DECISION ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION
ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AT ITS SEVENTH MEETING**

VII/23. Scientific and technical cooperation and the clearing-house mechanism

A. The clearing-house mechanism

The Conference of the Parties,

Taking note of the note by the Executive Secretary on the activities of the clearing-house mechanism during the inter-sessional period (UNEP/CBD/COP/7/17/ADD1),

Noting with satisfaction the concrete steps taken towards making the clearing-house mechanism an effective tool for promoting technical and scientific cooperation among Parties,

1. *Decides* to extend the mandate of the informal advisory committee, as constituted and coordinated by the Executive Secretary, and as defined by its operational guidelines;
2. *Also decides* to review the continuation and mandate of the informal advisory committee at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
3. *Calls upon* Parties to:
 - (a) Use the clearing-house mechanism toolkit to establish clearing-house mechanism national focal points and websites, if they have not done so already;
 - (b) Contribute resources for the translation and maintenance in the six official languages of the United Nations of the content of the website of the Secretariat for the Convention and of the clearing-house mechanism toolkit;
 - (c) Use the controlled vocabulary for the Convention on Biological Diversity to facilitate interoperability of information among national clearing-house mechanisms;
4. *Invites* developed country Parties to assist developing countries Parties, through the clearing-house mechanism, in their efforts to implement and use new information technologies, including the establishment of websites;

5. *Invites* Parties to develop regional clearing-house mechanisms to further promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation and the exchange of information on technology transfer at the regional and national levels;

6. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to use the clearing-house mechanism, in collaboration with the informal advisory committee, to continue to strengthen collaboration with international partners and organizations for review at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and to report on that collaboration, including an elaboration of the relative roles of the clearing-house mechanism and information facilities dealing in particular with taxonomic databases including, IABIN (Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network) hubs, BioNet LOOPs (Locally Owned and Operated Partnerships), NatureServe CDCs (Centres for Data Conservation), nodes of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility and Species 2000 and the Integrated Taxonomic Information System's Catalogue of Life;

7. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Update the strategic plan of the clearing-house mechanism to 2009, in collaboration with the informal advisory committee, for consideration by the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

(b) Convene, subject to the availability of financial resources, regional workshops as a catalysing mechanism to allow for the interaction of international thematic focal points with the national focal points to further enhance the scientific and technical cooperation goal of the clearing-house mechanism and to build capacities at the national level with regard to use of and access to new information technologies;

(c) Update the clearing-house mechanism toolkit to be used as a meta-toolkit, linking the different existing toolkits with a view to optimize their resources and assist users to choose the most appropriate technology;

(d) Examine ways to develop regional portals to visualize and exchange national and regional cartographic information (geographic information systems and remote-sensing) from all thematic areas (including maps, satellite images and datasets);

(e) Advise on ways the clearing-house mechanism can assist to make relevant information interoperable among the three Rio conventions for review at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

(f) Develop an Internet-based web portal on island biological diversity to integrate, into the existing clearing-house mechanism, information on relevant programmes or initiatives such as the Small Island Developing States Network (SIDSnet), the Coastal Regions and Small Islands - UNESCO, the Small Islands Voice and the small island developing states activities programme of the United Nations Environment Programme;

(g) Further enhance the sections on the Convention's website related to the programme areas and cross-cutting issues, by applying the lessons learned from the development of the Biosafety Clearing-House, especially its use of common formats, protocols and standards, to increase interoperability of data and information;

8. Calls on the Informal Advisory Committee to assess the results of the independent review of the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity (UNEP/CBD/COP/7/INF/12) and assist the Executive Secretary on measures and actions to be undertaken to strengthen the clearing-house mechanism's role in promoting technical and scientific cooperation, including its role in facilitating the transfer of technology and know-how and capacity-building to support implementation of the Convention at the national level.

B. Operational procedures for the informal advisory committee of the clearing-house mechanism

The Conference of the Parties

Decides to adopt the operational procedures for the informal advisory committee of the clearing-house mechanism established by its decision III/4, paragraph 10, as annexed to the present decision.

Annex

**OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES FOR THE INFORMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
OF THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM**

A. Objectives

1. The informal advisory committee shall, in providing guidance to the Executive Secretary, have the following objectives:

(a) Provide advice on matters relating to the clearing house-mechanism, and in particular, on how to improve the effectiveness of the clearing house-mechanism as a mechanism to promote scientific and technical cooperation and exchange information on the transfer of publicly available expertise, technology and scientific cooperation;

(b) Facilitate the development and implementation of guidance from the Conference of the Parties concerning the clearing house-mechanism and the Strategic Plan of the clearing-house mechanism (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/3);

(c) Facilitate and encourage cooperation with other relevant international and regional scientific and technical cooperation and technology transfer initiatives;

(d) Advise on means to facilitate the implementation of the clearing-house mechanism at the national level;

(e) Enhance the scientific and technical cooperation benefits of all Convention activities.

B. Operational procedures

2. The Executive Secretary, in constituting and coordinating the informal advisory committee, shall seek to ensure regional balance and relevant expertise and knowledge, including of relevant international and regional scientific and technical cooperation initiatives, and non-governmental organizations.

C. Membership

3. The members of the informal advisory committee shall be selected by the Executive Secretary. In selecting members, he shall seek to ensure a balance of expertise and regional and bio-geographical balance.
4. Informal advisory committee members shall be selected for their expertise and understanding of the clearing-house mechanism and the Convention, taking into account the need for expertise including: scientific and technical cooperation; capacity-building; information exchange and sharing; and facilitating partnership with other organizations and initiatives.
5. Informal advisory committee members shall be selected for two years. The term is renewable by the Executive Secretary.
6. The Executive Secretary should ensure that changes in membership do not affect the continuity of the work.
7. Proxies may be agreed to by the Executive Secretary.

D. Chair

8. The Chair of the informal advisory committee shall be selected by the Executive Secretary, after consultation with the members, and serve for at least two years.

E. Meetings

9. Meetings shall be convened by the Executive Secretary and held back-to-back with SBSTTA and meetings of the Conference of the Parties. Additional meetings, electronic or in person, may be convened by the Executive Secretary as required to ensure the timely handling of issues.
10. The draft agenda for each meeting shall, if possible, be made available two months prior and otherwise at least one month prior to each meeting, and be posted on the Convention on Biological Diversity web site and notified to the informal advisory committee and clearing house-mechanism national focal points by fax and/or e-mail, and/or post.
11. Minutes of each meeting, and related information documents, shall be posted on the website of the Convention on Biological Diversity as soon as practical following their review by the Executive Secretary. This information will also be made available to the informal advisory committee and clearing-house mechanism national focal points by fax or e-mail or post.
