



Convention on Biological Diversity

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CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
Eleventh meeting
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Agenda item 11.2

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

XI/20. Climate-related geoengineering

The Conference of the Parties

1. *Reaffirms* paragraph 8, including its subparagraph (w), of decision X/33;
2. *Takes note* of the report on the impacts of climate-related geoengineering on biological diversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/28), the study on the regulatory framework for climate-related geoengineering relevant to the Convention on Biological Diversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/29) and the overview of the views and experiences of indigenous and local communities and stakeholders (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/30);
3. *Also takes note* of the main messages presented in the note by the Executive Secretary on technical and regulatory matters on geoengineering in relation to the Convention on Biological Diversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/10);
4. *Emphasizes* that climate change should primarily be addressed by reducing anthropogenic emissions by sources and by increasing removals by sinks of greenhouse gases under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, noting also the relevance of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other instruments;
5. *Aware* of existing definitions and understandings, including those in annex I to document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/28, and ongoing work in other forums, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *notes*, without prejudice to future deliberations on the definition of geoengineering activities, that climate-related geoengineering may include:
 - (a) Any technologies that deliberately reduce solar insolation or increase carbon sequestration from the atmosphere on a large scale and that may affect biodiversity (excluding carbon capture and storage from fossil fuels when it captures carbon dioxide before it is released into the atmosphere) (decision X/33 of the Conference of the Parties);

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(b) Deliberate intervention in the planetary environment of a nature and scale intended to counteract anthropogenic climate change and/or its impacts (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/10);¹

(c) Deliberate large-scale manipulation of the planetary environment (32nd session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change);

(d) Technological efforts to stabilize the climate system by direct intervention in the energy balance of the Earth for reducing global warming (Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change);²

6. *Notes* the findings contained in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/28, that there is no single geoengineering approach that currently meets basic criteria for effectiveness, safety and affordability, and that approaches may prove difficult to deploy or govern;

7. *Also notes* that there remain significant gaps in the understanding of the impacts of climate-related geoengineering on biodiversity, including:

(a) How biodiversity and ecosystem services are likely to be affected by and respond to geoengineering activities at different geographic scales;

(b) The intended and unintended effects of different possible geoengineering techniques on biodiversity;

(c) The socio-economic, cultural and ethical issues associated with possible geoengineering techniques, including the unequal spatial and temporal distribution of impacts;

8. *Notes* the lack of science-based, global, transparent and effective control and regulatory mechanisms for climate-related geoengineering, the need for a precautionary approach, and that such mechanisms may be most necessary for those geoengineering activities that have a potential to cause significant adverse transboundary effects, and those deployed in areas beyond national jurisdiction and the atmosphere, noting that there is no common understanding on where such mechanisms would be best placed;

9. *Invites* Parties to address the gaps identified in paragraph 7 and to report on measures undertaken in accordance with paragraph 8(w) of decision X/33;

10. *Reaffirming* the precautionary approach, *notes* the relevant resolutions of the meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and other Matter, 1972 (the London Convention) and its 1996 Protocol, and *recalls* decision IX/16 C of the Conference of the Parties, on ocean fertilization, and also decisions IX/30 and X/33, and paragraph 167 of the outcome document of United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20, “The Future We Want”);³

11. *Notes* that the application of the precautionary approach as well as customary international law, including the general obligations of States with regard to activities within their jurisdiction or control and with regard to possible consequences of those activities, and requirements with regard to environmental impact assessment, may be relevant for geoengineering activities but would still form an incomplete basis for global regulation;

¹ Excluding carbon capture and storage at source from fossil fuels when it captures carbon dioxide before it is released into the atmosphere, and also excluding forest-related activities.

² Noting that this definition includes solar radiation management but does not encompass other geoengineering techniques.

³ Adopted in General Assembly resolution 66/288.

12. *Further notes* the relevance of work done under the auspices of existing treaties and organizations for the governance of potential geoengineering activities, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the London Convention and its Protocol, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and its Montreal Protocol, and regional conventions, as well as the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization;

13. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of financial resources, to disseminate the reports referred to in paragraph 2 as widely as possible, including to the secretariats of the treaties and organizations referred to in paragraph 12, as well as the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques, the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, the Outer Space Treaty, the Antarctic Treaty, the United Nations Human Rights Council and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and its Committee on World Food Security for their information;

14. *Noting* that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the purpose of which is to provide comprehensive assessments of scientific and technical evidence on issues relating to climate change and its impacts, considers, in its Fifth Assessment Report, different geoengineering options, their scientific bases and associated uncertainties, their potential impacts on human and natural systems, risks, research gaps, and the suitability of existing governance mechanisms, *requests* the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to consider the Synthesis Report when it becomes available in September 2014 and report on implications for the Convention on Biological Diversity to the Conference of Parties;

15. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of financial resources, in collaboration with relevant organizations, to:

(a) Compile information reported by Parties as referred to in paragraph 9 above, and make it available through the clearing-house mechanism;

(b) Inform the national focal points of the Convention when the review procedures for the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are initiated, so as to facilitate national cooperation in providing input, in particular as it relates to biodiversity considerations;

16. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of financial resources and at the appropriate time, to prepare, provide for peer review, and submit for consideration by a future meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice:

(a) An update on the potential impacts of geoengineering techniques on biodiversity, and on the regulatory framework of climate-related geoengineering relevant to the Convention on Biological Diversity, drawing upon all relevant scientific reports such as the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and discussions under the Environment Management Group;

(b) An overview of the further views of Parties, other governments, indigenous and local communities and other stakeholders on the potential impacts of geoengineering on biodiversity, and associated social, economic and cultural impacts, taking into account gender considerations, and building on the overview of the views and experiences of indigenous and local communities contained in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/30.