

Introduction

The origin of the negotiations for the Convention on Biological Diversity lies in the 1987 Governing Council decision 14/26 of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which called upon UNEP to convene an Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on Biological Diversity for the harmonization of existing conventions related to biological diversity. At its first meeting, the Group of Experts agreed on the need to elaborate an internationally binding instrument on biological diversity. In May 1989, another Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on Biological Diversity was established to prepare an international legal instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking into account 'the need to share costs and benefits between developed and developing countries and the ways and means to support innovation by local people.' The Ad Hoc Working Group, which in February 1991 became the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC), held seven working sessions (five negotiating) which culminated in the adoption of an agreed text of the Convention on Biological Diversity through the Nairobi Final Act of the Conference for the Adoption of the Agreed Text of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Convention was opened for signature at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. It entered into force on 29 December 1993 and currently has 188 Parties. The principal objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity are the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from its utilization. The Convention recognizes that the key to maintaining biological diversity depends upon using this diversity in a sustainable manner.

The Convention translates its guiding objectives of conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing of benefits into binding commitments in its substantive provisions contained in Articles 6 to 20. These articles contain key provisions on, among others: measures for the conservation of biological diversity, both *in situ* and *ex situ*; incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity; research and training; public awareness and education; assessing the impacts of projects upon biological diversity; regulating access to genetic resources; access to and transfer of technology; and the provision of financial resources.

In addition to its substantive provisions, the Convention establishes institutional arrangements which provide a mechanism for the further development of, and for monitoring the implementation of, the Convention through meetings, work programmes, reviews and negotiations. Three institutions are established by the Convention: the Conference of the Parties (COP), the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and the Secretariat. In addi-

tion, the Convention establishes a financial mechanism for the provision of financial resources to developing country Parties, and provides for the establishment of a clearing-house mechanism (CHM) for scientific and technical cooperation. Further, the Convention enables the COP to establish additional subsidiary bodies as it deems necessary for the implementation of the Convention.

This chapter provides an overview of the institutions of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It is intended to provide a brief guide to the respective mandates of the various organs established by the Convention, as well as to how they operate and interrelate. It also describes how the programme of work of the Convention has been addressed to date. Detailed information on substantive decisions adopted by the COP to date on particular issues is provided in section VI of this Handbook.

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Conference of the Parties

The governing body of the Convention is the Conference of the Parties (COP), established under Article 23. Its key functions are to keep under review the implementation of the Convention and to steer its development. Other important functions of the COP include adoption of the budget, the consideration of national reports, the adoption of protocols or annexes and the development of guidance to the financial mechanism. A list of functions of the COP under the Convention is set out in Article 23.

The COP also serves as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (see the section on the Protocol at the end of the present chapter).

To date, there have been seven ordinary meetings of the COP, and the next meeting will take place in Brazil in the first half of 2006. At the fifth meeting (COP 5), it was decided that ordinary meetings of the COP shall be held every two years. Meetings of the COP are open to all Parties to the Convention, as well as to observers from non-Parties, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. In accordance with its rules of procedure, the COP can also hold extraordinary meetings. The first—and, to date, the only—extraordinary meeting of the COP (ExCOP) was held in Cartagena, Colombia, in February 1999, to consider and adopt the first protocol to the Convention, a protocol on biosafety.¹ As agreement on the text of the biosafety protocol was not forthcoming, the first extraordinary meeting of the COP was suspended.² The meeting resumed in Montréal in January 2000, where it concluded its work and adopted the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.³

The broad scope of the Convention has meant that the COP has been required to deal with a large agenda. The COP has initiated work in a number of areas to elaborate or clarify aspects of the Convention, and has taken some one hundred and seventy-five procedural and substantive decisions to date. At its first meeting (COP 1), in 1994, the COP adopted a programme of work for the years 1995–1997. It reviewed this programme of work at its fourth meeting (COP 4) in 1998, and adopted a programme of work for its fifth to seventh meetings.

1 See Section VI of this Handbook: Article 19(3).

2 Decision EM-I/1.

3 Decision EM-I/3.

At its sixth meeting, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to prepare a multi-year programme of work for the COP up to 2010, covering its eighth, ninth and tenth meetings.⁴ An Open-ended Inter-sessional Meeting on the multi-year Programme of Work took place in Montreal in March 2003. At its seventh meeting, in February 2004, the Conference of the Parties adopted a multi-year programme of work up to 2010.⁵

The implementation of the initial medium-term programme of work saw the evolution of a process for the development of COP decisions and the application of the general principles of the Convention to specific thematic areas and cross-cutting issues. In addition, at its second meeting, the COP decided that the ecosystem approach should be the primary framework of action to be taken under the Convention.⁶ This view has been reiterated in subsequent decisions of the COP.⁷

Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice

Article 25 of the Convention establishes an open-ended intergovernmental scientific advisory body, Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, SBSTTA, to provide the COP with advice and recommendations on scientific, technical and technological aspects of the implementation of the Convention.

Specific functions of SBSTTA include:

- Providing scientific and technical assessments of the status of biological diversity;
- Preparing scientific and technical assessments of the measures taken to implement the Convention;
- Identifying innovative, efficient and state of the art technologies and know how, and advising on how to promote their development;
- Providing advice on scientific programmes and international cooperation in research and development; and
- Generally responding to scientific, technical and technological and methodological questions asked by the COP.

To date, SBSTTA has held nine meetings. The tenth and eleventh meetings are scheduled to take place in February and December 2005, respectively. SBSTTA submits its advice to the COP in the form of recommendations. The COP considers SBSTTA advice on relevant issues before adopting its decisions. In some instances, the COP has explicitly endorsed specific SBSTTA recommendations in whole or in part.⁸

Much of the discussion relating to the operation of the Convention has concerned the need to promote the provision of scientific, technical and technological advice to the COP, and to ensure that available expertise in other relevant institutions is utilized. The current *modus operandi* of SBSTTA is set out in annex I to decision IV/16, as amended by paragraph 21 of decision V/20. Additional guidance on the functioning of SBSTTA is given in part III of decision V/20.⁹ SBSTTA's

4 Decision VI/28.

5 Decision VII/30.

6 Decision II/8, paragraph 1.

7 See decision IV/1 B and the section on "Ecosystem approach" in this chapter.

8 SBSTTA recommendations that have been explicitly endorsed by the COP are reproduced immediately after the decision endorsing them in section X of this Handbook.

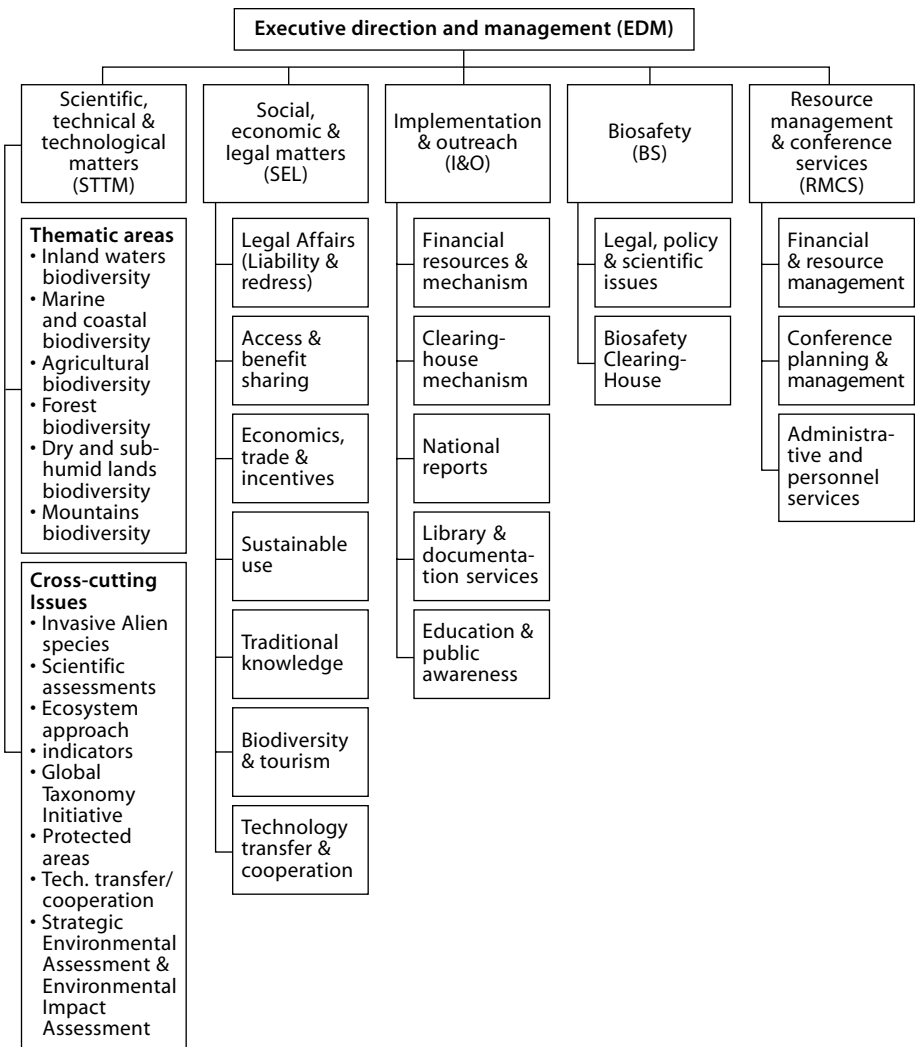
9 See section IV of this Handbook.

modus operandi envisages the use of small groups of experts, in liaison groups, to facilitate the preparation and review of documentation for SBSTTA meetings. It also envisages meetings of ad hoc technical groups of experts on particular issues. Ad hoc technical expert groups are composed from rosters of experts on particular issues drawn up by the Secretariat on the basis of nominations by Governments.

Secretariat

Article 24 establishes a Secretariat, whose principal functions are to prepare for, and service, meetings of the COP and other subsidiary bodies of the Convention and to coordinate with other relevant international bodies. The host institution of the Secretariat is UNEP. The Secretariat is located in Montreal, Canada.

FIGURE 1. PROGRAMMATIC STRUCTURE OF THE SECRETARIAT



The Secretariat provides administrative support to the COP, SBSTTA and other Convention bodies. It represents the day-to-day focal point for the Convention, organizes all meetings under the Convention, and prepares background documentation for those meetings. The Secretariat plays a significant role in coordinating the work carried out under the Convention with that of other relevant institutions and conventions, and represents the Convention at meetings of other relevant bodies. The programmatic structure of the Secretariat is described in Figure 1 above.

The Parties to the Convention have established trust funds to meet the costs of administering the Convention, including the costs of the Secretariat. All Parties contribute to the budget of the Convention. The Financial Rules for the Administration of the Trust Fund of the Convention on Biological Diversity were adopted by the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties through its decision I/6. Contributions made by Parties to the Convention to the Trust Fund are based on the UN scale of assessments.¹⁰

Financial mechanism

Article 21 establishes a mechanism for the provision of financial resources to developing countries for the purposes of the Convention. In Article 20, developed countries undertake to provide “new and additional financial resources to enable developing country Parties to meet the agreed full incremental costs” of implementing the obligations of the Convention. Article 39 designates the Global Environment Facility (GEF) on an interim basis to operate the financial mechanism of the Convention, and the GEF continues to fulfil this function. The financial mechanism functions under the authority and guidance of, and is accountable to, the COP. The COP determines the policy, strategy, programme priorities and eligibility criteria relating to the access to and utilization of the financial resources. COP 1 adopted comprehensive guidance for the financial mechanism.¹¹ This guidance has been refined and augmented at each of the subsequent meetings of the COP.¹² The GEF reports to each meeting of the COP on its implementation of the guidance.

The GEF is managed by a Council, which is composed of 32 members representing some 166 participant States. Projects of the GEF are undertaken by Parties to the Convention and the Implementing Agencies of the GEF: the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank.

Clearing-house mechanism

Paragraph 3 of Article 18 anticipated the establishment of a clearing-house mechanism (CHM) to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation.¹³ A pilot phase of the CHM, administered by the Secretariat, was established under COP decisions I/3 and II/3. At the end of 1998, an independent review of the pilot phase of the CHM was initiated.¹⁴ COP 5 supported the implementation of a

10 The financial rules for the administration of the Trust Fund for the Convention on Biological Diversity, as contained in decision III/1, are set out in section V of this Handbook.

11 Decision I/2.

12 See section VI of this Handbook: Articles 20, 21, and 39.

13 See section VI of this Handbook: Article 18(3).

14 Decision IV/2, paragraph 10(k).

strategic plan for the CHM¹⁵ and endorsed a longer-term programme of work for the CHM.¹⁶ An informal advisory committee has been established for the CHM.

COP 7 established a programme of work on technology transfer and technological and scientific cooperation with the aim of developing meaningful and effective action to enhance the implementation of Articles 16 to 19 of the Convention. Programme element 2 of the programme of work, on information systems, focuses on the development or strengthening of national, regional and international systems for gathering and dissemination of relevant information on technology transfer and cooperation and technical and scientific cooperation. It also invests the CHM with a central role in the dissemination and exchange of information and the facilitation of cooperation.¹⁷

Additional subsidiary organs

In the course of its consideration of specific issues, the COP has seen fit to establish a number of other subsidiary organs with limited and defined mandates. These include:

- Working Group on Biosafety;¹⁸
- Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing;¹⁹
- Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions;²⁰
- Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol (ICCP);²¹
- Working Group on Protected Areas;²²
- Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention;²³
- Compliance Committee under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.²⁴

15 See document UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/2.

16 See decision V/14 and document UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/4.

17 See decision VII/29, annex.

18 See decision II/5 and section VI of this Handbook: Article 19 (3).

19 See decisions V/26 A–C and section VI of this Handbook: Article 15.

20 See decision IV/9 and section VI of this Handbook: Article 8 (j).

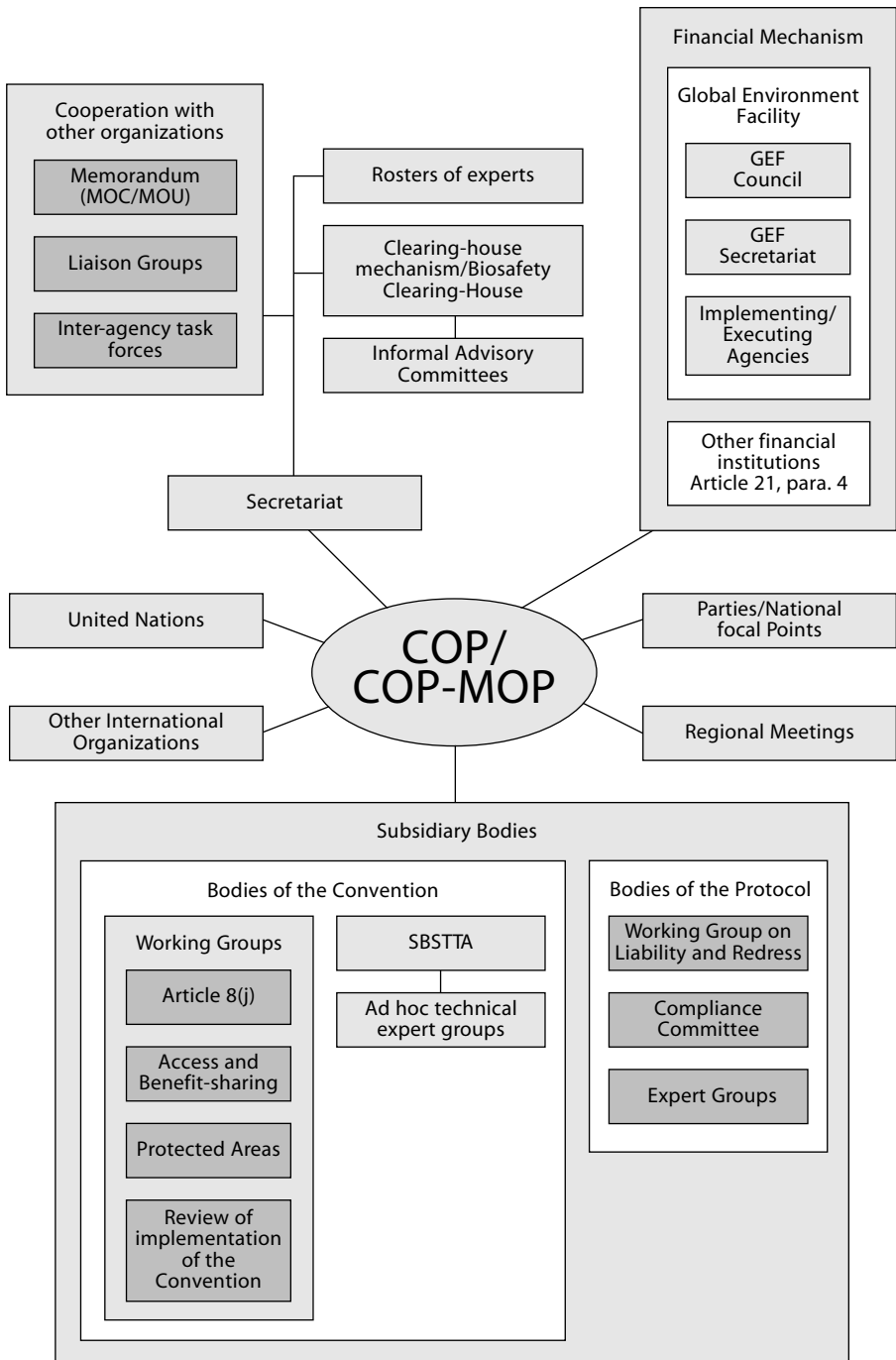
21 See decision EM-I/3 and the section on the “Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety” later in this chapter.

22 See decision VII/28.

23 See decision VII/30.

24 See decision BS-I/7 adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its first meeting serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol.

These bodies have been established to provide advice and recommendations on specific issues. In each case, the COP has decided the terms of reference of the organ, and has given guidance on its composition.



Other relevant activities

In addition to the formal establishment of subsidiary bodies, over the life of the Convention a wide range of other activities have supported its work. These include:

- Workshops and meetings on specific issues organized under the auspices of the Convention, often by the Secretariat in collaboration with one or more sponsoring governments or organizations;
- Conferences and other events sponsored by governments or institutions outside the auspices of the Convention, but with results being made available at meetings of the COP or SBSTTA (for example, in information documents);
- Regional and subregional meetings and activities on implementation of the Convention and by way of preparation for meetings of the COP;
- Initiatives on specific issues, such as the Global Invasive Species Programme and the Global Taxonomy Initiative; and
- Information-gathering exercises, such as, calls for case-studies from Parties and institutions on specific issues for synthesis in COP documents.

Thematic work programmes

The COP has initiated work on five thematic work programmes, addressing marine and coastal biodiversity, agricultural biodiversity, forest biodiversity, the biodiversity of inland waters, and dry and sub-humid lands. At its seventh meeting, the COP adopted a programme of work on mountain biological diversity.²⁵ It also mandated an ad hoc technical expert group to develop a programme of work on island biodiversity for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting.²⁶ Each thematic programme of work establishes a vision for, and basic principles to guide, future work; sets out key issues for consideration; identifies potential outputs; and suggests a timetable and means for achieving these outputs. The COP has explicitly directed that the consideration of certain cross-cutting issues should be integrated into the thematic work programmes.²⁷

Provision has been made for the periodic review of the implementation of the work programmes by the COP and SBSTTA. It is envisaged that implementation of the work programmes will involve contributions from Parties, the Secretariat, relevant intergovernmental organizations and other organizations.

Detailed information and references on the individual thematic programmes of work is contained in section VI of this Handbook (“Guide to decisions”).

Cross-cutting issues

Over and above the thematic programmes there are a number of other items on the COP agenda addressing key cross-cutting issues of relevance to all thematic areas. Essentially these correspond to the issues addressed in the Convention’s substantive provisions in Articles 6–20. For example, as indicated in subsequent sections of this Handbook, work has been initiated on:

25 Decision VII/27.

26 Decision VII/31.

27 See, for example, decision III/18, paragraph 2.

- Biosafety;
- Access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing;
- Traditional knowledge, innovations and practices (Article 8(j));
- Sustainable use;
- Biodiversity and tourism;
- Intellectual property rights;
- Indicators;
- Taxonomy;
- Public education and awareness;
- Incentives;
- Invasive alien species; and
- Liability and redress

Some cross-cutting initiatives, such as the work on indicators, directly support work under thematic programmes. Others are developing discrete products, which in some instances are quite separate from the thematic programmes—for example, the negotiations for a protocol on biosafety. Other “products” include guidelines which should assist Parties in the implementation of relevant articles of the Convention and cross-cutting programmes of work. These include: the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity; the Bonn Guidelines on Access and Benefit-sharing; Guiding Principles for the Prevention, Introduction and Mitigation of Impacts of Alien Species that Threaten Ecosystems, Habitats or Species; the Akwé: Kon Voluntary Guidelines on Social, Economic and Environmental Impact Assessment regarding Developments Proposed to Take Place on, or which are Likely to Impact on, Sacred Sites and on Lands and Waters Traditionally Occupied or Used by Indigenous And Local Communities, the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development and the Principles and Operational Guidance of the Ecosystem Approach.

These cross-cutting issues have an important role to play in bringing cohesion to the work of the Convention as they provide the substantive bridges or links between the thematic programmes.

Ecosystem approach²⁸

At its fourth meeting, the COP acknowledged that, by virtue of decision II/8, the ecosystem approach has been adopted as a framework for the analysis and implementation of the objectives of the Convention. In effect, the ecosystem approach is the fundamental paradigm for the Convention’s activities. In decision V/6, the COP endorsed a description of the ecosystem approach as well as certain operational guidance, and recommended the application of a number of principles of the ecosystem approach. The principles amount to a strategy for the integrated or holistic management of resources through modern scientific adaptive management practices. Essentially, they require that the process of decision-making be transparent and take into account all relevant factors. Collectively the principles are similar to principles associated with strategic environmental assessment methods. The COP recognized that the principles themselves require development and adjustment in

28 See section VI of this Handbook.

light of experience and accordingly encouraged further conceptual elaboration of the ecosystem approach and mandated further work in this area.

In this regard, COP 6 urged Parties, Governments and relevant international organizations to submit case-studies and lessons learned on the development and implementation of the ecosystem approach at the national and regional levels. COP also requested the Executive Secretary, on the basis of these submissions, to develop proposals for the refinement of the principles and operational guidance of the ecosystem approach.²⁹ At COP 7, the COP agreed that the priority should be to facilitate the implementation of the ecosystem approach as the primary framework for addressing the three objectives of the Convention in a balanced way, and that a potential revision of the principles should take place only at a later date, on the basis of experience and lessons learned.

Review of the operations of the Convention and the development of a Strategic Plan

COP 4 reviewed the operations of the Convention up to that date. Issues discussed included: future periodicity of meetings under the Convention; issues to be addressed at future meetings; and the way in which scientific and technical work under the Convention should be carried out. COP 4 did not reach a conclusion on some aspects of the future operations of the Convention, in particular how to improve preparations for and conduct of future meetings of the COP. It decided to hold an inter-sessional meeting to consider these issues further.³⁰ Accordingly, an Inter-sessional Meeting on the Operations of the Convention (ISOC) was held in June 1999. The ISOC recommended the development of a Strategic Plan for the Convention based on the longer-term programme of work adopted at COP 4.³¹ The ISOC also recommended that the Strategic Plan be considered and adopted at COP 6.

COP 5 adopted a further decision on the operations of the Convention, which, *inter alia*, set out a process for the development and adoption of a Strategic Plan for the Convention at COP 6 in 2002. COP 5 decided that the Strategic Plan was to be based on the longer-term programmes of work of the COP and SBSTTA, and was to provide strategic and operational guidance for the implementation of these programmes.³²

COP 5 also adopted certain operational guidance to improve the functioning of the COP and SBSTTA, and provided for a further inter-sessional meeting to consider, among other items, the preparation of the Strategic Plan before COP 6. The meeting on the Strategic Plan was held in November 2001.

COP 6 adopted the Strategic Plan for the Convention on Biological Diversity. In its mission statement the Strategic Plan commits Parties to a more effective and coherent implementation of the three objectives of the convention, and to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth. The Plan contains four strategic goals and objectives. It will be implemented

29 Decision VI/12.

30 Decision IV/16, paragraph 2.

31 UNEP/CBD/COP/5/4.

32 See decision V/20, section II.

33 See decision VI/26.

34 See decision VII/30.

through the programmes of work of the Convention, national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and other national, regional and international initiatives.³³

COP 7 considered the issue of the future evaluation of progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan.³⁴ The COP decided to develop a framework to enhance the evaluation of achievements and progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The COP also decided to adopt a more institutionalized process for the review of the implementation and operations of the Convention. In this regard, it established the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention to: consider progress in the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan and achievements leading up to the 2010 target; review the impacts and effectiveness of existing processes under the Convention; and consider ways and means of identifying and overcoming obstacles to the effective implementation of the Convention.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS, INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

Given the nature of the issues that the Convention seeks to address, its effectiveness heavily depends on the actions of Parties and other institutions. The need to develop institutional links with other international bodies, and to develop cooperative relationships with such bodies and, hence, mechanisms for coordinating these relationships, is fundamental to the implementation of the Convention. At each of its meetings, the COP has reaffirmed the importance it attaches to cooperation and coordination between the Convention on Biological Diversity and other conventions, institutions and processes of relevance.³⁵

Institutional links have been established with a wide range of other bodies. For example, the Convention Secretariat has participated in the Inter-Agency Task Force of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) of the United Nations. Memoranda of cooperation to provide a framework for developing institutional links and cooperation with other bodies have been concluded between the Convention Secretariat and, *inter alia*, the secretariats of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar, Iran, 1971); the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES); the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage; the Convention for the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS); the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC/UNESCO); the World Bank; IUCN—The World Conservation Union; the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

A liaison group of the secretariats of the three Rio conventions (CBD, UNFCCC and UNCCD) has been established to promote complementarities among the secretariats while respecting their independent legal status. COP 7 mandated the Exec-

35 See, especially, decisions I/5, II/13, III/21, IV/15, V/21, VI/20 and section VI of this Handbook: Article 24.

36 See decision VII/26.

utive Secretary to form a similar liaison group with the other four biodiversity conventions (CITES, Ramsar, CMS and World Heritage Convention) in order to enhance coherence and cooperation in their implementation.³⁶

Further information on cooperation with other biodiversity-related conventions, institutions and processes is contained in section VI (“Guide to decisions”) of this Handbook.

CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY

In January 2000, the COP adopted the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in accordance with Article 28 of the Convention. The Protocol was negotiated pursuant to Article 19, paragraph 3, of the Convention, which required the COP to consider the need for and modalities of a protocol setting out appropriate procedures in the field of the safe transfer, handling and use of any living modified organism resulting from biotechnology that may have adverse effect on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. In its decision II/5, the COP established an Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on Biosafety to negotiate the Protocol. The Working Group held six meetings between July 1996 and February 1999, and submitted its report to the first extraordinary meeting of the COP in February 1999 in Cartagena, Colombia. As noted above, the COP was not able to reach consensus on the text of the Protocol submitted by the Working Group at that meeting, and the extraordinary meeting was suspended.³⁷

Following informal consultations, the extraordinary meeting was resumed in Montréal in January 2000, and the Protocol was adopted on 29 January 2000. It was opened for signature in Nairobi on 15 May 2000. During the one-year period in which the Protocol remained open for signature, it was signed by 103 Parties to the Convention.

The Protocol entered into force on 11 September 2003, ninety days after the deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification. In accordance with Article 29, paragraph 1, of the Protocol, the COP to the Convention shall serve as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (COP-MOP), the governing body of the Protocol. The first meeting of the COP-MOP was held in February 2004 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in conjunction with the seventh meeting of the COP to the Convention. It adopted a number of decisions, based on the recommendations that had been prepared by the Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol (ICCP), an interim body that was set up by the COP at the time of the adoption of the Protocol to undertake the preparations necessary for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.³⁸

The decisions adopted by the first meeting of COP-MOP will shape the evolution of the Protocol in the coming years and will, to a great extent, determine its ability to achieve its objective. Some of the decisions deal with procedural or administrative issues, others are operational and aim to support implementation, while others still map out future work to resolve some of the issues that remain outstanding from the negotiation process. As of 31 December 2004, 111 Parties to the Convention had ratified the Protocol.

37 Decision EM-I/1.

38 Decisions EM-I/3 and V/1.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

There are many sources of information about the Convention. These include printed materials and worldwide Websites. The principal source of information about the Convention is the Convention Secretariat, which is located in Montréal, and the Convention's CHM (administered by the Secretariat). The Secretariat can be contacted at:

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The Secretariat's Website is at <www.biodiv.org>, and includes information on upcoming meetings (including official documentation), as well as background information and links to other useful sources. All technical documents and meeting reports can be also found here. It is linked to the Convention's clearing-house mechanism <www.biodiv.org/chm>.

National reports submitted by Parties are also available on the Website.