

**CONVENTION ON
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AFRICA REGIONAL MEETING ON THE
CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM
Nairobi, 31 March-2 April 2003

ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA**INTRODUCTION**

1. Article 18, paragraph 3, of the Convention on Biological Diversity establishes a clearing-house mechanism to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation.
2. In decision VI/18, the Conference of the Parties urged the Executive Secretary to convene additional capacity-building workshops at the national, subregional and regional levels referred to in decision V/14 of the Conference of the Parties for clearing-house activities and training in support of national capacities to implement the Convention.
3. Accordingly, the Executive Secretary has organized the present meeting to provide countries of the region with an opportunity to express their needs and expectations with regard to the clearing-house mechanism's new efforts to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation, particularly in collaboration with recently established international thematic focal points and other relevant international initiatives.
4. The organization of the meeting also responds to the recommendation of the informal advisory committee made at its meetings of 11 March 2001, 11 November 2001 and 10 April 2002, which requests the Executive Secretary to focus on the use of the clearing-house mechanism to promote technical and scientific cooperation, particularly within the thematic and cross-cutting areas of the Convention, including invasive alien species, the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI), coastal and marine biodiversity and the ecosystem approach.
5. The meeting further supports recommendations made during the sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), particularly recommendation VI/4, paragraph 22, which called for the clearing-house mechanisms to be used to facilitate scientific and technical cooperation.
6. The meeting will consider issues relevant to the operation of the clearing-house mechanism in the African region. Specific objectives for the meeting include:

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(a) To determine the regional information requirements and mechanisms needed to promote and facilitate scientific and technical cooperation activities under the Convention at the local and national level;

(b) To identify likely problems and suggest solutions in the implementation and ongoing development of the clearing-house activities in the region, particularly in the use of new information technologies;

(c) To explore partnerships for improving technical and scientific collaboration and reducing duplication of efforts;

(d) To identify obstacles to the implementation of recommendations related to the thematic areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention.

Participants

7. Each Party in the African region has been invited to nominate one expert qualified in the fields of management of clearing-house mechanism issues, information-sharing systems and database-management, and/or experience with the clearing-house mechanism. Nominations were requested from the national focal points for the Convention on Biological Diversity on 2 December 2002.

8. In order to further assist the deliberations, Parties, Governments and relevant organizations have also been requested to submit their views and needs with regard to the operation of the clearing-house mechanism, as well as any other relevant information they may wish to convey prior to the meeting.

9. In addition to these participants, representatives of the following organizations active in clearing-house mechanism issues have also been invited to participate as observers:

(a) World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN), the Africa Environment Information Network (AEIN), the Commonwealth Knowledge Network (CKN), and the Global Environment Facility (GEF);

(b) Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP), the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI), the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), BioNet International, Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS);

(c) Donor organizations, particularly from those Governments that have indicated their interest in funding capacity-building activities to enable the active participation of developing countries in pilot projects promoted by the clearing-house mechanism.

Documents

10. A list of documents for the meeting is attached as annex I below.

Expected outcome of the meeting

11. It is expected that the meeting will facilitate a better definition of the needs of countries of the region with regard to the further development of the clearing-house mechanism, particularly with regard to participation in the collaborative work between the clearing-house mechanism and established international thematic focal points, and will recommend possible solutions to overcome the identified constraints and impediments.

12. The recommendations of the meeting will be communicated to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting, to be held in Kuala Lumpur in March 2004.

ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

13. The meeting will be held at the United Nations Environment Programme in Nairobi. It will be opened by the Executive Secretary or his representative at 9 a.m. on 31 March 2003.

ITEM 2. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

2.1. Election of officers

14. The meeting will be invited to elect its Chair and Rapporteur from among its members. Proposals will be made from the floor.

2.2. Adoption of agenda

15. The meeting will be invited to adopt its agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CBD/CHM/Af.Reg/1/1).

2.3. Organization of work

16. The proposed programme of work for the meeting is shown in annex II below.

17. Participants will be invited to discuss the issues relevant to the promotion of technical and scientific cooperation as reflected in decision VI/18 of the Conference of the Parties, recommendations of the sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and recommendations of the informal advisory committee for the clearing-house mechanism, as well as issues pertaining to regional needs assessment in relation to use and future development of the clearing-house mechanism. To facilitate these discussions, it is proposed that these issues be clustered under two headings:

(a) Use of new information technologies to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation;

(b) Regional needs to implement effectively recommendations related to the thematic areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention.

18. Each of these headings will encompass various relevant issues. Following an introduction to the topic, participants will be invited to discuss relevant issues, with a view to making recommendations relevant to the objectives for the meeting.

ITEM 3. USE OF NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES TO PROMOTE AND FACILITATE TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION

19. The Secretariat will make a short presentation on issues relevant to this item based on a document from the Informal Meeting on Formats, Protocols and Standards for Improved Exchange of Biodiversity-related Information, held in Montreal, Canada on 19 to 20 February 2002 and decision VI/18 of the Conference of the Parties. Accordingly, it is proposed that this item of the agenda cover the following elements:

(a) Ongoing new-information-technologies projects under the clearing-house mechanism to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation;

(b) Cooperation between the clearing-house mechanism and other initiatives such as the Global Biodiversity Information Facility and the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and international thematic focal points.

20. These issues will be considered in the light of decision VI/18 of the Conference of the Parties, SBSTTA recommendation VI/4, paragraph 22, and the minutes of the meeting of the informal advisory committee for the clearing-house mechanism held on 11 March 2001.

ITEM 4. REGIONAL NEEDS TO IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVELY RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO THE THEMATIC AREAS AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES OF THE CONVENTION

21. In considering this item, the Regional Meeting will be invited to consider the regional needs to implement decisions related to the thematic areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention, including but not limited to: invasive alien species, taxonomy, traditional and local knowledge and coastal and marine biodiversity.

22. Possible group discussions that could be held under this item with a view to determining options for technical and scientific collaboration include:

(a) The role of the clearing-house mechanism in facilitating national and regional implementation of decisions; and

(b) The role of the clearing-house mechanism in facilitating greater national and regional participation in thematic and cross-cutting areas projects, particularly in collaboration with international thematic focal points.

ITEM 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

23. Participants will be invited to formulate general conclusions and recommendations on the issues considered at this meeting.

ITEM 6. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

24. Participants will consider and adopt the report of the meeting, on the basis of the draft report of the meeting and draft recommendations to be presented by the Rapporteur.

ITEM 7. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

25. It is expected that the meeting will be closed at 5 p.m. on 2 April 2003.

Annex I

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS FOR THE AFRICAN REGIONAL MEETING ON THE
CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM**

PLEASE NOTE:

**For reasons of economy, documents will be available at the meeting in a limited number.
Participants are requested to bring their copies of the documents to the meeting.**

Working documents

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|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| UNEP/CBD/CHM/ Afr.Reg/1/1 | Provisional agenda |
| UNEP/CBD/CHM/ Afr.Reg/1/1/Add.1 | Annotations to the provisional agenda |

Background information documents

Recommendations adopted by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at its sixth meeting, 12-16 March 2001 (UNEP/CBD/COP/6/3, annex I) 1/

Decision VI/18 of the Conference of the Parties

Minutes of the meeting of the informal advisory committee for the clearing-house mechanism, 11 March 2001 2/

Report of the Informal Meeting on Formats, Protocols and Standards for Improved Exchange of Biodiversity-related Information, Montreal, 19 to 20 February 2002 3/

The clearing-house mechanism matrix of work 4/

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- 1/ <http://www.biodiv.org/recommendations/default.asp?lg=0&m=sbstta-06&r=01>.
2/ <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/chm/chmiac-2001/official/chmiac-2001-03-11-minutes-en.pdf>.
3/ <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/cop/cop-06/information/cop-06-inf-18-en.pdf>.
4/ <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/ref/chm-matrix-work-en.pdf>.

Annex II

PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE AFRICAN REGIONAL MEETING ON THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM

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| <i>31 March 2003</i> | |
| 9 a.m. | <i>Item 1: Opening of the meeting.</i> |
| 9.15 - 9.30 a.m. | <i>Item 2: Organizational matters:</i> 2.1. <i>Election of officers;</i> 2.2. <i>Adoption of the agenda;</i> 2.3. <i>Organization of work.</i> |
| 9.30 -10.30 a.m. | <i>Item 3. The use of new information technologies to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation</i> |
| 10.30-11 a.m. | Break |
| 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. | Presentations under item 3 |
| 1 – 2 p.m. | Lunch |
| 2 – 3.30 p.m. | <i>Item 5. Conclusions and recommendations</i> |
| 3.30 - 4 p.m. | Break |
| 4 – 5 p.m. - | <i>Item 5. Conclusions and recommendations (continued)</i> |
| <i>1 April 2003</i> | |
| 9 - 10 a.m. | <i>Item 4. Regional needs to implement effectively recommendations related to the thematic areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention</i> |
| 10 -10.30 a.m. | Presentations under item 4 |
| 10.30-11 a.m. | Break |
| 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. | Presentations under item 4 (<i>continued</i>) |
| 1 - 2 p.m. | Lunch |
| 2 – 3.30 p.m. | Discussion under item 4 |
| 3.30 - 4 p.m. | Break |
| 4 – 5 p.m. | Conclusion |
| <i>2 April 2003</i> | |
| 9 – 10.30 a.m. | Discussion under agenda item 4 (<i>continued</i>) |
| 10.30-11 a.m. | Break |
| 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. | <i>Item 5. Conclusions and recommendations (continued)</i> |
| 1 - 2 p.m. | Lunch |
| 2 – 3.30 p.m. | <i>Item 5. Conclusions and recommendations (continued)</i> |
| 3.30 - 4 p.m. | Break |
| 4 – 5 p.m. | <i>Item 6. Adoption of the report</i> |
| 5 p.m. | <i>Item 7. Closure of the meeting</i> |