



**CONVENTION ON  
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Meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee  
to the Clearing-house Mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity  
The Hague, The Netherlands  
9 April 2002

**Meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee of the Clearing-house Mechanism**  
9 April 2002  
The Hague, Netherlands

Present at the Meeting were:

**Members:**

Jackie Van Goethem (Belgium, acting co-Chair)  
Horst Freiberg (Germany)  
Paula Warren (New Zealand)  
Bozena Haczek (for Zbysko Pisarski, Poland)  
Jeremy Harrison (UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre, UNEP-WCMC)  
Preston Hardison (Indigenous Biodiversity Information Network, IBIN)  
Christoph Häuser (Global Biodiversity Information Facility, GBIF)  
Jamie K. Reaser (Global Invasive Species Program, GISP)  
Gladys Cotter (Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, IABIN)  
Asghar M. Fazel (Iran)

*Observers*

Peigi Wilson (Assembly of First Nations, Canada)  
Fred Fortier (Indigenous Biodiversity Information Network)  
Severin M. ten Houte de Lange (National Reference Centre for Agriculture, Nature and Fisheries,  
The Netherlands)  
Julie Crowley (Canada)  
Donald Gordon (ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation)  
Inge van der Lëy (The Netherlands)  
Carmen Tavera (UNDP/GEF/SGP)  
Fernando Gast (Humboldt Institute)  
Barbara Di Giovanni (National Agency for New Technology, Energy and the Environment/Italy)  
Beatriz Torres (Global Biodiversity Information Facility)

Peter Herkenrath (Birdlife International)  
François Pythoud (Switzerland)  
Tom Hourigan (United States, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration)  
Michael Ruggiero (Integrated Taxonomic Information System)  
Dennis Fenn (United States, Geological Survey)  
Pasi Lai Honen (Finland)  
Jukka-Pekka Jappinen (Finland)

*Secretariat:*

Arthur Nogueira  
Marcos Silva (acting co-Chair)  
Olivier de Munck

Item 1. Opening of Meeting

Marcos Silva, on behalf of Hamdallah Zedan, Executive Secretary, welcome the Informal Advisory Committee (IAC) members and observers to the meeting. He reviewed the completion of the information exchange phase of the Clearing-house Mechanism (CHM) and stressed the importance of the need to use the CHM to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation, particularly in regard to the Convention's thematic areas of work. He also reviewed CHM activities accomplished in response to annexes I and II of decision V/14, the objectives of the strategic plan, recommendations made during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and recommendations made during the 11 March and 11 November 2002 meetings of the IAC. He concluded his opening remarks by wishing the IAC a successful and fruitful meeting.

Item 2: Organizational Matters

This agenda item was introduced by the co-Chair, J. Van Goethem.

Item 2.1. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Item 2.2. Organization of Work

The meeting agreed with the organization of work described in the provisional agenda.

Item 2.3. Welcome new members

There were no new members present at the meeting.

Item 3. Report on implementation of the Activities identified in Annex II, Decision V/14

The Secretariat offered a review of the accomplishments and ongoing work of the CHM listed in the Annex.

Comments on the review were made by Mr. Horst Freiberg (Germany), Ms Paula Warren (New Zealand), Ms Jamie Reaser (GISP), Mr. Fernando Gast (Humboldt Institute), Preston Hardison (IBIN) and Ms Gladys Cotter (IABIN).

Mr. Horst recommended that the CHM Toolkit be updated with information to assist CHM National Focal Points to make their information interoperable. He stressed the need for information on the use of open protocols and standards and recommended that Bioseek, the search tool developed to retrieve NFP web addresses, be updated.

Ms Paula Warren requested information on the objectives of the Global Invasive Species Information Network and asked if its development would go beyond data exchange. She stressed that the fundamental goal of the CHM goes beyond data exchange and that it should continue to place emphasis on facilitating communication, promoting technical and scientific cooperation and ensuring greater communication among experts to ensure that the CHM is able to meet the needs of Parties and its user community.

In reply, Ms Jamie Raeser stated that the Global Invasive Species Information Network would indeed fulfill needs related to scientific and technical cooperation, and summarized many of its planned activities and functions.

Mr. Fernando Gast emphasized the need for Parties to implement national CHMs to maximize the full potential of the CHM network.

In ensuing discussions on the development of information exchange tools, such as the CHM web site, Ms Warren mentioned that, although web site usage statistics are useful, they do not indicate if the user found the information required and that it would be useful to gather data on user satisfaction when developing new information exchange services and systems.

Mr. Horst Freiberg, in response to issues pertaining to cooperation, stated that technical and scientific cooperation will be one of the major issues to be discussed at the seventh meeting of the Parties, and that the CHM programme of work should take this into account.

Mr. Preston Hardison commented that, although he is in agreement with Ms Warren, he also sees many advantages to using new information technologies, particularly new open information protocols and standards in support of activities to promote technical and scientific cooperation.

#### Item 4. Progress report on the Biosafety Clearing-House

The Secretariat offered a review of work accomplished to date in the development of the Pilot Phase of the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) and described the synergies and differences between the CHM and the BCH.

Following this progress report, Ms Glady Cotter stated that, if the CHM is required to provide assistance to Parties in the development and establishment of national BCHs, the implications of this activity should be analysed.

#### Item 5. Review of information pertaining to the CHM in the second national report

Information pertaining to the CHM in the second national report found in UNEP/CBD/COP/6/INF/10, *Assessment of the Information Contained in the Second National Reports Concerning Cross-Cutting Issues Under the Convention*, was presented by the Secretariat. It was pointed out that there is strong support for the CHM but that lack of capacity has hampered the development and establishment of national CHMs. It was also stressed that in many regions that have benefited from the development of national CHMs, lack of capacity impeded full participation in CHM projects and activities.

Mr. Jeremy Harrison, in response to this presentation, asked how the IAC could assist the Secretariat in promoting the goals of the CHM.

In reply, the Secretariat stated that there exists a need for Parties to better understand the essential role played by the CHM in assisting with the implementation of the Convention, and that technical and scientific cooperation are essential elements

#### Item 6. Review of progress report on the mechanisms for implementation (UNEP/CBD/COP/6/13)

The Secretariat requested that the IAC reflect on the issues contained in UNEP/CBD/COP/6/13, *Progress Report on the Mechanisms for Implementation*, and to make recommendations on the future work and activities of the CHM during the sixth Conference of the Parties.

**Item 7. Preparation for the next meeting**

IAC members stated the need to meet in a timely manner, to more fully discuss decisions arising from the sixth Conference of the Parties, and to beginning to plan a plan of work in response to these decisions.

In response to the above, the Secretariat stated that possible dates and venues for the next meeting will be sent to IAC members as soon as possible.

**Item 8. Other matters**

**Item 9. Closure of the meeting**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 PM by the co-Chair who thanked all participants for a constructive and most productive meeting.

Annex

<i>The Clearing-house Mechanism Matrix of Work</i> <b>The Strategic Plan (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/3), Informal Advisory Committee Meeting (11 March 2001 &amp; 11 November 2001) Recommendations, Conference of the Parties V/14 Decisions and CHM Activities and Accomplishments</b>			
Strategic Plan*	Informal Advisory Committee Recommendations (11 March 2001 & 11 November 2001) and SBSTTA6 Recommendations	COP Decisions V/14, Annex II	CHM Activities and Accomplishments
* The Strategic Plan has 3 goals: (1) Cooperation, promotion and facilitation of scientific and technical cooperation; (2) Information exchange; (3) Network development. Each			

*The Clearing-house Mechanism Matrix of Work*

**The Strategic Plan (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/3), Informal Advisory Committee Meeting (11 March 2001 & 11 November 2001) Recommendations, Conference of the Parties V/14 Decisions and CHM Activities and Accomplishments**

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recommendation below is preceded by the goal under which it appears in the Plan.			
<p><b>3.1(a)</b> Goal 3: Promote use of the CHM. Obj 7.1.4</p>	<p>Ensure that information available on the CHM reaches the scientific community.</p> <p>Stress the need for more engagement and interactivity—the CHM should receive as well as disseminate information.</p> <p>Emphasize the need for the CHM to participate in all program areas.</p> <p>Publish more written information on the CHM.</p> <p>Reach audiences in addition to the scientific community</p> <p>Contribute to fostering public awareness and education about the Convention</p> <p>Complete updating all programmes and issues sections of the CBD web site</p> <p>Draft paper on synergies and differences between the CHM and the BCH</p>	<p>(a) Develop ways and means to ensure a broader understanding of the role of, and the value added by, the clearing-house mechanism.</p>	<p>New CHM Brochure was published..</p> <p>Launch of new web site.</p> <p>Developed automatic news dissemination mechanism.</p> <p>Developing new mechanisms for the public to communicate with the SCBD.</p> <p>Programmes and issues page revised and updated</p> <p>Paper on synergies and differences between the CHM and the BCH being drafted</p>
<p><b>3.2 (b)</b> Goal 3: promote use of the Clearing-house Mechanism</p>	<p>Use non-web, non-electronic tools to reach regions with inequitable access to new information</p>	<p>(b) Further develop non-Internet-based tools and training</p>	<p>Developed Toolkit for use with the Biosafety Clearing-House</p>

<p><i>The Clearing-house Mechanism Matrix of Work</i></p> <p><b>The Strategic Plan (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/3), Informal Advisory Committee Meeting (11 March 2001 &amp; 11 November 2001) Recommendations, Conference of the Parties V/14 Decisions and CHM Activities and Accomplishments</b></p>			
Strategic Plan*	Informal Advisory Committee Recommendations (11 March 2001 & 11 November 2001) and SBSTTA6 Recommendations	COP Decisions V/14, Annex II	CHM Activities and Accomplishments
Obj7.1.5	<p>technologies</p> <p>Create matrix of regional workshop decisions</p> <p>Non-web information tools should be developed parallel with the development of new web-based tools</p>	<p>packages to assist Parties in their national implementation efforts.</p>	<p>Developing CHM Toolkit from BCH toolkit</p> <p>Developing structured vocabularies for public use</p> <p>Matrix created and waiting final approval</p> <p>Installed fax server</p>
<p><b>3.3 (c)</b> Goal 3: Rely on partnerships and focus on facilitation. Strat 7.2.4</p>	<p>Study joint programs with the GISP and other similar initiatives in the creation of thematic focal points.</p> <p><b>SBSTTA6:</b> VI/4, A,4c, 22. Decides that the clearing-house mechanism will be used to facilitate scientific and technical cooperation on the topics listed under paragraph 21 above, in order to enhance the ability of the clearing-house mechanism to promote and facilitate scientific and technical cooperation, and invites the Executive Secretary to explore further with the Global Invasive Species Programme the potential for the latter to be an international thematic focal point for the clearing-house mechanism, in accordance with annex II (c) of decision V/14;</p>	<p>(c) Identify and establish cooperative arrangements with those international thematic focal points that can provide relevant and appropriate thematic information, using the following criteria:</p>	<p>Finalized an MOU with GISP to act as a thematic focal point.</p> <p><i>Organized and convened a meeting with the GISP to discuss implementation of a global invasive species network.</i></p> <p><i>Joined the GISP Information Management Committee as co-Chair</i></p> <p>Established the as a thematic focal point.</p> <p>Discussion with the Association for Biodiversity Information (ABI) creation of International thematic focal point</p> <p>Discussing with Indigenous groups the</p>

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	Establish new international thematic focal points with relevant initiatives and organizations		establishment of an indigenous thematic focal point pursuant to 8(j)
<p><b>3.4 (d)</b> Goal 3: Provide start-up assistance and ongoing capacity. Strat 7.2.1</p> <p>Goal 3: Address obstacles to growth. Strat 7.2.2</p>	<p>Assist in the promotion of training programs in developing regions.</p> <p>Emphasize capacity building, particularly education and training.</p> <p>Participate in new CHM/BCH regional workshops</p> <p>Whenever possible, include local expertise in capacity building workshops</p>	<p>(d) Convene regional workshops to support capacity-building for clearing-house mechanism activities, training and awareness, with a focus on cooperation in biodiversity information for the implementation and management of the clearing-house mechanism at the national, subregional, bio-geographic and regional levels, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Assisted in the organization and presentation of a joint BCH/CHM regional capacity building workshop in Africa.</p> <p><i>Organized CHM Latin American/Caribbean workshop</i></p> <p>Participated in GISP capacity building workshop in Latin America.</p> <p>Assisted in the organization of and participated in the Southern Africa Regional Training Workshop on the Establishment and Operationalisation of the Commonwealth Knowledge Network and the Convention on Biological Diversity Clearing-house Mechanism</p> <p>Participated in Regional Biosafety Capacity Building Workshops in Africa, Latin America and Asia</p>

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<p><b>3.5 (e)</b> Goal 1: Promotion and facilitation of scientific and technical cooperation</p>	<p>Focus on the use of the CHM to promote technical and scientific cooperation, particularly within the work programme of invasive alien species and the ecosystem approach.</p> <p>Seek advice from SBSTTA on the development of new CHM initiatives to promote technical and scientific cooperation.</p> <p>Seek close links with the GISP, and discuss joint work initiatives.</p> <p>Continue to focus on technical and scientific cooperation</p> <p>Complete the CHM/GISP "Building a Global Invasive Species Information Network" document</p>	<p>(e) Develop a pilot initiative to assist work on the thematic issues within the work programme of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, including:</p>	<p>Collaborating with the GISP on the implementation of a Global Invasive Species Information Network</p> <p>Discussing with WCMC a protected areas/marine and coastal protected areas project.</p> <p>Drafting with the GISP "Building a Global Invasive Species Information Network" document. First draft completed.</p>
<p><b>3.6 (f)</b> Goal 1 Obj 5.1.5 strat 5.2.3</p>	<p>Contact the UNDP concerning a survey on information access in technologically underprivileged areas.</p> <p>Participate in the GEF/UNEP Sustainable Alternatives Network</p>	<p>(f) Propose options for improving ways and means by which the clearing-house mechanism can facilitate access to and transfer of technology.</p>	<p>Discussing with the Belgian CHM focal point mechanisms and training programs for the transfer of expertise to developing areas.</p> <p>Established MoC with the GEF/UNEP Sustainable Alternatives Network</p>
<p><b>3.7 (g)</b> Goal 1: Track Best Practices, Needs</p>		<p>(g) Develop a list of best practices</p>	

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<p>and Priorities for Collaboration. Strat 5.2.1</p> <p>Goal 2: Track information needs, priorities and best practices. Strat 6.2.2</p> <p>Goal 2: Prioritize and promote expansion in content. Strat 6.2.3</p> <p>Goal 3: Concentrate on value added. Strat 7.2.5</p>		<p>and identify potential functions to be recommended for implementation by clearing-house mechanism national focal points.</p>	<p>Established MoC with the GEF/UNEP Sustainable Alternatives Network</p>
<p><b>3.8 (h)</b> Goal 2: development of a global mechanism for exchanging and integrating information on biodiversity Strat 6.2.1 6.2.2 6.2.4</p> <p>Goal 2: Ensure compatibility through standardization and interoperability. Strat 6.2.1 6.2.2</p> <p>Goal 3: Maintain local ownership of information. Strat 7.2.4</p>	<p>Examine the question of interoperability among CHM National Focal Points.</p> <p>Constitute a core group to examine metadata and common formats, and to report to the next IAC meeting.</p> <p>Continue to further develop controlled vocabularies and metadata standards</p>	<p>(h) Identify possible formats, protocols and standards for the improved exchange of biodiversity-related data, information and knowledge, including national reports, biodiversity assessments and Global Biodiversity Outlook reports, and convene an informal meeting on this issue</p>	<p>Using the Dublin Core as the metadata standard for the CHM and BCH web pages.</p> <p>Constituted a core group to examine the issue of metadata.</p> <p>Working with experts to develop metadata guidelines.</p> <p><i>Organized and convened an Informal Meeting on formats, protocols and standards for improved exchange of biodiversity-related information.</i></p>
<p><b>3.9 (i)</b> Goal 3: development of the</p>	<p>Examine the need to produce information in</p>	<p>(i) Identify options and</p>	<p>New web page was designed to</p>

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<p>Clearing-house Mechanism focal points and their partners strat 7.2.2 7.2.3</p>	<p>different languages</p> <p>Draft questionnaire on status of implementation of National CHMs</p>	<p>explore cooperative arrangements to overcome language barriers affecting the use of the clearing-house mechanism, including the development or consolidation of tools and services.</p>	<p>accommodate all six UN languages.</p> <p>The Biosafety Clearing-House has been created to accommodate all six UN Languages.</p> <p>Questionnaire under development</p>
<p><b>3.10 (j)</b> Goal 2: development of a global mechanism for exchanging and integrating information on biodiversity strat 6.2.1 6.2.2 6.2.2</p>	<p>Review the usability of the EC's electronic virtual collaborative environment, the Circle.</p> <p>Review the success of the Mountain Forum, and explore whether any design components can assist in the work of the CHM.</p>	<p>(j) Develop a publicly accessible global electronic platform for scientific and technical cooperation in biodiversity on the Internet matching the demands and needs of Parties in accordance with Article 18 of the Convention.</p>	<p>Established MoC with the GEF/UNEP Sustainable Alternatives Network.</p>
<p><b>3.11 (k)</b> Goal 2: development of a global mechanism for exchanging and integrating information on biodiversity strat 6.2.1 6.2.3 6.3.4</p>	<p>IAC will link with the CBD web site from remote locations and report on access problems.</p>	<p>(k) Encourage the establishment and maintenance of mirror sites of the Convention's website, within the other United Nations regions, as appropriate, in order to improve access to Internet-based</p>	<p>Has requested assistance from IAC to ascertain if mirror sites are still required.</p>

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		information	