Minutes of the meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee
Bangkok, Thailand
6 February 2005

IAC Members

Preston Hardison (Indigenous Biodiversity Information Network)
Jeremy Harrison (UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre)
Linus Spencer Thomas (Grenada)
Gladys Cotter (Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network)
Bonnie Carrol (Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network)
Toral Patel-Weynand (Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network)
Horst Freiberg (Germany)
Ole Hendrikson (Canada, representing Jason Thomson)
Heziekiel Benitez (Mexico)
Jackie van Goethem (Belgium)
Jan Plesnik (Czech Republic)
Soumalyia Bance (Burkina Faso)
Marianne Schlesser (Belgium)
Mostaza Panahi (Iran)

Observers

Tom Hammond (IUCN Canada)
Tomme Young (IUCN)

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity:

Hamdallah Zedan, Executive Secretary
Marcos Silva, Programme Officer, Clearing-House Mechanism

Introduction by Hamdallah Zedan

Mr. Hamdallah Zedan welcomed Informal Advisory Committee (IAC) members and observers to the meeting. He also thanked Mr. Linus Spencer Thomas, from Grenada, for agreeing to Chair the meeting on behalf of Mr. Agshar Fazel, IAC Chair.

In his introductory remarks, Mr. Zedan spoke on issues related to the implementation of the Convention, the 2010 target and technology transfer, particularly within the context of technical and scientific collaboration and the Clearing-House Mechanism. He emphasized the role of the IAC in relation to decision VII/23 (Scientific and technical cooperation and the Clearing-House Mechanism (Article 18, paragraph 3)) and VII/29 (Transfer of technology and technology cooperation (Articles 16 to 19)), especially the updating of the Clearing-House Mechanism strategic plan, the organization of regional

workshops, the updating of toolkit, the development of regional portals, among other decisions. Activities related to VII/29 and the role of the IAC were also highlighted and discussed. He concluded his introductory remarks by thanking participants for their contribution to the Clearing-House Mechanism and wished everyone a fruitful and successful meeting.

Item 2: Organizational Matters

This agenda item was introduced by Mr. M. Silva.

Item 2.1: Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted (see Annex I)

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

The acting Chair, Mr. Thomas welcomed the observers to the meeting.

Item 3: Discussion on implementation of items related to decision VII/23: Scientific and technical cooperation and the Clearing-House Mechanism[1]

1. Paragraph 6 of Decision VII/23: IAC members discussed the requirements of this decision, and the drafting of a document for the eight meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in Brazil 2006. Members agreed that the document should discuss the role of each organization and ways to eliminate duplication of work. There was also agreement that it would be useful to develop a glossary explaining the function of different databases held by organizations (taxonomic, ecological, etc). As well, discussion centered on the need for organizations to adhere to metadata standards. Ms Cotter stated that the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network may be able to produce a first draft of the glossary to assist in the drafting of the document.

2. Paragraph 7(a) of decision VII/23: Mr. Marcos Silva opened discussion on this item, and requested IAC members for advice on updating the Clearing-House Mechanism strategic plan. There was agreement that the new plan should continue to emphasize technical and scientific collaboration, network development and information exchange, particularly in the context of activities related to implementation of the Convention and the 2010 target. There was also

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[1] Full-text of decision VII/23 are available in Annex II

agreement that the IAC would send the Executive Secretary comments on the strategic plan by late Spring. In addition, IAC members recommended that the Executive Secretary draft a notification to Parties requesting comments on the strategic plan, and to forward comments received to the IAC.

3. Paragraph 7(b) of Decision VII/23: Participants voiced strong support for the organization of regional workshops on the Clearing-House Mechanism, and stressed that such workshops should be organized in collaboration with other organizations whenever possible.

4. Paragraph 7(c) of Decision VII/23 and Paragraph 12 (a,b,d) of Section G in Decision VII/16 (Article 8(j) and related provisions): IAC members discussed possible ways to further develop the Clearing-House Mechanism Toolkit as a meta-toolkit. There was agreement that the Toolkit should link with existing toolkits, and offer users advice on the use of each respective toolkit. There was also discussion that the Clearing-House Mechanism Toolkit should adapt some of the functionalities of BIOLAND, an electronic resource developed by the Clearing-House Mechanism to assist national Clearing-House Mechanisms to create websites. Discussion also centered on the possibility of receiving funding to support ongoing development of the Clearing-House Mechanism Toolkit. Ms Cotter stated that she would disseminate information on this activity and see if funding is available. IAC members also discussed issues related to the use of the Clearing-House Mechanism Toolkit to assist indigenous and local communities per decision VII/16. Mr. Preston Hardison stated that he would be willing to provide advice to the Executive Secretary on formats, protocols and standards for use by indigenous and local communities to assist in the further development of communication networks.

5. Paragraph 7(d) of Decision VII/23: In discussing issues related to the development of regional portals to visualize and exchange cartographic information, IAC members emphasized the importance of collaborating with projects such as the GEOSS (Global Earth Observation System of Systems) and the Global Spacial Data Infrastructure, among others. Mr. Silva then gave a brief summary of recommendations related to this decision made at the Informal meeting on interoperability of information among the three Rio and other environmental conventions held in November 2004.

6. Paragraph 7(e) of Decision VII/23 JH: Mr. Silva gave a summary of decisions made at the Informal meeting on interoperability of information among the three Rio and other environmental conventions. He described the pilot projects currently underway to make specific categories of information interoperable (national focal points and decisions) among the Conventions. Finally, he stated that draft interoperability standards where being drafted and discussed.

7. Paragraph 7(f) of Decision VII/23: With regard to the development of an Internet-based web portal on island biodiversity, Mr. Marcos Silva stated that meetings had been held with the Programme Officer responsible for island biodiversity, and that a draft structure of the portal had been designed. He also stated that the portal would be available shortly on the Convention's website.

8. Paragraph 7(g) of Decision VII/23: Mr. Silva gave a brief presentation on work related to the development of the new Convention website, particularly its use of common formats, protocols and standards. He described the use of eXtended Markup Language (XML) and metadata on the website. He concluded that information on the website could be made interoperable with other Conventions or organizations as required.

9. Para. 8 of Decision VII/23: IAC members stated that many of the recommendations in the independent review of the Clearing-House Mechanism (UNEP/CBD/COP/7/INF/12) pertain to activities to be undertaken by national clearing-house mechanisms. IAC members recommended that the results be discussed during regional meetings, and other Clearing-House Mechanism related meetings.

10. On completion of the above discussion, the Chair requested Mr. Tom Hammond, IUCN Canada, to give a brief presentation on the Conservation Commons initiative. Mr. Hammond discussed the principles and objectives of the Conservation Commons, and invited IAC members to become better acquainted with its activities. Discussion on the commons centered on issues related to Article 8(j), particularly on the concerns raised by indigenous and traditional communities.

Item 4: Discussion on implementation of items related to decision VII/29

11. Paragraph 6 of Decision VII/29: Mr. Horst Freiberg gave a brief background on discussions at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties concerning the role of the IAC and technology transfer. IAC members how the IAC can contribute to the work of the expert group on technology transfer and technical cooperation, particularly with regard to the development of information systems. There was agreement that there is a need for the IAC to meet back-to-back with the expert group and that the Clearing-House Mechanism should be the forum where Parties and other Governments are able to articulate their needs with regard to technologies. IAC members also expressed the view that the Programme Officer for technology transfer should participate in Clearing-House Mechanism related events and meetings to present issues related to decision VII/29. IAC members voiced the belief that the Clearing-House Mechanism's role is to provide information on technologies rather than activities related to the transfer of technologies among Parties. There was also agreement that the Clearing-House Mechanism should work with the Programme Officer responsible for technology

transfer in the design and evaluation (i.e. Technology Information Clearing-House of UNFCCC (http://ttclear.unfccc.int/ttclear/jsp/)) of information systems in support of decision VII/29. Finally, IAC members stated that the Clearing-House Mechanism should promote partnerships, especially bilateral partnerships.

Item 5: Other matters

The Secretariat requested IAC members to make more use of the IAC Collaborative Portal, especially with regard to electronic discussions related to decision VII/23 and VII/29.

Item 6: Closure of meeting

The meeting was closed at 16:00 by the acting Chair, on behalf of the Executive Secretary, who thanked all participants for a constructive and most productive meeting.

Annex I

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting

2. Organizational matters:
   2.1 Adoption of the agenda
   2.2 Organization of the work

3. Discussion on implementation of items related to decision VII/23: Scientific and technical cooperation and the Clearing-House Mechanism

4. Discussion on implementation of items related to decision VII/29

5. Other matters

6. Closure of the meeting

Annex II

<u>Scientific and technical cooperation and the clearing-house mechanism (Article 18, paragraph 3)</u>

    A.   The clearing-house mechanism
    B.

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/Add.1),
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.