

**CONVENTION ON
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MEETING OF THE INFORMAL ADVISORY
COMMITTEE TO THE CLEARING-HOUSE
MECHANISM OF THE CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
UNESCO, Paris, 7 July 2007

ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA**INTRODUCTION****A. General information**

1. The meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee to the Clearing-House Mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity will be held at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris on Saturday, 7 July 2007. Registration of participants will commence at 9 a.m.

B. Background

2. In its decision VIII/11, the Conference of the Parties adopted a multi-year strategic plan up to 2010 and a corresponding programme of work for the clearing-house mechanism with a view to contribute to the achievement of the 2010 biodiversity target. The strategic plan and its programme of work were initially drafted in close coordination with the Informal Advisory Committee to the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM-IAC) whose mandate is to provide guidance to the Executive Secretary on matters related to the clearing-house mechanism. This meeting is therefore an excellent opportunity to review the status of implementation and provide guidance for further work.

3. In addition, the Committee should take into consideration that decision V/23, paragraph 2, states that the Conference of the Parties will review at its ninth meeting the continuation and mandate of the Informal Advisory Committee.

C. Expected outcome

4. Participants are expected to make recommendations on major issues related to the implementation of the programme of work of the clearing-house mechanism. They are also invited to make suggestions on the future mandate and modalities of the Committee.

ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

5. The meeting will be opened by a representative of the Executive Secretary at 9.30 a.m. on Saturday, 7 July 2007. New members and guests will be welcome and will have the opportunity to introduce themselves.

ITEM 2. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

2.1. Adoption of the agenda

6. The provisional agenda prepared by the Executive Secretary (UNEP/CBD/CHM/IAC/2007/1/1) addresses issues related to the clearing-house mechanism, and more specifically on the implementation of its strategic plan and corresponding programme of work adopted by the Conference of the Parties in decision VIII/11.

7. The provisional agenda proposes to start with a presentation of the current status of implementation of the programme of work. The participants will then engage in in-depth discussions on issues of particular relevance to the clearing-house mechanism with a view to provide guidance to the Secretariat. An agenda item has also been reserved to discuss any matter related to the Informal Advisory Committee. Finally, any other matters could be discussed before concluding and closing the meeting.

8. Participants will be invited to adopt the provisional agenda prepared by the Secretariat.

2.2. Organization of work

9. Participants will be invited to consider the proposed organization of work is contained in Annex I to the present annotations. A list of relevant documents is provided in Annex II.

ITEM 3. STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK

10. Under this item, the Secretariat will present to the Committee a report on the status of implementation of the programme of work (UNEP/CBD/CHM/IAC/2007/1/2).

ITEM 4. ISSUES FOR IN-DEPTH CONSIDERATION

11. The implementation of the programme of work of the clearing-house mechanism is a global collaborative process involving the Parties, the Secretariat, and many partner organizations. Under this item, participants are expected to use their expertise to make realistic recommendations on the issues for in-depth consideration. Whenever possible, the Committee should also consider the timeframe and resource implications of any recommendation made.

12. The participants are invited to consult the following background documents which contain elements relevant to some sub-items for in-depth consideration:

(a) Proposals for the implementation of the programme of work of the clearing-house mechanism. (UNEP/CBD/CHM/IAC/2007/1/3);

(b) Synthesis of the information contained in the third national reports for Articles 17 and 18 (UNEP/CBD/CHM/IAC/2007/1/INF/1).

(c) Report of the brainstorming workshop for the identification of a strategy for the Belgian CHM partnership for the period 2008-2012, Brussels, Belgium, 2-3 May 2007 (UNEP/CBD/CHM/IAC/2007/1/INF/2)

13. The last sub-item has been reserved for considering additional technical issues not anticipated in the agenda.

4.1. Role of the clearing-house mechanism in a global biodiversity context

14. Simply put, the core mission of the clearing-house mechanism in support of the 2010 biodiversity target is threefold: (i) scientific and technical cooperation; (ii) information exchange; and (iii) networking. At the same time, there is such an abundance of biodiversity cooperation initiatives, information sources and networks around the world that this mission is a true challenge, especially when the limited resources assigned to the clearing-house mechanism are taken into account. How the clearing-house mechanism copes with this challenge will have a great impact on its effectiveness.

15. Participants are therefore invited to provide strategic guidance on how the clearing-house mechanism can have the highest possible impact in its facilitating role, by filling the right gaps and benefiting from existing initiatives without duplicating them.

4.2. The network of national clearing-house mechanisms and international partners

16. A fully operational clearing-house mechanism with participation of all Parties and an expanded network of partners is the third goal of the strategic plan of the clearing-house mechanism. Participants will be invited to comment on recent initiatives taken to strengthen and expand the global network, and make recommendations on further steps to take towards the achievement of this goal. It is expected that the issue of sustainability will be addressed under this item.

4.3. The central portal of the clearing-house mechanism and the Convention website

17. Further to user feedback and recommendations, the Secretariat's website has been revamped not only to better respond to the needs of the Parties but also to serve as the major outreach tool of the Secretariat and the clearing-house mechanism. In this process, the central portal of the clearing-house mechanism has also been enhanced to provide more information and services. Additional feedback and recommendations are welcome to assist the Secretariat in further improving its website.

4.4. Advanced information-exchange mechanisms

18. Objective 2.5 of the strategic plan for the clearing-house mechanism is the establishment of effective mechanisms for facilitating the exchange of information, including the use of common formats, protocols and standards. As information exchange mechanisms have now matured and gained in popularity, there is a real opportunity to move forward in this area, especially in the definition of common formats and the establishment of interoperability mechanisms. Whenever possible, the clearing-house mechanism will seek to make use of existing standards and build upon them. The Committee is invited to provide guidance on the exchange mechanisms that should be recommended by the clearing-house mechanism.

4.5. Capacity-building activities, tools and services

19. Capacity building is a major component of the strategic plan of the clearing-house mechanism, especially in the context of addressing the needs of developing countries and countries in transition. Capacity building can take a variety of forms: it can consist of, *inter alia*, specialized expertise, training workshops, on-line services or electronic tools to respond to certain needs. Participants are invited to comment on those activities, tools or services and provide guidance to improve their effectiveness.

20. More specifically, participants are expected to make recommendations for a future version of the toolkit for the clearing-house mechanism. The purpose of the toolkit is to assist Parties in establishing or enhancing their clearing-house mechanisms, and other partners in joining the global clearing-house mechanism network.

21. A related item is the preparation of clearing-house mechanism training modules to be incorporated in the set of training modules that the Secretariat will provide to national focal points. Participants will be invited to make suggestions about topics that should be included in those clearing-house mechanism training modules.

22. A major capacity building tool is the European Portal Toolkit (PTK) developed by the European Commission. This tool is widely used not only in Europe and but also in Africa thanks to the Belgian CHM partnership initiative. It features a full-fledged content management system that greatly facilitates the establishment of a national clearing-house mechanism website. Looking ahead, it is strategically important to discuss how this toolkit should evolve to remain in line with new standards and technological trends.

4.6. Transfer of technology and technology cooperation

23. In its decision VIII/12, paragraph 10, the Conference of the Parties requests the Executive Secretary "to carry out activities for the enhancement of the clearing-house mechanism as a key mechanism in technology transfer and technological and scientific cooperation". The committee is invited to provide guidance on such activities.

4.7. Communication, education and public awareness

24. The development of the global communication, education and public awareness network is a major objective of the strategic plan (objective 3.4.) under which eight activities are planned. These activities, also mentioned under priority activity 7 of decision VIII/6, are being carried out in collaboration with the CEPA programme officer assisted by its Informal Advisory Committee. Practical advice is expected on how to strengthen synergies between the clearing-house mechanism and CEPA.

4.8. Additional issues

25. Under this sub-item, participants may wish to raise for discussion technical issues that were not covered under the previous sub-items.

ITEM 5. MATTERS RELATED TO THE INFORMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

26. In accordance with decision VII/23, paragraph 2, the Conference of the Parties will review at its ninth meeting the continuation and mandate of the Informal Advisory Committee. The members of the Committee are therefore invited to provide their thoughts on this matter of direct relevance to them. The discussion could start with a self-assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the Committee, and then further continue with recommendations to improve its effectiveness. In this context, participants could make comments on any matter related to the Committee, such as funding or frequency and length of meetings.

27. Depending on the outcome of the discussion, the Committee may decide to prepare an information note for consideration by the ninth Conference of the Parties.

ITEM 6. OTHER MATTERS

28. Under this item, participants may wish to consider any other matters relevant to the clearing-house mechanism.

ITEM 7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

29. The Committee will be invited to formulate general conclusions and recommendations based on the outcomes of the discussions on the various issues considered during the meeting.

ITEM 8. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

30. The meeting is expected to be closed at 5 p.m. on Saturday, 7 July 2007.

Annex I

PROPOSED ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Saturday, 7 July 2007

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|-------------------------|--|
| 9 a.m. - 9.30 a.m. | <i>Welcome and registration</i> |
| 9.30 a.m. – 10.30 a.m. | 1. Opening of the meeting |
| | 2. Organizational matters: |
| | 2.1. Adoption of the agenda |
| | 2.2. Organization of the work |
| | 3. Status of implementation of the programme of work. |
| 10.30 a.m. - 10.45 a.m. | <i>Coffee break</i> |
| 10.45 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. | 4. Issues for in-depth consideration. |
| | 4.1. Role of the CHM in a global biodiversity context. |
| | 4.2. The network of national CHM and international partners. |
| | 4.3. The CHM central portal and the CBD website. |
| | 4.4. Advanced information-exchange mechanisms. |
| 12.30 p.m. – 2.00 p.m. | <i>Lunch break</i> |
| 2.00 p.m. - 3.30 p.m. | 4. Issues for in-depth consideration. (<i>continued</i>) |
| | 4.5. Capacity-building activities, tools and services. |
| | 4.6. Transfer of technology and technology cooperation. |
| | 4.7. Communication, education and public awareness. |
| | 4.8. Additional issues. |
| 3.30 p.m. - 3.45 p.m. | <i>Coffee break</i> |
| 3.45 p.m. – 5 p.m. | 5. Matters related to the Informal Advisory Committee. |
| | 6. Other matters. |
| | 7. Conclusions and recommendations. |
| 5 p.m. | 8. Closure of the meeting. |

Annex II

DOCUMENTATION

Working documents

- UNEP/CBD/CHM/IAC/2007/1/1
Provisional agenda
- UNEP/CBD/CHM/IAC/2007/1/1/Add.1
Annotated provisional agenda
- UNEP/CBD/CHM/IAC/2007/1/2
Status of implementation of the programme of work of the clearing-house mechanism.
- UNEP/CBD/CHM/IAC/2007/1/3
Proposals for the implementation of the programme of work of the clearing-house mechanism.

Information documents

- UNEP/CBD/CHM/IAC/2007/1/INF/1
Synthesis of the content of the third national reports for Articles 17 and 18.
- UNEP/CBD/CHM/IAC/2007/1/INF/2
Report of the brainstorming workshop for the identification of a strategy for the Belgian CHM partnership for the period 2008-2012, Brussels, Belgium, 2-3 May 2007.

Other documents

- UNEP/CBD/CHM/IAC/2007/1/Info-Part
Information note for participants
