



**CONVENTION ON
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BUREAU OF THE CONFERENCE
OF THE PARTIES
Montreal, 18 October 2007

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE
PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY HELD IN MONTREAL
ON 14 OCTOBER 2007**

INTRODUCTION

1. The fourth meeting of the COP-8 Bureau was held on 14 October 2007 at the Headquarters of the Secretariat in Montreal. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Fernando Coimbra of the Ministry of External Relations of Brazil, representing the President of the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The following Bureau members attended the meeting:

Mr. Deon Stewart (Bahamas) standing for Mr. Donald Cooper
Mr. Karma Nyedrup (Bhutan)
Mrs. Mary Fosi Mbantenkhu (Cameroon)
Mr. Robert McLean (Canada)
Mr. Fernando Perez Egert (Chile)
Ms. Andrea Stefan (Croatia)
Mr. Ositadinma Anaedu (Nigeria)
Mr. Miguel Aymerich (Spain)
Dr. Volodymyr Domashlinets (Ukraine)
Mr. Abdul Hakim Aulaih (Yemen)

2. The meeting was also attended by Ms. Nicola Breier of Germany (as host of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties), Mr. Fernando Casas, representing the Co-Chairs of the Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing, as well as the Executive Secretary of the Convention, Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif.

ITEM 1 OPENING OF THE MEETING

3. The meeting was opened by Mr. Coimbra on behalf of the President of the Conference of the Parties, Her Excellency Ms. Marina Silva, Minister of Environment of Brazil. The Chair welcomed Bureau members and said that Brazil was honoured to chair the Bureau. He indicated that the Government of Brazil accords great importance to the work to be done in the coming months, the aim being to ensure a productive outcome at COP 9. He emphasized that the main purpose of the meeting was to prepare for the fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8 (j) and related provisions.

4. The Executive Secretary welcomed the Bureau members and conveyed the gratitude of the Secretariat to the Bureau for their leadership. He further conveyed gratitude to the Co-chairs of the Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing for continuing to lead the Parties, during the Working Group's fifth meeting, toward making progress on the future elaboration of an international regime on access and benefit-sharing. He also praised the leadership of the Government of Brazil as Chair of the Informal Consultation on Resource Mobilization held on 13 October that had been attended by 45 delegates. He concluded by introducing Mr. John Scott, the Secretariat's Article 8 (j) focal point,

whom he indicated would be available throughout the coming week to provide advice and guidance to the Parties.

5. The Chair echoed the sentiments expressed by the Executive Secretary with regard to the work of the Co-chairs of the Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing and thanked them for their tireless efforts to continue to elaborate and international regime for ABS.

ITEM 2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

6. The Bureau adopted the following agenda as proposed by the Executive Secretary, following consultation with the Presidency:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8 (j) and related provisions.
4. Other matters.
5. Closure of the meeting.

ITEM 3 FIFTH MEETING OF THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON ARTICLE 8 (j) AND RELATED PROVISIONS

7. Officers: It was agreed that, consistent with the rules of procedure and practice, the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties would serve as the Bureau of the fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Article 8 (j) and related provisions. As decided at the previous meeting of the Bureau, Ms. Mary Fosi Mbantenkhu of Cameroon agreed to act as Rapporteur for the meeting.

8. Following a discussion on the organisation of work, it was agreed that the distribution of work proposed by the Secretariat would be adopted, with the caveat that the Co-chairs would ensure that agenda items 6 (International regime on access and benefit-sharing) and 8 (Development of elements of sui generis systems for the protection of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices) are not taken up at the same time. The Chair therefore, suggested that the Bureau should recommend the adoption of the agenda as proposed, and which the Bureau had already approved at its meeting in July. It was so decided.

9. With regard to the selection of Co-chairs for the two Sub-Working Groups, the Chair proposed that the Bureau agree to nominating one member from a developing country and the other from a developed country, as is the practice. Following discussion, it was agreed that Mr. Deon Stewart of the Bahamas would act as Co-chair of Sub-Working Group I, and Ms. Nicola Breier of Germany would assume the role for Sub-Working Group II.

10. As is the practice of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8 (j) and related provisions, the Bureau then considered selection of the Friends of the Bureau. At the invitation of the Chair, the Secretariat advised that the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB) had met on 13 October and that a selection of seven individuals, representing indigenous peoples from the seven geo-cultural regions of the world, had been put forward. Further to a query from the group regarding the geo-cultural regional breakdown, the Secretariat clarified that this representation had been formally set by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) to reflect the reality of regional distribution of indigenous peoples'. The Bureau therefore, welcomed the seven. With regard to the issue of which of the seven representatives of the indigenous peoples' would act as Co-chairs to the Sub-Working Groups, the Bureau was informed that the selection of the Friends of the Bureau Co-chairs would be decided during the afternoon session of the first day.

11. In closing discussion on this agenda item, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that the Fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8 (j) and related provisions would be open with a ceremonial opening presented by the Mohawk Community. This was welcomed by the Bureau.

ITEM 4 OTHER MATTERS

12. Under this item, the Bureau reviewed the draft revised interim policy on travel of eligible parties prepared by the Secretariat at the request of the Bureau. Further to consideration of the draft, the Bureau adopted, effective immediately, the revised interim policy on travel contained in the annex to this report.

13. The Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that, as follow up to the letter dated 10 September 2007 related to the audit of the Secretariat's accounts, a letter had been sent to the United Nations Board of Auditors requesting that the audit be conducted in March 2008, despite the absence of the final financial statement for 2007. The audit report will be made available to MOP4 and COP9. A similar letter was also sent to the Chief, Budget and Financial Management Service of UNON.

14. The Executive Secretary also briefed the Bureau on the implementation of the MOU signed on 22 February 2007 with the International Civil Aviation Organization, acting as the lead United Nations Agency for the Secretariat of the Convention, as well as the substantial costs charged by the organisation for CBD meetings. He informed the Bureau that this issue is under discussion with the Secretary General of ICAO and the relevant host country authorities.

15. The Executive Secretary also briefed the Bureau on the unexpected strengthening of the Canadian dollar vis-à-vis the United States dollar and its serious negative impact on the operations of the Secretariat, particularly on the cost of staff salaries and local recurrent expenditures such as rental and maintenance of the Secretariat premises. This effect will be more evident in the future as the Secretariat has now filled all the vacant positions in the Secretariat, as requested by the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

16. Initial calculations showed that for professional staff salaries alone there has been an increase of 37.4% in the Montreal post adjustment between January 2006 (when the 2007-2008 budget was prepared) and October 2007. This increase has had a significant impact on the Secretariat's budget for staff salaries and is due almost entirely to the exchange rate fluctuation. With the Cdn\$ at par with the US\$ for October 2007, and expected to strengthen even more in November 2007 and beyond, it is likely that the post adjustment multiplier for Montreal could increase even more, the consequent being further increases in salary costs. Expenditure on rent over the period January 2006 to December 2007 shows a loss of more than US\$200,000 due solely to exchange rate losses. Looking at other expenditures in Canadian dollars (not including rent) for the period September 2006 to October 2007, there has been a loss of more than US\$600,000 due only to exchange rate losses.

17. The Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that a notification will soon be sent to donors who, owing to the gain resulting from a more favourable exchange rate of their national currencies, may be in a position to pledge, on an exceptional basis, an additional voluntary contribution to the General Trust Fund of the Convention on Biological Diversity (BY) during 2008 to enable the Secretariat to offset some of the losses currently being experienced as a result of the currency fluctuations. The Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that an invitation had been dispatched to convene an Informal Donors Meeting on the budget for COP 9 and COP-MOP 4, to be held in Geneva immediately following the 6th Meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing.

18. Bureau members expressed their utmost confidence, appreciation and their full support to the Executive Secretary for his outstanding performance and the measures he has taken since assuming his duty to enhance efficiency and cost effectiveness of the operations of the Secretariat, as well as for mobilizing additional financial resources and strengthening relations with major partner organizations. They further appreciated the visibility given to biodiversity in the global policy initiatives in the United Nations system, as well as the emphasis and focus on implementation, particularly in addressing matters that concern poverty eradication and the Millennium Development Goals in general. They identified with the linkages and complementarity of biodiversity with other environmental conventions promoted by the Executive Secretary. They requested that their support to the Executive Secretary be recorded in the minutes of the Bureau.

19. In response to the comment made by the representative of the Government of Nigeria regarding the cooperation between the GEF and the Secretariat of the Convention, concerns were raised regarding the correspondence received by the Executive Secretary from the CEO of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and shared with the Bureau, related to the proposal to initiate a joint reporting procedure for the three Rio Conventions. In response, the Executive Secretary advised the Bureau that a response had been sent to the GEF CEO by his office, indicating that such a proposal would require the explicit approval of the Conference of the Parties. He further clarified that during the high level dialogue with the Parties, held in Paris on the margins of the second meeting of the Ad Hoc working Group on the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, the CEO stressed that the joint reporting initiative is a pilot initiative, based on voluntary participation.

ITEM 5 CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

20. In closing the meeting, the representative of the President thanked Bureau members for their cooperation and looked forward to their support throughout the week to ensure a smooth and efficient meeting.

ANNEX I

CBD INTERIM TRAVEL POLICY ADOPTED BY THE BUREAU AT ITS MEETING HELD IN BRASILIA ON 5 DECEMBER 2006

C. Conclusion

1. At its meeting held on 5 December, in Brasilia, and pursuant to decision VIII/31, paragraph 21, the Bureau considered and endorsed the interim travel policy. The Bureau at its meeting held in Montreal on 7th October 2007 reviewed the interim travel policy and decided to adjust it with a view to enhancing the geographical representation in the CBD meetings. The Bureau at its meeting held in Montreal on 14th October 2007 further discussed the options aimed at ensuring adequate geographical representation. To this end the Bureau at its meeting held on 18 October in Montreal, agreed on the following revised interim arrangements:

- (i) The procedure for the participation of eligible delegates in CBD meetings should aim at ensuring adequate geographical representation of all eligible regions with priority given to LDCs and SIDS and shall continue to be guided by the established United Nations practice;
- (ii) The procedure should aim at the fullest possible participation as the representation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition will enhance the implementation of the Convention at local, national, regional and international levels
- (iii) Donors are strongly encouraged to increase their financial support so as to ensure adequate geographical representation of eligible regions;
- (iv) Donors are strongly encouraged to pledge financial support for the participation of eligible countries as early as possible and preferably no later than three months before the meetings;
- (v) The Secretariat shall notify Parties as soon as possible and preferably six months in advance, of the dates and venue of the CBD meetings;
- (vi) Following the dispatch of a notification, eligible Parties shall be invited to inform, through official channels of communication, the Secretariat as soon as possible and no later than three months before the meeting whether funding is requested
- (vii) Based on the availability of financial resources and the number of requests received, the Secretariat shall prepare a list of sponsored delegates which will be distributed for information to the Bureau. The list shall be established with a view of ensuring adequate geographical representation of eligible regions with priority given to LDCS and SIDS;
- (viii) In accordance with decision COP-8/31, the Secretariat shall, four (4) weeks in advance, notify the eligible countries that would not be sponsored, inviting them to seek other alternative sources of funding;
- (ix) The Executive Secretary is invited to continue liaising with the Executive Director of UNEP with a view to ensuring a waiver on the 13% administrative charges on the Trust Fund to facilitate the Participation of Developing Countries with the understanding that the additional money secured will be used to enhance the geographical representation of eligible regions