



CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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BUREAU OF THE CONFERENCE
OF THE PARTIES
Bonn, Germany
18 May 2008

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY HELD IN BONN, GERMANY ON 18 MAY 2008

INTRODUCTION

1. The sixth meeting of the COP-8 Bureau was held on 18 May 2008 in the Salon Rheinaue of the Maritim Hotel in Bonn, Germany, site of the Ninth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-9). The meeting was chaired by Mr. Raymundo Rocha Magno, Ambassador of Brazil to the International Civil Aviation Organization and International organizations sitting in Montreal, representing the President of the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The following Bureau members attended the meeting:

Mr. Deon Stewart (Bahamas)
Mr. Karma Nyedrup (Bhutan)
Ms. Mary Fosi Mbantenkhu (Cameroon)
Mr. Robert McLean (Canada)
Mr. Fernando Perez Egert (Chile)
Ms. Andrea Stefan (Croatia)
Mr. Ositadinma Anaedu (Nigeria)
Mr. José Luis Herranz (Spain)
Dr. Volodymyr Domashlinets (Ukraine)
Mr. Abdul Hakim Aulaiah (Yemen)

2. The meeting was also attended by Mr. Jochen Flasbarth of Germany (as host of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties), Mr. Fernando Casas and Mr. Timothy Hodges, Co-Chairs of the Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS), as well as the Executive Secretary of the Convention, Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, and Mr. Oliver Jalbert, Principal Officer of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

ITEM 1 OPENING OF THE MEETING

3. The meeting was opened by Mr. Magno, representing the President of the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Her Excellency Ms. Marina Silva, Minister of Environment of Brazil. After welcoming Bureau members, he advised them that an agreement had been reached between the Presidency and the host Government, as is customary practice, wherein the Presidency would cede the chairmanship of the COP- 9 meeting to Germany, the host Government. Germany would therefore, continue to chair the present meeting, as well as all other Bureau meetings during the course of COP-9. Sincere gratitude was expressed by members to the Government of Brazil for its excellent chairmanship of the COP 8 Bureau.

4. The Executive Secretary welcomed the Chair and the Bureau members. He informed the participants that the fifth edition of Gincana would be launched at COP-9 and a celebration of the International Day on Biodiversity would be held on 22 May. He also introduced the Bureau to the Greenwave, a multi-year global campaign designed to bring together children and youth from around the world to raise awareness about biodiversity and the need to reduce its loss, which would be launched at COP-9.
5. The Chair then moved to the agenda items for consideration.

ITEM 2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

6. The Bureau turned its consideration to the agenda for the ninth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity as proposed by the Executive Secretary, following consultation with the Presidency. The Agenda, as outlined below, was adopted:
 1. Opening of the meeting
 2. Adoption of the agenda
 3. Ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity:
 - (a) Organizational matters
 - i. Opening ceremony: choreography
 - ii. Election of officers: nominations for the COP-9 Bureau
 - iii. Agenda
 - iv. Organization of work: establishment of two working groups and election of chairpersons
 - v. Modalities of addressing financial issues on the agenda of COP9
 - vi. Modalities of addressing ABS during COP-9
 - vii. Budget for the 2009/2010 biennium: establishment of a contact group and election of chairperson
 - viii. Election of Chairperson for the fifteenth and sixteenth meetings of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice;
 - (b) Credentials
 - (c) Nomination of Rapporteur
 4. High Level Segment of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
 5. Reports on regional preparatory meetings
 6. Schedule of Bureau meetings during COP-9
 7. Other matters
 8. Closure of the meeting

ITEM 3 NINTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Organizational Matters

7. Under organizational matters, the Executive Secretary advised the Bureau that it has been the practice at the CBD when organising plenary room seating order to proceed alphabetically. He proposed to the Bureau that the UN practice be adopted henceforth, wherein a country name is drawn from amongst the full list of Parties. Following agreement from the Bureau, the Executive Secretary advised members that Bolivia had been drawn and therefore, would lead the seating arrangement for all intersessional meetings leading up to COP-10.

Opening ceremony: choreography

8. The Executive Secretary then briefed the Bureau on the choreography for the opening plenary of COP-9. The meeting would be formally opened by the Minister of Environment of Brazil, following which the Minister of Environment of Germany would make a statement. Then the Lady Mayor of Bonn, Ms. Bärbel Dieckmann, followed by Mr. Uhlenberg, State Minister for the Environment of the State of Northrhine-Westphalia, would be invited to take the podium. Participants would then hear statements by the Greenpeace Kids and the German Youth Association for the Protection of Nature.

The Executive Secretary then advised the Bureau that a video message from Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP would be played, following which the two Executive Secretaries of the other Rio Conventions, Mr. Yvo de Boer of the UNFCCC and Mr. Luc Gnacadja of the UNCCD, had accepted to speak.

9. The representative of Brazil explained to the Bureau that in the week preceding the COP, there had been a change of Minister, and hence Her Excellency Marina Silva would not attend the COP. He further explained that the new Minister would only assume his role as of Tuesday, 20 May, and therefore, would not be able to participate. As a result, the meeting would be opened by Mr. Magno, representing the President of the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Election of officers: nominations for the COP-9 Bureau

10. In accordance with the rules of procedure, Bureau members were advised that, following the formal opening of COP-9 by the representative of the outgoing President, the meeting would elect the Minister of the Environment of Germany, H. E. Mr. Sigmar Gabriel, as President of COP-9. In that capacity, Minister Gabriel or his designated representative would chair plenary meetings during COP-9. It was explained that other members of the current Bureau would remain in office until the end of COP-9. The Bureau members were also reminded that the COP would need to elect retroactively the current Bureau member from Chile, Mr. Fernando Perez Egert, since the latter had not been elected by COP-8 due to the lack of nomination from the Latin American and Caribbean Group at that time.

11. The Bureau was then informed that COP-9 must elect the new Bureau members who will initiate their mandate at the end of COP-9. Members were then invited to report on progress of discussions in their respective regional groups on this matter. Each regional group indicated that discussions on this matter were in the early stages and none were in a position to indicate the names of two nominees for election to the Bureau from their respective regional groups. The representative of Germany, in his capacity as Chair of the meeting, proposed that as new members were selected by their regional groups, they be invited to join in the Bureau meetings during COP-9 as observers. In closing discussion on this issue, the Executive Secretary strongly urged the regional groups to conclude their deliberations on this matter by Friday, 23 May.

Agenda

12. Consideration of the agenda for COP-9 was straightforward, with the only comment coming from the representative of Brazil who indicated that they would raise issues under the relevant Bureau agenda items.

Organization of work: establishment of two working groups and election of chairpersons

13. The Bureau was reminded that at its meeting of 10 February 2008, it had decided to recommend the establishment of two working groups to consider the substantive agenda items of COP-9, under the chairpersonship of the following individuals:

- Ms. Maria Mbengashe of South Africa for Working Group I; and,
- Ms. Chaweewan Hutacharem of Thailand for Working Group II

14. Given the agenda of COP-9, the Chair suggested that the Co-chairs be invited to begin their work immediately following the closure of the Opening Ceremony. He pointed out that ABS would be addressed by Working Group II, and suggested that the Bureau may consider placing ABS at the top of the Working Group II agenda so that a contact group or informal consultations may begin as of Monday, 19 May. Following discussion amongst the Bureau members, the Executive Secretary proposed that the President call for the establishment of an Open-ended Informal Consultative Group immediately following the address made by the Co-chairs to the plenary, in order to allow informal consultations to begin as soon as possible while maintaining the ABS agenda item slot on Wednesday the 21st. This proposal was seconded by the representatives from Nigeria and Canada. The Chair then proposed that the Bureau address the next agenda and continue its deliberation on the ABS issue under Agenda item 3 (a) (vi). This was agreed upon.

Modalities of addressing financial issues on the agenda of COP9

15. The Executive Secretary proposed that the establishment of an informal contact group on financial issues be announced at the opening of the meeting, and further proposed that the Governments of Germany and the United Kingdom could be approached to identify suitable candidates to Chair the group.

16. The representative from Cameroon expressed concern about the possible number of contact groups that may proliferate. In response, the Executive Secretary assured the Bureau that these would not be formal Contact Groups but rather informal consultative groups established to facilitate the work of the COP as a whole. After some deliberation, the Chair proposed that the best course of action might be to allow the relevant Working Group to discuss the issue and strike a contact or informal consultative group to further deliberate the issue. This proposal was agreed upon by the Bureau.

Modalities of addressing ABS during COP-9

17. In taking up the question of how best to address the ABS issue, and following on the recommendation made by the Executive Secretary, the ABS Co-chairs proposed that work on a draft decision begin as of Monday, 19 May, through an open-ended informal consultative group process. They underlined the fact that during the course of the week, such an informal consultative group would need to be in contact with the Contact Group on the Budget. They further stressed the desire to avoid protracted debate on process and begin work in earnest on a draft decision.

18. The Bureau then discussed the format that should be adopted to assist in consideration of the ABS agenda item. The Executive Secretary reminded members that while ABS was a core CBD process issue, the Parties had before them 38 issues. This many issues multiplied by the number of Parties meant that it would be mathematically impossible to fully negotiate each and every issue and therefore, the Bureau agreed that the ABS process could benefit from initial consideration in a smaller setting, such as the Friends of the Co-chairs that had been struck during WGABS-6. Ultimately, the establishment of an Open-ended Informal Consultative Group, with due representation by region, was agreed upon. The representative of Nigeria further asked Bureau members to ask the regional groups to nominate a set number of representatives who would participate in the work of the Open-ended Informal Consultative Group. It was further agreed that the draft recommendation agreed upon and annexed to the report of WG-ABS-6.

19. The Chair informed the Bureau that given the importance of the ABS work to be conducted, it would be advisable for the ABS Co-chairs and the Working Group II Chair to provide a status report to the President, Minister Gabriel, as well as to the plenary on Friday 23 May. Several members, echoing concerns expressed earlier by the representative of Cameroon, cautioned that the number of contact groups/informal consultative groups should be carefully controlled, particularly in deference to smaller delegations whose capacity to participate effectively would be seriously stretched with the establishment of too many consultative mechanisms. After much discussion, the Bureau ultimately agreed to recommend launching the work of the Open-ended Informal Consultative Group on Tuesday.

Budget for the 2009/2010 biennium: establishment of a contact group and election of chairperson

20. Further to agreement reached at its 10 February 2008 meeting, the Bureau reiterated its recommendation that the Conference of the Parties continue the practice of establishing an informal Contact Group on Budget. The Bureau also agreed to recommend to COP-9 the election of Mr. Ositadinma Anaedu of Nigeria as chairperson of the Contact Group.

Election of Chairperson for the fifteenth and sixteenth meetings of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice

21. The Bureau was reminded that COP-9 must elect a chairperson for the fifteenth and sixteenth meetings of the SBSTTA. In keeping with the practice of rotation among the regions, the new SBSTTA Chair should come from the Latin American and Caribbean region. Consideration of this issue was deferred, following an intervention made by the representative of Chile, who explained that his regional group required a further period of consultation before a decision would be possible. He proposed that nominations be submitted within a few days, and this was accepted by the Bureau.

Credentials

22. In accordance with Rule 18 of the rules of procedure, which provides that “credentials of representatives... shall be submitted to the Executive Secretary if possible not later than 24 hours after the opening of the meeting”, and that credentials must be issued either by the Head of State or Government or by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bureau members were urged to remind members of their groups of the need to adhere to this rule as it affects the credibility of decisions taken at the meeting.

23. The Bureau then designated Mr. Karma Nyedrup of Bhutan to report to the Parties on this matter.

24. At the suggestion of the Chair, the Bureau then agreed that Brunei Darussalam, the Convention’s newest Party, be invited to take a seat amongst the Parties at the outset of COP-9.

Nomination of Rapporteur

25. As had been agreed at its meeting of 8 July 2007 in Paris, the Bureau recommended that Ms. Mary Fosi Mbantekhu of Cameroon act as Rapporteur for the meeting.

ITEM 4 HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE NINTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

26. The Chair opened discussion on this agenda item by explaining that while the goal of the High Level Segment was to seek the guidance of Ministers on how to solve issues that may still be facing the Parties. He further explained to members that in order to allocate enough time for provision of substantive advice, Minister’s statements should be brief, in the order of 3 minutes, and should focus on biodiversity-related achievements that were being made at the national level. Further, he advised that Ministers may wish to make statements of commitment, either national or global in nature, with respect to achievement of the 2010 target.

27. The representative of Brazil sought clarification on what type of mechanism would be used to bring Ministers into the debate. He asked whether the idea was to strike the equivalent of the Friends of the Chair during the High Level Segment, and expressed a lack of understanding as to why Ministers would be brought into negotiation mode. The Chair responded that the process would be issue-driven and that issues where political guidance from Ministers was considered beneficial would be brought before the High Level Segment.

28. The representative of Brazil further expressed the view that 3 minutes struck him as short for political statements. He informed the Chair that distribution of the list of Ministerial speaking slots to the Bureau for dissemination in the regional groups would be highly appreciated as it would allow Ministers and their delegations to plan other events, such as bilateral meetings.

ITEM 5 REPORTS ON REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETINGS

29. Regional preparatory meetings were held on 17-18 May 2008.

30. The representative of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the African group, advised the Bureau that the regional preparatory meeting was considered very important by its members. The African group very much appreciated the opportunity it afforded them to meet, discuss and arrive at common positions. The representative of Cameroon seconded the views expressed by the Nigerian representative and informed the Bureau that the African Group extended their gratitude and thanks to GTZ and the Secretariat for making the meeting possible.

31. The representative of Bhutan, on behalf of the Asia Pacific group, expressed the thanks of the group to the Executive Secretary and the Secretariat for organising the meeting. He further extended the gratitude of the group to the Government of Spain for providing the funding necessary to allow countries to participate. He outlined that 22 countries had participated in the preparatory meeting and that during their deliberations specific countries had been assigned to follow specific COP issues. He indicated that there was consensus within the regional group that more time should be allocated to

regional preparatory meetings. He also informed the Bureau that 4 names were under consideration within the region for nomination to the Bureau.

32. The representative of the Bahamas, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean regional group, reiterated thanks expressed by Bureau colleagues to the Governments of Germany and Spain, as well as to the Executive Secretary and the Secretariat. He indicated that a number of issues had been discussed by the regional group for the consideration of the Bureau including: time management during meetings in order to make the best and most efficient use of interpretation time; time allocated to speakers for the floor, as there had been concern raised by some within the group that observers sometimes received more speaking time than Parties; concern regarding the number of outstanding square brackets on text that had come out of the 2nd meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Protected Areas; conduct of the Chair during the SBSTTA-13 meeting, where some regional representatives had felt that the Chair had over-ruled positions submitted by Parties; a call that statements made by NGOs should be respectful of parties; and lastly, that the Latin American and Caribbean regional group strongly wished to have the opportunity to take the floor during the Opening Ceremony in order to make statements on the financial resources and financial management and ABS agenda items.

33. The representative of Spain, speaking on behalf of the European Union, indicated that the group was strongly committed to biodiversity issues and the objectives of the Convention. He advised the Bureau that the group had found its regional meeting to be very useful, as it had allowed the participants to clarify issues on both COP and EU positions and arrive at consensus.

34. The representative of Canada, speaking on behalf of the JUSCANZ region, indicated that the group's meeting had been fruitful and the JUSCANZ had agreed to meet every day during the COP from 09:00-10:00.

35. The representative of Croatia, speaking on behalf of the Central and Eastern European States, advised the Bureau that the group had not been able to meet before the opening of the COP, but indicated that members of the region had benefited from meetings on the margins of the WGABS-6 and WGA-2/SBSTTA-14 meetings in held earlier in the year in Geneva and Rome. She did underline the fact that the group would, in future, be very appreciative if they could benefit from organised and structured regional group meetings.

ITEM 6 SCHEDULE OF BUREAU MEETINGS DURING COP-9

36. The members of the Bureau agreed to meet at 18:00 on a daily basis during COP-9, beginning on Tuesday 20 May.

ITEM 7 OTHER MATTERS

37. No issues were raised under this agenda item.

ITEM 8 CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

38. The Chair brought the meeting to a close at 18:00.
