



## Convention on Biological Diversity

Distr.  
GENERAL

UNEP/CBD/COP/12/16  
25 August 2014

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE  
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY  
Twelfth meeting  
Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, 6-17 October 2014  
Item 16 of the provisional agenda\*

### INTERLINKAGES BETWEEN BIODIVERSITY AND HUMAN HEALTH

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

#### INTRODUCTION

1. The Vision of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (decision X/2) highlights the linkages between biodiversity and human well-being while Aichi Biodiversity Target 14<sup>1</sup> focuses explicitly on ecosystems and ecosystem services that contribute to human health, livelihoods and well-being. While various aspects of the nexus between health and biodiversity have been examined under the Convention, achieving Aichi Biodiversity Target 14 calls for a more coordinated focus on the linkages between health and biodiversity. Work on biodiversity-health linkages also contributes to the mainstreaming of biodiversity in the post-2015 development agenda (in follow-up to decision XI/22).
2. The Conference of the Parties, at its ninth, tenth and eleventh meetings, has called for strengthened cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other organizations on health and biodiversity issues. At its eleventh meeting, the Conference of the Parties welcomed the strengthening of collaboration between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the World Health Organization, and other relevant organizations and initiatives, and requested the establishment of a joint work programme with the World Health Organization, and other relevant organizations, to support the contribution that the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 can make to achieving human health objectives (decision XI/6, paragraph 29).
3. The Conference of the Parties also invited Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to raise awareness of the links between biodiversity and health issues so as to achieve mutual benefits and contribute to meeting relevant Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and to report thereon to the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting (decision XI/6, paragraph 27). This will be instrumental in achieving Aichi Target 14. Further, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to collaborate with a number of organizations, including the World Health Organization, involved in poverty eradication, human health, food security and gender issues in the process of developing sustainable development goals (SDGs), taking into account the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference (decision XI/22, paragraph 11 (c)).

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\* UNEP/CBD/COP/12/1/Rev.1.

<sup>1</sup> Target 14: By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.

4. Accordingly, the Secretariat of the Convention is working with the World Health Organization and a range of organizations and other partners on biodiversity and health activities to contribute to the following objectives:

- (a) To promote the enhanced use of biodiversity in programmes contributing to human health;
- (b) To raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use for human health co-benefits;
- (c) To contribute to implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and to the advancement of the sustainable development goals.

5. A progress report on this work was made available to the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at its eighteenth meeting,<sup>2</sup> and, on this basis, the Subsidiary Body prepared recommendation XVIII/14, which, inter alia:

- (a) Welcomed the progress under the joint work programme between Secretariat of the Convention and the World Health Organization, including the regional capacity-building workshops on the interlinkages between biodiversity and human health co-convened by the Secretariat and the World Health Organization (for the Americas and Africa regions), and the ongoing work in collaboration with other partners to develop a State of Knowledge Review on the Interlinkages between Biodiversity and Human Health;
- (b) Requested the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources:
  - (i) To continue efforts under the joint work programme between the Secretariat and the World Health Organization; and to further strengthen collaboration with other relevant organizations, in particular with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Bioversity International, as well as with initiatives, such as the Biodiversity and Community Health Initiative, as appropriate, to foster the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, in particular Target 14 ; and
  - (ii) To take steps to prepare for the wide dissemination of the forthcoming State of Knowledge Review on the Interlinkages between Biodiversity and Human Health, and highlight the linkages between biodiversity and human health in the ongoing discussions on the post-2015 United Nations development agenda and sustainable development goals.

6. The Subsidiary Body also prepared a draft decision for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting. This is reproduced in the compilation of draft decisions.<sup>3</sup>

7. Inter alia, the draft decision of the Subsidiary Body recommended that the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting consider the State of Knowledge Review on the Interlinkages between Biodiversity and Human Health with respect to its implications for the work under the Convention, including, inter alia: national biodiversity strategies and action plans; the identification of further opportunities for mainstreaming the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, including in the context of the post-2015 United Nations development agenda and the sustainable development goals; and opportunities to further promote knowledge and experience on the interlinkages between biodiversity and health among Parties and relevant partners.

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<sup>2</sup> UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/17.

<sup>3</sup> UNEP/CBD/COP/12/1/Add.2.

8. This note provides an update on work undertaken since the eighteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body.

### **I. FINALIZATION OF THE STATE OF KNOWLEDGE REVIEW ON THE INTERLINKAGES BETWEEN BIODIVERSITY AND HUMAN HEALTH**

9. The State of Knowledge Review on the Interlinkages between Biodiversity and Human Health (State of Knowledge Review), being prepared by the CBD Secretariat in collaboration with the World Health Organization and a number of relevant organizations and experts, will be an important source of information for discussions related to the joint work programme on biodiversity and human health, the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and ongoing discussions on the sustainable development goals and post-2015 development agenda.

10. The State of Knowledge Review will specifically contribute to (i) promoting the enhanced use of biodiversity in programmes contributing to human health; (ii) raising awareness of the importance of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use for human health co-benefits; (iii) the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, in particular Aichi Biodiversity Target 14; and (iv) supporting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the advancement of the sustainable development goals.

11. The State of Knowledge Review will comprise three main parts:

(a) Part I will introduce concepts such as the social and environmental determinants of health, biodiversity and ecosystem services, and will provide a broad overview of the different ways in which biodiversity and health are linked. It will also consider the common drivers of change that impact on both health and biodiversity, and discuss approaches such as “One Health”, “Ecohealth” and the ecosystem approach that attempt to unite different fields;

(b) Part II will examine how biodiversity is related to specific thematic areas at the biodiversity-health nexus including: water and air quality; agricultural biodiversity, food security, and nutrition; infectious diseases; microbial communities and non-communicable diseases; physical and mental health and well-being and the influence of cultural ecosystem services; traditional medicine; and modern medicine and pharmaceuticals;

(c) Part III will examine cross-cutting issues at the biodiversity-health nexus, such as climate change, land use change and disaster risk reduction. It will also explore how health and biodiversity policies and programmes can be better integrated; relevant aspects of community engagement; and how issues at the biodiversity-health nexus can be better reflected in relevant sectoral policies and practices, including in the context of the post-2015 United Nations development agenda and sustainable development goals. It will also consider available tools that are relevant to this context.

12. The State of Knowledge Review will attempt to identify gaps in existing scientific literature as well as policy gaps, and will include case studies that demonstrate the need for integration of health and biodiversity policies, particularly in developing countries.

13. The State of Knowledge Review is being prepared by a multidisciplinary group of experts drawn from the health, biodiversity and related sectors and disciplines. It will also take into account comments from a round of review by Parties, additional experts and relevant stakeholders.

14. The process for the development of the review was described in the progress report made available to the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at its eighteenth meeting. Since that time, the following activities have been carried out:

(a) Expert meeting for key authors held in Rome, Italy, from 1 to 3 July 2014, with a view to finalizing draft thematic chapters included in Part II and to discuss ways forward for the finalization of the complete volume;

(b) Finalization of the draft thematic chapters of the State of Knowledge Review included in Part II. These draft chapters are now being made available for peer review;<sup>4</sup>

(c) Revision of the emerging key messages in light of the peer review conducted in June and July 2014. These are being further revised to reflect updated content in thematic chapters (Part II). A note summarizing the revised key messages from the state of knowledge review will be made available prior to the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

(d) Preparation for the launch of the complete online advance version of the State of Knowledge Review on the Interlinkages between Biodiversity and Human Health, at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, on 7 October 2014, in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, and the subsequent publication at the IUCN World Parks Congress in Sydney, Australia, in November 2014.

## II. OTHER ACTIVITIES

15. The partners of the Biodiversity and Community Health Initiative, including the CBD Secretariat, are conducting research that examines a range of issues at the biodiversity-health nexus to develop and mainstream community health approaches in developing countries, and are engaging with relevant bodies and policy instruments to contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, as well as to the emerging sustainable development goals. Targeted inputs have also been provided by partners to relevant policy forums.

16. The Secretariat reported on collaborative activities with the World Health Organization in document UNEP/CBD/COP/11/INF/27 and in UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/17. The Secretariat is currently working with the World Health Organization to discuss the final steps toward the development of a memorandum of cooperation.

17. While the Secretariat was able to successfully carry out some of the activities pursuant to decisions X/2, paragraph 17 of decision X/20 and paragraph 29 of decision XI/6 (e.g. capacity-building workshops in Africa and the Americas regions, technical studies), it was not able to conduct some of these activities, such as regional capacity-building workshops on the interlinkages between biodiversity and human health, in other regions. This was mainly because of limited financial resources. Due to the fact that discussions on the post-2015 development agenda are ongoing, and in compliance with paragraph 11 (c) of decision XI/22, the Secretariat prioritized the development of the State of Knowledge Review in 2014. Subject to the availability of funding, the Secretariat intends to continue to implement the requests of the Conference of the Parties contained in these decisions, including through:

(a) Additional regional capacity-building workshops on the interlinkages between biodiversity and health in the next biennium (2015–2016);

(b) The development of indicators on biodiversity and human health; and

(c) Additional opportunities to further promote knowledge and experience on the interlinkages between biodiversity and health for the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, in particular Aichi Biodiversity Target 14, and for the mainstreaming of biodiversity and health linkages in the post-2015 United Nations development agenda and the sustainable development goals.

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<sup>4</sup> See: <http://www.cbd.int/en/health/stateofknowledge>. A notification launching the peer review process for thematic chapters of the State of Knowledge Review was issued on 21 August, 2014 (see: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2014/ntf-2014-105-health-en.pdf>).

### III. SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS FOR A DECISION

18. The Conference of the Parties may wish to consider the following additional elements of a decision:

*The Conference of the Parties*

*Welcomes* the State of Knowledge Review on the Interlinkages between Biodiversity and Human Health, developed by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the World Health Organization and other partners;

*Emphasizes* the relevance of the interlinkages between biodiversity and human health for the post-2015 United Nations agenda and the sustainable development goals, and, in this context, *encourages* Parties to make use of the information in the State of Knowledge Review on the Interlinkages between Biodiversity and Human Health to identify opportunities for further integrating biodiversity and human health concerns;

*Encourages* Parties to make use of the information in the State of Knowledge Review on the Interlinkages between Biodiversity and Human Health to integrate biodiversity and human health concerns, including in the development and implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, as well as policies, plans and programmes for the health sector, and broader policies, plans and programmes for sustainable development;

*Requests* the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technical Advice to consider the implications of the State of Knowledge Review on the Interlinkages between Biodiversity and Human Health for the work under the Convention and to report thereon to the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth meeting.

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