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Item 29 of the provisional agenda*

COOPERATION WITH OTHER CONVENTIONS, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND STAKEHOLDERS' ENGAGEMENT, INCLUDING BUSINESS

Note by the Executive Secretary

INTRODUCTION

1. At its eleventh meeting, the Conference of the Parties (COP) in decision XI/6 reiterated the importance of cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions,¹ the Rio conventions and other relevant instruments and partners for achieving full implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The decision also noted the importance of enhancing synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions and in collaborating with other United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and others, as well as the contribution of the Environment Management Group. The Conference of the Parties also requested the Executive Secretary to collaborate with other entities in numerous other decisions.²

2. In paragraph 17 of decision XI/6, the Executive Secretary was requested, subject to the availability of resources, to report to the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting on a number of aspects of such collaborative efforts, particularly with respect to the biodiversity-related conventions and

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

¹ The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (the Ramsar Convention), and the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (the World Heritage Convention, WHC).

² For example, in decision XI/6, COP also welcomed the Rio Conventions Pavilion as a mechanism to enhance collaboration, and invited further support to the initiative to increase visibility of synergies among conventions and improve its effectiveness and achievement of its objectives. In the same decision, COP invited the Environment Management Group to continue facilitating cooperation among its members in support of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. In decision XI/6, COP also welcomed and provided guidance regarding collaboration on: biodiversity and agriculture; forest biodiversity; biodiversity and health; biological and cultural diversity and; biodiversity and tourism development. In addition, COP addressed cooperation in specific decisions related to the cross-cutting issues and programmes of work of the Convention, including decision XI/21 on climate change and XI/28 on invasive alien species.

the Rio conventions, including through the established mechanisms of the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related Conventions (BLG) and the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions (JLG), and also with respect to national-level synergies. The decision requested the Executive Secretary to propose options for a process to enhance such coordination. The decision further requested the Executive Secretary, in consultation with other convention secretariats, to draft suggestions for the Conference of the Parties on improving efficiency and reducing unnecessary overlap and duplication at all relevant levels among the biodiversity-related conventions and the Rio conventions, with a view to identifying and reinforcing synergies.

3. With a view to providing an update on progress made, a note by the Executive Secretary on cooperation with other conventions and international organizations and initiatives³ was submitted to the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention at its fifth meeting. The note provided an update on actions undertaken and progress achieved to enhance collaboration between conventions, international organizations and initiatives, including an update on the activities of the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related Conventions and the Joint Liaison Group and cooperation with other organizations, pending the report to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting, as requested by decision XI/6.

4. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention, in its recommendation 5/1 on the financial mechanism, prepared a draft decision on enhancing programmatic synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions and related advice to the Global Environment Facility.⁴ In its recommendation 5/7, the Working Group prepared a draft decision on cooperation with other conventions, international organizations and initiatives for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting.⁴

5. Recalling decisions X/20 and XI/6 and aware of the existing gaps in enhancing cooperation and collaboration at the national level, the Working Group also requested the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources and recalling decisions XI/6, paragraph 17, and XI/28, paragraph 4, to consider in his report on this work to the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting the following:

(a) Submissions by Parties in response to notification 2013-120 (Ref No. SCBD/OES/OJ/moc/82999);

(b) Recent decisions and resolutions by other biodiversity-related conventions;

(c) Ongoing relevant projects, such as the United Nations Environment Programme's project on synergies for biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements;

(d) The views of Parties expressed at the fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention under the agenda item on cooperation with other conventions, international organizations and initiatives;

(e) A report on the cooperative partnership, with the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention, to promote awareness of, and capacity-building for, ecosystem-based solutions for water resources management;

(f) A progress report on ongoing initiatives, such as the online reporting system and InforMEA, in particular regarding their relationship to the general reporting requirements under the Convention on Biological Diversity as well as other ongoing developments, and the involvement of the Secretariat in these initiatives.

³ UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/8.

⁴ Reproduced in the compilation contained in document UNEP/CBD/COP/12/1/Add.2.

6. Section I of the present document addresses these matters related to cooperation with other biodiversity-related conventions. Section II addresses matters related to cooperation with the other Rio conventions. Progress in the development of a cooperative partnership on ecosystem-based solutions for water resources management is provided in section III. Section IV provides information on cooperation with other conventions, international organizations and initiatives.

7. In paragraph 48 of decision XI/6, the Conference of the Parties also decided to review the application of the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development at its twelfth meeting, in order to improve, inter alia, the provision of updated and innovative tools and instruments on sustainable tourism management to Parties and interested stakeholders and enhance their contribution to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. An addendum to this document⁵ provides a report on biodiversity and tourism development, pursuant to decision XI/6, section E.

8. A summary of the outcome of the nineteenth meeting of the senior officials of the Environment Management Group, held in New York on 19 September 2013, was provided to the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention at its fifth meeting.⁶ A progress report by the Environment Management Group on the contribution of the United Nations system to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, in particular through the work undertaken by its Issues Management Group on biodiversity will be made available.

9. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention, at its fifth meeting, also prepared draft decisions on progress related to business engagement (contained in recommendation 5/4), engagement with subnational and local governments (contained in recommendation 5/5), and stakeholder engagement (contained in recommendation 5/6), based on the documentation prepared by the Executive Secretary.⁷ These matters are therefore not discussed further in the present note.

I. COOPERATION WITH OTHER BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS

10. As cited above, the Conference of the Parties, in paragraph 17 of decision XI/6 requested the Executive Secretary to undertake, among others, the following actions:

(a) Provide a report on the implementation of the *modus operandi* adopted by the Biodiversity Liaison Group and the Joint Liaison Group, evaluating their impact in enhancing coordination, coherence and national-level synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions;

(b) Propose, in consultation with Parties and other members of the Biodiversity Liaison Group and the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions, options for the form and content of a process to enhance coordination, coherence and national-level synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions and the Rio conventions, so as to increase the involvement of Parties in the work of the Biodiversity Liaison Group and the Joint Liaison Group;

(c) In consultation with other convention secretariats, draft suggestions for the Conference of the Parties on improving efficiency and reducing unnecessary overlap and duplication at all relevant levels among the biodiversity-related conventions and the Rio conventions, including through workshops held jointly with other conventions, with a view to identifying and reinforcing synergies;

⁵ UNEP/CBD/COP/12/24/Add.1

⁶ UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/8.

⁷ UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/10, Report on progress related to business engagement; UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/9, Engagement with Subnational and Local Governments; and UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/11, Stakeholder engagement.

(d) Liaise with the other biodiversity-related conventions and relevant organizations, through the Biodiversity Liaison Group and other forums, in order to seek ways of collaborating on the mid-term review of progress towards reaching the Aichi Biodiversity Targets;

(e) Make available, through the clearing-house mechanism, lessons learned with regard to cooperation and synergy at national level, including from the implementation of the Global Environment Facility pilot project on facilitating national reporting to the Rio conventions.

11. The importance of strengthening coherence and synergy of implementation among the multilateral environmental agreements, including the biodiversity-related conventions and the Rio conventions, has been noted by numerous intergovernmental processes and bodies, and the dialogue has been ongoing for a number of years. A summary of recent calls through relevant intergovernmental processes of the need for enhancing synergy and cooperation, as well as views on this issue submitted by Parties, was provided to the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh meeting.⁸

12. A number of studies related to cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions, including harmonized reporting, have been undertaken in recent years.⁹ A recent activity in this context is an ongoing project on “improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies” being undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in response to a request from its Governing Council. The project is looking at synergies among the conventions both at a global level as well as in their national and regional level implementation. The first level concerns the identification of opportunities and options for further enhancing cooperation at the global level through secretariats and their host institutions, and through the governance and advisory bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions. The second level concerns the identification and sharing of best practice at the national level for achieving increased coherence in the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions.

13. UNEP has also established a task team which has commenced consultations on the effectiveness of administrative arrangements and programmatic cooperation between UNEP and the multilateral environmental agreements for which UNEP provides the secretariat. At its first meeting, the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP welcomed the establishment of the task team, asked it to continue its work and report to the next meeting of the Assembly, and requested the Executive Director to submit information on the progress of the task team to the relevant conferences and meetings of parties.

14. The Executive Secretary was requested in paragraph 17 (b) of decision XI/6 to propose, in consultation with Parties and other members of the Biodiversity Liaison Group and the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions, options for the form and content of a process to enhance coordination, coherence and national-level synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions and the Rio conventions, so as to increase the involvement of Parties in the work of the Biodiversity Liaison Group and the Joint Liaison Group.

15. This request is also aligned with the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Paragraph 89 of the outcomes document encourages parties to multilateral

⁸ UNEP/CBD/COP/11/17.

⁹ For example, in 2012 UNEP-WCMC concluded a report commissioned by the Ministry of Environment of Finland on “Promoting synergies within the cluster of biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements” (http://www.unep-wcmc.org/medialibrary/2012/04/27/8b832e8c/Final_MEA_synergies_27April2012_cover.pdf). This report followed one from other work on synergies undertaken by the Ministry of Environment of Finland and Nordic entities that include a symposium organized by the Ministry in Helsinki in April 2010 on “Synergies in the Biodiversity Cluster” (<http://www.biodivcluster.fi/> with the report of the meeting available at: http://www.biodivcluster.fi/pdf/Synergies_report_final.pdf); and a study undertaken for the Nordic Council of Ministers on “Possibilities of enhancing co-operation and co-ordination among MEAs in the biodiversity cluster”, published in 2009 (Niko Urho, 2009, “Possibilities of enhancing co-operation and co-ordination among MEAs in the biodiversity Cluster”, Nordic Council of Ministers, Copenhagen. Available online at: http://www.biodivcluster.fi/pdf/Possibilities_on_enhancing_cooperation.pdf).

environmental agreements to consider further measures to promote policy coherence at all relevant levels, improve efficiency, reduce unnecessary overlap and duplication, and enhance coordination and cooperation among the multilateral environmental agreements.

16. One area identified by the Liaison Group for which further synergies could bring strong benefit, is to strengthen actions by Parties towards greater coherence and synergy at the national level, and at the level of the governing bodies. Ways in which strengthened actions may be taken by Parties towards greater coherence and synergy among the conventions at the national level and at the level of the governing bodies are also provided, in sub-sections B, C and D, below.

A. *The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 as framework for cooperation*

17. As noted above, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its 20 Aichi Targets provide an agreed overarching framework for action on biodiversity and a foundation for sustainable development, and therefore also serves as a framework for cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 has been recognized or supported by the governing bodies of the other five biodiversity-related conventions and by the United Nations General Assembly.¹⁰ Section I of the document on cooperation with other conventions, international organizations and initiatives provided to the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention, at its fifth meeting, contains a summary of recent decisions of the biodiversity-related conventions towards the objectives of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species, at its tenth meeting, resolved to prepare a new Strategic Plan for Migratory Species for the period 2015-2023, which is expected to be adopted at its eleventh meeting in November 2014. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets have served as a framework in developing the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species.

B. *Cooperation at the level of convention secretariats and the liaison group of the biodiversity-related conventions*

18. The Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related Conventions was established at the request of the Conference of the Parties, at its seventh meeting (decision VII/26), as a means to enhance coherence and cooperation in the implementation of the conventions. Based on its operation since 2004, a modus operandi for the liaison group was agreed in September 2011 by the executive heads of the secretariats of the six biodiversity-related conventions. The modus operandi records the liaison group's mandate provided through decision VII/26 and through subsequent decisions of the governing bodies of the member secretariats prior to the agreement of the modus operandi; sets out guiding principles and an indicative list of areas of cooperative activity to guide the work of the liaison group; and establishes its membership and its secretariat as well as the officers, frequency, location, participation, organization and reporting for its meetings.

19. The Liaison Group serves as a valuable mechanism to promote coordination and cooperation in the work of the secretariats of the respective conventions as well as to help promote coherence in the development and review of respective policy of the conventions and in measures towards the implementation of the conventions. In these respects, significant achievements of the liaison group in the last two biennia to advancing synergies at the national level as well as the global level include:

(a) Contributing to the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 as an overarching global framework rather than a strategic plan solely for the Convention on Biological Diversity;

¹⁰ CMS Resolution 10.18; CITES Resolution 16.4; Ramsar Resolution XI.6; ITPGRFA Resolution 8/2011; WHC Decision: 37 COM 5A; General Assembly Resolution 65/161 of 11 March 2011.

(b) Successfully promoting the alignment of the strategies of the other biodiversity-related conventions with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets;

(c) Supporting and encouraging Parties to exploit synergies and enhance coordination at the national level, in particular to implement the national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) for example through preparation of guidance manuals by the CMS and CITES Secretariats;

(d) Proposing policy solutions that would assist eligible countries to access GEF funding to implement projects that harness synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions while being consistent with the mandate of the Global Environment Facility (recommendation 5/2).

20. Key among these accomplishments is the agreement of these conventions to align their activities with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and to use national biodiversity strategies and actions plans as the main planning tool for implementation at the national level. Thus, cooperative activities are now focused on the provision of support for achieving the objectives of the strategic plans of the conventions, including the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 in line with respective mandates.

21. In addition, through its meetings, the Liaison Group has served to identify concrete areas and mechanisms to enhance coordination among the secretariats, for example, at its ninth meeting by agreeing to convene regular virtual meetings of the communications officers of the secretariats in order to strengthen collaboration on outreach and awareness.

22. The eighth meeting of the liaison group of the biodiversity-related conventions was held on 13 February 2013 in Bogis-Bossey, Switzerland.¹¹ A special meeting of the Liaison Group with the Secretariat of the GEF, held from 2 to 3 September 2013, considered how to help countries access GEF funding to implement projects that harness synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions while being consistent with the GEF mandate.¹² The outcomes of these meetings were presented to the fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention, on the review of implementation of decision XI/5,¹³ on the basis of which the Working Group prepared a draft decision on enhancing programmatic synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions and related advice to the Global Environment Facility as part of its recommendation 5/1 on the financial mechanism.

23. The ninth meeting of the liaison group of the biodiversity-related conventions was held on 16 August 2014 in Warth, Switzerland. Among other things, the Liaison Group consulted on matters regarding the form and content of a process to enhance coordination, coherence and national-level synergies, including the work being undertaken in this respect by the United Nations Environment Programme. The development of the options for the form and content of a process to enhance coordination, coherence and national-level synergies, presented below, have been informed by these discussions.

24. At its ninth meeting, the Liaison Group also noted success stories of cooperation, for instance on the joint production of pertinent technical series documents, and noted that more efforts could be undertaken to scale up such joint activities. It agreed to pursue strengthened collaboration on outreach and awareness, as well as collaboration on work related to the sustainable development goals, including the development of indicators, as two areas for immediate action that could enhance cooperation and synergies. It also agreed that it would seek to increase efforts for coordination on technical support and capacity-building support programmes for joint efforts on issues of common interest.

¹¹ The report of the meeting is available at www.cbd.int/cooperation/doc/blg-2013-02-13-en.pdf.

¹² The report of the meeting of the BLG and the GEF Secretariat is available at www.cbd.int/cooperation/doc/blg-2013-09-09-en.pdf.

¹³ UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/5.

25. The Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) participated as an observer at the ninth meeting of the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related Conventions. A decision was taken by the Liaison Group to invite the Secretary of the IPPC to become a member, and this invitation was accepted.

26. At several of its meetings, the Liaison Group has addressed the work of, and collaboration with, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). At its eighth meeting, the BLG agreed on the need for a coordinated approach among the biodiversity-related Conventions to develop requests to IPBES within the framework of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. At its ninth meeting, the BLG decided to invite the IPBES secretariat to its next meeting and to consider, under a dedicated agenda item, possible modalities of future cooperation with IPBES and to explore opportunities to enable the participation of chairpersons of relevant convention bodies at this meeting. The Secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions participated in both plenary meetings of the Platform held respectively in Bonn, from 21 to 26 January 2013 (IPBES-1) and Antalya, Turkey from 9 to 14 December 2013 (IPBES-2), and cooperated on their input to the discussions. The relationship with IPBES, including potential implications for the preparation of future editions of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* and how the Convention, and in particular the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, should collaborate with the Platform, will be addressed by the Conference of the Parties, at its twelfth meeting, under agenda item 30. A draft decision on these matters is reproduced in the compilation of decisions.¹⁴

C. Cooperation at the national level

27. At the national level, the national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) provide a concrete framework for building coherence and synergy in planning and implementing the biodiversity-related conventions. However, there is room for further enhanced cooperation at the national level to ensure that the NBSAPs reflect the commitments under the various biodiversity-related conventions, that interagency mechanisms at the national level are effective in encompassing all relevant interests across various ministries, and, likewise, that implementation of the NBSAPs is pursued together with key sectors to ensure effective implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The ongoing development, revision and implementation of updated NBSAPs, aligned with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, provides an opportunity and a mechanism to facilitate the involvement and collaboration of all relevant stakeholders and bodies related to each of the conventions.

28. Among the positive accomplishments, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) have both prepared guidance to support the integration of measures appropriate to their objectives in NBSAP. The preparation and implementation of projects and initiatives with co-benefits across the conventions, including, in eligible countries, within the framework of the GEF, as addressed by the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention in recommendation 5/1, provides another opportunity to gain practical synergy.

29. National reporting is an issue that has a bearing both at the global level, given that it is determined by and responds to the governing bodies and that it enables aggregated assessment, and at the national level. While the nature, form, content and purpose of national reports to the various conventions differ, establishing common reporting formats, data standards and interoperability between online reporting tools/platforms would ease burdens on Parties and enhance the utility of data and potential for aggregation, where relevant.

¹⁴ UNEP/CBD/COP/12/1/Add.2.

30. In considering approaches to enhance coordination and synergies, countries may employ a range of measures in order to oversee and enable practical national-level synergies and enable coordinated inputs to the governing bodies. The establishment or enhancement of national committees or other mechanisms involving the offices and focal points relevant to the various conventions would be another beneficial approach, given the need that efforts towards greater integration and synergy among the conventions be nationally driven and implemented. Building on the work of the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related Conventions, steps may be taken to enhance cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions in closer partnership with Governments to create a more effective means for national-level synergies. Such a process is suggested below.

D. Cooperation at the level of the governing bodies to enhance coordination, coherence and national-level synergies

31. The following paragraphs focus on options for the form and content of a process to enhance coordination, coherence and national-level synergies among the governing bodies of biodiversity-related conventions. An authoritative process to enhance coordination, coherence and national-level synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions could be gained through the establishment of a joint working group, drawing members from representatives of Parties to each of the biodiversity-related conventions, that would advise the governing bodies and Parties to the biodiversity-related conventions on matters of coordination at the national, regional and global levels. The work and process undertaken to enhance synergies among the three conventions in the chemicals and waste cluster may provide valuable background and experience.¹⁵

32. The Conference of the Parties could initiate such a process by establishing a working group comprising representatives nominated by regions and in which officers or other representatives of Parties to the other biodiversity-related conventions, for example the chairs of the subsidiary bodies, could participate as observers. Under terms of reference provided by the Conference of the Parties, the group could commence work immediately. The Working Group could provide a report on its work to the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

33. For this group to become a Joint Working Group among the biodiversity-related conventions, the Conference of the Parties could invite the governing bodies of all biodiversity-related conventions to endorse its establishment and to nominate Party representatives to the Joint Working Group. It would work as a joint body starting in 2017, after potential endorsement by the CMS COP in November 2014 or 2017, the Ramsar COP in 2015, the Governing Body of the ITPGRFA in 2015, the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention in 2015 and the CITES COP in 2016. Such a joint working group could consider matters of coordination, coherence and synergy at all levels, including national-level synergies. Each governing body would nominate up to 10 members. The Joint Working Group of the governing bodies of all biodiversity-related conventions could build on the report of the Working Group and report to the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties as well as meetings of the governing bodies of the other biodiversity-related conventions. The group would be serviced by the Secretariat and the secretariats of any of the other conventions that join.

II. COOPERATION AMONG THE RIO CONVENTIONS

34. A report on cooperation among the Rio conventions: the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), including in the context of the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio conventions, has been provided to the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention at its fifth meeting.¹⁶

¹⁵ <http://synergies.pops.int>.

¹⁶ UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/8.

35. The report contained information on cooperation between the Secretariat of the Convention and the Secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, including cooperation on promoting synergy between NBSAPs, national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs) and national action programmes (NAPs), and the CBD Secretariat's involvement in the processes of the UNFCCC and the UNCCD. It included information on UNCCD-CBD joint liaison arrangements at the United Nations Headquarters New York and the Rio Conventions Pavilion. It also provided information on the twelfth meeting of the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions, held on 22 January 2013 in Bonn.¹⁷

36. With regards to options for enhanced cooperation among the Rio conventions, the Joint Liaison Group, in line with the guidance provided by the bodies of the Rio conventions, has previously developed a number of cooperative activities and considered actions for enhanced cooperation.¹⁸ Options identified by the three convention secretariat were outlined in a joint paper, which had been made available to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, at its eighth meeting.¹⁹

37. In the past biennium, the secretariats have cooperated in the area of joint reporting within the framework of a UNEP/GEF project "Piloting Integrated Processes and Approaches to Facilitate National Reporting to Rio Conventions".²⁰ At the twelfth meeting of the JLG, the issue of joint reporting was addressed. Noting that the goal of joint reporting would be to increase effectiveness of reporting while alleviating the reporting burden of countries, especially for small island developing States and least developed countries, the JLG observed that having a single template for reporting under the three Rio conventions would be difficult and ultimately of limited impact because of the convention-specific information required in the reports and differences among the conventions in reporting obligations, the entities responsible and the reporting and review timeframes.

38. The thirteenth meeting of the JLG is scheduled to be held on 24 September 2014 in New York.

III. PROGRESS WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COOPERATIVE PARTNERSHIP ON ECOSYSTEM-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (DECISION XI/23, PARAGRAPH 4)

39. Cooperation with the Ramsar Convention continues under the frameworks of the Memorandum of Cooperation signed by the Convention Secretariats on 4 November 2011 and the CBD-Ramsar fifth Joint Work Plan 2011-2020.

40. In paragraph 4 of decision XI/23 the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, and invited the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, under the Joint Work Plan between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention, and in consultation with relevant organizations and initiatives, to develop a cooperative partnership to promote awareness of, and capacity-building for, ecosystem-based solutions for water resources management as a means to enhance the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 by the broadest range of stakeholders, as a contribution to sustainable development and to the United Nations International Year of Water Cooperation (2013), and to make a progress report available to Parties prior to, and for the consideration of, the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Consequently, the Executive Secretary has prepared a progress report on this topic as an information note. The key points are as summarized below.

¹⁷ www.cbd.int/doc/reports/jlg-12-report-en.pdf.

¹⁸ More information is available at www.cbd.int/cooperation/liaison.shtml.

¹⁹ UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/10/INF/9.

²⁰ FNR-Rio Project, managed by the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre with six pilot countries: Afghanistan, Eritrea, Lao PDR, Liberia, Palau and Mauritius. More information is available at www.rioconventionsreporting.net.

41. There has been progress in recognition of the importance of ecosystem services in solving water-related problems. At the international level this includes the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference²¹ and the current status of a water goal, and targets, being considered for the post-2015 United Nations development agenda and the sustainable development goals.²² A growing number of organizations or initiatives have, or are developing, relevant partnerships; an example is the “Water Nexus Solutions” of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the International Water Association.²³ In addition, some long-standing water related partnerships are increasing attention to ecosystems as solutions; an example is the ecosystems and water security theme of the new strategy of the Global Water Partnership.²⁴ Decision X/28 and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, in particular the inclusion of water among the ecosystem services addressed by Aichi Biodiversity Target 14, has contributed to this progress.

42. Because water is so central to the environment, human development and economic interests, everybody is a stakeholder in sustainable water. There is therefore a high number of potential partners in ecosystem-based solutions for water resources management. All potential partners consulted to date have expressed interest in the concept of the “partnership”.

43. A key requirement is to engage with stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in, or affected by, water resources management. These stakeholders are focussed on finding solutions, often with an emphasis on using water related infrastructure. Communication is therefore improved by referring to ecosystems as “natural infrastructure”²⁵ to be promoted in harmony with built (physical) infrastructure. Convincing examples of the approach include where natural infrastructure has been used to improve sustainability and economic efficiency of high capital cost built infrastructure.

44. An informal and voluntary “Platform for Natural Infrastructure Solutions for Water” is therefore identified as the way forward. The objectives of the Platform remain consistent with decision XI/23 and centre on placing natural infrastructure at the heart of water management, through awareness raising and capacity-building. It will function as a community of practice, including among existing partnerships and initiatives, and enable new partnerships to flourish. The Platform will be open to all interested stakeholders, cover all relevant ecosystem types and address solutions to problems related to both water quantity (including scarcity and the extremes of drought and flood) and water quality. Key themes are likely to quickly develop such as disaster risk reduction, water security for agriculture, urban water solutions, etc. The mission, objectives, guiding principles, scope and desired outcome for the platform are described in the annex to the present note.

45. The current status of the platform is that voluntary resources are required to operationalize the platform based on a low-cost concept of a web-based forum facilitated by a modest level of secretariat support. Once operational, the platform should facilitate funding for on-the-ground capacity-building activities and projects.

²¹ Paragraph 122 of the outcome document “The future we want” (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex): “We recognize the key role that ecosystems play in maintaining water quantity and quality and support actions within respective national boundaries to protect and sustainably manage these ecosystems”.

²² As of the date of this document, the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals had approved proposed goal 6 “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all” with the proposed targets to include “by 2020 protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes”.

²³ <http://www.waternexusolutions.org/1x8/home.html>.

²⁴ <http://www.gwp.org/en/Our-approach/Thematic-Areas/Ecosystems-and-Water-Security>.

²⁵ Consultations have debated terminology at considerable length. “Green infrastructure” is an alternative but less favoured because in the water sector it is often used for low carbon approaches such as hydropower dams (which are built/physical infrastructure).

IV. COOPERATION WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVES

46. Support provided to the implementation of the Convention through the full engagement of relevant international organizations is essential to the achievement the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Likewise, mainstreaming biodiversity into the sectors and processes that most impact biodiversity depends on due attention being provided in other relevant international processes. In this respect a number of specialized agencies, programmes and funds of the United Nations, as well as other organizations, continue to be actively engaged in the issues of the Convention and its Protocols. To support this objective, the Secretariat continues to maintain and build upon collaborative agreements with relevant organizations and to cooperate fully in relevant external processes and interagency task forces. It will be essential that this work is strengthened in the lead up to 2020.

Cooperation in the context of the processes towards the post-2015 United Nations development agenda and sustainable development goals (SDG)

47. A report on cooperation of the Secretariat of the Convention as a member of the United Nations, inter-agency, Technical Support Team (TST) to the United Nations General Assembly's Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and as a member of the United Nations Task Team on Post-2015 (UNTT) was provided to the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention at its fifth meeting.²⁶ Updated information, including on the outcome of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, is provided to the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting in document UNEP/CBD/COP/12/15.

The Aichi Biodiversity Targets Task Force

48. The Aichi Biodiversity Targets Task Force comprises 29 organizations (international non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations entities, including the secretariats of biodiversity-related conventions)²⁷ and aims to contribute to the successful and timely implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and, more specifically, to provide a platform to exchange information and coordinate activities among the signatories in support of the efforts of their member countries and stakeholders towards achieving the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets. A meeting of the Task Force was held in the margins of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties in October 2012 and further steps will be taken to enhance this mechanism. A brief report was provided to the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention at its fifth meeting in the document on cooperation with other conventions and international organizations and initiatives.²⁶

²⁶ UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/8.

²⁷ The 29 signatories of the Memorandum of Cooperation and Members of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets Task Force comprise the international non-governmental organizations Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE), BirdLife International, Conservation International, Rare Conservation, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), TRAFFIC (that signed on 4 November 2011), the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF); the intergovernmental organizations Bioversity International, the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) (that signed on 14 October 2013), the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention; and United Nations entities comprising the Secretariats of the CBD, CITES and CMS, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

Ongoing initiatives, such as the online reporting system and InforMEA, in particular regarding their relationship to the general reporting requirements under the Convention on Biological Diversity as well as other ongoing developments, and the involvement of the Secretariat in these initiatives

49. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention requested a progress report on ongoing initiatives, such as the online reporting system and InforMEA, in particular regarding their relationship to the general reporting requirements under the Convention on Biological Diversity as well as other ongoing developments, and the involvement of the Secretariat in these initiatives. The Secretariat continues to work closely with its counterparts from other MEAs on knowledge management and the interoperability of information systems, including in the context of UNEP's MEA information and knowledge management initiative and the InforMEA portal,²⁸ as reported to the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention, at its fifth meeting.²⁹ The Secretariat is also advancing work on the online reporting facility to enable Parties to provide regular updates on progress towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets,³⁰ as part of general improvements in the clearing house mechanism.³¹

Cooperation with other international organizations and initiatives

50. A report on cooperation with other international organizations and initiatives was provided to the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention at its fifth meeting.³² It addressed cooperation in the framework of the Inter-agency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species;³³ programmatic cooperation between the Secretariat of the Convention and the United Nations Environment Programme; cooperation between the Secretariat of the Convention and the United Nations Development Programme; cooperative support provided to the Convention by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);³⁴ progress in the joint programme between UNESCO and the Secretariat of the CBD on biological and cultural diversity 2010-2020;³⁵ as well as collaboration between the Secretariat of the Convention and the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), among others.³⁶

51. In addition to the information provided to the Working Group on collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), an in-depth report on work in this area is provided for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting.³⁷

²⁸ www.informea.org

²⁹ Progress report on the clearing-house mechanism UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/3/Add.2 (see, in particular paragraph 40 of that information note).

³⁰ See document UNEP/CBD/COP/12/9/Add.2.

³¹ See document UNEP/CBD/COP/12/11.

³² UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/8.

³³ The secretariats of ten international organizations participate in the Inter-agency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species as core members: the Centre for Agricultural Biosciences International (CABI), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the World Trade Organization (WTO).

³⁴ Further details were provided by FAO in information document UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/INF/22.

³⁵ A progress report on the joint programme, including a report of the conference, was made available in information document UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/INF/14.

³⁶ It was noted that the negotiations for the sixth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund concluded in April 2014 with commitment by donors for a replenishment of US\$ 4.43 billion to GEF-6, 2014-2018. The biodiversity focal area strategy is presented among the programming directions for the replenishment that was adopted by the GEF Assembly at its fifth meeting held from 25 to 30 May 2014 in Cancun, Mexico. More information is also available on the GEF website at <http://www.thegef.org/gef/node/10419>.

³⁷ UNEP/CBD/COP/12/16.

52. In addition to the report on collaboration in the area of biodiversity and tourism development with the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), other specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations, convention secretariats, intergovernmental organizations and environmental non-governmental organizations provided to the Working Group, an addendum to the present document³⁸ provides a report to the Conference of the Parties on biodiversity and tourism development.

53. Further details on the Joint ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity,³⁹ including an outline and the current status of eleven ongoing national-level projects are provided in an information document.⁴⁰

54. A brief report on collaboration between the Secretariat of the Convention and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) in the framework of a memorandum of understanding established in October 2012 was provided to the Working Group. In August 2014, SPREP organized and delivered a joint preparatory meeting for its Members in preparation for the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the forthcoming meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the CMS and the Ramsar Convention with the participation of representatives of the secretariats of each of the three conventions.

VI. SUGGESTED ELEMENTS FOR A DRAFT DECISIONS

55. In light of its consideration of the information contained in the present note by the Executive Secretary, the Conference of the Parties may wish to include the elements below into the draft decision contained in recommendation 5/7 of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention. The Conference of the Parties may wish to consider including its decision under this item in the wider package of decisions that could collectively be known as the “Pyeongchang Roadmap for the enhanced implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets”.

Recalling paragraph 4 of decision XI/23,

Noting the report on progress of the Executive Secretary,⁴¹

Welcomes the proposed *Platform for Natural Infrastructure Solutions for Water* as a contribution of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 to the post-2015 United Nations development agenda and the sustainable development goals;

Invites Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to provide resources to support its full implementation.

Recalling decision XI/6,

Reaffirming the need to strengthen synergistic processes among the biodiversity-related conventions, building on the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 as the central pillar, in close

³⁸ UNEP/CBD/COP/12/24/Add.1.

³⁹ The programme document that is the basis for concrete project activities under the Joint ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity is available in English, French and Spanish from both the CBD and ITTO websites at the following locations: CBD: <http://www.cbd.int/forest/doc/cbd-itto-initiative-programme-document.en.pdf>; ITTO: http://www.itto.int/documents_detail/contents_type=598 ITTC(XLVII)/11 ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative to Conserve Tropical Forests.

⁴⁰ UNEP/CBD/COP/12/INF/25.

⁴¹ UNEP/CBD/COP/12/24.

collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other relevant entities of the United Nations system, aiming for further development of tools and procedures enabling harmonized implementation of the conventions, learning from other relevant processes, including the process within the chemicals and waste cluster,

Noting, with appreciation, the work of the biodiversity-related conventions to strengthen synergies among them and with other United Nations organizations,

Noting the benefits of greater involvement by national Governments in strengthening synergies for implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the respective biodiversity conventions at the national level, and recalling paragraph 89 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,⁴² which encourages parties to multilateral environmental agreements to consider further measures to promote policy coherence at all relevant levels, improve efficiency, reduce unnecessary overlap and duplication, and enhance coordination and cooperation among the multilateral environmental agreements,

Without prejudice to the specific objectives and recognizing the respective mandates of these conventions,

Calls on the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related Conventions to continue its work to enhance coherence and cooperation in the implementation of the conventions;

Decides to establish a Working Group on Synergies among the Biodiversity-related Conventions which will include two members from each of the regional groups, while ensuring adequate representation of members from least developed countries and small island developing States;

With a view to engaging the other biodiversity-related conventions in the work of the Working Group on Synergies among the Biodiversity-related Conventions, *requests* the Executive Secretary to invite the executive heads of the other biodiversity-related conventions to facilitate the participation of officers, or other representatives of Parties to their conventions, through their standing committees, bureaux or other processes, as appropriate;

Requests the working group to explore ways and means for enhancing synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions with a view to enhancing their implementation at all levels, in mutually supportive ways, and to identify opportunities and processes to enhance mainstreaming of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 at the national level, and to provide an interim report on its work to the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention, at its sixth meeting;⁴³

Invites the governing bodies of the other biodiversity-related conventions to consider to endorse the working group, so that it becomes a Joint Working Group on Synergies among Biodiversity-related Conventions, and to arrange for the nomination of up to ten members from each convention as members of the joint group;

Requests the Joint Working Group on Synergies among the Biodiversity-related Conventions to hold its first joint meeting in 2017 and to prepare proposals for enhancing synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions, with a view to enhancing their implementation at all levels in mutually supportive ways, for consideration by the governing bodies of those biodiversity-related conventions that have endorsed the group, including the Conference of the Parties, at its fourteenth meeting;

⁴² General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

⁴³ Or the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, if established, at its first meeting.

Requests the Executive Secretary to continue to pursue collaboration and partnerships with Parties, entities of the United Nations system, indigenous and local communities and stakeholders from various sectors to support implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

PLATFORM FOR NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE SOLUTIONS FOR WATER

Mission

- Water and natural infrastructure is at the heart of green economies

Objectives

- To support awareness-raising and capacity-building for natural infrastructure solutions for water
- To support the development of an adequate knowledge base on using natural infrastructure solutions for solving water problems through collating, synthesizing and disseminating knowledge and experience, making available the relevant tools and practices that support improved use of natural infrastructure, and identifying areas where information is lacking and new knowledge is needed
- To identify ways in which natural infrastructure can contribute to addressing some of the major global water challenges faced today
- To identify key opportunities to promote natural infrastructure solutions in other forums and mobilize support and inputs (such as targeted briefs) to mainstream natural infrastructure into those forums

Guiding Principles

A set of principles will guide the Platform and ensure that it adds value to global efforts:

- Increases knowledge, understanding and capacity regarding how natural infrastructure provides solutions for water related challenges
- Recognizes that natural and build (physical) infrastructure should operate in harmony and be mutually supportive of each other
- Is of global significance through influencing policies, investment and action at regional, national and local levels
- Is open to all interested stakeholders and practitioners
- Prioritizes engagement with, or influencing, the water resources management community
- Adds value to existing partnerships and initiatives
- Is driven by needs identified by users

Scope

- Addresses all components of natural water infrastructure and their inter-linkages through the water cycle, including wetlands, land cover (forests, grasslands and crops) and soils
- Ecological infrastructures needed for essential water-related ecosystem services
- Long-term perspectives and interconnectivity in the maintenance of water related ecological infrastructures under pressure from climate change and land and water use
- Human dependencies and impacts on water related ecological infrastructures

- Accounting for services provided by intact water related ecological infrastructures *versus* benefits and costs stemming from degraded ones
- Opportunities and approaches to restoration of degraded water related ecological infrastructures
- Alignment of policies across sectors for investments in water related ecological infrastructures
- A special focus on ecosystem based adaptation to climate change, resilience and disaster risk reduction
- Integration of water related ecological infrastructures in economic and land-use planning
- Approaches, including economic incentives, for the maintenance of water related ecological infrastructures

Outcome desired

- Awareness and capacity to use water related ecosystem infrastructure solutions mainstreamed across all relevant sectors and policy areas, delivering significant and tangible improvements in the sustainability of water on the ground
-