



Convention on Biological Diversity

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CHAIRS OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BODIES OF BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS

Fourth meeting
Gland, 13 February 2011

REPORT OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF CHAIRS OF SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BODIES OF BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS

ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. The meeting was opened by Ms. Senka Barudanovic, Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), who welcomed participants and asked the Secretary-General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, Mr. Anada Tiega, to open the meeting. Mr. Tiega mentioned the need for common understanding of the challenges facing the biodiversity-related conventions. He stressed the importance of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) as a new mechanism for addressing these challenges. The co-chair responded by offering congratulations to the Secretary-General on the 40th anniversary of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and called for a round of applause. Ms. Barudanovic introduced her co-chair, Ms. Heather MacKay, before suggesting that participants in the meeting introduce themselves around the table (see participants list in annex I). After this, Mr. Nick Davidson (Deputy Secretary-General of the Ramsar Convention) provided some initial housekeeping and procedural information.

ITEM 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

2. The meeting agreed to proceed on the basis of the proposed agenda.

NOTE: All presentations from the meeting are available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=AHTEG-IAS-02>

ITEM 3. THIS AGENDA ITEM WAS DIVIDED INTO TWO SEPARATE DISCUSSIONS, AS FOLLOWS:

Item 3.1 Mobilizing the scientific community for the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 – opportunities for the scientific advisory bodies of biodiversity-related conventions

3. The co-chair introduced the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to present an overview of the Nagoya Outcomes, focusing on the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the work that the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity was undertaking to assist Parties to implement them.

4. In the following discussion, the co-chair explained how the fifteenth and sixteenth meetings of SBSTTA would address the further update of Strategic Plan rationale, indicators and milestones, including a review/assessment process undertaken through the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity

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Observation Network (GEO BON), which would provide input to the forthcoming Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Indicators, which in turn would provide input to the next SBSTTA. Similar work would be done for the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) and the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI), and would feed into the Strategic Plan implementation process. The co-chair also mentioned work which was proposed to be undertaken on ecosystem restoration within the Convention on Biological Diversity. She further stated that the agenda of the next two meetings of SBSTTA would include the specific issues of sustainable use, the relation between biodiversity and climate change, discussion on biodiversity of inland and marine waters, and island biodiversity, amongst others. She emphasized the great importance of expected guidance for National Focal Points (NFPs), which would enable better cooperation on national level, but also better preparation for meetings of SBSTTA. She underlined the potential of regional workshops, which would be according to the workplan of the Convention on Biological Diversity. These workshops were aimed at the revision of NBSAPs, but also presented a great possibility for the development of cooperation at local and regional levels between all the biodiversity-related conventions.

5. A representative of the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) thanked the representative from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity for the presentation and raised questions about collaboration mechanisms, monitoring of progress and success, and the need for specific protocols for data-sharing between the biodiversity-related conventions. He mentioned that the next CMS Conference of the Parties, to be held in Norway in November 2011, would be asked to extend the current Strategic Plan until 2014 (with minor adjustments) and to establish a working group to develop a new Strategic Plan for the period 2015-2020. The representative from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity described ongoing collaborations with both CMS and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to develop tools for integrating the work of these conventions into the Convention on Biological Diversity National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) at country level. There was a need for improved guidance to National Focal Points (NFPs) of these conventions in order to allow them to better engage with their colleagues in the NBSAP revision process. Ramsar suggested that there was a need for a mapping of respective targets and objectives for the different Strategic Plans of the biodiversity-related conventions against the Convention on Biological Diversity Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The representative from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) stated that they were undertaking an exercise to map the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 against the GEF Biodiversity Focal Area strategic objectives for GEF-5 and other GEF Council decisions, noting that the negotiations for the GEF-6 replenishment would start in 2012 and that the Convention on Biological Diversity did not attend STAP meetings. IUCN expressed the positive attitude of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in improving collaboration. IUCN has also completed a mapping exercise for the Strategic Plan and will bring it to their next Congress meeting in South Korea. They reported that the Government of India had requested IUCN assistance in their preparations for the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) and that they were undertaking an analysis of COP 10 decisions which specifically mentioned the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). IUCN hoped to be fully engaged in the NBSAP workshops and was willing to provide more assistance.

6. The representative from CITES stated that they would be adapting their own Strategic Plan to reflect the broader Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and highlighted a need for capacity-building, especially in relation to the best available science for the elaboration of non-detriment findings to make sure that trade did not threaten the survival of species. He also mentioned a growing tension between science and politics within the CITES process, especially in the area of marine species (e.g., sharks) where there was strong disagreement between nations dependent on fish for food security and those nations that were not. He also mentioned the need for capacity-building for assessment of sustainable use: the basis of all CITES work. CITES briefly described the ongoing collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity on the planned series of regional NBSAP workshops.

7. The representative for the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITFPGRFA) stated that the interaction with the Convention on Biological Diversity at both scientific, technical and operational (process) levels was a requirement written into the treaty, and mentioned that at the Fourth Session of the Governing Body to the ITPGRFA to be held in Bali the next month. The Nagoya outcomes would be a separate agenda item, with both the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the ABS Protocol to be considered. With respect to the latter, he also mentioned that a revision of 1996 Leipzig Global Plan of Action on Plant Genetic Resources was underway, and would be reviewed at the thirteenth session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA 13) to be held in July 2011. He recalled that as well as many other collaborations, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations was a lead partner in the Convention on Biological Diversity programme of work on agriculture.

8. The representative for Ramsar mentioned that its COP-11 would be held in Romania in 2012. The forthcoming Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) and other planning meetings would be considering recommendations on the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, in order for Ramsar's current strategic plan to be updated as appropriate in order to better reflect the new Strategic Plan under the Convention on Biological Diversity. He stressed the role of water-related ecosystem services as underpinning many other securities, such as food and water security. He mentioned the workshop at GEO BON for observation data to support the biodiversity-related conventions, and noted ongoing work on indicators being undertaken by Ramsar in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) – all feeding into the Convention on Biological Diversity AHTEG on Indicators.

9. The representative from CITES suggested that for the purposes of the Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Bodies of the Biodiversity-related Conventions (CSAB) exercise, mapping of the various strategic plans should be restricted to science and technology aspects and leave mapping of political/governance issues for the Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG). IUCN stressed that governing processes of all conventions were looking at the implications of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 on their work and stressed the need to work quickly and produce a user-friendly product. The co-chairs asked if IUCN might take the lead in the coordinating role and received a positive response.

The co-chairs proposed the following action points arising from the discussion:

(a) To recommend that the Convention on Biological Diversity should engage more broadly with the biodiversity-related and Rio conventions to integrate the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 into other implementation processes;

(b) To recommend that, with the assistance of IUCN, an exercise be conducted intersessionally to review and cross-map the various strategic plans, priorities and targets of the biodiversity-related conventions, the results to be brought back to CSAB and then to the respective meetings of governing bodies;

(c) Recognizing the need for all the biodiversity-related conventions to engage more strongly with the NBSAP process as appropriate, to recommend that these conventions should:

(i) consider how to better support their NFPs to engage in the process at country level;

(ii) consider what scientific guidance might be needed from the scientific advisory bodies, and how this might be co-ordinated;

(iii) consider and provide recommendations to their contracting Parties on how the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and NBSAP process could help in harmonizing reporting requirements and processes.

Item 3.2 The intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services – opportunities for the scientific advisory bodies of biodiversity-related conventions

10. The co-chairs introduced Mr. Neville Ash (UNEP) who provided an overview and update of the recent IPBES meeting in Busan, South Korea, in June 2010 (see presentation <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=CSAB-04>). He gave a brief overview of the negotiation process, agreed to the functions, and the next steps for the IPBES. The UNEP Governing Council (GC: 21-24 Feb 2011) was expected to agree on a decision to request the Executive Director of UNEP to convene the first IPBES Plenary in or around October 2011, which would address issues related to the governance and structure of the IPBES; the second Plenary could be held in early 2012 and would address the development of the IPBES work programme. He stressed that the focus of the IPBES had to address the needs of Governments and other decision-makers for improving science knowledge for decision-making. He suggested the following discussion points for the group: (i) how secretariats and scientific advisory bodies might engage in consultation groups leading up to the IPBES plenaries; (ii) the development of procedures for defining and processing “user needs”; (iii) the nature of future CSAB involvement in the governance structure of IPBES; (iv) how CSAB might make inputs into the development of the work programme.

11. The co-chairs thanked the presenter and moved on to explain that there was a lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities to identify user needs and information gaps to be addressed by IPBES, and indeed other similar fora. The SBSTTA chair noted that SBSTTA had already received a request from the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to discuss the relationship between IPBES and SBSTTA, but only once all the operational arrangements regarding IPBES had been settled. She noted the potential value of the CSAB group’s recommendations regarding possible relationships between the IPBES and other biodiversity-related conventions. Emphasizing the importance of scientific information in the decision-making process, she stated that IPBES would be a welcome development if it was responsive to requests coming from process of the Convention on Biological Diversity. She stressed that IPBES work needed to be strongly aligned with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and therefore the SBSTTA Bureau and other Convention on Biological Diversity bodies should have a prominent place in governing bodies of IPBES. Finally, she asked how IPBES would engage with national level partners – only through government, or directly to institutions, academia, etc.

12. A representative from CMS welcomed the progress being made with IPBES, and stressed the importance of gap analysis and the art of bringing science into policy and decision-making. He added that CSAB should be engaged as a group in the IPBES process and that CMS was willing to help this in any way.

13. The representative of IUCN confirmed their strong support for IPBES and welcomed faster movement of science into policymaking. She stated that IUCN was willing to undertake some of the delivery functions of IPBES but warned that discussions regarding the hosting could become politicized. She added that civil society engagement in IPBES needed to be more clearly defined, and stressed the role and potential of the Biodiversity Indicators Project (BIP), the IUCN Red List of Endangered Species, amongst other programmes, in providing information to the IPBES process. UNEP responded by explaining how the multi-stakeholder composition of IPBES was being developed to address involvement of groups such as IUCN.

14. The representative from CITES explained how both their plant and animal science committees would be discussing IPBES at their respective meetings later that year, and added that these committees could be both “provider and user” in the IPBES process, and that CITES would like to be involved in the work towards the first plenary. As actual engagement modalities had not been fully developed internally, CITES would welcome suggestions for collaborations from IPBES – but would be happy to join any

advisory panel, finally, stressing that development of an IBPES work programme would be very important from the perspectives of meeting national and species-level science information needs.

15. A representative from ITPGRFA added that both the Treaty and FAO had been involved in the IPBES process and that science was important to meeting the challenge of feeding 9 billion people, and the need to intensify, in a sustainable manner, agricultural production if broader environmental targets, such as the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 were also met.

16. The representative from the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands described the important role that the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) had played within Ramsar in shaping the way in which scientific information on wetlands was gathered and communicated to policymakers, and that the MA produced useful outputs that could not be done within a small secretariat such as that of Ramsar. She expressed a hope that the outputs of future IPBES assessments would be equally relevant and valuable. The Ramsar Secretariat also mentioned the difficulty of accessing national level knowledge that was “stored in heads” and not shared through scientific literature. He noted that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) model was restricted to peer-reviewed literature and that simple questions like “Where are the wetlands in country X?” were not easily answered from this literature alone. The Ramsar STRP Chair noted that Ramsar supported CSAB representation in the IPBES Advisory Panel, asked what role CSAB could play in the presentation of agreed coordinated requests to IBPES on issues or themes of common interest to the biodiversity-related conventions, and suggested that CSAB might submit a joint information paper to the first Plenary of IPBES to reflect the group’s recommendations in this respect. She suggested that each Convention’s Science Body should review and discuss the questions raised in Mr. Ash’s presentation, and that a collective view of the CSAB group should be developed.

17. The representative from CMS stressed the need for transparent review of protocols to avoid some of the recent problems incurred in the IPCC process. CITES noted that their Conference of the Parties had requested the Secretariat to NOT take any strong position with respect to IPBES without further guidance from the Conference of the Parties.

18. The representative from UNEP responded that in order to adequately fill information gaps, the “grey literature” did need to be accessed, so the procedures for doing so would need to be discussed at an IPBES Plenary. Currently it was not clear who would enter IPBES from national level – there were ongoing discussions between the different levels of users which still needed to be resolved before or at the first plenary.

19. The co-chairs suggested that the IPBES discussion could continue in the Ramsar STRP from 14-19 February, and the CSAB co-chairs, who would attend the STRP 16 meeting, could distil out the science issues in these discussions and circulate them within CSAB (online) to assess the level of agreement. This approach was supported by CMS and others. Finally, the representative from IUCN highlighted the connection between implementation modalities and financial needs.

The meeting agreed the following action points:

(a) Discussion on IPBES will be taken up at the STRP 16 meeting, in order to begin the development of a strategy for Ramsar’s engagement with IPBES, possibly including a draft resolution on IPBES engagement to be tabled at the Ramsar COP 11 in 2012;

(b) The Ramsar STRP is planning to develop an information document on STRP engagement with IPBES for discussion with the Ramsar Convention’s Standing Committee. The document also will be shared with the CSAB group members to serve as a starting point for the development of a joint information paper from CSAB, aiming to be submitted to the to the first plenary of IPBES.

NOTE: The morning session closed at 1 p.m. Items 4 and 5 were postponed and taken up at 5 p.m. after consideration of all other agenda items.

ITEM 4. MOBILIZING THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAGOYA PROTOCOL ON ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING – OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BODIES OF THE BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS

20. A short presentation (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=CSAB-04>) was provided by a representative from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and a brief discussion followed, ending with the suggestion that the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity could provide the CSAB with a guide to the science and technical implications of the Protocol. IUCN added that they were currently working on a guide in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

21. A representative from ITPGRFA stated that it was working closely with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity on ABS issues and had good experience with establishing access agreements. Their collaboration would continue.

The co-chairs proposed the following action points arising from the discussion: CSAB members to draw attention of their respective science bodies to the Nagoya Protocol and the SCBD/IUCN guide and to get advice on further needs and report back to the next meeting.

ITEM 5. MOBILIZING THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF BIODIVERSITY - OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BODIES OF THE BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS

22. A brief presentation (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=CSAB-04>) was made by a representative from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity followed by a short discussion. The United Nations Decade of Biodiversity (UNDB) was a response to the prognosis that the next 10 years were the most important to avoid dangerous environmental tipping points, but the major focus is awareness-raising. The chair from SBSTTA pointed out that UNDB, which coincided with the Strategic Plan, allowed sufficient time for significant change in human society and biodiversity. She stressed that more than public awareness-raising was needed – political awareness and action on the ground was needed also. However, the only way to re-establish a lost connection with nature was through learning. She urged that consideration be given, in time for the start of the UNDB, to building capacities and conditions for formal permanent education on environmental responsibility.

23. IUCN asked how it would be possible to keep a decade-long initiative alive. Perhaps it would be necessary to kick-start the process every two years – the general public still did not see the connection between biodiversity and nature, and that nature was in trouble.

24. A representative from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity added that a draft workplan was available from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and would be circulated to CSAB members.

The co-chairs proposed the following action point arising from the discussion: CSAB members to take information on UNDB back to their respective science bodies and seek advice on how best to maximize the impact of the decade and how best to use scientific knowledge to support the process.

ITEM 6. AREAS FOR COLLABORATION OR INTEGRATION

25. The co-chairs explained that items 4 and 5 would be considered at the end of the afternoon session.

Item 6.1. Ecosystem restoration

26. The CSAB co-chair, Heather MacKay, introduced agenda item 6, specifically the briefing paper on Ecosystem Restoration (see the information document for this meeting <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=CSAB-04>) which included a proposal for a collaborative work programme on practical guidance for ecosystem restoration. She outlined the foundations for collaboration among the Conventions and Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs): ecosystem restoration features prominently in several of the Conventions' recent decisions and workplans as well as other global processes with similar multi-sectoral objectives.

27. Following the introduction, the representative from CMS supported the proposal to collaborate further on this, and especially to better define the restoration of natural ecosystems both in terms of restoration of degraded habitats and the removal of alien species.

28. The second part of the presentation was made by Mr. Sasha Alexander of the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER), who first presented a letter to the chairs from the SER leadership offering support and assistance for developing practical restoration guidance. He then focused on the target audiences and types of guidance that could be developed under a potential CSAB collaboration, including, in the short-term, general policy and planning guidance for national decision makers and implementing agencies, and in the long-term, specific technical guidance for practitioners in the field. The presentation provided an overview of the current work plans of various CSAB members that address ecosystem restoration (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=CSAB-04>).

29. Following the presentation, the representative from the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands described the current work of the STRP to provide guidance on avoidance (as the first response to the threat of habitat loss), mitigation, compensation, and ecological restoration. SBSTTA highlighted the need for careful communication on ecosystem restoration with decision makers prioritizing the reduction of direct and indirect pressures, and also the need to consider how long a restored habitat/ecosystem might remain in its restored condition, or become degraded again. She added that there were opportunities for cross-convention collaboration to address multiple benefits relevant to more than one convention. CMS agreed that care needed to be taken with communicating what could, and what could not be restored and at what cost, and to what extent? Ramsar highlighted the way in which climate change was rapidly causing changes that required consideration of novel ecosystems and how to address these in policy, and the fact that no ecosystem was truly static over hundreds of years. CMS highlighted the need to consider ecological networks and barriers to movement (linear development – roads, power-lines, etc.) rather than single, stand-alone sites. A representative from STAP mentioned that restoration was a viable project focus under the GEF biodiversity and land degradation focal areas, but added that it was needed to clearly demonstrate global environmental benefits (a GEF eligibility criterion) in such projects, and the need to always try to avoid degradation first.

30. The discussion then focused on three points raised in the presentation: (i) was the proposal a good starting point for further collaboration on ecological restoration guidance; (ii) which conventions should be involved, and with what *modus operandi*; and (iii) how to ensure that this, and other CSAB products met user demand and were actively taken up and used. For example, IUCN was developing a Red List for Ecosystems to complement the Red List of Endangered Species. CITES would support all outputs of the meeting and group, but might not actively participate in this work as the CITES Secretariat had no clear mandate to do so from its CoP/Standing Committee: perhaps the Caspian Sea would be the closest approach to a requirement for ecological restoration to improve populations of sturgeon species, all of which were CITES listed. The representative from ITPGRFA mentioned the need to consider restoration within the context of traditional/sustainable high-yield agricultural systems.

31. Suggested next actions were: (i) to form an informal working group among CSAB participants and invited organizations to further refine the briefing paper on ecosystem restoration, including the proposal for a multi-convention work programme - all CSAB participants agreed to participate in this working group even though some did not see the immediate relevance to their respective Convention or

MEA; (ii) to produce a CSAB information document that could be circulated to various member meetings and other processes; and (iii) to hold one or two technical expert workshops that would provide a framework for policy guidance and terms of reference for a joint work programme – it was suggested that the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) World Conference to be held in Mérida, Mexico in August 2011 might be a potential cost-effective venue for one of these workshops. All CSAB participants agreed to request that their respective Secretariats considered providing modest funding for such workshops.

32. CITES questioned whether the circulation of a CSAB joint paper would be delivered as a CSAB document or would be used by the individual conventions as they saw fit. A representative from the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands gave an example of how CSAB work had been useful in their STRP work.

33. The meeting noted with appreciation the contribution made by the SER to the development of the briefing paper and their offer to contribute to the future work on this topic.

The meeting agreed the following action points:

(a) **Ms. MacKay and Mr. Alexander will finalize the briefing paper, taking account the discussions at this meeting, and will make this paper available as an information document for any of the other CSAB group members to use in taking the issue forward within their own decision-making processes;**

(b) **Ramsar, with assistance from SER, will refine and circulate ideas, objectives and outlines for one or two small workshops to further develop a collaborative programme of work on ecosystem restoration;**

(c) **CSAB participants will seek funding or in-kind support for such workshops.**

ITEM 6.2 HARMONIZATION OF SPECIES NOMENCLATURE

34. The Co-chair requested CITES to briefly introduce this agenda item and their background note to the meeting (see information document <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=CSAB-04>). A representative from CITES described the recent work that had been completed between CITES and CMS to ensure that both conventions used a standard set of reference materials for nomenclature – not necessarily the most recent, but rather the best, most widely accepted, standard reference list of species names. CMS added that this was a good example of collaboration between two science bodies of the respective conventions. Ramsar noted that it was working to extend its nomenclature list beyond waterbirds to better support its work on standard site identification and would draw on the experience of the CITES/CMS collaboration (see information document from Ramsar <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=CSAB-04>). IUCN voiced its support and was willing to provide inputs based on the work of the Species Survival Commissions (SSC). SBSTTA added they would link this discussion to the Convention on Biological Diversity GTI discussions.

35. Further work towards harmonization of nomenclature was generally supported. The co-chairs thanked CITES/CMS for taking a lead on this agenda item.

The co-chairs proposed the following action points arising from the discussion:

(a) **The issue of harmonization of species nomenclature across the conventions should be addressed as a standing item on the agenda of each CSAB meeting;**

(b) **Science bodies to provide regular updates to future CSAB meetings.**

ITEM 6.3 WAYS TO STRENGTHEN SUPPORT TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LIAISON GROUP OF THE BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS

36. A representative from the Ramsar Secretariat explained that currently, the BLG was a meeting of the senior staff of the respective conventions, but that a decision of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (decision X/20) requested a review of the effectiveness of the BLG. A representative from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity provided historical detail of the early meetings (comprising the biodiversity-related conventions, IPCC, science bodies) and its subsequent evolution. The co-chairs asked what specifically needed to be improved. The representative from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity suggested that there was a need for more time and effort from existing members, greater involvement of national partners, and a greater focus on science, but added that the latter might duplicate the work of CSAB. The representative from Ramsar noted that the BLG, which could address governance/political issues, had a wider scope than CSAB. The representative from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity added that better linkages between CSAB and BLG would be an improvement. CMS stressed the need to keep science and political agendas separate in any joint meeting to avoid dominance of the former by the latter.

The meeting agreed that it was not necessary to hold joint meetings of CSAB and BLG, but that the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity would track BLG meetings more closely and report back at subsequent CSAB meetings, and would advise the CSAB members if and when specific inputs were required from CSAB to the BLG meetings¹.

37. The meeting then considered whether there might be any new or emerging issues of common interest that could be the subject of collaborative work in future. IUCN suggested waiting until the mapping exercise referred to in agenda item 6.1 was completed before attempting to identify new issues. The co-chairs agreed but suggested in the meantime a quick tour de table on current priorities and issues being considered within each of the scientific advisory bodies.

38. The representative from Ramsar suggested that water should be a cross-cutting issue of high priority. SBSSTA were generally supportive of water as an emerging issue, and also suggested biodiversity and natural disasters.

39. The Ramsar STRP 16 meeting would consider current STRP work on urban wetlands, wetland biodiversity and health, extractive industries and energy sector impacts on wetlands, and would discuss the role of wetlands in disaster planning and response as a possible new issue for STRP in the future.

40. The CMS Science Council would be considering habitat change in relation to ecosystem services and migratory species, climate change, marine issues, alien species and the science/policy interface.

41. CITES mentioned the need for improved scientific guidance on the non-detrimental finding assessment and also mentioned a more scientific basis for management of species in trade.

42. ITPGRFA added climate change adaptation in agricultural systems, plus access to and transfer of technology.

43. STAP referred to tipping points/thresholds; invasive alien species and climate change (invasion pathway analysis), carbon sequestration, genetic resource ABS; multi-focal topic – tracking multiple benefits from limited resources (e.g., the development of carbon tracking tool with ICRAF/WFF and plan a similar exercise for biodiversity).

44. Co-chair MacKay stated that the Strategic Plan cross-mapping exercise and outputs would be a useful analytical tool for existing issues, but some horizon-scanning could be a useful exercise at the next

¹ The next meeting of the BLG will be 13 April 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland.

meeting. She suggested that identification of emerging issues of common interest or concern for the biodiversity-related convention might also be a potential role for IPBES.

The co-chairs proposed the following action point arising from the discussion: The next CSAB agenda should include an agenda item on emerging issues, including some consideration of approaches to horizon-scanning which might be useful and relevant.

ITEM 7. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

45. The meeting agreed that the rotation of the meeting between members should be continued with the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the host organization acting as co-chairs. The meeting noted that CITES had offered to host the fifth meeting of the Chairs of Scientific Advisory Bodies of Biodiversity-related Conventions in Spring 2012, on the margins of the CITES Animals Committee (venue to be determined).

46. Co-chair MacKay requested the Convention on Biological Diversity, Ramsar and CITES secretariats to work together to prepare a short aide-memoire for the organization and preparation of co-hosted CSAB meetings, to cover issues such as agenda preparation, registration and bookings, and circulation of documents.

ITEM 8. OTHER MATTERS

47. No other matters were discussed.

ITEM 9. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

48. The co-chairs thanked participants for their contributions to a very productive meeting. They specifically recognized the efforts by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in preparing the meeting. The meeting was closed at 5:30 p.m. on 13 February 2011.

Annex I

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