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Item 11 of the provisional agenda*

OPTIONS TO ENHANCE SYNERGIES AMONG THE BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present document outlines the preparation and results of a workshop on synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions held in February 2016 pursuant to decision XII/6 of the Conference of the Parties and presents to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation considerations towards developing recommendations to the Conference of the Parties. An addendum to the present document presents the outcomes of the workshop in a manner that could be used by the Subsidiary Body in developing such recommendations (UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/9/Add.1). In addition, the report of the workshop is presented in an information document (UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/21). Other information relevant to this matter is provided in information documents UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/36 and UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/37.

2. This work addresses synergies among the conventions represented in the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related Conventions (Biodiversity Liaison Group), which are the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention) and the World Heritage Convention (WHC).

II. BACKGROUND AND PREPARATION OF THE WORKSHOP

A. Mandate

3. At its first meeting, in decision I/9, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity decided to consider as a standing item on its agenda the relationship of the Convention with the Commission on Sustainable Development and biodiversity-related conventions, other international agreements, institutions and processes of relevance. The Conference of the Parties has consistently recognized the importance of cooperation and synergy with other conventions and organizations and has adopted decisions on cooperation at each of its subsequent meetings.¹ As a result, numerous measures have been taken to facilitate cooperation between the Convention and other biodiversity-related

* UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/1/Rev.1.

¹ Decisions II/13, II/14, III/21, IV/15, V/21, VI/20, VII/26, VIII/16, IX/27, X/20, XI/6 and XII/6.

conventions and to promote synergies among them, including the establishment of the Biodiversity Liaison Group and initiatives that have arisen from its work.

4. At its eleventh meeting, in decision XI/6, the Conference of the Parties urged Parties to pursue efforts to enhance synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions to promote policy coherence, improve efficiency and enhance coordination and cooperation at all levels, and with a view to strengthening Parties' ownership of the process.

5. At its twelfth meeting, in decision XII/6, the Conference of the Parties noted 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-related conventions at the national level, and recalled paragraph 89 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,² 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.

6. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties encouraged Parties to improve cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and other organizations at all levels to enhance effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of the objectives of the Convention. Furthermore, initiating a Party-led intersessional process, the Conference of the Parties decided to establish an informal advisory group to prepare, in consultation with the Secretariat, a workshop with the task to prepare options which could include elements for a possible road map, for Parties of the various biodiversity-related conventions to enhance synergies and improve efficiency among them, without prejudice to the specific objectives and recognizing the respective mandates and subject to the availability of resources of these conventions, with a view to enhancing their implementation at all levels. The Biodiversity Liaison Group was invited by the Conference of the Parties to participate in the informal advisory group.

7. The Conference of the Parties also requested the Executive Secretary to organize the workshop, to transmit the report of the workshop to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation for consideration at its first meeting and subsequently to the Conference of the Parties for consideration at its thirteenth meeting, to facilitate ways for the informal advisory group to hold discussions, and to prepare a study on key capacity-building and awareness-raising needs regarding cooperation with other multilateral environmental agreements at the national level as an input for the workshop. The executive heads of the other biodiversity-related conventions were invited to facilitate the participation in the workshop of representatives of Parties to their conventions, through their standing committees, bureaux or other processes, as appropriate. Participation was also invited from representatives of each of the secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions; observers, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Union for Conservation of Nature, as the organizations which provide the secretariats to such conventions; as well as representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities. The informal advisory group was requested to consider relevant inputs to the workshop, among them the results of the UNEP project on cooperation and synergies among biodiversity-related conventions referred to elsewhere in the present document, including sections B, C and E below.

8. At its eleventh meeting, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, in paragraph 15 of resolution 11.10, welcomed CBD decision XII/6 and requested the Executive Secretary and the Standing Committee to facilitate the selection of the representatives to participate in this workshop.

9. At its twelfth meeting, the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (the Ramsar Convention), in paragraph 15 of resolution XII.3, welcomed CBD decision XII/6 and, in paragraph 46, requested the Secretary General

² General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

and the Standing Committee to facilitate the selection of the representatives to participate in the workshops led by the biodiversity convention exploring synergies among the conventions.

10. At its sixth session, the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, in Resolution 7, welcomed the decision of the CBD Conference of the Parties to hold a workshop and requested the Secretary and the Bureau to facilitate the selection of the representatives to participate in this workshop and report on the outcomes to the Governing Body at its seventh session. In its resolution 10, the Governing Body urged Contracting Parties to take measures to enhance synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions to promote policy coherence, improve efficiency and enhance coordination and cooperation at all levels.

11. The Standing Committees of CITES, CMS and the Ramsar Convention, and the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity addressed matters related to the organization of the workshop in the regular meetings of these bodies held during the biennium. The matter was also considered by these bodies and by the Bureau of the Governing Body of ITPGRFA, the Bureau of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM, the governing body of IPPC) and the World Heritage Committee, in considering the representation of Parties to the respective conventions at the workshop (see subsection C).

B. The Informal Advisory Group

12. Through Notification 2015-021 dated 27 February 2015, the Executive Secretary invited Parties to nominate members of a regionally balanced informal advisory group, composed of two members per region. Relevant experience was sought with regard to: biodiversity-related policy, in particular with respect to the Convention on Biological Diversity; intergovernmental bodies of one or more of the biodiversity-related conventions, as well as with relevant organizations; implementation, at the national level, of the Convention on Biological Diversity and/or other biodiversity-related conventions, and; monitoring and reporting on the implementation of one or more of the biodiversity-related conventions. The membership of the informal advisory group was selected by the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity on the basis of nominations by Parties and was published through a notification.³

13. The Secretariat facilitated consultations of the informal advisory group through written briefings, virtual meetings and one in-person meeting. The informal advisory group, with the participation of representatives of the Biodiversity Liaison Group, met to advance its preparatory work in six meetings: three meetings held by teleconference on 30 June 2015, 30 July 2015 and 9 September 2015, a face-to-face meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 17 and 18 September 2015, and two meetings held by online videoconference (by GoToMeeting) on 3 December 2015 and 3 February 2016.

14. At its meeting held on 17 and 18 September 2015, participants were invited to consider and discuss the desirable outcomes and end products of the workshop. Conclusions of the meeting included the following:

(a) The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and national biodiversity strategies and action plans provide the common vision and frameworks for work on synergies;

(b) The workshop would make use of and appropriately build on the work of individual conventions and the Biodiversity Liaison Group, and on existing studies and other work or materials on the topic of synergies, including those of the UNEP project on improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies;

(c) The workshop would take into account the interconnectedness of global and national efforts while focusing on the facilitation of operations and actions at the country level;

³ Notification 2015-056, 19 May 2015, Membership of the informal advisory group concerning cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions, <https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2015/ntf-2015-056-cooperation-en.pdf>.

(d) The outcomes of the workshop would include that: challenges and obstacles that countries are facing at national level and global level are identified; national, regional, global and other needs to address these challenges are identified, and; key components of guidance to be used at the global, regional and national levels are developed.

15. In addition, the informal advisory group identified eight broad thematic areas for the workshop to address, under each of which options for enhanced synergy and cooperation among the conventions could be considered and developed (see para. 37).

16. Organizational and logistical arrangements were also considered at this meeting, including the criteria for the selection of participants and the setting of the agenda, as well the determination of necessary presentations and preparatory materials. Methodology for nomination and selection of representatives of Parties to the conventions, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the role of the members of the informal advisory group at the workshop, were also addressed.

17. The informal advisory group was supported in its work at this meeting by representatives of a number of organizations, including UNEP, UNDP, FAO, IUCN, GEF, and the secretariats of each of the biodiversity-related conventions.

C. Organization of the workshop

1. Participation of representatives of the Parties to the seven biodiversity-related conventions

18. To ensure balance of perspective from each of the conventions and from among regions, and taking into account the availability of funding and differences in the way that the conventions organize themselves regionally, it was determined that representation of the conventions would most adequately be provided by representatives of five Parties to each convention, one from each of the five United Nations Regional Groups of Member States.⁴

19. The executive head of each convention facilitated the participation of the representatives of Parties to the convention through its standing committee or bureau, in line with decision XII/6. The selection and nomination of its five representatives was made by the standing body of the convention concerned, in consultation with its secretariat. The Secretariat of CBD liaised with the other convention secretariats to provide coordination and appropriate advice, with a view to gaining full representation, including from a maximum number of countries and subregions; it also handled administrative matters, including travel arrangements for funded participants. In three cases, due to internal/national procedures, nominations could not be confirmed for a particular convention/region, and, in two other cases, participants could not travel. A total of 32 representatives of Parties to the conventions participated in the workshop, from 28 countries drawn from all regional groups of the United Nations.

20. The Parties to CBD were represented by members of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties, the Parties to CITES were represented by members of its Standing Committee, the Parties to CMS were represented by members of its Standing Committee, the Parties to ITPGRFA were represented by members of the Bureau of the seventh session of the Governing Body, the Parties to IPPC were represented by members of the Bureau of the CPM, and the Parties to WHC were represented by members of the Bureau of the World Heritage Commission. In some cases, the member was substituted by an alternate member or a designated official from the same national structure or another country within the region.

21. In addition, in order to provide continuity in the organization and preparation of the workshop, as well as to its delivery and follow-up, members of the informal advisory group also took an active part in the workshop. Two members of the informal advisory group served as the co-Chairs of the workshop and, together with five other members, served as the moderator or rapporteur of breakout groups.

⁴ See United Nations Regional Groups of Member States, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, online: <http://www.un.org/depts/DGACM/RegionalGroups.shtml>.

2. *Participating organizations*

22. In line with decision XII/6, representatives of the Parties to the conventions were supported in their work at the workshop by the executive heads and other staff of each of the secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions, as well as by representatives of relevant observer organizations to provide information and advice based on their respective mandates and experience. These included UNEP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Union for Conservation of Nature, as the organizations which provide the secretariats to such conventions, as well as representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities, global non-governmental organizations and other international organizations.

23. The roles of participants are described in annex I to the revised annotated agenda of the workshop (UNEP/CBD/BRC/WS/2016/1/Add.1/Rev.1). The list of participants is available on the workshop page at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=BRCWS-2016-01>. An abridged version of the list will be included in the report of the workshop.

3. *Organization of work*

24. The overall structure of the workshop programme was determined by the informal advisory group to include plenary sessions and sessions divided into breakout groups that would consider the eight thematic issue areas and report back to plenary. A professional facilitator was engaged to help catalyse the work and gain contributions and inputs from all participants. The detailed programme was developed in collaboration between the co-Chairs, the professional facilitator and the CBD Secretariat and presented in annex II to the revised annotated agenda of the workshop (UNEP/CBD/BRC/WS/2016/1/Add.1/Rev.1).

25. Workshop participants were invited to consult relevant background materials and to submit relevant case studies in advance of the workshop. Five countries and one regional group provided such case studies, which were shared with the participants at the workshop.⁵ Preparatory webinars were held for workshop participants in January 2016 (see section E below).

26. Preparation and organization of the workshop was financially supported by the Governments of Switzerland and Finland. Financial support was made available to enable the participation of representatives of developing country Parties and those of countries with economies in transition, and to two representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities.

D. Study on key capacity-building and awareness-raising needs to enhance cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions

27. As an input for the workshop, the Executive Secretary was requested in decision XII/6 to prepare a study on key capacity-building and awareness-raising needs regarding cooperation with other multilateral environmental agreements at the national level. The study was undertaken in conjunction with the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC). The report of the study was made available as a background document for the workshop (UNEP/CBD/BRC/WS/2016/1/INF/1).

28. The study draws on a survey undertaken by the CBD Secretariat at the end of 2015. It analyses the capacity-building needs and awareness-raising needs regarding cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions at the national level, existing learning opportunities, tools and mechanisms to address those needs, and explores opportunities to better address those needs in the future.

29. One of the main findings was that there is no critical need to come up with new tools or mechanisms, but that the existing tools and mechanisms ought to be strengthened, including raising awareness on their existence. Key tools and mechanisms that need to be promoted further to strengthen their use include:

⁵ Relevant background materials and the case studies are available online at the workshop web page: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=BRCWS-2016-01>.

(a) Cooperation mechanisms for national focal points (formal or informal) and potentially other stakeholders involved in the implementation of the conventions;

(b) Meetings or workshops on issues related to one or multiple of the biodiversity-related conventions which facilitate exchange between national focal points and other stakeholders.

30. Furthermore, it was found that, in the short term, it would be particularly important to take advantage of identified ongoing or planned capacity-building activities at the different levels of governance that would benefit from enhanced cooperation in the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions.

E. UNEP project on improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies

31. The results of a project conducted by UNEP on “improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies” provided an important input for the work carried out in the present Party-led process. The project was conducted between 2013 and 2015 in response to decision SS.XII/3 of the Governing Council of UNEP and was funded by contributions from the European Commission and the Swiss Federal Agency for Nature Conservation. One component of the project addressed opportunities to enhance cooperation at the national and regional levels, and another component focused on the global level.

32. The project produced two outcome documents: a “Sourcebook of opportunities for enhancing cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions at national and regional levels” (UNEP Sourcebook), published in 2015 and launched at the margins of the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands; and a paper on “Elaboration of options for enhancing synergies among biodiversity-related conventions” (UNEP Options Paper). This paper focuses on synergies at the international level, including the possible role of UNEP, and will be considered by the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP at its second session (UNEA 2).

33. The timing of the workshop enabled it to benefit from the findings and conclusions of this work. The UNEP Sourcebook and Options Paper were made available as background documents to the workshop. Preparatory webinars were held for the workshop on 20 and 27 January 2016 to introduce the workshop participants to the findings presented in the two documents. The webinars were made available online to participants who could not attend on those dates.⁶ In addition, a tabulated summary of recommendations and options was included in the annotated agenda of the workshop and used by participants in developing options for action under the thematic issue areas that the workshop addressed.

34. Furthermore, in decision XII/6, the Conference of the Parties invited the Executive Director of UNEP to transmit to the Conference of the Parties of each of the biodiversity-related conventions the results of its project. Accordingly, the UNEP Sourcebook is presented for the benefit of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation in information document UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/36, and the UNEP Options Paper is presented in information document UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/37.

F. Other relevant work on synergies among biodiversity-related conventions

35. Among other work relevant to the consideration of synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions and made available as background documents to the workshop are two studies conducted by UNEP-WCMC published in 2015. One provides an overview of existing initiatives for enhancing coordination and collaboration at various levels across the biodiversity-related conventions. The other, entitled Mapping Multilateral Environmental Agreements to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, maps the

⁶ The webinars are available online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ofFw6J1UrQ> (first session on 20 January 2016) and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVcuH4SxiDk> (second session on 27 January 2016).

linkages between the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the articles, resolutions, decisions, strategic plans, joint work plans, and convention-specific tools or guidelines for six biodiversity-related conventions.⁷

III. WORKSHOP ON SYNERGIES AMONG THE BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS

36. The workshop on synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions was held at the United Nations Office at Geneva, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, from 8 to 11 February 2016. The report of the workshop is made available to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation for consideration at its first meeting in the document UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/21. The report presents the proceedings and outcomes of the workshop. Details of its organization of work and methodology are provided in document UNEP/CBD/BRC/WS/2016/1/1/Add.1/Rev.1 as annotations to the agenda of the meeting. The workshop documents, including background documents and the list of participants, are provided on the web page of the workshop.⁸

37. Discussions were held and options for action prepared on the following eight broad thematic areas: I. the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and national biodiversity strategies and action plans; II. Institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms; III. Information and knowledge management; IV. National reporting, monitoring and indicators; V. Communication and awareness-raising; VI. Science–policy interface; VII. Capacity-building and; VIII. Resource mobilization and utilization. The discussions sought to identify such options at the national, regional and global levels and for implementation in the short, medium and long term. An overview of the outcomes of the discussions, theme by theme, is provided in UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/9/Add.1.

38. The eight thematic areas are interlinked. For example, capacity-building is relevant to enhancing synergies in all thematic areas; and the establishment or enhancement of institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms would contribute to enhancing synergies under each. In some cases there is overlap between areas, in particular between Area III, information and knowledge management and Area IV, national reporting, monitoring and indicators. As a result, several options for action identified under Area III are equally relevant to Area IV. In addition, a number of common issues emerged in the discussions under several thematic areas and among the options for action identified.

39. Common issues at the national level, included the identification of: national biodiversity strategies and action plans as a framework for building synergies; national coordination mechanisms being important to strengthen synergies in a number of areas; the Sustainable Development Goals as an important global framework to which the biodiversity-related conventions relate;⁹ needs assessments as a necessary first step in determining actions to enhance synergies; the importance of involving stakeholders, indigenous peoples and local communities to strengthen synergies in a number of areas; the importance of coordinated or joint communications; and the interrelationship of planning frameworks, building capacity and resource mobilization. At the regional level, these included: sharing experience and best practice; utilizing and building on existing regional organizations and initiatives; and needs assessment. At the global level, they included: the role of the Biodiversity Liaison Group and common action by the convention secretariats; decision making by the governing bodies; consideration of synergies in the guidance of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to the Global Environment Facility; and coordinated or joint communications, including web-based communication on synergies.

⁷ The final report and a summary of the study, Mapping Multilateral Environmental Agreements to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, were made available as background documents to the workshop, <https://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=BRCWS-2016-01>. Appendices to the report are available at the UNEP-WCMC website, <http://www.unep-wcmc.org/resources-and-data>.

⁸ The web page of the workshop is accessible at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=BRCWS-2016-01>.

⁹ For example, implementation actions related to NBSAPs and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, information management and indicators for the biodiversity-related conventions, being relevant or contributory to the Sustainable Development Goals.

40. The workshop noted that not all options for action at the national level would be applicable to all countries. The workshop considered them a menu of options that could be taken up by countries as appropriate and according to national circumstance.

41. In a number of cases, owing to the limitation of the time, options for action were identified without a precise identification of the actors that would need to take a role in the action, particularly at the international level. The workshop agreed to task the Secretariat with identifying actors relevant to such options for action. This has been addressed in the addendum to the present document by identifying actors to which the Conference of the Parties could address elements of a decision with respect to specific actions identified by the workshop.

42. The workshop did not attempt to define or develop a possible road map for enhancing synergies and efficiencies among the conventions. However, many of the options were identified according to whether they would be implemented as short-, medium-, or long-term actions.

43. A number of participants noted the value of the meeting across the seven biodiversity-related conventions and for continuing such a Party-driven dialogue. It was also observed that considerable discussion on synergies among the conventions had been held under the auspices of CBD over a number of years,¹⁰ but not to the same extent under all other biodiversity-related conventions. In this regard, the workshop had been helpful. Nonetheless, some aspects of the discourse have been advanced primarily from the perspective of CBD and UNEP and it would be helpful for the work on synergies to be equally prioritized by all conventions in order to take better account of their own structures, processes and implementation mechanisms.

IV. BUILDING ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP

44. The Subsidiary Body could make recommendations to the Conference of the Parties drawn and built on outcomes of the workshop, in particular the options for action that were identified, and other relevant work on synergies among the conventions. This could include recommendation of a possible decision of the Conference of the Parties based on material presented in UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/9/Add.1. As described in that note, the addendum builds on the information contained in the report of the workshop (UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/21) in a manner intended to assist the Subsidiary Body on Implementation to advance the work on this matter.

45. A recommended text for a decision could include elements aimed at various actors, including the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Secretariat, the Biodiversity Liaison Group, relevant organizations and the governing bodies of the other biodiversity-related conventions, as well as elements aimed at enhancing, initiating or establishing new tools, mechanisms or initiatives for the purpose of enhancing synergies and efficiencies among the biodiversity-related conventions. Addressing the national level, the Subsidiary Body could recommend elements of a decision on specific measures from among the options for action identified by the workshop. It could also consider the possibility of packaging some relevant measures, for example as a set of voluntary guidelines for enhancing synergies among biodiversity-related conventions, for the possible adoption by the Conference of the Parties. Addressing the international level, recommendations could include measures to support national implementation drawn from among options for action identified; and measures to enhance cooperation and coordination at the international level.

46. Such measures should be to the mutual benefit of the conventions concerned and be compatible with their provisions, obligations and objectives. Some measures may be relevant to enhancing synergies between just two of the instruments or among a subset of them, rather than among all seven conventions.

¹⁰ For example, in response to a request of the Conference of the Parties in decision VII/26, in 2005 the issue was considered in depth at the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention, which reported to the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting. Work undertaken – including collaborative preparatory work by the secretariats of CBD, CITES, CMS, Ramsar and WHC, as well as the Rio Conventions – and arising from that review, has contributed to the progress to date in advancing synergies in a number of areas. Documents issued for that meeting are available at <https://www.cbd.int/doc/default.shtml?mtg=WGRI-01>.

Some measures would have particular relevance for the two Protocols of the Convention on Biological Diversity.¹¹

47. Not all options for action at the national level, nor the guidance of the Conference of the Parties, would be applicable to all countries. At the same time, many of the options for action could be taken up by countries independently of any guidance that may be provided by the Conference of the Parties.

48. Existing initiatives and ongoing efforts to enhance synergies among relevant intergovernmental instruments, organizations, programmes and initiatives could be taken into account and potentially built upon, including those to which the conventions, through their secretariats, actively contribute. In addition, new opportunity is provided by the inclusion of biodiversity in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹² and the Sustainable Development Goals. As a result, any measures and mechanisms that may be established by Governments to deliver on the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals as a whole would include measures towards, and to monitor progress towards, the Goals and targets related to biodiversity. The implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions to which a country is party, as well as actions towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, could provide a basis for this. In such a case, it would be beneficial for the national structures and offices related to the conventions to be a part of the national coordination mechanisms for the Sustainable Development Goals. This would provide an opportunity for mainstreaming biodiversity and for enhanced mechanisms for coordination among the biodiversity-related conventions to contribute to this.

49. Analysis of the options for action in the various thematic areas and cross-cutting issues among them, and the findings of the study on key capacity-building and awareness-raising needs, point to the importance of coordination mechanisms at all levels to serve as the foundation for enhancing policy coherence and synergies in the implementation of the conventions, including in specific areas, such as communications, capacity-building or resource mobilization.

50. At the international level, there are numerous collaborative mechanisms relevant to biodiversity¹³ and several that focus on specific aspects.¹⁴ Others provide a dedicated platform of support to the implementation of the conventions.¹⁵ Mechanisms focused on coordination among the biodiversity-related conventions comprise the collaboration between the convention secretariats through the Biodiversity Liaison Group¹⁶ and through bilateral work programmes and consultation;¹⁷ and the mechanism of the

¹¹ For example, much of the ongoing cooperation between ITPGRFA and CBD relates to the Nagoya Protocol.

¹² General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015 entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

¹³ For example, the Environment Management Group of the United Nations, UN Water, UN Oceans, the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW) and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF).

¹⁴ For example, the Interagency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets Task Force.

¹⁵ For example, the NBSAP Forum, a global partnership aiming to support NBSAP revisions hosted by the Secretariat of Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Development Programme, and the United Nations Environment Programme (<http://nbsapforum.net/>); the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (<http://www.bipindicators.net/>); and the UNEP-led Multilateral Environmental Agreement Information and Knowledge Management (MEA-IKM) Initiative, including its Internet platform, InforMEA (www.informea.org).

¹⁶ The mandate for establishing the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions was provided by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in decision VII/26, whereby it requested the Executive Secretary to invite the secretariats of other biodiversity conventions to form a liaison group to enhance coherence and cooperation in their implementation. This mandate has been supported by follow-up decisions of the governing bodies of member secretariats. Modalities for the operation of the group were further clarified by agreement of a *modus operandi* that was welcomed by the Conference of the Parties in decision XI/6. The group has achieved success in increasing programmatic cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions in a number of areas. The *modus operandi* of the Biodiversity Liaison Group and other information is available at www.cbd.int/blg.

¹⁷ Bilateral work programmes between the secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions provide a means to foster cooperation in areas of common interest and within the mandates of the conventions concerned. Several of the secretariats have established memoranda of cooperation which provide a framework for joint work plans. Among those involving CBD are bilateral work plans with the secretariats of CMS, Ramsar, ITPGRFA and IPPC. Such work plans may be subject to review under the governing framework of the conventions concerned – for example by the standing committees of CMS and Ramsar – and endorsement of the governing bodies, including the Conference of the Parties to Convention on Biological Diversity.

Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Bodies of Biodiversity-related Conventions (CSAB).¹⁸ With the exception of CSAB, which serves a particular niche, there is presently no ongoing mechanism that brings together representatives of the Parties and structures of governance of the various biodiversity-related conventions.

51. There may be a benefit in establishing such a mechanism that would enable consultation and coordination among parties across the structures of governance of the conventions. Such a mechanism could be served by the Biodiversity Liaison Group. One function could be to further advance synergies and efficiencies and promote coherence across the decision-making bodies. As an initial measure, this could perhaps be considered a time-bound exercise to further advance the Party-driven dialogue across the conventions. The mechanism used for convening representatives of the Parties to each of the biodiversity-related conventions in the workshop could serve as a useful model.

52. A third aspect of liaison and coordination around the biodiversity-related conventions at the international level lies in coordination among international organizations. The inter-agency mechanisms referred to above and in footnotes 13, 14 and 15 have an important role to play in this regard. The work under the Environment Management Group of the United Nations, through its former issues management group on biodiversity, made an effective contribution. Consideration could be given to the establishment of a dedicated consultative group on biodiversity, perhaps based on the Aichi Biodiversity Targets Task Force¹⁹ or along the lines of a global partnership on biodiversity that was considered by the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting.

53. Addressing the national level, consideration of coordination mechanisms needs to take account of: (a) the great variation in national circumstances, including the conventions to which a country is a Party, which has a bearing on the need; (b) the fact that institutional and coordinative arrangements are made at the discretion of the Party; and (c) differences between the conventions in their requirements of national authorities. Under the Convention on Biological Diversity, Parties determine the specific responsibilities of their national focal point, which may be a person or an institution, according to general terms of reference outlined by the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting. Nonetheless, many of the options for action at the national level emphasized the benefits of strengthening coordination among the conventions. Consideration could be given to building such coordination mechanisms around national focal points and equivalent authorities of the conventions at the individual and the institutional levels. One of the options for action identified by the workshop was to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the national focal points of the biodiversity-related conventions. Regional mechanisms, such as that provided by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), serve both as a mechanism for cooperation among member States at the regional level and for facilitating synergies among the conventions to which the member States are Parties.

54. Some of the options identified for action and related measures would require from the Conference of the Parties and the governing bodies of other conventions a new mandate and/or new budgetary support, while others would not. For example, there is already a mandate for work among the convention secretariats to promote coherence and cooperation through the consultative mechanism provided by the Biodiversity Liaison Group. On the other hand, the establishment of a consultative group involving

¹⁸ The Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Bodies of Biodiversity-related Conventions involves representatives of parties to the conventions – the Chairs of the scientific advisory bodies – together with the secretariats. Typically, other organizations have joined its meetings. It has convened in the margins of meetings of the scientific bodies on an opportunistic and irregular basis, being without a formal mandate or budget. Perhaps in the light of the recently established memorandum of understanding between the secretariat of IPBES and the secretariats of the conventions represented in the Biodiversity Liaison Group, there could be fresh consideration and incentive for the CSAB or similar to serve as a liaison mechanism between the conventions, IPBES, and their respective secretariats.

¹⁹ The 29 signatories of the Memorandum of Cooperation and Members of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets Task Force include the CBD Secretariat, other convention secretariats, international organizations, including those that provide the secretariats to the biodiversity-related conventions, and international non-governmental organizations. Memorandum of Cooperation available at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/agreements/agmt-aichi2020-2011-09-20-moc-web-en.pdf>.

representatives of Parties from each of the seven conventions would require a new mandate and, most likely, a budget for its convening and secretariat support.

55. The Subsidiary Body could also consider whether to recommend to the Conference of the Parties further consultation across the conventions to build on the results of the workshop or other related work, and, if so, through what mechanisms. There may also be a need for more detailed consideration at the level of experts, for example in the setting of expert workshops, to further develop recommendations for enhancing synergies and efficiencies among conventions under the thematic issue-areas addressed by the workshop.

56. In addition, the Subsidiary Body could consider any further work it may wish the Secretariat to undertake prior to the consideration of this matter by the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth meeting, and any recommendations that it may wish to make to Parties to prepare for the meeting. It could also consider any further work that could be undertaken by the informal advisory group. In this regard, the Subsidiary Body could request the Secretariat to undertake further work, perhaps in consultation with the informal advisory group and the co-Chairs of the workshop, for example to elaborate and refine proposed actions, and further categorize them, including into categories for which there is relevant ongoing work or a mandate and those for which there is none and according to whether they would be implemented in the short, medium or long term.

57. In the light of the recommendations of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation and the decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, consideration could be given to these matters by the governing bodies of each of the biodiversity-related conventions between 2016 and 2019, taking into account the calendar of their meetings.²⁰ Respecting the distinct mandates and independent status of each convention, such considerations could include: the establishment of any additional mandates needed under each of the conventions; the establishment of any consultative mechanisms among Parties to the conventions; and any further alignment of frameworks, including those provided by the strategic plans of the conventions, a Strategic Plan for Biodiversity updated to 2030, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

58. In the light of decisions of the governing bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions, Governments could provide complementary instruction to relevant international organizations through their own governing bodies.

V. SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

59. To assist the Conference of the Parties to address this matter at its thirteenth meeting, the Subsidiary Body could take action along the following lines:

(a) The Subsidiary Body may wish to recommend that the Conference of the Parties adopt a decision on synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions. The Subsidiary Body may wish to prepare a draft decision that could include elements drawn or adapted from the material presented in the note by the Executive Secretary on possible recommendations arising from the options for action identified by the Workshop on Synergies among the Biodiversity-related Conventions (UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/9/Add.1), and other relevant materials, as well as elements concerning further consultation among the conventions as addressed in section IV above;

²⁰ The General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention meets every two years (21st session, 2017) during the sessions of the General Conference of UNESCO; and the World Heritage Committee meets once a year (40th session, 10-20 July 2016). The Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands meets every 3 years (COP 13, 2018) and its Standing Committee meets once a year (52nd session, 13-17 June 2016). The Governing Body of ITPGRFA holds its regular sessions at least once every two years (7th session, 2017). The Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) meets once a year (11th session, 4-8 April 2016). The Conference of the Parties to CMS meets every three years (COP 12, 2017); and during the intersessional period its Standing Committee usually meets once a year (45th session, 9-10 November 2016), as well as immediately before and after each COP. The Conference of the Parties to CITES meets every three years (COP 17, 24 September to 5 October 2016); and during the intersessional period its Standing Committee meets twice, as well as immediately before and after each COP. The Conference of the Parties to CBD meets every two years (COP 13, 4-17 December 2016).

(b) The Subsidiary Body may wish to include in such recommendations the appreciation of the Conference of the Parties of the contributions of the various actors in the preparation, discussions and outcomes of the workshop;²¹

(c) The Subsidiary Body may wish to request the Executive Secretary to undertake any further work that may be relevant and helpful to the further consideration of these matters and to present the outcomes of such work to the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth meeting, taking into account the time available to undertake such work;

(d) The Subsidiary Body may wish to encourage Parties to facilitate consultation between the national focal point of the Convention on Biological Diversity, or other relevant officials, and the national focal points or other relevant authorities of the other biodiversity-related conventions to prepare for the discussions on enhancing synergies among the conventions at the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity;

60. The Subsidiary Body may also wish to take account of its conclusions on this matter in formulating its recommendations on other relevant matters addressed at its first meeting, including those that relate to capacity-building, national reporting, mainstreaming, and resource mobilization.

²¹ These include the informal advisory group; the Biodiversity Liaison Group and the secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions; the representatives of Parties to the conventions who participated in the workshop; the standing bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions; the organizations that participated in the workshop and those that contributed to its preparation at the meeting of the informal advisory group held on 17 and 18 September 2015.