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HOSTING THE MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES FOLLOWING THE THIRTEENTH MEETING

Note by the Executive Secretary

INTRODUCTION

1. The Conference of the Parties, in paragraphs 1 and 2 of its decision XII/35, invited interested Parties to notify the Executive Secretary of their offers to host the fourteenth and fifteenth meetings of the Conference of the Parties (COP) as well as the ninth and tenth meetings of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol (COP-MOP/CP) and the third and fourth meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol (COP-MOP/NP).

2. In paragraphs 3 and 4 of the same decision, the Conference of the Parties also requested the Executive Secretary to prepare a proposal on how the hosting of meetings of the Conference of the Parties beyond the thirteenth meeting might be determined, and to submit the proposal to the Subsidiary Body on implementation at its first meeting for its consideration and recommendation regarding the proposal by the Secretariat and the offers made to host the fourteenth and fifteenth meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

3. The present document provides, in section I, some background information regarding the hosting of meetings of the Conference of the Parties. Section II contains a summary of information on the hosting of the fourteenth and fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Section III presents a proposal on the determination of hosting of meetings of the Conference of the Parties subsequent to the thirteenth meeting.

I. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

4. According to rule 3 of the rules of procedure, the meetings of the Conference of the Parties shall take place at the seat of the Secretariat, unless decided otherwise by the Conference of the Parties or unless other appropriate arrangements are made by the Secretariat in consultation with the Parties. The “date and venue of next meeting of the Conference of the Parties” is a standing item on the agenda of the meetings of the Conference of the Parties. Under current practice, the Conference of the Parties decides at

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

each meeting the venue of its next meeting by accepting an offer made by a Party. In the decision, interested Parties were also invited to notify the Executive Secretary of their offers to host the subsequent meeting.

5. According to rule 21, paragraph 1, of the rules of procedure, the office of President of the Conference of the Parties shall normally be subject to rotation among the five United Nations regional groups: Africa Group; Asia-Pacific Group; Central and Eastern Europe Group (CEE); Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC); and Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG). In accordance with the customary practice, the country hosting a meeting of the Conference of the Parties assumes the office of the Presidency. Since the entry into force of the Convention, meetings of the Conference of the Parties have been hosted successively by 12 different Parties. Such rotation is desirable as it provides an opportunity to raise, among other things, awareness about biological diversity and the profile of the Convention among the population and communities within the host country and region, thus contributing to the achievement of the Convention's objectives. In the past, the meetings of the Conference of the Parties were hosted (and the next one is planned to be hosted) without strictly following rotation among the regional groups, as shown in the table below.

Table. **Distribution of the hosting of meetings among the five regions of the United Nations**

	African Group	Asia-Pacific	GRULAC	CEE	WEOG
COP 1 - Nassau, Bahamas, 1994			x		
COP 2 - Jakarta, Indonesia, 1995		x			
COP 3 - Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1996			x		
COP 4 - Bratislava, Slovakia, 1998				x	
COP 5 - Nairobi, Kenya, 2000	x				
COP 6 - The Hague, Netherlands, 2002					x
COP 7/COP-MOP 1 (CP) - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2004		x			
COP 8/COP-MOP 3 (CP) - Curitiba, Brazil, 2006			x		
COP 9/COP-MOP 4 (CP) - Bonn, Germany, 2008					x
COP 10/COP-MOP 5 (CP) - Nagoya, Japan, 2010		x			
COP 11/COP-MOP 6 (CP) - Hyderabad, India, 2012		x			
COP 12/COP-MOP 7 (CP)/COP-MOP 1 (NP) - Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, 2014		x			
COP 13/COP-MOP 8 (CP)/COP-MOP 2 (NP) - Cancun, Mexico, 2016			x		

II. HOSTING OF THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

6. During the eighteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, the representative of Egypt informed Parties that his country had the intention to host the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in 2016. In the light of the offer made officially by Mexico to host the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Government of Egypt

reconsidered its proposal and, during the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, expressed its interest to offer to host the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the respective meetings of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meetings of the Parties to the Protocols.

7. The representative of Turkey also informed the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting of his Government's offer to host the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the respective meetings of the Parties to the Protocols. In its decision XII/35, the Conference of the Parties took note of the offer by Turkey and the expression of interest by Egypt, and invited interested Parties to notify the Executive Secretary of their offers to host the fourteenth and fifteenth meetings of the Conference of the Parties, as well as the corresponding meetings of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol and the Nagoya Protocol.

8. The Executive Secretary issued a notification¹ to Parties on 24 November 2015 reminding those interested to express their interest to host the fourteenth or fifteenth meetings of the Conference of the Parties as soon as possible and before the end of 2015 (for COP 14) and preferably at least two months before the first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (for COP 15). The Executive Secretary reminded Parties that any expression of interest or offer to host any of the meetings should be submitted as a formal letter signed by the appropriate official of the Government of the offering country.

9. The Executive Secretary has received such letters from Egypt (30 November 2015) and Turkey (26 February 2016) with respect to COP 14, and from Peru (25 February 2016) and China (11 March 2016) with respect to COP 15. The letters received from the four countries have been issued as information document UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/28.

III. CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE HOSTING OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

10. As noted in the introduction of this note, the Executive Secretary was requested to prepare a proposal on how the hosting of meetings of the Conference of the Parties beyond the thirteenth meeting may be determined.

11. Rule 21, paragraph 1, of the rules of procedure, which states that the office of President shall normally be subject to rotation among the five United Nations regional groups, could be regarded as the basis for a criterion for determining the hosting, in other words rotation among regional groups, depending on the availability of offers.

12. At the same time, practical considerations, such as logistical, technical and financial requirements for hosting a meeting should also form a criterion for determining the host. Hosting a meeting of the Conference of the Parties is a major undertaking which entails considerable costs to the host Government, both in terms of funds and human resources, as well as other specific obligations. These costs and obligations are set out in detail in a "host Government agreement" signed between the host Government and the Secretariat at least several months prior to the meeting.

13. The standard host Government agreement used for meetings under the Convention on Biological Diversity follows the relevant guidelines of the United Nations and of the United Nations Environment Programme and covers, among other things, the additional costs involved in holding the meetings in the offering country rather than at the seat of the Secretariat in Montreal, Canada (secretariat and other staff, including security, travel and cost of premises), transportation between airport, hotels and meeting venue, the provision of medical facilities, police protection, and local personnel, support for the high-level segment and the participation of indigenous and local communities, matters relating to liability, visas and privileges and immunities, minimizing the environmental impact of meetings, and the provision of

¹ Notification 2015-135 of 24 November 2015.

exhibition areas and rooms and facilities for associated meetings and side events. The United Nations guidelines for the preparation of host Government agreements, which include model host Government agreements, are available at: <https://www.cbd.int/information/hosting-meetings/>.

14. Considering all the elements highlighted above, the following criteria may be used in determining the hosting of the meetings of the Conference of the Parties following the thirteenth meeting:

- (a) Rotation among regional groups;
- (b) Logistical, including security, technical and financial elements available for hosting such meetings, including matters related to privileges and immunities and facilitation of issuance of visas.

15. In addition, the Conference of the Parties may wish to take into account the Party's standing with regard to the payment of contributions to the appropriate programme budgets, as well as any other factor that it considers appropriate at the time of taking a decision to accept an offer to host.

16. Regional rotation should be taken as an important consideration in determining the hosting of the meetings of the Conference of the Parties as it is consistent with the rules of procedure as described above. The rotation may commence from COP 14, starting with a region that has previously hosted fewer meetings than other groups, such as the African Group (1), the Central and Eastern European Group (1) or the Western European and Others Group (2). However, as indicated in paragraph 9 above, following the invitation by the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting, two Parties offered to host COP 14 and another two to host COP 15. This raises the question whether there is a need for a transition period and therefore interim arrangements to identify the two Parties that may host COP 14 and COP 15, respectively. In this regard, the Parties concerned may be invited to bilaterally agree on the matter and to consult with the Executive Secretary concerning the logistical and related requirements. In this case, the criteria proposed in paragraphs 14 and 15 above may be applicable only from COP 16.

17. In applying the criteria starting from the hosting of COP 16 and in order to avoid competing offers from the same regional group, it is advisable that members of the regional group hold consultations to determine which country from their region will make an offer to host on behalf of the group. Once that is agreed, the chair of that regional group or a member of the Bureau representing the regional group should send the information formally to the Secretariat, which would consult with the offering country regarding the minimum requirements to be met. The offer would then be communicated to the Bureau.

18. When a Party intends to offer to host meetings of the Conference of the Parties and related meetings of the Parties to the Protocols, the Party should consult with the Secretariat in order to ensure that the necessary minimum requirements will be met.

19. It is also advisable to adopt the dates and venues of COP 14 and COP 15 at COP 13 in order to assist all Parties in preparing their calendars, and the host Governments to undertake the necessary preparations well in advance.

20. In order to encourage more countries to make offers to host the meetings of the Conference of the Parties concurrently with the meetings of the Parties to the Protocols in the future, Parties may wish to consider reviewing the budget allocation for the organization of these meetings concurrently with the meetings of the Parties to the Protocols, with a view to increasing the sharing of the costs with all Parties in the core budget. On the other hand, in recent years, Governments that hosted the meetings of the Conference of the Parties have demonstrated their commitment to the implementation of the Convention by making generous voluntary contributions, in the lead-up to or during their presidency, to support activities, including the participation of representatives from developing countries in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties. This practice should be encouraged, and future host Governments may be called upon to consider making similar arrangements.