

**CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL
DIVERSITY**Distr.
GENERALUNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/INF/4/Add.1
14 February 2001

ENGLISH ONLY

**SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND
TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE**

Sixth meeting

Montreal, 12-16 March 2001

Item 5.2 of the provisional agenda*

GLOBAL TAXONOMY INITIATIVE*Progress report on the Global Taxonomy Initiative**Note by the Executive Secretary**Addendum***REGIONAL MEETING OF SCIENTISTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA,
COSTA RICA, 6-9 FEBRUARY 2001**

1. At its fifth meeting, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to initiate short-term activities, including regional meetings of scientists, managers and policy makers to prioritize the most urgent global taxonomic needs and facilitate the formulation of specific regional and national projects to meet the needs identified, and to report thereon to the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting (decision V/9, para. 3(b)).
2. Pursuant to that request, a Central American Regional Workshop on the Global Taxonomy Initiative was held in INBio Park, National Biodiversity Institute of Costa Rica (INBio), Santo Domingo de Heredia, Costa Rica, from 6 to 9 February 2001. Funding for participants from the region was provided by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Other participants were funded by their respective institutions.
3. Twenty participants were drawn from Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama and selected by the Convention on Biological Diversity/GTI focal points in the respective countries. In five of the seven countries, the focal point or the representative of the focal point attended the meeting. Additional participants were invited on the basis of the importance of their institutions to regional activities, or their individual commitment to GTI activities in the region. These additional participants came from: the Convention Secretariat, CONABIO (Mexico), Jamaica, the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History and Missouri Botanical Gardens, in the

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United States of America, the Natural History Museum of London, the All-Species Foundation, BioNET-International and SIDA. Three of the participants are members of the GTI Coordination Mechanism. The full list of participants is contained in annex I below.

4. The activities undertaken at the meeting are listed in annex II below.

5. Although Mexico had not been considered part of Central America for the purposes of the meeting, the participant from that country expressed the view that support for priorities under the GTI within Mexico would be well served by closer involvement with the region.

6. The meeting revealed that national assessments of taxonomic needs are not all completed, and no information was available regarding possible completion dates for the various countries. However, some taxonomic needs and priorities are summarized in a preliminary regional assessment, which was drafted for the workshop and circulated to all participants. During the meeting further information on regional botanical needs and capabilities was provided and will be published separately in March 2001. The regional assessment will be updated in the light of the botanical information and other data to be gathered, and a final form produced and circulated in due course. A preliminary summary is presented in annex III below.

7. The meeting also indicated that prior levels of knowledge regarding the roles and functioning of the GTI, and funding options for GTI projects, were generally poor among the taxonomic participants. Scientific participants were generally unaware before the meeting of the identities of the national focal points for the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

8. Although, in paragraph 2 (k) of its decision V/13, the Conference of the Parties provided guidance to GEF to the effect that it should continue promoting awareness of the GTI and facilitate capacity-building in taxonomy in its Capacity Development Initiative, participants were unaware that a report on capacity-building in Latin America had been produced as part of that Initiative. A copy of this report was shown to participants, and details on how to obtain it have been circulated.

9. A very useful telephone conference with a representative of GEF was organized during the meeting, and participants noted the commitment of the financial mechanism to funding taxonomic work.

10. Participants discussed in outline a regional project to meet needs identified, and a multinational working party was set up to produce an initial project draft.

11. Participants also discussed the establishment of a regional network for meeting taxonomic needs, and identified a funding option through BioNET-International.

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Annex II

**CENTRAL AMERICAN REGIONAL WORKSHOP OF THE GLOBAL TAXONOMY
INITIATIVE, ACTIVITIES**

Inaugural Presentations:

Dr. R. Gámez: INBio.

Dr. T. Ebenhard: Swedish Scientific Council.

Dr. C. Lyal: Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Main Presentations:

Dr. C. Lyal: The GTI

Dr. Terry Erwin: A Taxonomist's Vision: Knowing All Earth's Species

Eric Vargas, M.Sc.: Taxonomic Information Uses: INBio's Case.

Dra. Julieta Carranza: Central American Network of Herbaria/Red de Herbarios de Mesoamérica y del Caribe.

Mariela Bermúdez, M.Sc.: Botany Information Gaps in Central America

A. Herrera, M.Sc.: Taxonomic Needs Assessment in Central America

Dr N. King: BioNET-INTERNATIONAL: a Model for Central American Networking

Main discussion topics for workshop sessions

Taxonomic needs and impediments in Central America

Developing a network of taxonomic institutes in Central America

The taxonomic impediment in Central America: development of a regional project to address identified needs

Processes for project funding by GEF

Annex III

MAIN NEEDS, PRIORITIES AND LIMITATIONS FOR TAXONOMY IN CENTRAL AMERICA. PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT*

Country	Needs	Priorities	Limitations
BELIZE	Training Infrastructure for collections Make information available to the public	Training	Insufficient budget Limited infrastructure Lack of specialized literature Lack of trained personnel
COSTA RICA	Training Budget Institutional collaboration Collecting/updating of information	Large and complex inventories Inventories in zones not yet studied Dissemination of information	Little training Insufficient budget Poor valuation of taxonomy
EL SALVADOR	Training Budget Specialized literature Equipment Contact with specialists	Training Budget for collections Launch national inventories National biodiversity centre	Little valuation of taxonomy Limited budget Lack of trained personnel Poor inter-institutional coordination
GUATEMALA	Training Budget Political support National inventories Development of database	Training Repatriation of information National biodiversity centre Support to collections	Little student or political interest Lack of economic motivation Little training
HONDURAS	Training Budget Specialized literature Investigation	Training Financial resources Launch national inventories Cataloguing and development of collections	Little valuation of Taxonomy Lack of trained personnel Insufficient budget
NICARAGUA	Training National inventories National biodiversity centre Political support	Inventory in zones not yet studied National biodiversity centre Update collections	Lack of trained personnel Lack of national and global interest Lack of a strategy
PANAMA	Training Budget National biodiversity centre Equipment	Increase budget Betterment of infrastructure Training	Little valuation of taxonomy Insufficient budget Little available information Lack of regional work networks

* From: *Assessment of Taxonomy Needs in Central America. Preliminary Report*, ed. A. Herrera, 2001, 36 pp.