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FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSED BIODIVERSITY TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraph 6 of decision IX/14, on technology transfer and cooperation, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, in cooperation with relevant partner organizations, to:

(a) Identify options for activities to be included in a prospective Biodiversity Technology Initiative as well as for the structure, functioning and governance of a Biodiversity Technology Initiative; and to

(b) Complete, as necessary, the list of criteria for selecting the host institution of the Biodiversity Technology Initiative, bearing in mind the possibility of the Initiative being hosted by the Secretariat of the Convention; and to submit the options and the list of criteria to the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention at its third meeting for its consideration.

2. In paragraph 7 of decision IX/14, the Conference of the Parties requested the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention at its third meeting to review the options and the list of criteria referred to above with a view to finalize them for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its tenth meeting.

3. The present note was prepared further to these requests. Section II provides background information on earlier work related to the potential launching of a Biodiversity Technology Initiative (BTI). Section III provides options in designing the BTI, addressing its possible portfolio of activities, structure and functioning. Section IV provides the requested list of criteria for selecting the host institution; this section also discusses the possibility of the Initiative being hosted by the Secretariat of the Convention. Section V provides conclusions and maps out a suggested way ahead.

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4. Invitations to review the first draft of the present note and to provide comments and input were sent to relevant organizations by notification 2009-126 of 1 October 2009. Comments were subsequently received from IUCN (The International Union for the Conservation of Nature) as well as an individual expert, Dr. Florencio G. Aceñolaza, and were taken into consideration in finalizing the present note.

II. BACKGROUND

5. At its seventh meeting, in February 2004, the Conference of the Parties adopted a programme of work on technology transfer and scientific and technological cooperation. The programme of work contains for programme elements (technology assessments; information system, enabling environments, and capacity-building). Under the programme element on enabling environments, the Executive Secretary was requested to prepare proposals on options to apply institutional, administrative, legislative and policy measures to facilitate access to and adaptation of technologies (decision VII/29, paragraphs 1 and 7). Such proposals were prepared accordingly and submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting, in March 2006, as document UNEP/CBD/COP/8/19/Add.2.

6. The proposals contained in this document *inter alia* noted that “the example of the Climate Technology Initiative (CTI), which was launched in 1995 by 23 OECD/International Energy Agency member countries and the European Commission to support the technology-related objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, shows the useful role of such an international network for the effective implementation of provisions on technology transfer” and suggested that “Parties may wish to engage in a collaborative effort to establish an international initiative with a view to support the implementation of Article 16 to 19 and the programme of work on technology transfer and scientific and technological cooperation”.¹

7. Upon consideration of the proposals, the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting requested the Executive Secretary to “explore possibilities of developing a ‘Biodiversity Technology Initiative’, taking into account the Climate Technology Initiative”.²

8. Pursuant to this request, the Executive Secretary prepared a document contained such an exploration. A first draft of this document was made available to the meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Technology Transfer and Scientific and Technological Cooperation, which took place in September 2007.³ The Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group considered the establishment of a Biodiversity Technology Initiative in section VI of its suggested strategy for the practical implementation of the programme of work,⁴ noting that committed Parties and organizations that act as champions of technology transfer can play an important role in promoting and supporting the effective implementation of Articles 16 to 19 and the programme of work on technology transfer and scientific and technological cooperation. The example of the CTI would indicate the useful role of such an international network of champions for the effective implementation of provisions on technology transfer. The establishment of a similar ‘Biodiversity Technology Initiative’ would be useful and welcome if effectively contributing to the implementation of the suggested strategy.

9. The Group noted that open questions remain, including on the funding needs, the potential portfolio of activities, and other questions as identified in the draft report, and suggested inviting Parties

¹ UNEP/CBD/COP/8/19/Add.2, paragraph S7 and rationale.

² Decision VIII/12, paragraph 15

³ Reviews of this first draft were provided by the chair of the CTI Executive Committee, Mr. Elmer Holt, and the CTI secretariat, and are gratefully acknowledged

⁴ See UNEP/CBD/COP/9/18, annex.

and relevant organizations to provide their views on these open questions. Such invitations were communicated by the Executive Secretary by notifications and comments received from a number of Parties and the International Environmental Technology Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/IETC) were reflected in a note by the Executive Secretary submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting (UNEP/CBD/COP/9/18/Add.1). The note described the Climate Technology Initiative, addressing its historical background, the evolution of its institutional structure and its host-institution agreements, its funding and portfolio of activities.

10. Based on this description, the document explored possibilities for developing a Biodiversity Technology Initiative (BTI), addressing its possible portfolio of activities and its funding needs as well as possible funding mechanisms and arrangements. It also discussed how to identify a host institution, providing a list of criteria, and how to identify an institution providing secretariat services if different from the former. The document highlighted the need for full involvement and participation of developing countries in the Initiative, and also discussed governance issues such as the relationship of the Initiative with the Convention and its bodies, the need for cooperative arrangements with other organizations and conventions, and stakeholders; and the governing body and evaluation of the Initiative. The present note builds on this earlier document.⁵

III. OPTIONS IN DESIGNING A POSSIBLE BIODIVERSITY TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE (BTI)

A. *Portfolio of activities*

11. The activities of the Climate Technology Initiative (CTI) fall into the general—and overlapping—categories of: technology needs assessments (TNAs), implementation activities, training courses, information dissemination, and seminars and symposia. Most comments received on the earlier document followed the example of the CTI closely, and a portfolio based on the CTI activities, with suitable adaptations in order to reflect the specific needs and circumstances of the Convention, would presumably provide viable options.

12. Adaptations would need to include an adequate reflection of those provisions related to access to and transfer of technology which are specific to the Convention, in particular those pertaining to the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources (Articles 16, paragraphs 3 and 4), as well as Article 19 paragraphs 1 and 2, in conjunction with Article 15, paragraph 6, and Article 8(j)). Such reflection would, *inter alia*, require an adaptation of the list of relevant stakeholders to be engaged in the BTI and its activities to include, for instance, indigenous and local communities.

13. In identifying options for a possible portfolio of activities, it is also noteworthy that the Climate Technology Initiative has a strong focus on energy efficiency-enhancing technologies—an important component of technologies for mitigation of climate change. This subset of technologies has the important advantage that it is tangible and readily identifiable. In contrast, many technologies that are relevant for the Convention, and in particular technologies that are relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, are broad and not readily identifiable. Technologies that make use of

⁵ The present note also takes into consideration the options identified under the current negotiations in the UNFCCC Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention on 'enhanced action on development and transfer of technology. In light of the dynamic nature of these negotiations, it is difficult to reflect their most recent state in the present note. The negotiating text as of 6 November 2009 as downloaded from the UNFCCC website is available under <http://www.cbd.int/doc/case-studies/ttc/ttc-UNFCCC%20LCA%20November%202009.pdf> . According to the Copenhagen Accord, a Technology Mechanism will be established to accelerate technology development and transfer in support of action on adaptation and mitigation.

genetic resources are, however, readily identifiable and, therefore, the potential linkages between these activities and the international regime on access and benefit-sharing could be examined. Such consideration could include whether the proposed BTI could constitute a tool as part of the international regime.

14. It has been underlined in the strategy for the practical implementation of the programme of work⁶ that technology transfer, in particular in the context of the third objective of the Convention, will not be effective as an on-off and one-way activity, but needs to be embedded in a participatory decision-making process as well as in integrated, long-term scientific and technological cooperation.⁷ At its ninth meeting, the Conference of the Parties encouraged Parties to engage in South-South technology transfer and cooperation on science, technology and innovation, as well as explore alternative models for triangular, regional or multilateral cooperation, as complementary mechanisms to North-South activities.⁸ These provisions provide entry points for also putting emphasis, in the activity portfolio of the BTI, on, *inter alia*, the promotion of international research cooperation.

1. *Support technology needs assessments*

15. At its eighth meeting, the Conference of the Parties underlined the importance of developing specific approaches to technology transfer and technological and scientific cooperation to address the prioritized needs of countries based on the priorities listed in national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and to link technology needs assessments to those priorities.⁹ The Biodiversity Technology Initiative could provide, in collaboration with the GEF¹⁰ and its implementing agencies, other relevant organizations and stakeholders, as well as relevant processes under other conventions,¹¹ technical assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition in carrying out *technology needs assessments*, in particular in the context of the revision of national biodiversity strategies and action plans. This could include the training on TNA methods, including workshops, the development of relevant materials, and the dissemination of experiences and of information on lessons learned and best practices:

- (a) Capacity-building for biodiversity-related technology needs assessments;
- (b) Technical assistance to countries carrying out needs assessments;
- (c) Development of methodological approaches to technology needs assessments in partnership with relevant international organizations;
- (d) Exchange of experiences about successful approaches to conducting technology needs assessments;

⁶ Decision IX/14 annex.

⁷ *Ibid.*, paragraph 4.

⁸ Decision IX/14, paragraph 13.

⁹ Decision VIII/12.

¹⁰ At its ninth meeting, the Conference of the Parties requested the Global Environment Facility to provide support to developing country Parties in the preparation of national assessments of technology needs for implementation of the Convention (see decision IX/14, para. 14). Under the current GEF strategy, technology-needs assessments would be eligible for GEF funding if being part of the development or revision of national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

¹¹ Such cooperation could also be in light of their experiences with, and evaluations of, providing support for technology needs assessments for mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.

(e) Facilitating interaction between governments, agencies and relevant international organizations on technology needs assessments.

16. One concrete activity under subparagraph 15 (c) above could be the development of a handbook providing clear and practical advice on how to carry out biodiversity-related technology needs assessments. This work could be based on a suitable revision of the recently updated technology needs assessment handbook for climate change, prepared by UNEP-GEF in cooperation with the CTI.¹²

2. *Support to implementation activities*

17. The BTI could facilitate the actual transfer of relevant technologies, that is, according to Article 16, paragraph 1, of the Convention, technologies that are relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity or make use of genetic resources and do not cause significant harm to the environment. The transfer of these technologies, identified during the technology needs assessment process, could be supported through a variety of activities, including:

(a) Based on outcomes from the technology needs assessment process, identifying priority technology sectors in partnership with developing countries and countries with economies in transition, research institutions and relevant stakeholders including the business sector, as well as indigenous and local communities;¹³

(b) Undertaking active match-making between potential technology providers, recipients, and, as needed, relevant funding institutions, with a view to fast-track financing and access by developing countries to relevant technologies in the public domain, the transfer and application of which does not involve intellectual property rights issues;¹⁴

(c) Implementing other targeted activities in selected priority sectors with a view to foster access to and transfer of technology, including by promoting collaborative research and the development of biotechnology-based industries in biodiversity-rich countries, by catalysing or facilitating the establishment of partnership with technology innovators, research alliances or consortia, joint ventures, or twinning arrangements;

(d) Evaluating activities, and disseminating lessons learned, to inform pertinent activities in other regions and sectors;

(e) Based on an exchange of practical experiences and lessons learnt, and in accordance with identified needs, develop guidance for identifying and removing barriers to technology transfer, and for promoting an enabling environment for technology transfer and scientific and technological cooperation, both in providing and in receiving countries. This work could build on existing work under the Convention, such as the strategy for the practical implementation of the programme of work and technology transfer and scientific and technological cooperation,¹⁵ and could include identifying good practices for the transfer of relevant technologies on a fair and most favourable basis, according to the

¹² The handbook is available under <http://unfccc.int/ttclear/jsp/index.jsp>. It includes consideration of short-term and medium- to long-term technology options, and the extension of technology implementation analyses from barrier and policy analysis to sector and national system analysis.

¹³ This could for instance include biological resources, including biomass, and their possible application in sectors such as energy, health, agriculture, livestock, industry, and the environment. Priority areas could also be identified in accordance with the various programmes of work of the Convention.

¹⁴ See decision IX/14, paragraph 9.

¹⁵ See <http://www.cbd.int/tech-transfer/enabling.shtml> for more information.

requirements of the Convention,¹⁶ as well as work on, for instance, biosecurity, bioethics, intellectual property rights, and licensing technology.

18. Such work could be undertaken in close cooperation with the designated central consulting point on technology access and transfer suggested in the strategy for practical implementation of the programme of work, as well as with nominated institutions which could act as national or regional centres of excellence for technology access and transfer under the Convention.

19. As part of its work under paragraph 17 (e) above, the BTI could be instrumental in enhancing policy coherence. For instance, the BTI could promote that technology needs are adequately addressed in Parties' national biodiversity strategies and action plans as well as in their national development plans such as poverty reduction strategies. Within developed countries, coherence could be enhanced for instance with other instruments of technical assistance and technology transfer, such as those under Official Development Assistance (ODA) activities, in order to avoid duplications and facilitate synergies.

3. Capacity-building and training

20. The BTI could organize training courses, on national or regional levels, in cooperation with relevant international organizations and with a focus on the special requirements and circumstances of countries. Specific activities could include:

- (a) Capacity-building for technology needs assessment;
- (b) Exchange and dissemination of information on relevant technologies and their application;
- (c) Exchange of experiences, including good practices, and capacity building on the establishment of enabling environments or certain aspects thereof, as appropriate to the circumstances of the region and/or the country;
- (d) Professional education and training, for instance on systematics, taxonomy, genomics (structural and functional), proteomics, and metabolomics, and germplasm banks.

4. Dissemination of information

21. Through its activities, the BTI could facilitate the exchange and dissemination of relevant information among Governments, industry, research institutions, relevant international organizations, other stakeholders and indigenous and local communities, in order to support the transfer and adaptation of relevant technologies. This could take place through the organization of workshops and symposia (see next section), the dissemination of pertinent publications, and the establishment, in close coordination with the clearing house mechanism of the Convention, of electronic means of information exchange. It could thereby assist the clearing house mechanism of the Convention to function as a knowledge hub on relevant technology and scientific and technical cooperation.

5. Workshops, symposia, and other meetings

22. The BTI could organize a programme of seminars and workshops designed to promote and facilitate the access to and transfer of technologies of relevance to the Convention, and the development of scientific and technological cooperation. The BTI could also organize side-events at meetings held under the Convention to share experiences and lessons learned from pertinent activities. Such events

¹⁶ See Article 16, paragraph 2, of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

would be an important means of implementing the activities outlined above, in particular with regard to capacity-building and training, and information dissemination.

23. Such events would be organized with the active participation of relevant agencies/centres, the business sector, universities, research institutions, international organizations, financial institutions, other stakeholders, and indigenous and local communities, both from developed and from developing countries, and would initiate or strengthen networking between these actors, for collaborative activities on relevant technologies.

24. The BTI could also facilitate specifically arranged technology-transfer fairs and/or match-making events in conjunction with meetings under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

B. Structure

25. Important structural issues to consider are the degree of independence of the proposed BTI from the Convention and its bodies, and, closely related to this issue, the participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

26. The Climate Technology Initiative (CTI) is a voluntary initiative of nine members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for supporting the work on technology transfer under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The CTI is governed by an Executive Committee, composed of representatives from each of the CTI member countries. While independent from the UNFCCC process, the CTI works closely it, including the Convention Secretariat and the Expert Group on Technology Transfer (EGTT), as well as with relevant Implementing Agreements of the International Energy Agency (IEA) and other international organizations or initiatives.

27. One option would be to adhere to the CTI model and establish the BTI as an independent initiative, which would be open to all interested Parties on a voluntary basis on the clear understanding that the mandate of the BTI, as an initiative to support technology transfer and scientific and technological cooperation, would be of a limited and voluntary nature.

28. It could also be considered whether to open membership at some level to institutions as well, for instance, research institutions, civil society organizations, or international organizations. Membership for business sector participants would also provide an opportunity for business sector financial support, either through membership contributions or other arrangements.

29. The comments of Parties on the earlier document reflected a desire for the active participation of developing countries, with several submissions advising that the BTI should be demand-driven and structured in a way to be able to address developing countries' specific needs and their national biodiversity strategy and action plans. As explained above, such consideration is particularly important in light of the third objective of the Convention and the provisions of Article 16, paragraph 3, Article 19, paragraphs 1 and 2, and Article 15, paragraph 6, and the subsequent promotion of collaborative research and joint venture projects in developing countries.

30. Several, not mutually exclusive, options can be identified to address this aspect.

(a) Membership status is tied to the issue of funding. In order to alleviate the financial burden associated with membership, a differentiated payment schedule could be established for developing countries and countries with economies in transition (see next section for further discussion);

(b) In addition to an Executive Committee consisting of member representatives which would be responsible for the day-to-day management of the BTI, a strong steering committee or advisory body could be established which would guide the BTI on programmatic issues and, in particular, would ensure that the BTI addresses the needs and circumstances of developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition. This body could be composed of representatives of developed and developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition, with balanced regional representation, as well as international organizations, research institutions, the business sector, other stakeholders, and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

31. Another option is to move the BTI closer to the Convention and its bodies. This could include, for instance:

(a) A reporting obligation of the BTI to the Conference of the Parties;

(b) The provision of strategic guidance to the BTI by the Conference of the Parties. In this case, the role of the steering committee or advisory board could be to complement and further specify the advice provided by the Conference of the Parties;

(c) The hosting of the BTI by the Secretariat of the Convention. In this case, the day-to-day management would be undertaken by the Executive Secretary, based on the guidance from the Conference of the Parties and the advice provided by the steering committee/advisory board (which would in this case also include representatives of BTI members).

32. All options will require the active engagement of committed Parties and organizations that act as champions of technology transfer and which would provide both financial and capacity support to the BTI and the implementation of its portfolio of activities.¹⁷

C. Functioning

1. Funding mechanisms

33. Core funding for the BTI could be provided by mutually agreed annual membership fees. In order to alleviate the financial burden for developing countries and countries with economies in transition associated with membership in the BTI, fees could be differentiated in accordance with levels of development.

34. Additional funding and capacity could be mobilized through:

(a) Additional voluntary contributions for specific activities, both from members and non-members as well as from relevant international organizations and initiatives and stakeholders, including the business sector;

(b) Innovative financial mechanisms, such as for instance innovative taxation models and fiscal incentives as well as new and innovative sources of development finance;¹⁸

¹⁷ The important role of such champions was also underlined in the strategy for the practical implementation of the programme of work on technology transfer and scientific and technological cooperation, which was developed by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Technology Transfer and Scientific and Technological Cooperation. See decision IX/14, annex, paragraph 30.

¹⁸ See the note by the Executive Secretary on policy options concerning innovative financial mechanisms (UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/3/8) and the report of the International Workshop on Innovative Financial Mechanisms, convened in Bonn from 27 to 29 January 2010 (UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/3/INF/5).

(c) Close cooperation with other initiatives and/or programmes that work on the formation and training of human resources, and/or on scientific and technological cooperation and the transfer of technologies which are relevant to the Convention;

(d) In-kind arrangements like the hosting of meetings, temporary secondments of staff, etc., both by members and non-members;

(e) Financial support for official representatives to attend meetings and workshops.

35. Several comments from Parties on the earlier note highlighted the limited nature of a prospective BTI if designed after the CTI. In particular, funding on a scale comparable to the CTI would not be able to satisfy the need for biodiversity technology transfer, including because new technologies, in particular biotechnologies, are mostly proprietary products of business sector actors, and their transfer would carry high price tags, in addition to the further additional research effort needed to assess and adapt them to local conditions and to the needs of local communities..

2. *Cooperative arrangements*

36. As noted above, earlier comments emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts with other organizations and initiatives as well as stakeholders: firstly, because technology transfer is typically embedded in a long-term process of scientific and technological cooperation; and secondly, because it would also mobilize additional resources as well as create synergies with existing activities and processes. In fact, one important function of the BTI could be to nurture a network of champions which promote scientific and technological cooperation and the transfer of technologies which are of relevance to the Convention, including research institutions and the business sector. As said above, this network could include nominated regional or national centres of excellence.

37. Coordination of activities is an important element of cooperation with other organizations and processes. For instance, BTI activities could be held, whenever appropriate, in conjunction with meetings and events of the Convention. The BTI could also seek to cooperate with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as its Expert Group on Technology Transfer and the CTI, for instance, in the area of technologies of joint interest. It could also seek to identify synergies, and catalyse joint activities accordingly, with other biodiversity-related conventions and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

D. *Governance*

38. As explained under sub-section B. above, the governance of the BTI will be tied to its degree of independence from the Convention and will also depend on how to best involve developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

(a) In case of an independent BTI, an Executive Committee consisting of member representatives could be established which would be responsible for the day-to-day management of the BTI;

(b) In addition, a steering committee or advisory body could be established which would guide the BTI on programmatic issues and, in particular, would ensure that the BTI addresses the needs and circumstances of developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition. This body could be composed of representatives of developed and developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition, with balanced regional representation, as well as international organizations, research institutions, the business sector, other stakeholders, and the SCBD.

(c) If the BTI were given strategic/political guidance by the Conference of the Parties, the role of the steering committee or advisory board could be to complement and further specify the advice provided by the Conference of the Parties, by providing operational guidance;

(d) If the BTI were hosted by the Secretariat of the Convention (see paras. 42-44 below), the day-to-day management would be undertaken by the Executive Secretary. Strategic/political guidance would then be provided by the Conference of the Parties, which could be further specified by advice provided by the steering committee/advisory board (which could in this case also include representatives from BTI members – those Parties and organizations providing funds for the BTI);

(e) On select issues of a technical nature, the work of the Conference of the Parties and the steering committee/advisory board could then also be supported by reconvening the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Technology Transfer and Scientific and Technological Cooperation.

39. Following the example of the CTI, the BTI could be evaluated periodically in order to determine whether it is achieving its goals of improving technology transfer. How and by whom this evaluation is to be carried out could be dependent on how the BTI is hosted and funded at the time of evaluation. For instance, if the BTI were to be hosted by the Secretariat of the Convention and, accordingly, would operate under United Nations rules and regulations, such evaluations could be part of the periodical evaluations by the Joint Inspection Unit.

40. Irrespective of who would be hosting the BTI, the substantive evaluation of the impact of the BTI could be undertaken by specialised consultants based on the criteria set by Conference of the Parties and further detailed, as appropriate, by the advisory committee.

IV. LIST OF CRITERIA FOR SELECTING A HOST INSTITUTION

41. As requested by decision IX/14, this section provides a list of criteria for selecting the host institution of the BTI. It should be noted that no expression of interest for hosting the BTI has been received further to notification 2009-126 of 1 October 2009. The rationale provided for each criterion is based on the analysis of the previous section, as follows:

(a) The host institution should hold relevant technical capacity and expertise on the Convention, and should have in particular concrete experiences in the transfer of relevant technologies and in scientific and technological cooperation as related to the Convention. The host institution should also have experience in dealing with the process of commercialization of such technologies, for instance, converting patents into business models.

Rationale: The BTI will provide support to implementing the provisions on technology transfer and scientific and technological cooperation for the Convention. In light of this overall objective and the options on a possible portfolio of tasks, as outlined above, a host institution which would meet these criteria could start activities in a relatively short time frame and, in light of potential in-house synergies, with perhaps relatively modest additional resources.

(b) The host institution should have a sound knowledge of the pertinent needs and circumstances of developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

Rationale: The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity has underlined that technology transfer under the Convention should be a country- and demand-driven process.¹⁹

(c) The host institution should provide access to a strong international network of relevant experts and partner institutions.

Rationale: In conjunction with (a), this would enable the host institution to synergize with existing work of other organizations and initiatives, and mobilize relevant expertise. It would also be an important precondition for being able to forge new partnerships, which would be a critical activity for advancing scientific and technological cooperation.

(d) The host institution should have high convening power.

Rationale: As explained above, forging partnerships by bringing people together is an important element in a possible portfolio of tasks, and convening power will be important for effectively undertaking this activity. A high reputation and impartiality are important determinants of convening power.

(e) The host institution should provide sufficient institutional flexibility to enable the establishment of a Biodiversity Technology Initiative under its umbrella.

Rationale: This criterion would be important if candidates under consideration in light of the previous criteria would be multilateral organizations, and the prospective membership of the BTI would not correspond to the membership of the host organization.

Hosting of the BTI by the Secretariat of the Convention

42. In decision IX/14, paragraph 6, the Conference of the Parties requested, when completing the list of criteria for selecting the host institution of the Biodiversity Technology Initiative, to bear in mind the possibility of the Initiative being hosted by the Secretariat of the Convention. This sub-section responds to this request by assessing the profile of the Secretariat against the criteria set out above, as follows:

(a) The Secretariat holds relevant technical capacity and expertise on the Convention, including on its provisions and programme of work on technology transfer and scientific and technological cooperation. It is familiar with the various aspects of the topic. As the Secretariat services a global intergovernmental process on various areas and programmes of work, many of which are not directly related to the transfer of technology and scientific and technological cooperation, it has however only limited concrete and practical experiences in the actual transfer and adaptation of specific technologies and in promoting scientific and technological cooperation as related to the Convention;

(b) The Secretariat has a sound overview of the general needs and circumstances of developing countries and countries with economies in transition as related to the transfer of relevant technologies and to scientific and technological cooperation. It may not necessarily have detailed knowledge on the specific technological needs and circumstances of individual countries; however, as it is the goal of the technology needs assessment process, yet to be undertaken on a comprehensive scale for the Convention, to gain this knowledge, it is doubtful whether at present and single organization would be in possession of this information;

(c) The Secretariat could build on its large network based on national focal points for the various work areas under the Convention, and in particular on the network established through the earlier

¹⁹ Decision VII/29, annex, paragraph 2 (Programme of work on technology transfer and scientific and technological cooperation); decision IX/14, annex, paragraph 5 (Strategy for the implementation of the programme of work).

work in designing and implementing the programme of work on technology transfer and scientific and technological cooperation, including the work of the Ad hoc Technical Expert Group on Technology Transfer and Scientific and Technological Cooperation, which convened in September 2007. The Secretariat has also an increasing network of business organizations;

(d) Servicing a United Nations intergovernmental process of 193 Parties, the Secretariat holds high convening power on matters related to the three objectives of the Convention;

(e) As per pertinent decisions of the Conference of the Parties, the funding for the Biodiversity Technology Initiative could be established as a budget line either under the BY trust fund (core budget) or the BE trust fund (voluntary contributions), and needed posts could be established as L positions. Hence, the institutional flexibility would in principle be given.²⁰

43. This overall assessment shows that the Secretariat would in principle be able to host the Biodiversity Technology Initiative. In light of the central role of the Secretariat as coordinator on biodiversity issues among international organizations, it could play a similar role with regard to the BTI, if a decision were made to move the BTI more closely under the Convention process. However, the assessment against criteria (a) and (b) also points to limitations. The Secretariat assists in implementing large number of programmes of work, including seven thematic work programmes and 18 work programmes on various cross-cutting issues, as well as providing support to a number of implementation mechanisms. Many of those work-streams are not or not directly related to the issues of technology transfer and scientific and technological cooperation and, as a consequence, the BTI when hosted by the Secretariat could only rely on limited in-house synergy.

44. At present, the Secretariat does not have the capacity to host the BTI and provide secretariat services. Effective hosting and provision of secretariat support in light of the possible portfolio of activities provided above would require the establishment of two Professional posts (at L-3 or L-4 levels, with exact levels depending on the configuration of the agreed portfolio of activities), as well as one General-Service post (at G-7 level). It would also require the establishment of an operating budget in, at a minimum,²¹ the same order of magnitude as the budget of the Climate Technology Initiative, as well as a commitment by supporting Parties, organizations and stakeholders to provide diverse in-kind contributions as outlined above.²²

V. SUGGESTED WAY AHEAD

45. The strategy for the practical implementation of the programme of work on technology transfer and scientific and technological cooperation, annexed to decision IX/14 of the Conference of the Parties, highlights the important role of committed Parties and organizations that act as champions of technology transfer in promoting and supporting the effective implementation of Articles 16 to 19 and the programme of work on technology transfer and scientific and technological cooperation. Likewise, such champions would also be needed – in fact, would be fundamental – for the establishment of the proposed Biodiversity Technology Initiative, irrespective of the specific options which would be eventually be selected by the Conference of the Parties.

²⁰ The establishment of the LifeWeb Initiative may provide an example where similar arrangements were made. See <http://www.cbd.int/lifeweb/>.

²¹ See related discussion in paragraph 35 above.

²² Member contributions to the CTI in 2008 totalled 654,130 euros, plus diverse in kind contributions and a minimum core contribution of 10,000 euros per member for communications and outreach. See the *CTI Annual Report 2008*, available under <http://www.climatetech.net/publications/>.

46. The strategy also noted that the establishment of a Biodiversity Technology Initiative would be useful and welcome if effectively contributing to the implementation of the strategy.

47. In light of these considerations, the Working Group may wish to review the options and the list of criteria provided in the present note with a view to finalizing them for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its tenth meeting, as requested in paragraph 7 of decision IX/14, and may also wish to recommend that the Conference of the Parties:

(a) *Invites* interested Parties and other Governments, as well as relevant international organizations and initiatives, research institutions and the business sector to consider establishing a Biodiversity Technology Initiative, taking into account the options as finalized by the Working Group, and to pledge financial and capacity support accordingly;

(b) *Considers* the potential linkages between the Biodiversity Technology Initiative and its activities and the international regime on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits derived from their utilization.

48. The Working Group may also wish to adopt recommendations which would seek to establish *interim* arrangements before the establishment of the Biodiversity Technology Initiative. These could include a recommendation to *request* the Executive Secretary to identify, in cooperation with relevant organizations and initiatives, activities currently being undertaken by these organizations and initiatives which support, facilitate, or promote technology transfer and scientific cooperation under the Convention, as outlined in the present note, namely, on (i) support for technology needs assessments; (ii) pertinent training courses; (iii) pertinent seminars and symposia; (iv) information dissemination; (v) other implementation activities including match-making and catalyzing or facilitating the establishment of research alliances or consortia, joint ventures, or twinning arrangements, and to disseminate this information through the clearing house mechanism of the Convention.

49. The Working Group may further wish to recommend that the Conference of the Parties:

(a) *Invites* Parties to consider including the preparation of technology needs assessments in the revision and updating of national biodiversity strategy and action plans; and

(b) *Requests* funding institutions, including the GEF, to provide financial support accordingly.
