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AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

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Item 11 of the provisional agenda*

ENGAGEMENT WITH SUBNATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

*Note by the Executive Secretary***

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present document is intended to provide the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention, at its fifth meeting, with an update on engagement with subnational governments, including cities and other local governments, and on subnational implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). It provides information on the importance of the contribution by subnational governments to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and summarizes progress made by Parties and by the Secretariat of the Convention, towards fulfilling previous decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (COP), on subnational implementation. It outlines the remaining challenges to be faced, and suggests recommendations for consideration of by the Working Group.

2. Subnational governments¹ have immense potential to contribute to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. A growing number of examples of implementation at the subnational level demonstrate this potential. Parties' progress towards achieving the goals and targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 could be accelerated if the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystem services by leading subnational governments can be multiplied by a much greater number of subnational governments. Overall progress in achieving national goals and targets could, in many cases, also be significantly enhanced through alignment between strategies across and at various levels of government.

3. Cities and city-regions have a particularly important role to play in subnational implementation of the Convention. Since 2007, just over 50 per cent of the world's population live in cities, and this slight majority is responsible for about three quarters of the world's consumption of resources. Furthermore, between the years 2000 and 2030, the urban population is expected to nearly double to 4.9 billion, while

* UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/1.

** Updated from UNEP/CBD/COP/11/13.

¹ "Subnational governments" refers, in this context, to any levels of government that fall beneath national government.

the increase in total urban area is expected to triple in that same period of time, with the majority of the global urban area projected to be urban in 2030 yet to be built².

4. The mode and direction of global urban development will profoundly affect biodiversity – not only where urbanization happens, but in every corner of the globe. These effects are as a result of both the quantities in which, and methods by which, nature's goods and services are utilized, as well as the effects of global change, including climate change. Development in the future needs to take a more strategic course, cognisant of our reliance on ecosystems and their services, if society is to persist and thrive.

5. In the face of these formidable challenges to global sustainability, Parties to the Convention can benefit from working with cities and subnational governments in order to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and achieve the Aichi Targets. Subnational governments contribute directly and substantially to the Strategic Plan, across a variety of activities from awareness-raising to protected area management. Their contribution is likely to be enhanced through additional coordination with, and guidance from, national governments, many of which have already demonstrated the utility of such working relationships. While the Convention establishes commitments at the national level for its 194 Parties, national governments in turn have the collective capacity to mobilize thousands of subnational governments and hundreds of thousands of cities, toward a common cause.

6. The past three meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention have featured decisions on subnational implementation of the Convention. At its ninth meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopted decision IX/28, the first decision in a United Nations multilateral environmental agreement (MEA) to recognize the importance of cities and other subnational governments in its implementation.

7. Decision IX/28 was further advanced by decision X/22, in which Parties endorsed a Plan of Action on Local and Subnational Action for Biodiversity (2011-2020), outlining the ways in which subnational implementation can contribute to national governments' implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 through an indicative list of activities. In paragraph 1 of decision X/22, the Conference of the Parties encourages Parties and other Governments to implement (the Plan of Action), as appropriate, in the context of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and to report on their activities in the fifth national report of the Parties to the Convention.

8. At the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, decision XI/8 A on engagement of other stakeholders, major groups and subnational authorities addressed additional issues related to subnational governments, cities and other local authorities for biodiversity. In paragraph 4 of decision XI/8 A, Parties and other Governments were invited to develop, with their local and subnational governments, guidelines and capacity-building initiatives to develop, enhance or adapt local and subnational biodiversity strategies and action plans, or to mainstream biodiversity into sustainable development, in line with their national biodiversity strategies and action plans, so as to ensure harmonious and coherent implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets at all levels of governance.

9. Paragraph 5 of decision XI/8 A invites Parties, development organizations and other donors to support initiatives by networks of local and subnational governments that complement the Plan of Action and contribute directly to Parties' achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets;

10. Paragraph 6 of decision XI/8 A encourages the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership to develop indicators that track the progress of urban settlements towards attaining the Aichi Biodiversity Targets based, for instance, on the City Biodiversity Index, and encourages Parties to monitor and report on the contribution of their cities to reaching the Targets, in particular in their fifth national reports.

² Cities and Biodiversity Outlook: Action and Policy: <http://www.cbd.int/en/subnational/partners-and-initiatives/cbo/cbo-action-and-policy-executive-summary>.

11. Paragraph 7 of decision XI/8 A requests the Executive Secretary, subject to availability of resources, to support the Global Partnership on Local and Subnational Action on Biodiversity³ and its activities as an effective platform for scientific and technical cooperation, capacity development and the dissemination of best practices for local and subnational implementation of the Convention, and to continue to involve local and subnational authorities in the series of workshops to review and update national biodiversity strategies and action plans, including regional activities.

A. Activities by the Parties in support of subnational implementation

12. Of the 43 fifth national reports submitted by 24 April 2014, most contain explicit reference to subnational implementation. It is hoped that this encouraging trend is further reflected in the fifth national reports that remain to be submitted. The following examples of subnational implementation are drawn from the fifth national reports submitted thus far, and provide evidence of coordinated action towards achieving the goals and targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. It covers such topics as support and guidance to subnational governments; initiatives demonstrating cooperation in implementation; policy interventions; subnational strategies and action plans; assessment and valuation of biodiversity; and responding to the need to strengthen implementation through networking of local governments.

13. Belgium's fifth national report includes sections on implementation by each of the three subnational governments that constitute the country, as well as substantial steps on subnational implementation taken by the national government. For example, in the update of Belgium's National Strategy 2020, a new addition to the strategic objectives is to "promote the commitment of cities, provinces and other local authorities in the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy 2020". More specific decisions at the federal and subnational levels include that, "by 2019, public space managers in municipalities must manage their spaces without the use of plant protection products". Belgium has also reported that the City Biodiversity Index - also referred to as the Singapore Index has been tested in the Brussels-Capital Region.

14. In the People's Republic of China, following guidance by the Ministry of Finance, 30 provinces (autonomous regions and province-level municipalities) have so far established funds for ecological and environmental restoration in mining areas, through which they receive funds from mining operations. Several provinces have also established their own specialized funds for protected areas. Subnational governments in China are developing biodiversity strategies and action plans (BSAPs), with the guidance of national government, with seven provinces having launched their BSAPs so far. The Ministry of Land and Resources has issued rules for developing master plans for land use at municipal, county and town levels. The rules require that local governments control land use for urban and rural development and identify core protected areas of nature reserves, forest parks, geological parks, natural habitats for wild animals and plants, as well as protected core areas of water sources. During 2009-2013 China conducted the eighth forest resources consensus, at the provincial level. The results of this and prior consensuses are the most authoritative up-to-date data reflecting the status of forest resources at national and province level.

15. The Republic of the Congo is beginning to implement an article that includes local governments in the administration of water and forest use.

16. The Danish Ministry of the Environment and Local Government Denmark are updating a registry of important natural habitats in each municipality in Denmark, in a total of approximately 310,000 localities. Denmark also reports that ecological corridors between natural areas will be expanded and

³ The Global Partnership on Local and Subnational Action on Biodiversity is an affiliation of subnational governments, and partners supporting them, including national governments, which have committed to implementing the CBD. A Steering Committee of Subnational Governments and a Steering Committee of Cities, both composed partly of COP hosts, represent the Partnership and offer the voice of subnational governments to the parties to the CBD.

supplemented in municipal planning initiatives, with local authorities being encouraged to establish quality goals for their ecological corridors. The Ministry of the Environment is working to promote biodiversity in towns and cities and, as a consequence, it is reported that a number of local authorities are putting more emphasis on ensuring green, multifunctional spaces in urban areas. State goals for nature conservation by 2020 include ensuring that municipal plans do not compromise international nature conservation areas.

17. In the Federal Republic of Germany the Government's Federal Re-networking Programme of habitat corridor creation calls for close cooperation between federal, regional and local authorities and conservation and user associations. In addition, the federal level is providing assistance under the "lighthouse project" for model projects designed to implement re-networking measures such as the trial and development project "Holstein Habitat Corridors". A "Biological diversity in municipalities" declaration has been signed by some 220 cities and municipalities, many of which have declared their readiness to pay greater attention in future to conserving biological diversity as the basis for sustainable urban and local development, and to take concrete action to conserve and strengthen biological diversity at local level. The declaration includes the signatories' declaration of intent to join forces in an alliance for biological diversity. The Federal Environment Ministry and the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation are providing technical and financial support for the start-up phase of the alliance.

18. The Government of Japan has taken the initiative to adapt the City Biodiversity Index to Japan's particular context. The Government is providing support for the establishment of urban parks and purchases of land for special green conservation areas by local governments; as well as for the formulation of implementation plans for nature restoration projects based on the Law for the Promotion of Nature Restoration, as well as promoting projects to local governments. Support has been provided to 27 local municipalities for the formulation of Local Biodiversity Strategies including 23 prefectures and 32 municipalities. The Japanese Government is also formulating Local Biodiversity Strategy Formulation Guidelines with the aim of promoting the formulation of regional strategies. One of Japan's prefectures, Aichi, has also revised its Regional Biodiversity Strategy in order to include the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The Government of Japan established a Local Government Network on Biodiversity in October 2011, through which cooperation between local governments has progressed.

19. Mongolia's Ministry of Environment and Green Development and its National University have cooperated with the City of Ulaanbaatar to successfully reintroduce the Eurasian Beaver to the Tuul River Basin.

20. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar reports that the country's Department of Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation Society is conducting monitoring and surveillance at the Irrawaddy Dolphin Protected Area in collaboration with local authorities.

21. Among Nepal's main biodiversity related policies and strategies is an Environment Friendly Local Governance Framework, introduced in 2013. Furthermore, Nepal is including, among the national targets set by its national biodiversity strategy and action plan, the development and implementation of biodiversity management programmes by local governments.

22. The Government of the Netherlands began, in 2012, to develop a Biodiversity Monitoring Strategy for the Caribbean Netherlands, after the three islands of Aruba, Curacao and Saint Maarten became "special municipalities of the Netherlands" in 2010. The Strategy is due for completion in 2014 and will form the strategic framework for biodiversity monitoring throughout the Dutch Caribbean region, also linking with the rest of the region. The Dutch Government has also published various studies on the valuation of ecosystems and biodiversity under the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) initiative. One of these, 'Green pays off with TEEB city' (Groen loont met TEEB stad), indicates that integration of green-blue developments within spatial plans provides large net social returns, such as savings on health care costs, increased value of real estate, savings on energy costs and savings in

disposal and purification costs of rainwater. The benefits are about 1.5 to 2 times higher than the costs for investment and maintenance.

23. Local government subject experts were among those who drafted New Zealand's fifth national report. It explains that the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement, updated in 2010, provides direction for local authorities about how certain matters related to coastal management should be dealt with under the Resource Management Act planning documents, supporting better environmental outcomes with updated and more specific policy on key matters such as the preservation of natural character, protection of outstanding natural landscapes and features, protection of indigenous biodiversity and habitats, control of sedimentation and other discharges, improvement of water quality, adoption of a precautionary approach where appropriate, and monitoring. Additionally, New Zealand has drafted a National Policy Statement under the Resource Management Act on indigenous biodiversity that would require local authorities to manage the effects of activities through district and regional plans, to ensure that there is no net loss of significant indigenous biodiversity.

24. In the compilation of the Republic of Palau's most recent national biodiversity strategy and action plan, state and local governments were among the stakeholders consulted.

25. In the Republic of Rwanda campaigns for sensitization of local authorities and communities surrounding protected areas are reported as having achieved success.

26. One objective in the Solomon Islands' biodiversity strategy is that Honiara city council has developed, adopted and has started implementing of an invasive species strategy by 2017.

27. The Republic of South Africa's Department of Environmental Affairs has developed a local government support strategy, in consultation with stakeholders, identifying 108 municipalities (out of a total of 234) where urgent intervention is needed. Within the context of this support strategy, the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) has a programme to provide targeted capacity-building for municipalities to incorporate spatial biodiversity priorities in their planning and decision-making. In particular, a number of engagements have been held with district municipal managers and other decision-making platforms to incentivize the uptake of biodiversity considerations into municipal planning and decision-making. South Africa, in collaboration with "ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability", has also developed a biodiversity mainstreaming toolbox for land-use planning and development for municipalities in the Gauteng Province. In a separate initiative, in partnership with SANBI, they aim to provide biodiversity summaries for all 234 municipalities, to make science-based biodiversity information, including spatial data, available to municipalities to support them in their reporting responsibilities, such as the drafting of State of Environment Reports. Another partnership has been developed between the national Department of Water Affairs and the municipalities of eThekweni, uMgungundlovu District, and Msunduzi to foster better collaboration and coordination of ecological infrastructure investments aimed at improving water security in the Greater uMngeni catchment. South Africa's new Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act of 2013 delegates additional decision-making power to municipalities, providing both opportunities and challenges for mainstreaming biodiversity in municipal planning and decision-making. In South Africa, 17 biodiversity sector plans and eight bioregional plans have been or are being developed for municipalities in a range of provinces. They are based on provincial spatial biodiversity plans, and consist of maps of Critical Biodiversity Areas and Ecological Support Areas at municipal scale, with accompanying land-use guidelines, published in terms of the Biodiversity Act to guide land-use planning and decision-making by a range of sectors.

28. The agencies and organizations consulted for Sweden's fifth national report included the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. The Swedish Government intends to appoint a national coordinator for ecosystem services to enhance skills and increase the knowledge base on biodiversity and ecosystem services in municipalities, among other public authorities. Guidance on ecosystem assessment will be developed for central, regional and local authorities. Existing national and regional indicators for

monitoring of environmental quality objectives include the number of municipalities with green infrastructure plans.

29. Over and above these examples, and in considering this item of the agenda, Parties are invited to share additional experiences of, and commitments to, subnational implementation and to provide recommendations, based on section II of this document, to the Conference of the Parties on how such actions, including biodiversity reporting and biodiversity planning coordinated across levels of government, may be adopted by Parties.

B. Activities of the Secretariat of the Convention in support of subnational implementation

30. In response to paragraph 7 of decision XI/8 A, and in support of Parties' increasing efforts to facilitate subnational implementation of the Convention, the Secretariat has also engaged in a number of initiatives, with partners, including the following:

(a) The Secretariat co-organized, with the City of Montreal and the government of Catalonia as host subnational governments, meetings of the Global Partnership on Local and Subnational Action for Biodiversity, in 2013, in Montreal and Barcelona, respectively. A combined meeting of the Steering Committee of Cities and the Steering Committee of Subnational Governments of the Global Partnership will take place in Gangwon Province, Republic of Korea, in July 2014. The Advisory Committee of Subnational Governments is additionally receiving technical support from the Secretariat in the formulation of model pilot projects for other members of the Global Partnership to consider;

(b) The Secretariat supported and provided input into the global assessment "Urbanization, Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services: Challenges and Opportunities" – a publication initiated by the Stockholm Resilience Centre with contributions by various research institutions and other partners;

(c) With funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Japan, the Secretariat is currently completing a pilot project to assist key cities in India, Malawi and South Africa to develop local biodiversity strategies and action plans in line with the relevant national biodiversity strategies and action plans;

(d) With funding from the Government of Canada, the Secretariat is currently coordinating a pilot project assessing the links in biodiversity planning between levels of government in three countries – Canada, Brazil and South Africa, with the support of the countries and subnational governments concerned;

(e) The Secretariat will convene a regional workshop on cities and biodiversity for South, East and South-East Asia, hosted and supported by the Government of China, as a means of building capacity and expertise on biodiversity planning at the local level throughout the region;

(f) The Secretariat will facilitate another summit of subnational governments in parallel with the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea and Gangwon Province, in October, 2014;

(g) The Secretariat has provided technical support for the establishment of networks of subnational governments in support of subnational implementation of the CBD including the MediverCities network of Mediterranean cities for biodiversity, the Maritime Innovative Territories International Network (MITIN), and the Urban Biosphere Initiative (URBIS);

(h) The Secretariat continues to provide biodiversity advice and expertise to other United Nations agencies dealing with urbanization issues. For example the Executive Secretary attended the Special Session: United Nations High-Level Inter-Agency Meeting at the World Urban Forum in

Medellin, in April 2014, to ensure biodiversity's place in the new urban agenda towards Habitat III, and likewise responded to a request for input into United Nations Economic and Social Council discussions on sustainable urbanization. Meanwhile, the Secretariat continues to seek opportunities for strengthening relationships with other United Nations agencies and other agencies to garner support for parties' implementation of the Convention at the subnational level.

31. While paragraph 7 of decision XI/8 A also requests the Executive Secretary to continue to involve local and subnational authorities in the series of workshops to review and update national biodiversity strategies and action plans, including regional activities, it was decided, subsequent to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to discontinue this workshop series.

II. SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

32. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention may wish to recommend that the Conference of the Parties, at its twelfth meeting, adopt a decision along the following lines:⁴

The Conference of the Parties,

Noting the importance of including biodiversity in measures to address the challenges of sustainable urbanization by Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, agencies within the United Nations system such as UN-Habitat and ECOSOC, subnational governments and the organizations that work to support them, such as ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, and in the context of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda,

Taking note with appreciation of the valuable contribution of a temporary seconded staff person from ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, upon which the Secretariat currently relies to carry out its work on subnational implementation,

1. *Acknowledges* efforts to quantify and bring attention to the challenges and solutions associated with current patterns of urbanization, such as the publication of the global assessment *Urbanization, Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services: Challenges and Opportunities*,⁵ and *encourages* its broad dissemination and use;

2. *Invites* Parties to redouble their efforts at the national level to enable, support and guide strategic and sustainable urbanization by, for example, limiting, phasing out or reforming incentives harmful to biodiversity and developing and applying positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, especially as this applies to land-use planning for urbanization as part of achievement towards Aichi Biodiversity Target 3 and comprehensively discussed in document UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/4/Add.1;

3. *Encourages* Parties still preparing their fifth national reports to include reports on subnational implementation, providing concrete examples of coordination between different levels of government, to the Secretariat;

⁴ In addition to this recommendation text, and given the comprehensive and cross-cutting nature of subnational implementation, it is important that it is reflected also in all other COP decisions, so that it may be considered wherever it is most relevant. At its fifth meeting, the Working Group is therefore invited to consider recommendations on subnational implementation in documents on other agenda items. The Working Group is further invited to recommend such text where appropriate.

⁵ Published in 2013 by Springer and available as an open access publication at <http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007%2F978-94-007-7088-1>.

4. *Also encourages* Parties to support initiatives that are contributing towards achieving sustainable patterns of urbanization, such as the Urban Biosphere Initiative (URBIS), the Maritime Innovative Territories International Network (MiTin) and the MediverCities network;

5. *Further encourages* subnational governments to contribute to the attainment of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 by, specifically, integrating biodiversity considerations into plans for sustainable urbanization;

6. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources, to increase efforts to:

(a) Mainstream biodiversity into the work of other agencies and key partners involved in work at the subnational level;

(b) Assist Parties and subnational governments, and their partners, to more effectively integrate the contribution of subnational governments into the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.
