

Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions
Thursday 29 April 2021 @ 1400-1530 (CET) / 0800-0930 (EST)
(Via Microsoft Teams)
Report of the virtual meeting

The meeting was held virtually on 28 April 2021 and was chaired by Ms. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) with the participation of Ms. Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of UNFCCC, and Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary of UNCCD. Further active meeting participants: Mr. Neil Pratt (CBD), Mr. David Ainsworth (CBD), Ms. Miriam Medel (UNCCD), Ms. Yukie Hori (UNCCD), Mr. Daniele Violetti (UNFCCC), Mr. Alexander Saier (UNFCCC). The following guests were invited to speak on the first agenda item: Ms. Delphine De-Canecaude (BETC), Mr. Emmanuel Prevost (BETC).

Welcome, opening and adoption of the agenda

Ms. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema opened the meeting at 0800. The provisional agenda was approved (and is provided in annex to this report).

1. Joint outreach campaign

The chair invited Mr. Thiaw to introduce the joint outreach campaign, which emanates from the concept of a “social contract for nature”, and to invite the publicity company BETC, contracted by UNCCD, to present their proposals. Mr Emmanuel Prevost and Ms. Delphine De-Canecaude of BETC presented the proposal, which was then discussed by the Executive Secretaries and their respective communications focal points.

The meeting discussed the content of the proposal. It was suggested that a “solutions” component could be added to the messaging to raise awareness of the public on actions they can take in the areas highlighted by the campaign. Examples of such solutions could be provided by the convention secretariats that address the issue in question. The meeting also discussed the importance of transforming the scientific resources of the conventions into language that is accessible to the public, as well as the importance for the three secretariats to further review the text and messages proposed for the campaign, given that they will receive high visibility and scrutiny. It would be important that thematic experts at the secretariats contribute to these tasks. It was agreed that the presentation would be shared and looked at further before making final remarks or comments on its content.

The meeting also discussed the coordination and operationalization of the campaign. It was agreed that the communications focal points would further reflect on the proposal and prepare a plan to develop a mechanism/platform/programme to coordinate the campaign, maximize its outreach and ensure its sustainability. This will include identifying opportunities, including through joint efforts, to mobilize resources for its daily operations and for engaging with social media giants.

2. UK tripartite initiative, joint narrative, and Rio Conventions Pavilion

- *Joint narrative*

The UNCCD JLG focal point (Miriam Medel) introduced the tripartite initiative being led by the UK, in its capacity as incoming UNFCCC COP 26 President, to build appropriate links between the COPs of the three Rio Conventions and to promote synergies and an integrated approach in the implementation of the three conventions in order to address interlinked global challenges. The tripartite discussions involving the three secretariats, the Global Environment Facility, UK and the other COP presidencies (Chile, Egypt,

China, India) have identified two activities of common interest: (1) the preparation and agreement of a joint narrative of key messages about synergies and complementarity of the three conventions and their role in addressing global challenges, for use by the secretariats and the presidencies, and (2) the use of the Rio Conventions Pavilion as a mechanism for convening events to promote an integrated approach to the implementation of the conventions, including at the three COPs.

A draft of the joint narrative has been prepared by the secretariats and made available to the Executive Secretaries for their review. The messages discuss three simple points, that the Rio conventions: (1) respond to the development agenda and urgent environmental threats; (2) represent a blue print for sustainable development, and; (3) advocate for a coherent approach to restore balance with nature, and see nature as a solution to many problems including in the context of the post-COVID 19 pandemic recovery.

The Executive Secretaries agreed on the draft joint messages, and requested the document to be updated to include a reference to the joint outreach campaign discussed in item 1. The meeting also agreed on the next step, which is to share the draft joint narrative with the UK. Once approved and finalized, the messages will be used by all tripartite partners in their communications. The meeting further discussed the way forward, and agreed to plan for activities to present or make use of the common narrative, for example in the form of a joint op ed, communications to the bureaux, a specific event or an event that could be held at the margins of a larger event like the UN Food Systems Summit 2021.

- *Rio Conventions Pavilion*

The CBD JLG focal point (Neil Pratt) made a short introduction and invited the CBD Head of Communications (David Ainsworth) to give a presentation on options and next steps in the planning of the Rio Conventions Pavilion, for the consideration of the Executive Secretaries. Options related to modalities (virtual and/or physical), timing and costs of convening the Pavilion were discussed. The Executive Secretaries were supportive of the idea of holding a virtual Pavilion in the lead to and in association with the COPs, and discussed ways to support its development, including by engaging partners from the private sector, and making links with the joint outreach campaign and the joint narrative. It was agreed that a concept note will be developed jointly by the communications teams to present the different options and scenarios, costs and opportunities for funding, and themes.

3. Updates on the convention processes, meetings held and planned

The Chair proposed that in view of the fact that the Executive Secretaries had briefed each other on the status of their processes at a meeting convened on 26 April 2021 by the Deputy Secretary-General to provide updates on 2021 UN conferences and negotiations, it was unnecessary to provide further updates and this was agreed.

4. Any other business

The UNCCD Executive Secretary provided information on the current status of the preparation of the High-level Dialogue on Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought being convened by the President of the General Assembly on 20 May 2021, and thanked the UNFCCC and CBD Executive Secretaries for their planned contributions.

It was agreed that the next meeting will be chaired, coordinated and organized by UNFCCC, tentatively in late June or early July 2021. The meeting was closed at 0935.

Annex

**Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions (JLG)
Principals Meeting**

**Thursday 29 April 2021 @ 1400-1515 (CET) / 0800-0915 (EST)
(Via Microsoft Teams)**

Draft Agenda

- 1. Joint outreach campaign (25 mins)¹**
Presentation of the proposed campaign by BETC²
Discussion, next steps / agreement
- 2. UK tripartite initiative, joint narrative, and Rio Conventions Pavilion (15 mins)**
 - Introduction of proposed joint narrative on Rio Conventions – update from Sherpas (UNCCD)
 - Planning for Rio Conventions Pavilion – update from Sherpas (CBD)Discussion, next steps
- 3. Updates on the convention processes, meetings held and planned (30 mins)**
 - UNCCD
 - UNFCCC
 - CBDDiscussion
- 4. Any other business (5 mins)**
 - Brief information sharing on other relevant issues/events, e.g.:
Ministerial Roundtable on UNFSS and Rio Conventions planned by Food Systems Summit Secretariat for June 2021 and *High-level Dialogue on Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought* convened by President of the General Assembly on 20 May 2021
 - Tentative scheduling of next JLG Principals meeting

¹ Given the nature of items 1 and 2 of the agenda, the communications leads would also participate in this meeting of the Principals

² Note that the usual order of business has been reversed in order to allow the contractor, BETC, to be present at the beginning of the meeting and leave at the end of the first item.