



Ref.: SCBD/TSI/RS/YX/LZ/84259

22 January 2015

Dear Ms. Ishii,

I am pleased to inform you that the decisions of the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 12) and the decisions of the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety are now available on the SCBD website at <http://www.cbd.int/decisions/cop/?m=cop-12> and <http://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/mop-07/full/mop-07-dec-en.pdf>, respectively. The decisions of the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing will be posted shortly.

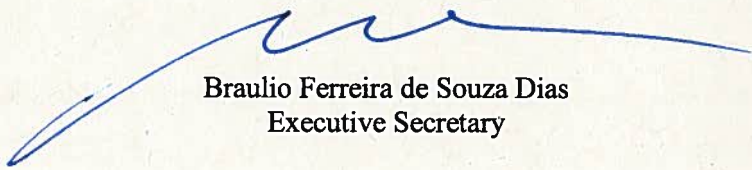
Decision XII/30 on issues related to the financial mechanism provides further guidance on the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing, customary sustainable use, marine and coastal biological diversity and biodiversity and tourism development.

The decision furthermore calls on the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to take several actions to improve the effectiveness of the financial mechanism. In paragraph 8 of XII/30, the COP invites the GEF to make available a preliminary draft of its report to the Conference of the Parties, particularly focusing on the response of the GEF to previous guidance from the Conference of the Parties, to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation prior to the meeting of the Conference of the Parties at which the report will be formally considered, with a view to promoting effective and timely consideration of the information provided in the report.

Decision XII/30 also encourages the Executive Secretary and the Chief Executive Officer of the GEF to continue to strengthen inter-secretariat cooperation and collaborate with the Independent Evaluation Office of the Global Environment Facility and the Global Environment Facility agencies.

In this regard, I wish to share with you and your colleagues the recent updates under the Convention as contained in the annex to the present letter, and look forward to enhanced collaboration between our secretariats.

Yours sincerely,



Bráulio Ferreira de Souza Dias  
Executive Secretary

Enclosure

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## **Annex: Updates under the Convention on Biological Diversity**

### **Dates and venues of intergovernmental meetings**

Following the relevant decisions of COP 12, and taking into account the calendar of major international meetings, and in consultation with the Bureau and the Government of Mexico, it has been announced that the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 13), the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP 8), and the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing (COP-MOP 2), will be held in the period from 4 to 17 December 2016, in Los Cabos, Mexico. The nineteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the ninth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention will be held in Montreal, Canada, in the period from 1 to 7 November 2015. The twentieth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation will be held in the period from 25 April to 7 May 2016 in Montreal, Canada.

I want to take this opportunity to once again thank you and your colleagues for the well-received contributions during the past biennium leading to COP 12, and look forward to continuing collaboration at the upcoming intergovernmental meetings during the present biennium.

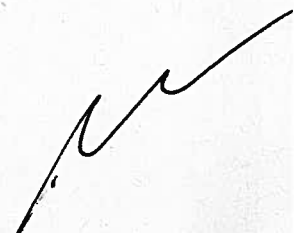
### **Needs assessment**

COP 12 decided, in anticipation of the seventh replenishment of the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund, to undertake, at its thirteenth meeting, the second determination of funding requirements for the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols. The terms of reference for the second determination of funding requirements is similar to the first round, requiring close collaboration between the secretariats of the Convention and the Global Environment Facility. A notification calling for nominations of requisite experts was issued in this regard.

### **Support to the third national report of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety**

The third regular national reports for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety will be due no later than 31 October 2015. In decision XII/30, the Conference of the Parties invites the financial mechanism to "support, in view of the experience gained during the second national reporting process, the following activities within the Biodiversity Focal Area Set Aside for eligible Parties, in particular those that have reported to the Compliance Committee difficulties in complying with the Protocol, with a view to fulfilling their national reporting obligation under the Protocol: (i) Preparation of the third national reports under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, in accordance with paragraph 2(g) of decision BS-VI/5; (ii) Preparation, by Parties that have not yet done so, of their first national reports under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, in accordance with decision BS-V/14".

Due to the urgency attached to the third national reports that need to be ready by 31 October 2015, it is important that the relevant staff of the two secretariats work closely in the coming weeks to ensure appropriate support in place.



## **Support to the fifth national report of the Convention**

The CBD Secretariat has received about 125 fifth national reports and a large number of these reports have been supported by the financial support of the GEF. Based on past experience, facilitating the submission of the remaining fifth national reports could be even more challenging. The relevant staff of the two secretariats should exchange information about the fifth national reports on a more regular basis.

## **National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans**

In pursuance of decision XII/29, paragraph 3, regarding a proposed pilot voluntary peer-review process for the national biodiversity strategies and action plans, 17 technical experts have been included in the informal expert group for the development of a methodology for Voluntary Peer-Review of the Convention on Biological Diversity's implementation. The methodology for a voluntary peer-review process will be developed and reported to at the Subsidiary Body on Implementation for its consideration.

## **Capacity-building workshops**

The CBD Secretariat is working with voluntary contributors to design a range of capacity building activities as requested by COP 12, and identifying potential opportunities of synergies and collaboration with the GEF Secretariat and the GEF agencies. Mr. Ravi Sharma and Mr. William Ehlers have already initiated conversation on potential joint activities through the Expanded Constituency Workshops.

## **Gender mainstreaming**

Decision XII/7 on gender mainstreaming adopted an updated and expanded Gender Plan of Action (GPA) under the Convention for the period 2015 to 2020. I also note the decision of the GEF Council at its 47th meeting adopting the GEF Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP). I would like to propose strong collaboration between our two secretariats in this area and also to request full support of the GEF towards implementation of the GPA through ongoing and developing GEF projects, including in the context of the development and implementation of the NBSAPs, the expanded constituency workshops, as well as potentially complementary activities and funding to a Japan Biodiversity Fund grant for gender mainstreaming in order to support mutual objectives. In this regard, Mr. Neil Pratt and Ms. Yoko Watanabe have already initiated conversation on the potential for collaboration.

## **Biodiversity and climate change**

The role of biodiversity in carbon sequestration and in resilience for adaptation is increasingly recognized in the climate negotiations, and this trend is expected to result in better integration of biodiversity into the climate agreements to be finalized later this year. The CBD Secretariat is considering outreach and promotional activities, including the Rio Conventions Pavilion (RCP), in the lead up to the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and I want to emphasize the need for collaboration and mutual support on synergizing biodiversity and climate change.



## **Post-2015 United Nations development agenda**

To further support efforts to integrate biodiversity into the post-2015 United Nations development agenda and the sustainable development goals (SDGs) as well as to integrate biodiversity and ecosystem services into poverty eradication and development strategies, the CBD Secretariat will continue to work with key partners to provide inputs to the post-2015 United Nations development agenda and SDG process, prepare a handbook and training toolkit and an interactive online platform on mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into poverty eradication and development processes, develop material and initiatives to support integration of the Strategic Plan and Aichi Biodiversity Targets into United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and support Parties in their efforts to take biodiversity and ecosystem values into account in national and subnational accounting systems.

The CBD Secretariat is also participating in the preparatory process for the third International Conference on Financing for Development to be held from 13 to 16 July 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The International Conference provides an occasion to highlight the importance of financing for biodiversity and the global environmental agenda. It is important that all global environmental institutions come together to raise awareness and their voice for our global commons.

## **Theme of the International Day for Biological Diversity 2015**

The theme for the International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) on 22 May 2015 has been designated as: "Biodiversity for Sustainable Development". The theme reflects the importance of efforts made at all levels to establish a set of SDGs as part of the United Nations post-2015 development agenda and the relevance of biodiversity for the achievement of sustainable development, as underlined in the Gangwon Declaration on Biodiversity for Sustainable Development. As per past practices, the CBD Secretariat will organize several events to mark the occasion including an event to be held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. In addition, the CBD Secretariat is also in the process of developing a variety of outreach materials to help celebrate this important day including, *inter alia*, the following: key messages for the day; a web page featuring events and information materials and links to partner activities; and information booklet on the theme of "Biodiversity for Sustainable Development". I wish to invite the financial mechanism to take this theme into consideration in its activities.

## **Other areas of work**

I would also like to encourage our secretariats to explore the potential for collaboration with respect to: the GEF 6 Integrated Approaches that relate to work under the Convention on Sustainable Cities (COP decision XII/9 on engagement with subnational and local governments), Commodity Supply Chains (COP decision XII/10 on business engagement) and Food Security (related to several areas and programmes); the Cross-Cutting Capacity Development Strategy of the GEF 6 Corporate Program, for example to integrate provisions of the CBD within national policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks, and; the development of a global communication strategy to be implemented over the second half of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity and updated toolkits for communication, education and public awareness, as mandated by COP decision XII/2.



