

Draft for consultation

Note: this document is an advance review version of a pre-session document for the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation to be considered under agenda item 15 - review of the effectiveness of processes under the Convention and its Protocols¹

REVIEW OF THE EXPERIENCE IN HOLDING CONCURRENT MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES OF THE CONVENTION AND THE MEETINGS OF THE PARTIES OF THE PROTOCOLS

I. BACKGROUND

1. At the UN Biodiversity Conference held in Cancun, Mexico, in 2016, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity was, for the first time, convened concurrently with the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization. In decision XIII/26, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, decided to use a list of criteria for reviewing, at its fourteenth and fifteenth meetings, experience in holding meetings concurrently, and requested the Executive Secretary to prepare a preliminary review, using these criteria, for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at its second meeting. The meetings of the Parties to the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols decided to use similar criteria for reviewing their meetings in decision VIII/10 and decision 2/12, respectively.

2. In response to this request a notification inviting Parties to provide their perspectives on concurrently convening meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the meetings of Parties to the two Protocols was issued on 22 February 2017 with a deadline of 24 March 2017. Subsequently the deadline for the submission of comments was extended to 10 April 2017. The notification was distributed to Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols. The notification invited Parties to complete a questionnaire based on the criteria identified in decisions XIII/26, COP-MOP VIII/10 and COP-MOP 2/12 and provided additional space for written comments.

3. An additional survey was distributed electronically to participants to the UN Biodiversity Conference. This survey was distributed on 22 February 2017 and was open until 10 March 2017. Reminders to complete the survey were sent on 3 March 2017 and on 9 March 2017. For the survey, respondents participated in their personal capacity and their responses do not necessarily reflect the official view of the Parties or organizations they represent.

4. The following note summarises the main findings of the two surveys on the experiences of convening concurrent meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, and the meetings of the two Protocols². Observations are also provided by the Secretariat on issues related to the logistics of convening meetings of the Convention and Protocols for the information of Parties in their consideration of this issue. The note contains a section on each of the criteria identified in decisions XIII/26, COP-MOP VIII/10 and COP-MOP 2/12 as well as a section identifying general observations and conclusion. Further

¹ Montreal, Canada, 9-13 July 2018. See: CBD/SBI/2/1 available at <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/SBI-02>

² As per decision XIII/26, this document will be complemented by the reflections from the Government of Mexico, as the host country for the UN Biodiversity Conference, on the logistical and technical burdens of convening concurrent meetings.

this note is complemented by two information documents which reproduce all of the written comments received in response to the notification and survey as well as provide additional analysis³.

II. RESPONDENTS TO THE SURVEYS

5. Responses to the survey issued to Parties through a notification were received from 64 Parties⁴. However 71 responses to the survey were received as some countries provided separate submissions for the Convention and its Protocols. Not all respondents answered all questions in the survey or provided written comments. The number of written comments received varied with the question and ranged from 23 to 44 written responses. Of the responses to the notification, 62 related to the Convention on Biological Diversity, 55 to Cartagena Protocol and 41 to the Nagoya Protocol. This represents a response rate of approximately 32% of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, 32% of Parties to the Cartagena Protocol and 43% of Parties to the Nagoya Protocol. On a regional basis 23 responses were received from Africa, 10 from Asia and the Pacific, 7 from Central and Eastern Europe, 17 from the Group of Latin American Countries and 14 from the Western European and Other Group. 53 of the responses were from developing countries and 18 were from developed countries. The responses to the survey are summarized in figure 1. The results of the survey are further explored in the following section of this note.

6. The online survey was distributed to 2,810 participants to the UN Biodiversity Conference⁵. This represents approximately 90% of all meeting participants. Responses to the survey were received from 749 respondents. This represents a response rate of approximately 27% amongst those surveyed and 24% of all participants in the UN Biodiversity Conference. Not all respondents answered all questions in the survey. Further the number of written responses varied greatly. The number of written comments received ranged from 15 to 217 responses depending on the question. The written comments also tended to be more critical than the situation suggested by the quantitative results. 47% of respondents represented Parties, 8% represented indigenous peoples and local communities and 38% represented other observers. A further 6% represented non-party governments, including subnational authorities. This distribution of responses was similar to the overall participation in the UN Biodiversity Conference where Parties accounted for 48% of participants, indigenous peoples and local communities represented 5% of participants and observers accounted for 45% of participants. On a regional basis 17% of responses were from Africa, 21% from Asia and the Pacific, 8% from Central and Eastern Europe, 25% from Latin America and the Caribbean and 30% from the Western Europe and Other Group. This distribution is similar to the regional distribution of participants in the UN Biodiversity Conference. The responses to

³ UNEP/CBD/SBI/2/INF/... and UNEP/CBD/SBI/2/INF/...

⁴ Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bénin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Ecuador, European Union, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea Equatorial, Guinee-Bissau, Honduras, India, Iran, Jamaica, Kuwait, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sao Tome, Senegal, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, St. Kitts and Nevis, Sudan, Switzerland, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, Yemen, Zimbabwe. In addition one Party (Iraq) noted that it was unable to respond to the notification as it could not participate in the UN Biodiversity Conference for visa reasons.

⁵ E-mail addresses were collected from the list of registered participants to the UN Biodiversity Conference. As some participants did not provide an email address and/or registered using a generic institutional email address it was not possible to contact all registered participants. However most participants, approximately 90%, were contacted. The survey was not distributed to United Nations staff servicing the meeting, security personnel, interpreters, local staff, volunteers and those individuals who only attended a specific event taking place at the margins of the Conference.

the survey that directly address issues related to the criteria identified in decision XIII/26 are summarized in figure 2.

Figure 1

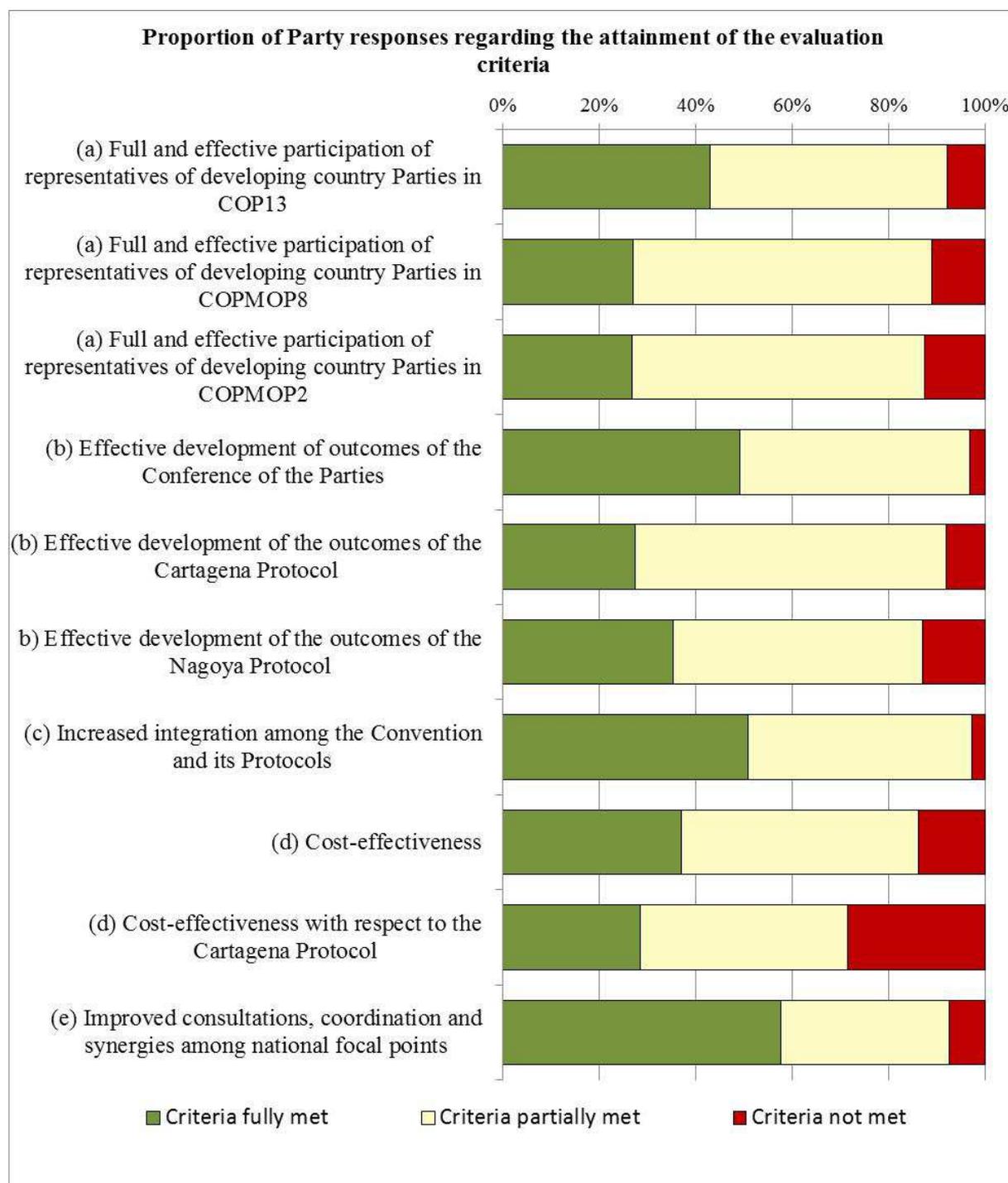
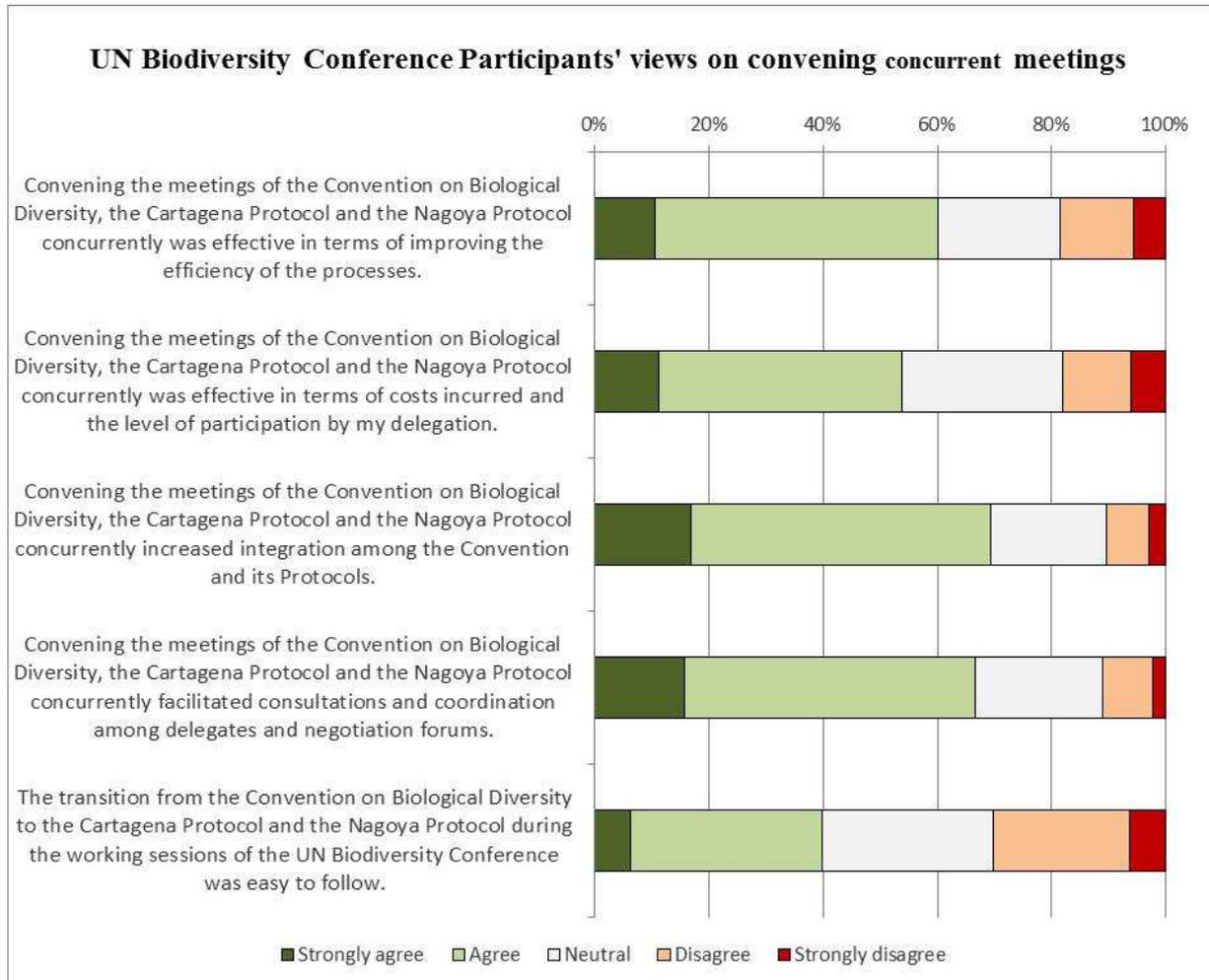


Figure 2



III. FULL AND EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF REPRESENTATIVES OF DEVELOPING COUNTRY PARTIES

7. The information collected through the notification distributed to Parties indicates that 43% of respondents felt that the criterion of full and effective participation of representatives of developing country Parties in COP-13 was fully met while 49% of respondents felt that it was partially met. Only a minority of Parties felt that the criterion was not met (8%). With regards in to the participation of developing countries in COPMOP-8, 27% of respondents felt that the criterion had been met and 62% felt that it had been partially met. 11% of respondents felt that it had not been met. The distribution of responses was similar for the criterion related to the participation of developing countries in COPMOP-2. 27% of respondents felt that the criterion had been met and 61% felt that it had been partially met. 13% of respondents felt that it had not been met. For all three criteria the responses from developing and

developed countries were similar, except that no Party from a developed country indicated that the criterion was not met.

8. A number of issues were raised by Parties in their written comments. Several Parties noted that concurrent meetings made it difficult for some delegations to follow the proceedings. This was noted as being particularly problematic for small delegations. Relatedly a number of Parties noted that concurrent meetings necessitated a relatively large number of contact group meetings as well as meetings of friends of the chair. Further many Parties noted the limited funding available to support the participation of representatives from developing countries was problematic in terms of the full and effective participation of developing country Parties.

9. The number of developing country Parties that have received funding to participate in meetings of the COP and COP MOPs has varied from meeting to meeting. The number of Parties and participants that can be supported is dependent on the contributions received by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the daily subsistence rate of the country the meeting is being held in and the cost of airfare. This makes a direct comparison of the number of Parties and participants supported to participate in meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the meetings of the Protocols difficult as these factors have all varied between meetings. For example the contributions received to support participation in meetings has ranged between \$465,370 for COP12 and COP MOP 7 to \$1,045,102 for COP 10 and COP MOP 5. For the UN Biodiversity Conference in 2016, contributions totalling \$672,000 were received.

10. The general approach the Secretariat of the Convention has followed at previous meetings was to provide each eligible country with the equivalent of one return airline ticket and the equivalent of three weeks of daily subsistence allowance⁶. It was then up to the Party to decide how they wished to make use of the funds. For example some Parties chose to send one participant to cover issues related to the Convention and its Protocols while other Parties chose to allocate the ticket to one participant while allocating the DSA to another. A similar approach was follow for the UN Biodiversity Conference however the amount of daily subsistence allowance that was mad available was reduced to two weeks owing to the shorter duration of the meetings. Generally the effect of convening concurrent meetings has been a reduction of one week of daily subsistence allowance. However as some Parties have also received support to participate in the high level segments of the meetings, the overall reduction in DSA in some cases was less. Further, historically it has been difficult to secure funds for the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol in comparison to meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. Convening meetings concurrently has reduced this discrepancy as funds are provided for the UN Biodiversity Conference generally and not to one of the three specific meetings.

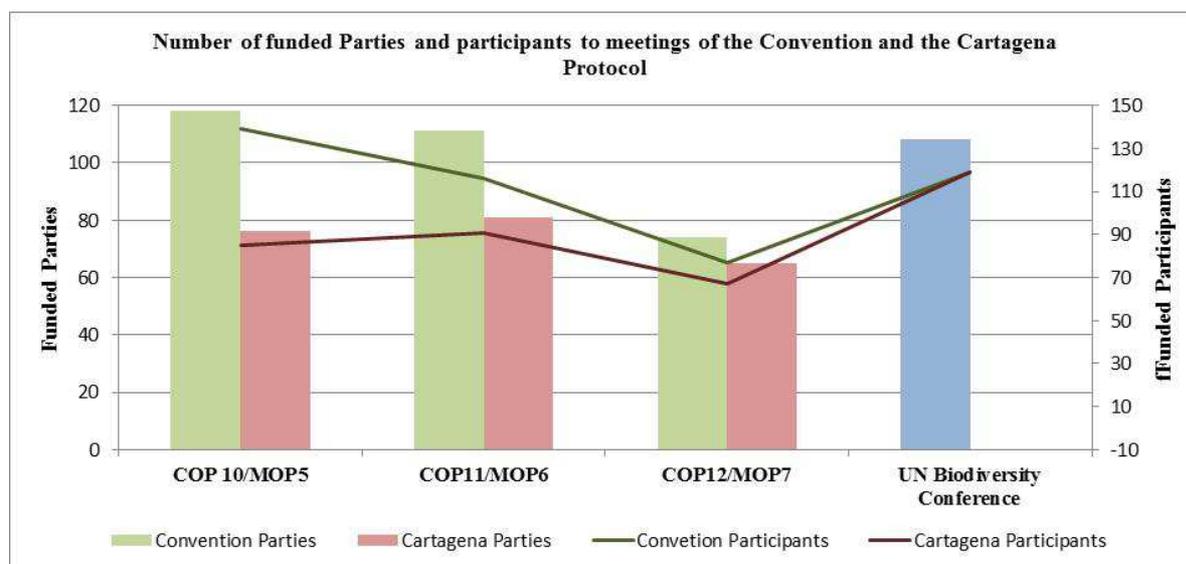
11. Between COP10 and COP13 the number of Parties receiving support has ranged from 74 (COP12) to 118 (COP10) and has averaged 103. During COP13 108 Parties received support. Similarly the number of participants that it has been possible to support has also varied. Between COP10 and COP13 the number of funded participants has ranged from 77 (COP12) to 139 (COP10) and has averaged 113. During COP 13 119 participants were funded. While both the number of Parties and participants supported to participate in COP13 was a little higher than average it is not clear if this can be considered as a positive trend due to the other variables noted above (see Figure 3). Further it is important to note

⁶ However in some cases, for example when a participant from a developing country was a member one of the Convention's Bureau's, multiple participants from the same Party were supported.

that many of the funded participants which participated in the meetings of the COP also participated in meetings of the MOPs. This is especially true for participation in the UN Biodiversity conference where no distinction was made between participants in the COP and COP MOPs in the issuing of support. The decision on who to send to participate in the meetings was left to the discretion of the Parties concerned.

12. With regards to meetings of the Cartagena COPMOP, between COPMOP5 and COPMOP-8 the number of Parties receiving support has ranged from 65 (COPMOP7) to 108 (COPMOP8) and the number of funded participants has varied from 67 (COP MOP 7) and 119 (COP MOP 8). However in the case of COPMOP-8 the majority of funded participants were also participants in COP13. The overall effect of convening concurrent meetings of the COP and MOPs in terms of the level of support provided to developing countries appears to have been an increase in the number of Parties and Participants able to participate in negotiations related to the Cartagena Protocol. However it is important to note that not all of these participants are necessarily experts in the Cartagena Protocol and many also needed to cover multiple issues during the UN Biodiversity Conference. The meetings of the COP MOP of the Nagoya Protocol have always been held concurrently with meetings of the COP and as such it is not possible to discern any trends with regards to the funding of Parties and participants⁷.

Figure 3



13. Information gathered from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity’s meeting registration database indicates that the number of developing country Parties participating in meetings of the COP has varied over time. Between COP-7 and COP-13 there has been an average of 127 developing country Parties participating in meetings. When information from COP-10 is excluded the average number of developing country Parties participating in meetings is 125. The number of developing country Parties participating has varied from 117(85%) (COP-7) to 138 (97%)(COP-10)⁸. During COP-13 128

⁷ The issue of support to developing country Parties for participation in meetings of the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and the two Protocols will be further explored during the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation under agenda item 17 (Trust fund for facilitating participation of Parties in the Convention process: allocation of resources and possibilities of engaging the private sector). Relevant documentation prepared for that agenda item will provide further information on this issue.

⁸ The percent figures indicate the proportion of all developing country Parties participating in the meeting. The figures are based on the number of developing country Parties at the time of the meeting.

(88%) developing country Parties participated. Further the number of participants from developing country Parties has also varied. Between COP-7 and COP-13 the average number of participants from developing country Parties has been 897 and has ranged from 578 (COP-7) to 1168 (COP-10). During COP-13 there were 922 participants representing developing country Parties. Overall convening concurrent meetings does not appear to have had an effect on the number of developing country Parties and participants attending COP-13(see figure 4).

14. With regards to the participation of developing countries in the Cartagena Protocol COPMOPs this has also varied over time. Between COPMOP-1 and COPMOP-8 the number of Parties participating varied from 38 (68%) (COPMOP-1) and 104 (83%)(COPMOP-8) and averaged 77 Parties participating per meeting. Further the number of non-Party governments participating has also varied and ranged from 6 (COPMOP-6) and 103 (COPMOP-1) with an average of 24 non-Party governments participating. However if the information COPMOP-1 is excluded the average per meeting has been 13 non-Party governments. With regards to participants, the number of participants from developing country Parties participating in meetings of the COPMOP has ranged from 123 (COPMOP-1) to 580 (COPMOP-8) and averaged 300 participants per meeting. It appears that convening concurrent meetings has allowed for more Parties and representatives of developing countries to participate in meetings of the COPMOP (see figure 5). However it is important to note that these figures do not provide any information on the effectiveness of participation. Given that some developing country Parties were represented by small delegations which had to handle multiple issues during the meeting, their ability to participate may have been limited.

15. As there have only been two meetings of the Nagoya Protocol COP-MOP, trends are difficult to discern. As the Nagoya Protocol entered into force during COP12, participation information specifically for COPMOP1 of the Nagoya Protocol is not available. During COPMOP-2 there 53(76%) developing country Parties participating represented by 320 participants. More time will be required to determine trends with regards to participation.

16. Overall convening concurrent meetings does not appear to have had an effect on the level of participation of developing country Parties in the COP. However it does appear to have increased participation of developing country Parties in the Cartagena Protocol COPMOP. However it is important to note that while participation may have increased there is insufficient information to be able to judge the effectiveness of this participation. Further there is insufficient information to be able to judge what the effect has been for the Nagoya Protocol COPMOP.

Figure 4

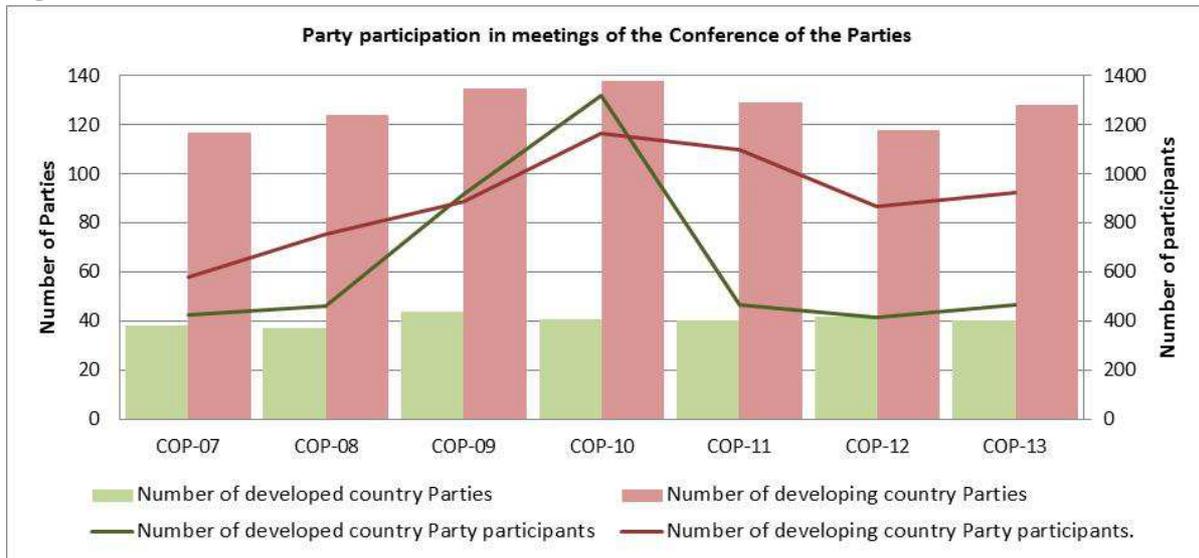
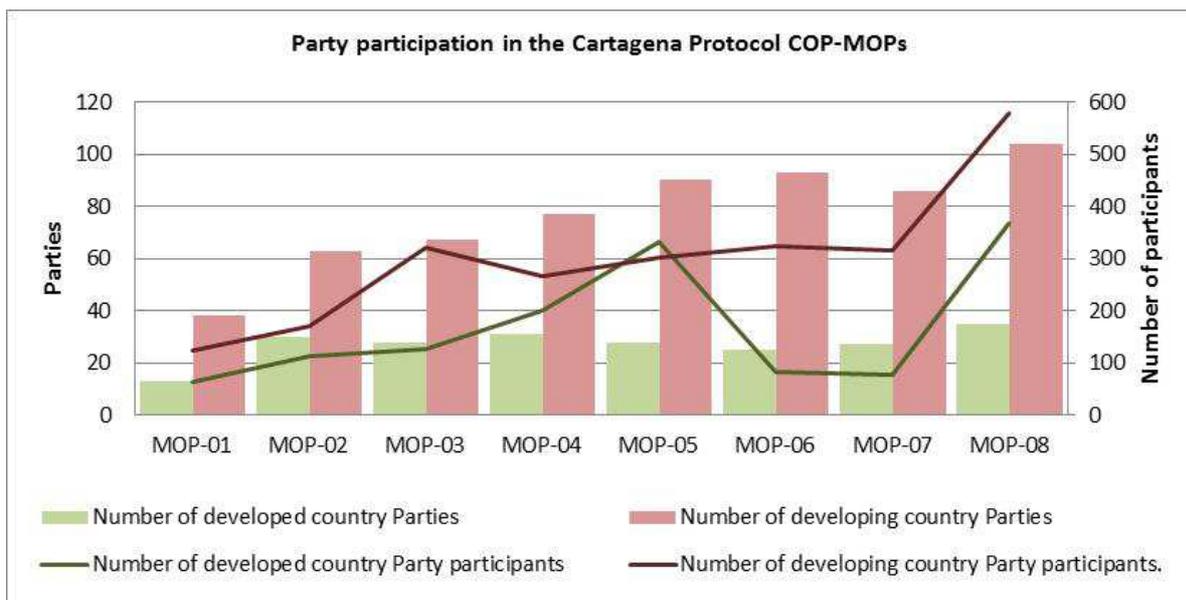


Figure 5



I. EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF OUTCOMES

17. With regards to the effective development of outcomes for the Convention on Biological Diversity 49% of the Parties responding to the notification indicated that the criterion was fully met and 48% indicated that it was partially met. 3% of responses indicated that the criterion was not met. With regards to the Cartagena Protocol 27% of responses indicated that the criterion had been fully met and 65% indicated that the criterion had been partially met. 8% of responses indicated that it had not been met. For the Nagoya Protocol 35% of respondents felt that the criterion had been fully met, 52% felt that it had been partially met and 13% felt that it had not been met. The responses from the notification suggest that the process of convening concurrent meetings was perceived as being more effective for the Convention than for the Protocols. However for both the Convention and the Protocols the proportion of respondents indicating that the criterion was not met was relatively small. For the criterion related to the

Convention on Biological there were no major differences when the results were disaggregated by developed and developing countries. However with regards to the development of outcomes for the Cartagena Protocol the proportion of responses indicating that the criterion had been fully met was much smaller in the responses from developed countries than from developing countries. The responses from developed countries tended to be of the view that the criterion had been partially met. Further, with regards to the Nagoya Protocol, the proportion of responses indicating that the criterion had not been met was much larger for developed countries than for developing countries.

18. In their written comments some Parties noted that dealing with some items of the agenda, such as those related to the financial mechanisms, in an integrated manner created confusion at times. However others felt that that dealing with some issues in an integrated manner, such as synthetic biology and digital sequence information, had benefits. A number of respondents noted that the limited time available for contract groups was problematic and that dealing with the Convention and the Protocols in a concurrent manner risked that some instruments would be given more attention than others. It was suggested that some of these issues could be addressed in the drafting of the agendas for the meetings. A number of Parties also noted that the limited participation of some Parties in the Conference created challenges for the effective development of outcomes.

19. The results from the electronic survey of participants were similar to those from the notification. A clear majority of survey respondents felt that convening the meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Cartagena Protocol and the Nagoya Protocol concurrently was effective in terms of improving the efficiency of the processes under these agreements. 11% of respondents strongly agreed and 50% agreed that this was the case. 13% of respondents disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed. The remaining 22% of respondents had a neutral opinion on this issue. The results were similar when only responses from respondents from Parties were considered (16% strongly agreed, 49% agreed, 17% neutral, 13% disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed).

20. Survey respondents, in their written comments, identified various advantages and disadvantages of convening concurrent meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Cartagena Protocol and the Nagoya Protocol. The advantages identified included the greater exchange of views and information and more coherent outcomes across the three agreements. Some respondents also noted that concurrent meetings shortened the total length of the meetings and that concurrent meetings gave more visibility to the work of the Protocols and allowed for links between the three processes to be better recognized. Among the disadvantages noted were the difficulty of following three different meetings, the difficulty of coordinating, and the large number of contact groups required. These issues were noted to be particularly problematic for smaller delegations. Other challenges noted were the limited amount of time available to discuss some issues and the need for delegates to wait for their items to be addressed.

21. In total, during the UN Biodiversity Conference there were 46 sessions held in plenary and working groups over 12 days. This means that on average there were 3.8 working sessions held per day. By comparison during COP12, COPMOP 1 and COPMOP-7 there were 54 working sessions held over 15 days, or an average of 3.6 session a day. During COP-11 and COPMOP-6 there a total of 51 working sessions over 15 days, or an average of 3.4 working sessions per day. Similarly for COP-10 and COPMOP-5 there were 56 working sessions held over 15 days, or an average of 3.7 sessions per day and for COP-9 and COPMOP-4 there were 52 working sessions over 15 days, or an average of 3.4 sessions per day (See table 1). The effect of having concurrent meetings was a reduction in the overall length of the meeting and an overall reduction in the number of plenary and working group sessions. However during the UN Biodiversity Conference there were, on average, slightly more working sessions per day.

However when sessions of the high level segment are also considered there is no major different in the number of working sessions⁹.

22. The number of contact groups and friends of the chair meetings was greater during the UN Biodiversity Conference than during recent meetings of the COP and COPMOP, though lower than during COP-10. During the UN Biodiversity Conference there were 76 meetings of contact groups and friends of the chair. During COP12, COPMOP-7 and COPMOP-1 there were 36 while during COP11 and COPMOP-6 there were 42. During COP10 and COPMOP-5 there were 116 contact groups and friends of the chair. Part of the reason for this large number is that the negotiations at COP-10 lead to the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol and there were contact groups meeting on this issue throughout the course of the meeting.

Table 1 –Number of sessions per meeting

Meetings	Length of meetings (days)	Number of plenary and working group sessions¹⁰	Average number of sessions per day	Number of contact groups and friends of the chair	Average number of contact groups and friends of the chair per day
COP-9, COPMOP-4	15	52	3.4	NA	NA
COP-10, COPMOP-5	15	56	3.7	116	7.7
COP-11, COPMOP-6	15	51	3.4	42	2.8
COP-12, COPMOP-7, COPMOP-1	15	54	3.6	36	2.4
UN Biodiversity Conference	12	46	3.8	76	6.3

23. Overall the effect of having concurrent has been a reduction in the length of the meetings and an overall reduction in the number of plenary and working group sessions. This has also resulted in, on average in a small increase in the number of working group and plenary sessions being held each day. However when sessions of the high level segment are considered, this increase is negligible. Further it appears to have resulted in more contact group and friends of the chair meetings being held. Therefore while the overall duration of the meetings has been reduced the intensity of the negotiations appears to have increased slightly to compensate.

II. INCREASED INTEGRATION AMONG THE CONVENTION AND ITS PROTOCOLS

24. 51% Parties responding to the notification felt that the criterion of increased integration among the Convention and its Protocols was fully met while 46% felt that it was partially met. Two Parties (3%) felt that the criterion was not met. There were no significant differences when responses from developing

⁹ Prior to the UN Biodiversity Conference, the High Level Segment was convened in parallel to the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. During the UN Biodiversity Conference, the High Level Segment was convened just prior to the official start of the meeting.

¹⁰ The number of sessions does not reflect the sessions held as part of the High Level Segment, of which there are 4 for each meeting. During the UN Biodiversity Conference the High Level Segment was convened just prior to the official start of the meeting, unlike previous meetings where it was held in parallel.

and developed countries were considered separately, except that no Party from a developed country indicated that the criterion was not met.

25. In their written comments several Parties noted the convening concurrent meetings was a good first step and had some positive impacts. However a few Parties noted that more time will be required to be able to judge this issue in a meaningful way. Some Parties were of the view that more progress had been made on the integration of procedural issues under the Convention and its Protocols than on substantive matters. Others noted that the format for the UN Biodiversity Conference promoted a greater understanding of how the Convention and its Protocols relate to one another.

26. The results from the electronic survey were similar to those from the notification distributed to Parties. With regards to integration among the Convention and the Protocols a majority of respondents felt that convening concurrent meetings helped in this regard. 17% and 52% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed, respectively, that this was the case. 7% and 3% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. Further 20% of respondents had a neutral opinion on this issue. When only responses from Parties were considered 22% strongly agreed and 51% agreed that convening concurrent meetings increased the integration among the Convention and its Protocols. 7% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed that this was the case. A further 18% of respondents were neutral.

27. In their written comments, respondents to the survey of participant to the UN Biodiversity Conference, were generally positive regarding the effects of convening concurrent meetings on increasing the integration between the Convention and its Protocols. Among the issues highlighted were the increase in awareness of the operations of the three agreements and increased consultations. Several respondents pointed to the discussions on synthetic biology and digital sequence information being dealt with under the three agreements as an example of increased integration. However others felt that this made for complicated negotiations. Further some respondents noted that for small delegations concurrent meetings did not facilitate integration and raised questions about the mandates of the Convention and Protocols. Others felt that concurrent meetings resulted in parallel discussions and complicated negotiations rather than promoted integration. Some respondents also noted that the effects of concurrent meetings with respect to integration cannot be judged based on the outcomes of one meeting alone and that integration requires time.

28. The issue of concurrent meetings was also considered during the fourteenth meeting of the Compliance Committee Under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The members of the committee noted that concurrent meetings allowed for better and more integrated discussions on matters common to the Convention and its Protocols, including on the guidance to the GEF¹¹.

III. COST-EFFECTIVENESS

29. On the criterion of cost effectiveness 37% Parties responding to the notification felt that the criterion was fully met, 49% felt that it was partially met and 14% felt that it was not met. The distribution of responses between developed and developing countries were similar. However a greater proportion of developed countries felt that the criterion was not met and a greater proportion of developing countries felt that the criterion was fully met.

¹¹ For further information see document CBD/CP/CC/14/5.

30. With regards to the criterion on the cost effectiveness with respected to the Cartagena Protocol 29% of responses indicated that the criterion was fully met and 43% of responses indicated that the criterion was partially met. 29% of responses indicated that the criterion was not met. In comparison to the other criteria, this was the one where the greatest proportion of respondents felt the criterion was not met. However overall most respondents still felt that the criterion had been fully or partially met. When the responses received are disaggregated by developing and developed countries there do appear to be differences. The responses from developed countries indicate that more than half (56%) believe that the criterion had not been met. The responses from developing countries suggest that only about a fifth of Parties feel that this criterion had not been met.

31. In their written comments Parties noted that having concurrent meetings generated cost savings in relation to some elements of their participation, such as by only having two weeks of meetings rather than three weeks, but that it also generated some increased costs. Increased costs were generally noted in relation to the need to have delegates responsible for the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols attend two weeks of meetings. Further it was noted that the increased number of parallel sessions required larger delegations. This may be particularly true for developed country Parties which tend to have larger delegations with more specific areas of expertise.

32. There are a variety of costs associated with convening meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Protocols. Differences in national circumstances among host countries make a direct comparison of costs impossible. However some issues can be compared in relative terms. For example the UN Biodiversity Conference required the same number of security officials from the United Nations Department of Safety and Security as for previous meetings of the COPs and MOPs. However during the UN Biodiversity Conference these officials were only required for 20 days while for other meetings their presence was required for between 26 and 28 days.

33. With regards to interpretation costs, the UN Biodiversity Conference required more interpreters than previous meetings of the COP and MOPs. However the interpreters were required for less time. For example the UN Biodiversity Conference required 756 interpreter days (54 interpreters for 14 days) whereas COP-12 and COP-9 required 836 interpreter days (44 interpreters for 19 days), COP11 required 798 interpreter days (42 interpreters for 19 days) COP10 required 660 interpreter days (44 interpreters for 15 days), and COP8 required 722 interpreter days (38 interpreters for 19 days). However it is important to note that the length of the contract for interpreters is based on a variety of factors including the length of the meetings, the number of weekends, and the country the interpreters are travelling from to reach the meeting venue (see table 2). As such the contracts for interpreters are not solely determined by the duration of the meeting.

34. With regards to services for document translation, for the UN Biodiversity Conference 630 translator days (45 translators for 14 days) were used. For previous meetings of the COP and MOPs the practice had been to use 840 translator days (40 translators for 21 days). However based on the experiences at the UN Biodiversity Conference, in the future, if concurrent meetings are held, the number of translators hired and/or the length of their contracts may need to be further increased in order to better serve the needs of the meeting.

Table 2 – interpretation needs

Meetings	Length of contract	Interpreters required	Interpreter days
COP-9, COPMOP-4	19	44	836
COP-10, COPMOP-5	15	44	660
COP-11, COPMOP-6	19	42	798

COP-12, COPMOP-7, COPMOP-1	19	44	836
UN Biodiversity Conference	14	54	756

IV. IMPROVED CONSULTATIONS, COORDINATION AND SYNERGIES AMONG NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS

35. The responses from Parties to the notification indicated that Parties generally felt that convening concurrent meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Cartagena Protocol and the Nagoya protocol improved consultations, coordination and synergies among national focal points. A majority of responses indicate that this criterion had been fully met (58%). Further 35% of responses indicate that this criterion had been partially met and 8% of responses suggest that it had not been met. There were no significant differences when responses from developing and developed countries were considered separately.

36. In their written comments a number of Parties noted that convening concurrent meetings facilitated coordination and consultation. However some Parties noted that they did not observe any significant change in this respect. It was also noted that as all the issues related to the two Protocols were held in one working group this limited consultations and coordination. A few developing country Parties noted that as only one participant per delegation was supported to attend the meeting this limited their ability of coordinate and consult.

37. The responses from the electronic survey distributed to participants were similar to those from the notification. A majority of respondents felt that convening concurrent meetings facilitated consultation and coordination among delegates and negotiation forums. 16% of respondents strongly agreed and 51% agreed that this was the case. Only 9% of respondents disagreed and 2% of respondents strongly disagreed. 22% of respondents had a neutral opinion on this issue. When only responses from respondents representing Parties were considered the results were similar. 20% of respondents strongly agreed and 51% agreed that concurrent meetings facilitate consultations and coordination. 8% of respondents disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed that this was the case. 18% of respondents were neutral in their opinion.

38. In their written comments a few respondents noted that concurrent meetings created opportunities to network. However others noted that given the heavy agenda and having meetings concurrently reduced the amount of time available to coordinate and consult. This was noted to be the case particularly for small delegations.

V. OTHER ISSUES

39. Parties raised a number of additional issues in their submissions in response to the notification. A number of respondents noted that convening concurrent meetings was generally a good idea but that a number of outstanding issues needed to be resolved in order to ensure the effectiveness of the process. Among the issues identified were the need to ensure appropriate representation of developing countries, structuring the agendas for the three meetings to make them as streamlined as possible and limiting the need for contact group and friends of the chair meetings. It was also noted that sufficient time needed to be given to all three instruments. Some Parties suggested that in future meetings of the UN Biodiversity Conference the discussions under the Protocols should be limited to the first week of the meeting. Some Parties also commented on the timing of the High Level Segment and questioned whether it would be more effective to have the meeting at the start or end of the UN Biodiversity Conference.

40. The High Level Segment was also considered as part of the electronic survey distributed to participants in the UN Biodiversity Conference. The involvement of different sectors and ministers in the High Level Segment was felt to have promoted the consideration of mainstreaming and promoted dialogue. However a number of respondents noted that it would have been more effective if there were greater opportunities for discussion. With regards to the timing of the High Level Segment, respondents generally felt that having the segment before the official start of the UN Biodiversity Conference was effective. However some respondents noted that this created some challenges as some high level participants were not available to help address contentious issues at the end of the Conference. Regarding the timing of future high level segments while the majority of respondents indicated that these should continue to be held before the official start of the UN Biodiversity Conference respondents were more divided in their views. However several respondents were of the opinion that the timing of the High Level Segment should be based on the goals for the High Level Segment and the issues being discussed.

VI. SUMMARY

41. Most Parties responding to the notification felt that the criteria identified in decisions XIII/26, COP-MOP VIII/10 and COP-MOP 2/12 were either fully or partially met (see figure 1). The criterion with the highest proportion of responses indicating that it had not been met was the cost-effectiveness with respect to the Cartagena Protocol. Overall there were no major differences between the responses from developing and developed countries. However for many of the criteria the proportion of Parties indicating that they had been met or partially met was similar. Therefore while the process of convening concurrent meetings can be viewed as positive it is clear that further work is needed to make concurrent meetings more effective and to ensure that all of the criteria are fully met. In this respect among the issues identified by Parties are the need to ensure appropriate representation of developing countries, the need to give sufficient time to the three instruments in negotiation sessions, the need to streamline the agendas for the meetings as much as possible in order to reduce the needs for contact groups and the need to explore ways to limit the amount of time delegates responsible for the Protocols are required to spend at the UN Biodiversity Conference.

42. The responses from the electronic survey provide a similar picture. Overall the responses to the survey suggest that the organization of the UN Biodiversity Conference was effective and appropriate. The survey respondents generally felt that convening concurrent meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Cartagena Protocol and the Nagoya Protocol was efficient, and cost effective. Respondents also generally felt that it increased integration and facilitated consultations. However for smaller delegations this was not always the case and several respondents noted in their written comments that the success of holding concurrent meetings would depend on ensuring that all Parties are appropriately represented.
