

FIRST HIGH LEVEL RETREAT AMONG SECRETARIATS OF BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS

1 September 2010

Château de Bossey, Chemin Chenevière 2, CH 1279 Bogis-Bossey, Switzerland

SUMMARY OF THE RETREAT

- 1. Introduction** - A high-level retreat among the secretariats of biodiversity-related conventions was held for the first time on 1 September, 2010 at the Château de Bossey, Switzerland. The retreat was an initiative of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in response to requests by other convention secretariats for a joint meeting before the High Level Event on Biodiversity and the tenth meeting of the CBD Conference of the Parties. The retreat was organized with the kind financial support of the Government of Switzerland and participants included secretariat representatives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Convention on Migratory Species, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the World Heritage Convention. Representatives of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture were unable to attend.
- 2. Opening of the Retreat** - The meeting was opened at 10 a.m. by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaf). Mr. Robert Lamb, representing the Government of Switzerland, welcomed participants to Bossey. The Secretary General of CITES (Mr. John Scanlon), the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Mr. Anada Tiega), the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species (Ms. Elizabeth Mrema) and a representative of the World Heritage Convention (Mr. Salvatore Arico) also made brief remarks and the other participants also introduced themselves. (See list at Annex 1).
- 3. Preparation of the High Level Event of the United Nations General Assembly** – Mr. David Cooper (SCBD) described the process for preparing the High Level Event, noted the General Assembly resolutions calling for the High Level Event and introduced the background paper recently released by the Secretary General. The Executive Secretary further described the process of preparing for the event including the numerous consultations with the Bureau of the CBD Conference of the Parties and UNEP and other partners. UNEP had shared a draft of the paper with other biodiversity-related conventions for their comments. The Executive Secretary also informed participants of the decision (made the same day) of the President of the 64th session of the UNGA that the theme of the High Level Event would be: “The way forward in achieving the three objectives of the CBD, and the internationally agreed biodiversity goals and targets. The Executive Secretary informed the participants of a letter received the same day from the office of the President of the 65th session inviting the representative of the Secretariat of the CBD and UNEP’s representative in New York for a meeting on the 3rd of September to discuss the structure and possible elements of the summary of the President. The Executive Secretary circulated a hard copy of elements of a possible zero-order draft of the UNGA President’s Summary Statement and invited inputs from participants, who were glad to contribute to further development of the document. During an open discussion, participants suggested ways in which the Statement could be modified to refer to other biodiversity-related conventions and the role they can play in furthering the biodiversity agenda agreed by governments. The draft of the President’s Statement was revised accordingly. The CITES Secretariat indicated that it would attend the event.

4. **Preparation of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10)** – Mr. Djoghlafl noted that the main interlinked issues to be addressed by COP-10 would be the Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing, the Strategic Plan and related targets, and the Strategy for Resource Mobilization. He pointed out that links between biodiversity and climate change were also important. In addition to these matters, MOP-5 of the Biosafety Protocol was expected to adopt a supplementary protocol on liability and redress. The Executive Secretary of CBD provided an overview of the preparations for COP-10, focusing on the high-level segment and the major events to be held in collaboration with partners, including a Forum on South-South Collaboration, a City and Local Authorities Forum and a Parliamentarian’s Forum¹. Participants briefly described their plans for involvement in the COP and the CBD Secretariat invited representatives of other convention secretariats to make use of the ‘UN place’ which would be provided at CoP10, to attend CBD Secretariat staff meetings and to work jointly with the CBD Secretariat in supporting the meeting. It was noted that the World Heritage Convention had offered to provide the assistance of a staff member and to cover related travel and *per diem* costs. The CITES Secretariat expressed support for a successful COP and indicated that it would make a contribution by participating actively in the COP. It further indicated that it would have very small delegation with limited capacity to be part of the CBD Secretariat support team and would only be able to assist the team on issues of specific relevance to CITES, where appropriate.

5. **The Biodiversity Strategic Plan (2010-2020)** – Mr. David Cooper made a brief overview presentation on the Strategic Plan and related targets, highlighting the current status of the Plan and accompanying decision. He described the extensive preparatory process which had been carried out according to the mandate provided by COP-9 involving numerous submissions from Parties and observers, over 20 informal workshops and two global workshops². He noted that most of the text of the Plan, including the rationale, vision statement, 2020 strategic goals and the means for implementation had been agreed by the CBD’s intergovernmental Working Group on the Review of Implementation of the Convention, taking into account the advice of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. However the Mission Statement for 2020 and the textual formulation of a few 2020 targets were still to be agreed before the final Plan is adopted at CoP-10. In addition, agreement on the whole plan was contingent on satisfactory outcomes regarding negotiation of a protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (see item 10) and a mechanism for providing necessary financial resources.

It was agreed that the new Strategic Plan would provide a framework that was relevant for all the biodiversity-related conventions and organizations and that it should be proposed that the plan be called a Strategic Plan for Biodiversity rather than the Strategic Plan for CBD. This would enable the Plan to go beyond the CBD and to provide guidance for all biodiversity-related conventions and other UN bodies or stakeholders, taking into account their already-existing strategies related to biodiversity. At the same time, it was noted that the future use of the Plan by other conventions was a matter for the governing bodies of those conventions to decide. It was agreed that it would be desirable if specific references to the other biodiversity-related conventions were incorporated into the draft Plan and associated decision. The CBD Secretariat, while explaining that the Plan was now in the hands of Parties, agreed to facilitate such references being included. Participants also made some observations on the Strategic Plan to be taken into account as the Plan is finalized, noting that some issues, such as possible overexploitation through trade (noting Target 4.3 of the 2010 targets), and water-related issues were not specifically reflected in the list of targets. At the same time it was noted that, while it would be desirable for the targets to be limited in number as well as specific, measurable and

¹ See also www.cbd.int/cop10

² See UNEP/CBD/WGRI/3/3 and also www.cbd.int/sp/sp2010+

comprehensive, it was not possible for any set of targets to fully meet all three criteria simultaneously. The CITES Secretariat provided suggestions for specific language for changes that might be made to the draft decision, draft Plan and draft targets.³

Representatives of all the convention secretariats agreed to cooperate in the implementation of the Plan, including through the revision and updating of national biodiversity strategies and action plans which should cover the full range of activities needed to implement all the biodiversity-related conventions. Participants agreed to coordinate capacity building activities in support of the implementation of the Strategic Plan. All biodiversity-related conventions would be invited to contribute to and participate in the regional and sub-regional capacity development workshops for the revision and updating of national biodiversity strategies and action plans. It was noted that funds to assist countries will be available under GEF-5, and that the Japan Trust Fund will enable the Secretariat to convene capacity development workshops to support the process. It also explained that activities were being undertaken on local, provincial and regional biodiversity strategies and action plans as well.

6. **Collaboration for the United Nations Biodiversity Decade** – Mr. Djoghlafl described the proposal that 2011-2020 be declared by the General Assembly as the UN decade for biodiversity. The proposal was initiated by Japan – as the incoming COP Presidency -- and supported by CBD parties at the Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention. The initiative would build on the public awareness created by IYB, ensure that biodiversity remains a high-profile issue through the entire decade from 2011-2020, and provide a vehicle to promote collaboration among all stakeholders, including biodiversity-related conventions and other UN agencies, to support implementation of the Biodiversity Strategic Plan 2011-2020. Meeting participants strongly supported the initiative and expressed their interest in greater collaboration in the coming years.
7. **The Plans on South-South Collaboration and on Cities and Biodiversity** – Mr. Djoghlafl introduced the issue of south-south cooperation which would be addressed in the South-South Forum in Nagoya on October 17th. The CITES Secretariat suggested that a reference to the role of other biodiversity-related conventions in contributing to south-south cooperation be included in the decision. He also presented a summary of the Cities and Biodiversity Initiative, which was started by the city of Curitiba – host of COP-9, and championed by Singapore, and which was now expanding rapidly, reaching more than 200 municipalities. It was now being linked to the activities of UN-HABITAT and other agencies. Meeting participants congratulated the Secretariat on the progress being made with the initiative and indicated their interest in supporting it where appropriate.
8. **The Programme of Work on Protected Areas** – Mr. Sarat Gidda (SCBD) presented the current status of the Programme of Work for Protected Areas highlighting the extension of protected area coverage, the creation of a strong network of national focal points, the development of e-learning modules and the many ways in which the Programme of Work was already contributing to the proposed targets of the Biodiversity Strategic Plan (2011-2020). In the following discussion, meeting participants noted that protected areas remain a primary tool for ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity conservation and play an important role in the provision of ecosystem services to surrounding areas. Accordingly, they committed themselves to continue to contribute to the implementation of the Programme of Work including through participation, as appropriate, in a possible second round of workshops.

³The CITES comments are available at: <http://www.cbd.int/sp/sp2010p/inputs.shtml>

9. **Discussion on the elements of joint collaboration between 2011–2012** – An open discussion was held during which all meeting participants agreed that there was scope for increased collaboration above and beyond existing MoUs and work plans. The Joint Work Programme of Ramsar and CBD was highlighted as a good example of collaborative work, and the recently-appointed heads of CITES and CMS also expressed their willingness to explore more areas and approaches for collaboration. The CITES Secretariat provided a note on possible areas for collaboration between CITES and CBD.⁴ The conclusions reached and recommendations made in the retreat are summarized below.
10. **Presentation by the Co-Chairs of the Ad-Hoc open ended Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing** – Mr. Timothy Hodges gave a brief history of the ABS-WG process and outlined the current status of the negotiations of the protocol. He provided some personal reflections on the delicate balance of the negotiations but expressed his confidence that an agreement would be reached in October 2010. Participants provided examples of the role and impact of ABS provisions in their respective conventions and suggested areas for potential collaboration and sharing of experience to assist national implementation of the protocol once it is adopted. The Secretary-General of CITES invited Mr. Hodges to visit the Geneva offices of the CITES Secretariat for a briefing on its work related to CITES electronic permits and certificates.
11. **Conclusions and Recommendations** – The following are the main conclusions and recommendations emerging from the retreat:
- (a) A Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011- 2020 to be adopted by COP-10, preferably with specific references to the role of the other biodiversity-related conventions, could serve as useful framework that is relevant for all biodiversity-related conventions, taking into account their already-existing strategies related to biodiversity and the independence of their governing bodies.
 - (b) It was noted that the CITES Secretariat considered the scope of bracketed Target 6 of the draft Strategic Plan as too limited, in view of target 4.3 of the 2010 targets and the potential value of broadening Target 6 to cover overexploitation pressures other than those related to fisheries alone.
 - (c) Revised and updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans should cover the full range of activities needed to implement all the biodiversity-related conventions.
 - (d) Capacity building activities in support of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity should be coordinated among the biodiversity-related conventions. The secretariats would be invited to contribute to and participate in the regional and sub-regional capacity development workshops for revising and updating national biodiversity strategies and action plans. All biodiversity related conventions will be expected to work and collaborate closely with their national focal points in the planned processes for the revision and/or updating of the NBSAPs.
 - (e) The High Level Event on Biodiversity of the United Nations General Assembly to be held on 22 September offered an unprecedented opportunity to advance the issue of biodiversity at the highest political level. The CBD Executive Secretary agreed to incorporate references to the other biodiversity-related conventions, in the draft of the President’s summary of the meeting.
 - (f) The participants agreed to hold a high-level dialogue among biodiversity related conventions at COP-10;
 - (g) The participants agreed to work together in support of the UN Decade for Biodiversity.
12. The meeting was closed at 1800 and was followed by an informal working dinner.

⁴ The note from CITES is available at <http://www.cbd.int/cooperation/related-conventions/blg.shtml>, together with an electronic version of this report.

Annex 1: Participants

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

- John Scanlon, Secretary General
- Marceil Yeater, Chief, Legal Affairs and Trade Policy Support
- Marcos Silva, Team Coordinator, Knowledge Management and Outreach Services.

Convention on Migratory Species

- Elizabeth Mrema, Executive Secretary

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands,

- Anada Tiega, Secretary General

World Heritage Convention

- Salvatore Arico, Programme Officer

Convention on Biological Diversity

- Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary
- David Cooper, Senior Programme Officer
- David Duthie, Senior Programme Officer
- Sarat Gidda, Programme Officer (Protected Areas)
- Ailis Rego, Associate Executive Assistant
- Tony Gross (Consultant) Advisor to the Executive Secretary

Co-chair, ABS Working Group

- Timothy Hodges

Switzerland

- Robert Lamb, CBD National Focal Point