



CBD

Meeting of the Consortium of Scientific Partners
Montreal, Canada, 4 July 2018
18:00 – 20:00

MEETING REPORT

Introduction

The objective of the meeting was to review progress and activities carried out by members of the Consortium of Scientific Partners on Biodiversity (CSP) since COP 13 and to provide a forum for CSP members to discuss how to re-energize its work and contributions to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The meeting also served as a platform to sustain momentum during the intersessional period between meetings of the Conference of the Parties (COP), to ensure that this partnership remains relevant as the UN Decade on Biodiversity draws to a close and that it is able to advance work on technical and scientific cooperation, as well as articulate its vision of how to position itself in the post-2020 biodiversity agenda.

1. Welcome remarks and opening of the meeting

Mr. Erie Tamale, who moderated the meeting, welcomed participants and asked each member organization to briefly introduce themselves, their institution and their work. This was followed by welcome remarks by Dr. Cristiana Paşca Palmer, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Dr. Palmer told partners that there is a new opportunity to work together and to respond to the scientific needs of Parties. She stressed the importance of Article 18 of the CBD in facilitating technical and scientific cooperation, as well as the transfer of expertise to deliver impact and enhance the progress on the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. She collectively reminded the group *“that necessity is the mother of invention. For biodiversity, such a moment of necessity cannot come at a more critical time, as we search for new and innovative approaches to solving the most vexing biodiversity challenges and look for ways to restore balance of life on Earth”*. Dr. Palmer also stated that it would be a good thing to broaden this network and invite other institutions to contribute as the task ahead will require a fundamental shift towards a path of stronger cooperation among the scientific community. She highlighted that COP15 and the post-2020 biodiversity agenda open the doors for renewed focus and perspectives from the Consortium of Scientific Partners on Biodiversity. She concluded by saying that we possess the ability to restore balance if we put our minds to it, as we most preserve the great diversity and health of our planet.

Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, Director of the Implementation Support Division, also provided a few opening remarks. For Ms. Mathur-Filipp, science is at the heart of the work of the CBD, and IPBES can be to biodiversity what the IPCC was for climate change. She reminded participants how the work of the CSP could be complementary to the work of IPBES. She stressed that it was a critical time to take action through science and to implement Article 18 to its full potential, as she is confident the CSP can be instrumental in achieving that goal.

These remarks were followed by reflections from Mr. Hesiquio Benitez from CONABIO, the outgoing Chair of the CSP, who reminded participants of the importance of the Consortium, the wide breadth and strengths of the institutions that make up this group, as well as the many topics and collective expertise around the room that they can contribute to and support the implementation of the

Convention. He encouraged the group to build on the solid foundations and notable achievements to date and continue working in partnership with renewed vigour and purpose.

2. Update on the key milestones of the Consortium of Scientific Partners and recent activities undertaken within the mandate of the group

Under this agenda item, Mr. Hesiquio Benitez highlighted the salient achievements of the CSP to date; he reminded participants that the Consortium is composed of four different groups of organizations: scientific institutions, museums, policy influencers, and decision makers. He also stressed that the group has made great strides towards the advancement of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the realization of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. He reminded the group that the last meeting of CSP took place in Cancun, Mexico, during COP14. He also reflected on the great opportunities for information exchange, possibilities to work with policy makers, and efforts towards greater public awareness in highlighting the potential that the Consortium offers. He underscored the challenges that each institution has a different mandate, work in a multiplicity of languages and while they may not work together regularly, the organizations that collectively make up the Consortium are still working individually towards the implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. He advocated for a format or webpage which would allow them to provide updates and contributions of CSP to the CBD. He pointed out the CBD Secretariat should be in a position to provide more support to facilitate communication. He encouraged the Consortium to play a stronger role and lead on the organization of scientific fora which could support mainstreaming, build momentum, and consolidate efforts. Particularly, he noted botanical gardens as prime locations to spread awareness on CBD goals and objectives. He invited members to intentionally organize activities to support the CBD and biodiversity-related needs that will also foster collaboration within the CSP. He invited all members to agree upon future ways to work together.

Under this agenda item, CSP members were given up to two minutes each to highlight and share information about the technical and scientific cooperation activities they have undertaken since COP13 both in the context of the CSP and independently through joint programming and projects; including examples of good practices and lessons learned. The objective of this segment was also to ensure that members of the Consortium were kept abreast of the work across the board in order to facilitate the sharing and replication of good practices and models, and to identify opportunities for closer collaboration. Thus, the following participants shared their activities:

- Mr. Horst Korn from the International Nature Academy of Germany stated that his institution organizes 70 to 80 workshops per year at the International Lecture Academy, 12 to 15 of which align with the scope and objectives of the CSP. One of their partners is the Klaus Töpfer Fellowship, a four-week leadership training organized on the Island of Vilm, in which 25 young emerging nature conservation leaders, mostly from the Eastern and Central Europe and Central Asia, participate every year. Many other capacity building activities are organized with other partners that are not necessarily members of the Consortium such as IUCN, UNEP and CBD; including some on ABS issues. Their focus is mostly on Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Caucasus and other developing countries. They have also recently decided that they will offer capacity building under the Bio-Bridge Initiative.
- Mr. Han de Koeijer from the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (RBINS) explained that Belgium and France are working together on the Clearing-House Mechanism in many developing countries. RBINS works especially in Africa where they have Memoranda of Understanding with Benin, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo for activities ranging from GTI, Monitoring of habitats, Public Awareness and MRV as well as the CHM.
- Ms. Anne Charpentier, Director of the Montreal Insectarium, and representing Espace pour la vie-Space for Life in Montreal, Canada, which brings together the city's four most prominent natural museums: the Montreal Biodome, the Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium, the Montreal Botanical Garden, and the Montreal Insectarium. Ms. Charpentier talked about their

biodiversity education programme to reconnect people with nature; she also reminded that their institute has approximately 300 researchers working on botany, ecology, entomology and evolution. She presented their citizen science programme: Mission Monarch in which they partner with the United States of America and Mexico on migration of the monarch butterfly. They also have publications about how to approach citizen scientists. She also talked about their cooperation on sustainable development and capacity building with the Paris-based National Museum of Natural History, which is also a member of the Consortium. They also have collaborations with different other institutions.

- Mr. Randall García from the Biodiversity Institute of Costa Rica (INBIO) talked about their initiative using rural tourism and the use of biodiversity as a strategy for local development in the South of Chile, in collaboration with local authorities and universities. They are currently expanding the approach to introduce the same model in Nicaragua, using experience from both countries to discuss experiences of villages within the bio forest conservation for public awareness; he invited CSP to participate in this initiative.
- Mr. Tim Hirsch of Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) was happy to announce that his organization has reached a milestone of one billion species occurrence records registered in their database on that same day. He reminded that over 1200 institutions voluntarily shared data to achieve that billionth record milestone. Funding from the European Union has allowed them to enhance capacity in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific for institutions to share data in order to address key policy needs, through the Biodiversity Information for Development (BID) programme. This programme includes a pool of volunteer mentors experienced in data management who can provide expertise on requests to assist in project implementations, and to take part in training workshops.
- Ms. Lily Rodriguez (observer) talked about a forum that the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS) is organizing in South Africa, which will focus on post-2020 discussions. She invited the CSP to be a co-organizer, and will send more information.
- Mr. Vincent Fleming of the United Kingdom's Joint Nature Conservation Committee advanced that even though preparing reports can be a burden, it can be a good exercise to know what everybody is doing. He suggested doing it a way that not all members submit reports at the same time. He stated that such a network of institutions can have bigger impacts while working together, so long that members have a clear idea of direction. Only then the CSP will be able to bring new partners.
- Mr. Han de Koeijer acknowledged what Mr. Fleming said. However, he also thinks that the Consortium ought to open up in order to include expertise that it currently does not have, and proceed differently in the future.
- Ms. Wendy Yap from the Singapore Botanic Gardens noted that there is work already being undertaken individually that is relevant to the mission of the Consortium.
- Mr. Korn stressed that the Memorandum of Understanding is a legal document that was signed by the Minister in Germany and that as such, it should not be modified. He reminded the group to learn from past experiences: the more it has grown, the less it has done. There is a need to invigorate activity within the existing member base first before broadening its membership.
- Mr. Byoung Yoon Lee of the National Institute of Biological Resources of the Republic of Korea highlighted that a lot of things are being done, but that how they contribute to the implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets is unclear. He also indicated that his institution provided about one million species to GBIF, which contributes to Target 19. He also reminded that post-2020 targets should be measurable and tangible.
- Mr. Xu Jing of the Chinese Research Academy of Environment Sciences (observer) pointed out that the Consortium includes providers working in the field of technology, but needs

guidance from the SCBD. Knowing the needs will allow everybody to better contribute and channel efforts meaningfully.

- Mr. Erie Tamale reminded participants that the Conference of the Parties will discuss a number of decisions that will require actions from CSP Members. The issue is to identify common possibilities to contribute and to identify where there might be gaps, opportunities, and overlap. It is critical to mobilize joint activities, as well as to share information to prevent overlap. There is a need to finalize a work plan with prioritized objectives and clear ideas of flagship projects by COP 14.
- Mr. Elpidio Peria from ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity felt that the CSP needs to be strategic in its undertakings by identifying only a few issues. It is important to know how the Consortium contributes to the mitigation climate change and biodiversity loss, and actions need to work towards greater impacts on women and indigenous peoples. It is also important to know where funds are coming from. The Consortium should take advantage of the BBI to strengthen its work.

3. Presentation on Technical and Scientific Cooperation under the CBD and its Protocols

Under this item, the CBD Secretariat updated CSP members on the technical and scientific cooperation portfolio at the CBD Secretariat, including the Bio-Bridge Initiative. Participants learned about the various BBI tools and services, including the helpdesk and the BBI web platform, which are available to help Parties find and access the available expertise, resources, and technologies they need to better address biodiversity-related issues and to successfully implement the Convention and its Protocols. The presentation also showcased examples of technical and scientific cooperation projects that have been implemented with BBI seed funding and highlighted other strands of work being undertaken by the Secretariat to advance technical and scientific cooperation objectives.

4. Discussion on the CSP's vision, the proposed work plan for 2018-2020 and next steps, including the role of the CSP in the context of the post-2020 biodiversity agenda

Under this item, the CSP was invited to discuss issues central to its mandate. Reports from previous CSP meetings and conversations with members over the past few months have revealed a reduced level of engagement by members in advancing the mandate of the Consortium. There was also consensus that the CSP's mandate and future direction needs to be revisited and re-energized. The Secretariat presented a short report it has compiled on potential activities that could be implemented by the CSP between 2018 and 2020 to deliver impact on issues relevant to the Convention and to its Protocols.

Members discussed how the CSP ought to position itself to effectively contribute to the preparation of the post-2020 biodiversity agenda and how to feed into the process of informing the dialogue and priority-setting. It was agreed that CSP members can play an indispensable role in surfacing science-based evidence to inform the process.

As a follow-up action item, CSP members were encouraged to review the work plan circulated in advance of the meeting and provide concrete suggestions on activities that can be undertaken collectively as a group. CSP members were also urged to use the intersessional period to think about a flagship project that could be implemented jointly to be discussed at COP14 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.

5. Election of a new CSP Chair

Due to commitments with the COP Presidency, the current Chair of the Consortium of Scientific Partners, CONABIO, will step down. During the meeting, members expressed their desire to have a strong institution as Chair of the Consortium.

Prior to the meeting, the Secretariat had been in contact with members of the Consortium to gauge interest in who could act as Chair going forward. The Smithsonian Institution expressed a keen interest in taking over responsibilities from CONABIO, and a call was made to other institutions who might also be interested. One of the ideas floated during the meeting was to have a co-Chair for support and to alleviate any reservations that the United States of America, where the Smithsonian Institution is based, is not a Party to the CBD.

6. Opportunities for broadening the CSP membership

Under this agenda item, members of the CSP discussed opportunities to consolidate and broaden its membership to ensure adequate regional balance and thematic representation. Dr. Philip Dobie, from the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) (observer) noted that it is important to be clear on the type of broadening that is required, as it could be geographic or in the type of institutions or expertise.

There was no consensus on this agenda item with some in favour of broadening the membership and others who preferred to wait until the CSP solidifies its base and is clear on its plans going forward. Members were encouraged to think about the potential benefits of broadening the CSP, and to send names of potential members to contact in due time, once the issue has been fully discussed.

7. Closure of the meeting

Due to commitments with a Contact Group, the Chair had to leave early and therefore, Mr. Erie Tamale summarized the salient discussion points from the meeting and follow-up action items. He closed the meeting and encouraged CSP members to send feedback on, and additions to the work plan. The objective is to have input from the CSP on a flagship project and on the work plan to have a final document for consultation by COP 14.

List of Participants

Organization	Location	Contact Name	Meeting Attendance
CORE CSP MEMBERS			
Instituto Humboldt	Colombia	Mr. Rodrigo Moreno	Remote
Singapore Botanical Gardens	Singapore	Ms. Wendy Yap	In person
		Mr. Jeremy Woon	In person
Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences	Belgium	Mr. Han de Koeijer	In person
INBio	Costa Rica	Mr. Randall García	Remote
Fundação Oswaldo Cruz	Brazil	Ms. Marcia Chame dos Santos	Remote
CONABIO	Mexico	Mr. Hesiquio Benitez	In person
		Ms. Laura Rodriguez	In person
German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation	Germany	Mr. Horst Korn	In person
		Ms. Janina Heim	In person
Joint Nature Conservation Committee	United Kingdom	Mr. Vincent Fleming	In person
Missouri Botanical Gardens	United States of America	Mr. Peter Wyse Jackson	Remote
University of Sao Paulo	Brazil	Mr. Antonio Mauro Saraiva	Remote
Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle	France	Mr. Denis Duclos	In person
Espace pour la vie- Space for Life	Canada	Ms. Anne Charpentier	In person
Royal Botanic Gardens Kew	United Kingdom	Ms. China Williams	Remote
National Institute of Biological Resources	Korea	Mr. Byoung Yoon Lee	In person
OBSERVERS			
Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF)	Denmark	Mr. Tim Hirsch	In person
World Agroforestry Centre	Kenya	Mr. Philip Dobie	In person
International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS)	Peru	Ms. Lily Rodriguez	In person
Chinese Research Academy of Environment Sciences	China	Mr. Xu Jing /	In person
		Ms. Tian Yu	In person
Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research	Uruguay	Ms. Ione Anderson	In person
Ministry of Environment of Egypt	Egypt	Mr. Moustafa Fouda	In person
ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity	Philippines	Mr. Elpidio Peria	In person