



# CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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## STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE CONSORTIUM OF SCIENTIFIC PARTNERS ON BIODIVERSITY

First meeting

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, United Kingdom, 8-9 September 2006

### REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE CONSORTIUM OF SCIENTIFIC PARTNERS ON BIODIVERSITY

#### I. INTRODUCTION AND OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. On the margins of the high-level segment of the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), held in Curitiba, Brazil, on 27-28 March 2006, the following partners decided to join forces with the Convention Secretariat in support of the enhanced phase of implementation of the Convention : the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle de France, the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and the National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

2. To this end, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed with the objective of leveraging the expertise and experience of these institutions in order to implement education and training activities to support developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition to build scientific, technical and policy skills in the area of biodiversity. Accordingly, the first meeting of the Steering Committee of the Consortium of Scientific Partners (CSP) on Biodiversity was held at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in the United Kingdom, on 8-9 September 2006 to: (i) identify common areas for collaboration based on on-going activities; (ii) identify priority activities to form the basis of a four-year plan of action for the Consortium; and (iii) finalize the organizational structure and modus operandi of the Consortium.

3. At a dinner offered in the evening of 8 September 2006 by the host organization, Peter Crane, the Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, welcomed the participants to Kew and expressed his pleasure at hosting the first meeting of the steering committee. He described the occasion as special as reflected in the choice of venue for the dinner, the Marianne North Gallery, which contained a collection of more than 800 oil paintings by Marianne North, showing over 900 species of plants from virtually all the continents, with a collection of about 250 strips of different timbers. Dr. Crane noted that the Steering Committee meeting dinner was only the second dinner held at that location since its donation to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in the nineteenth century.

4. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, expressed his thanks, on behalf of all participants, to Peter Crane and the staff of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. He stated how privileged the Convention Secretariat was to have as partners such prestigious scientific institutions with their tremendous potential to assist Parties during the enhanced phase of implementation.

5. On 9 September 2006, the meeting continued at the Orangery under the chairmanship of Dr. Crane and the Executive Secretary, Dr. Djoghlaif. Dr. Crane opened the meeting by once again

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welcoming all participants. In his introductory statement, Dr. Djoghlaflaff reaffirmed his appreciation to all participants for committing to the goals and objectives of the partnership particularly in light of the enhanced phase of implementation of the Convention. He reminded participants that implementation of the Convention would be impossible without the full and active partnership of all stakeholders including scientific institutions, botanic gardens and museums.

6. Dr. Djoghlaflaff also recalled the signing of the original MOU in Curitiba. He recognized the presence of Montreal Nature Museum and the Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad de México (CONABIO) as observers. Dr. Djoghlaflaff also reminded participants that CONABIO would be signing the MOU in Geneva on 13 September 2006. He announced that the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) of Cape Town and the Geneva Botanic Gardens had also expressed an interest in joining the Consortium. In closing his remarks, Dr. Djoghlaflaff paid tribute to Bertrand-Pierre Galey, Peter Crane and Cristian Samper for their initiative in developing the initial concept for the Consortium.

## **II. REVIEW OF RELEVANT ONGOING ACTIVITIES OF PARTNER INSTITUTIONS AND IDENTIFICATION OF PRIORITY AREAS FOR COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES**

7. Each partner institution made a short presentation on activities of relevance to the Convention on Biological Diversity and to the implementation of the decisions of the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The following presentations were made:

- Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle de France – Bertrand-Pierre Galey
- Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History – Cristián Samper
- Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew – Alan Paton
- Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences - J.L. Van Goethem
- German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation - Gisela Stolpe
- National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia - Yousef Al Wetaid
- Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad de México – José Sarukhan
- Montreal Nature Museum – Gilles Vincent

8. The presentations revealed a wealth of capacity among the institutions involved in the Consortium regarding policy, technical and scientific issues. They also clearly highlighted the importance of the networks that the institutions bring. The presentations further indicated the main target audiences that can benefit from the activities of the Consortium: (i) National focal points for the Convention; (ii) managers, civil servants and scientists involved in biodiversity issues; (iii) school teachers and students; and (iv) the general public/visitors to institutions in the Consortium. The need to train many of the stakeholders who do not attend meetings under the Convention and develop tools that can be widely disseminated to a broad audience for local training was also noted. The presentations will be posted on the webpage that will be created for the Consortium on the Convention website.

9. The discussions that followed each presentation allowed the identification of possible areas for future collaboration that could then be translated into a four-year action plan for the Consortium and provide a framework for it to respond to the needs of Governments identified in requests made by the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting, for the achievement of the 2010 target and for the celebration of the International Year for Biodiversity in 2010. Participants also considered whether the scope of the activities of the Consortium should be broad (applicable to all countries) or narrow (with clear target audiences); all-inclusive (and thus quite complex) or strictly focused. In any case, it was

emphasized the activities will focus on responding to requests and recommendations of the Conference of the Parties. Participants also considered the advantages and disadvantages of targeting a few countries (e.g. the mega-diverse countries), where the Consortium activities could have high chances of success.

10. The areas for possible collaboration where the Consortium has comparative advantage include: (i) existing/ongoing activities; and (ii) new activities for which the Convention Secretariat will support the mobilization of additional financial resources:

### ***Ongoing activities***

*Objective: to describe, publicize, exchange materials and avoid duplication in the implementation of existing activities so as to prepare actions for expanded capacity building*

1. Communication, education and public awareness (link to the clearing-house mechanism)—citizen science best practices.
2. Knowledge-sharing and the Biodiversity Heritage Library.
3. Human capacity-building for the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation and related programmes—including through the enhanced use of digital images of all type specimens (of extant taxa) available on Internet by 2010.
4. Human capacity-building—enhance competence pools for training and capacity-building at the country and regional level in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.
5. Human capacity-building—through training on the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and other biodiversity-related conventions, including the exchange of materials. Training must be durable, and should use not only sophisticated methods (e.g. e-learning) but also the most conventional ones.
6. Access and benefit-sharing (ABS)—sharing experiences and best practices, participate in ABS processes as appropriate and provide scientific advice on specific issues (both scientific and those related to financial mechanism, e.g. the Clean Development Mechanism under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) under discussion/negotiation.

### ***New activities***

*Objective: develop new activities based on capacity building needs and institutional comparative advantage (some of these actions may require additional funding)*

1. Capacity-building for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity—minimum one-day information and training workshops on the margins of meetings under the Convention. With regard to training, the ideal would be to have different modules for training developed in a coordinated manner by each institution based on their expertise and comparative advantage. The forthcoming meetings to be considered are:
  - *Second meeting of the Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention (9 to 13 July 2007) and the twelfth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) (2 to 6 July 2007) to be held at UNESCO, Paris. The main themes for the twelfth meeting of SBSTTA are the in-depth reviews of the application of ecosystem approach, and the implementation of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC). Suggested topics for training in Paris include:*
    - Best practice in citizen science;

- Promoting GSPC and the ecosystem approach through examples of good practice that can be adapted.
  - In addition, regarding the GSPC, training on those targets which are going to be missed and then target capacity-building where a difference can be made to achieve those targets.
  - *Second meeting of the Working Group on Protected Areas (11 to 15 February 2008) and the thirteenth meeting of SBSTTA (18 to 22 February 2008) to be held at FAO in Rome.* The main themes for the thirteenth meeting of SBSTTA are the in-depth reviews of the implementation of the programmes of work on agricultural biodiversity and forest biodiversity.
  - *The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention,* to be held in 2008 in Germany. At this meeting, the Consortium can consider an overview of target commitments, broad significance, highlight needs and lobby for additional commitments for capacity building.
  - A longer workshop can be planned on the margins of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties or at other times on taxonomy and its importance to the achievement of the objectives of the Convention. For this training, a few countries (e.g., five or six megadiverse countries) can be selected so as to demonstrate, by 2010, that such a capacity-building initiative can actually work and show results.
2. *International Biodiversity Day (22 May).* Each institution will celebrate International Biodiversity Day (IBD) every year. The theme for 2007 is climate change and biodiversity, and for 2008, agricultural biodiversity. In that context, each institution will prepare and/or contribute to the preparation of outreach materials and help to celebrate IBD locally.
  3. *International Year for Biodiversity (2010).* The Consortium will explore the options for a joint exhibit for celebrating the International Year for Biodiversity to be finalized by the end of 2009. Mr. Samper offered to take the lead in exploring options for the exhibit and offered the support of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History to this end. Appropriate exhibit material will be distributed to all developing countries and countries with economies in transition and other interested parties and the full exhibit will be displayed by the CSP partners in the Consortium. It is estimated an exhibition could be seen by some 10 million people in 2010.
  4. *Others:*
    - Creation of a webpage for the Consortium hosted by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity with links to each partner;
    - Publication before the end of 2006, of a special volume of Gincana on the Consortium activities;
    - Publication in early 2007, of a user-friendly document describing the work of each partner
  5. The need to increase focus on climate change and biodiversity given the political and NGO focus and the important interconnections between biodiversity and climate change, including the impacts on *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation of biodiversity was noted.
  6. Not all institutions are expected to be involved in all the activities listed above. Members of the Consortium could partner according to their comparative advantages and agree to carry out some activities jointly.

11. The following criteria can be used to assess the success of the Consortium: number of focal points trained, number of participants in workshops, number of training kits / manuals distributed, number of schools / students benefiting from education training programmes of the Consortium.

### **III. MODUS OPERANDI FOR THE STEERING COMMITTEE/CONSORTIUM**

12. Participants agreed to a two-tiered operational arrangement with

(a) A broader Steering Committee assembly consisting of all signatories of the MOU; and

(b) An Executive Bureau consisting of the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History and the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle. The bureau would serve the broader Steering Committee and would be meeting electronically at least twice a year with meetings of the assembly taking place less frequently. The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew will act as Chair of the Bureau and the Consortium until the next meeting of the Consortium.

13. It was also agreed that the current composition of the Consortium plus the three potential additions (Montreal, Geneva and South Africa) provides the necessary comparative advantage to meet the agreed work programme of the Consortium. It was therefore agreed that future membership in the Consortium should be based on the identification of needs and subject to invitation by the Consortium.

14. The Secretariat of the Convention will provide the Secretariat of the Consortium and will develop a listserv and a webpage dedicated to the Consortium, with links to the websites of each member. The Secretariat will also work with Consortium members and donors to mobilize additional financial resources for the implementation of MOU activities.

### **IV. DATES AND VENUE OF THE NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

15. Following an invitation by Mr. Bertrand-Pierre Galey of the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, the next meeting will be held back-to-back with the International Symposium in celebration of the birth of Buffon in Paris on 12 December 2007.

### **V. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

16. Dr. Crane thanked everyone and invited those who wanted to visit the garden. On behalf of all the participants, he expressed his pleasure in the outcomes of the meeting. In turn, the Executive Secretary thanked everyone for the successful meeting and Dr. Crane for his leadership, as well as his team for the superb organization of the meeting.

17. The meeting was closed at 5 p.m. on 9 September 2006

*Annex I*

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