



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

Distr: General

UNEP/CMS/Conf.9.12
3 November 2008

Original: English

NINTH MEETING OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Rome, 1-5 December 2008
Agenda Item 11.0

LIAISON GROUP OF BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS

1. In Decision VII/26 (February 2004) the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity urged further enhanced cooperation between the Convention on Biological Diversity and all relevant international conventions, organizations and bodies, strengthening and building on existing cooperative arrangements to enhance synergies and reduce inefficiencies in a manner consistent with their respective mandates, governance arrangements and agreed programmes, within existing resources and requested formation of a liaison group of the biodiversity conventions to enhance coherence and cooperation in their implementation.
2. The Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions involves the following multilateral environmental agreements:
 - (a) Convention on Biological Diversity;
 - (b) Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals;
 - (c) Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora;
 - (d) International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;
 - (e) Ramsar Convention on Wetlands; and
 - (f) World Heritage Convention.
3. To date six meetings of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions have been held, typically involving the heads of the secretariats of the six biodiversity-related conventions and additional technical staff where appropriate. Reports of these meetings and additional background information is accessible from <http://www.cbd.int/blg/>.
4. In the wake of an analysis of the effectiveness of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions, contained in the draft report on Enhancing MEAs' coherence (EMG/IEG/MEAs/PD/29Jan08), prepared by the Secretariat of the Environment Management Group the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in its decision IX/29:
 - (a) underlined the important role of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions in exploring options for enhancing synergies, avoiding duplication of efforts and improving the coherent implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions;
 - (b) encouraged the executive heads of the secretariats of the Biodiversity-related Conventions to meet on a more regular basis; and

(c) invited the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions to examine the report of the Ad Hoc Joint Working Group on Enhancing Cooperation and Coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (report of its third meeting in Rome 25-28 March 2008) with a view to identify options for improved implementation of and cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions.

5. In its sixth meeting held on 31 May 2008 in Bonn, Germany and hosted by the Secretariat of Convention on Migratory Species, the Liaison Group discussed *inter alia* these concerns about its effectiveness. It was noted in particular that the Liaison Group has no dedicated staff to pursue common interests and tasks on behalf of the six conventions. Joint activities are therefore mostly of a technical nature and pursued by the responsible programme officers. CMS offered fund and lead in the production of an information display highlighting the role of the Liaison Group. Copies of the display have been sent to all member Conventions.

6. Besides an exchange of information and coordination among secretariats current activities of the Liaison Group focus on Knowledge Management, the respective application of the Addis Ababa principles and guidelines and an assessment of existing guidance developed by any of the Liaison Group members with regard to their relevance to the other conventions.

Knowledge Management

7. With the multitude of information generated on and by multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), it is increasingly becoming a challenge to make this information available to Parties to MEAs and other stakeholders in an easy and user-friendly way. Therefore, from 2006-2008, UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) worked with the UNEP Division of Environmental Law and Conventions (DELIC) and the secretariats of six biodiversity-related conventions and agreements, on knowledge management for biodiversity. The objective of the project was improved implementation of the biodiversity-related agreements through the strategic use of information.

8. Improved access to a range of strategic documents and information tools of the biodiversity-related MEAs through a single web portal at www.inforMEA.org. MEA Document Search allows access to a range of strategic documents and information tools including:

- (a) articles;
- (b) decisions, resolutions and recommendations;
- (c) strategic plans;
- (d) national focal point information; and
- (e) list of parties.

9. A concept paper for a follow-up project on Knowledge Management has been prepared by UNEP-WCMC taking into account views provided by the secretariats of biodiversity-related MEAs and is currently being under consideration by UNEP.

Application of the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity

10. Through Decision VII/14 the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in 2004. Other Conventions have considered these guidelines in various ways.

- (a) The Convention on Migratory Species has undertaken additional scientific studies to examine the applicability of the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines;
- (b) The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species made efforts to link the concept of non-detrimental use to the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines and the Animals and Plants Committees have examined their applicability on the basis of case studies submitted by Parties;
- (c) The Ramsar Convention has updated its definitions of wise use and the concept of maintenance of the ecological character of a site and in clarifying linkages with the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines; and
- (d) The First Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture discussed the implementation of Article 6 of the Treaty (sustainable use) and decided that this should be a standing item on its agenda.

11. The Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions recognized the common interest in further capacity development, training and information on the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity and their relevance in the context of each of the biodiversity-related conventions and decided to prepare a CD-ROM on their application by each MEA. This would help to understand linkages between partners and to identify gaps and thus prepare the road for a common framework.

Scientific cooperation and assessment of available biodiversity guidance

12. The Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions agreed that there was a need to exchange and share information about each convention's scientific activities and processes and called for a meeting of Chairs of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Bodies of the Conventions together with representatives of the secretariats and from UNEP. To date, two meetings have been held.

13. Among the areas considered in the meetings was the coverage of scientific and technical guidance and consideration of complementarities and gaps in guidance developed under the Conventions.

14. It was recognized that there are abundant data and information on biodiversity but these data are often not available to the Conventions' scientific advisory bodies. If a need for an intergovernmental mechanism to strengthen the science-policy interface is confirmed it should be ensured that its work focuses not on collecting additional data but on bringing together various sources of scientific information, including traditional ecological knowledge, in a coherent and comparable form.

15. Moreover, there are many examples where guidance and guidelines developed by one convention have been endorsed – fully or in part – by other conventions, or where guidance has been jointly developed. It was agreed that it would be useful to fully examine all relevant guidance, including from IUCN, and their respective relevance and adaptability to the work of other conventions.

International Year of Biodiversity 2010

16. Following a recommendation of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its eighth meeting, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a decision declaring 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) and identifying the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity as focal point for the campaign. Building on the experience gained by the inter-agency task force for the celebration of the International Day for Biological Diversity, an inter-agency advisory committee for the International Year will be established with a view to promote a system-wide coherence and common programme and objective within the United Nations and among partners and to maximise actions related to the Year. The committee will comprise the members of the Heads of Agency 2010 task forces and include CMS.

Guidance from CMS COP for future activities

17. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species at its ninth meeting may wish to recognize the important role of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions in sharing information, coordinating activities and thereby providing services to the Parties of all biodiversity-related conventions.