

Report of the seventh meeting of the Joint Liaison Group of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

Bonn, 7 June 2007

I. Welcome and opening

1. The seventh meeting of the Joint Liaison Group (JLG) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was held on 7 June 2007 in Bonn, Germany.

2. Mr. Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, chaired the meeting. Mr. Arba Diallo, Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, sent his apologies for not being able to participate. The participants are listed in annex II.

II. Adoption of the agenda

3. The agenda was adopted as presented in annex III. The Chair suggested that participants discuss, under agenda item 6, the interest of the upcoming president of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC in reducing emissions from deforestation as a key element of the thirteenth session of the COP in Bali, Indonesia (December 2007). He suggested the group explore possibilities for collaboration in this area, as deforestation relates to climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation.

III. Main results from the consideration of the document on options for enhanced cooperation among the three Rio Convention in each convention process

4. An update on the consideration of the document on options for enhanced cooperation among the three Rio Conventions (FCCC/SBSTA/2004/INF.19) by the bodies of the different conventions was delivered at the opening of this agenda item. Parties to the three conventions have welcomed this document. At its eighth meeting, in March 2006, the COP to the CBD considered in detail the options contained in the document and requested the CBD secretariat, through the JLG, to identify mutually supportive activities to be conducted by the secretariats of the Rio Conventions, Parties and relevant organizations. Parties to the UNFCCC have submitted their views on the information contained in the paper (see FCCC/SBSTA/2006/MISC.4). Finally, the UNCCD is considering the meaning and implications of synergies among the Rio Conventions; Parties will send their views on the options paper before the upcoming COP (September 2007).

5. Collaboration at the national and local levels is essential to enhance synergy among the Rio Conventions. Lack of coordination of national activities, including the absence of information flow between focal points, is a major obstacle to achieving synergy and meeting the objectives of the three conventions efficiently. It was noted that active cooperation at the level of secretariats could be an incentive for cooperation at the national level. For this reason, the JLG should now work toward the implementation, as appropriate, of joint activities that have been previously identified within the above-mentioned document.

6. In particular, the JLG has identified several options for cooperation at the level of Convention bodies and secretariats as well as for encouraging collaboration of focal points. During the meeting, it

agreed to consider what activities at the level of secretariats could be implemented by the secretariats during 2007 and 2008 and in this way provide an incentive for cooperation at the national level and at the level of relevant organizations. Some of these activities may be drawn from a proposal submitted by the secretariat of the CBD as discussed in paragraph 7, below.

7. In response to decision VIII/30 of the COP to the CBD, Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, the Executive Secretary of the CBD, presented to the JLG a document entitled "Proposal from the Convention on Biological Diversity on options for mutually supportive activities for the secretariats of the Rio conventions, Parties and relevant organizations." It is based on the options paper and includes a list of activities and indicators at different levels and for different areas of work. The JLG welcomed the document and agreed to further explore a number of activities for cooperation at the level of secretariats identified within this document, with a view to operationalizing them in the future. The JLG noted that it would not be appropriate to consider those activities for Parties or other organizations.

8. As such, on the basis of the document presented by the CBD, the JLG identified a number of possible activities at the level of secretariats (listed in annex I) and agreed to undertake an analysis of each on the basis of its technical and logistical feasibility; and financial implications and staff capacity. It also agreed to consider this analysis at its next meeting. In addition, the JLG agreed to develop two information notes: one on the links between forests, climate change, desertification and biodiversity and one on adaptation activities, plans and programmes, as specified in paragraphs 14 and 17, below.

IV. Identification of next steps and main areas for future collaboration

A. Reducing deforestation

9. It was noted that deforestation lies at the core of the environmental problems being addressed by the Rio Conventions: it is a significant source of greenhouse gases, is a major driver of biodiversity loss and is conducive to land degradation. Hence, activities to reduce deforestation provide significant collaboration opportunities for the three conventions, including their secretariats.

10. At its eleventh session, in November–December 2005, the COP to the UNFCCC requested the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) to consider issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries and to report back to the COP at its thirteenth session. After two years of work, the SBSTA has initiated the preparation of a draft decision on this matter. Its preamble recognizes that activities relating to reducing emissions from deforestation can promote co-benefits and may complement the aims of other relevant conventions.

11. At its eighth meeting, the COP to the CBD welcomed consideration within the UNFCCC of reducing emissions from deforestation and noted that this consideration represents a unique opportunity for protecting biodiversity. The UNCCD has urged for the pressure on forest resources to be reduced and has noted that drylands, which have significant potential to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, are at high risk of degradation. Land degradation and issues related to countries with low-forest cover continue to be important to the UNCCD process.

12. In April 2007, the United Nations Forum on Forests adopted a non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests. However, the JLG noted that the treatment of forests at the international level is split into various process and that further efforts are needed to coordinate related activities. It was mentioned that better managing the world's forests could provide opportunities for concrete cooperation, for example, through the development of management tools.

13. The focus of the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development will be on Africa, rural development, land degradation and drought. A joint event that addresses deforestation and integrated local area development was suggested as an option for cooperation.

14. As a first step to enhance collaboration in the area of deforestation, the JLG agreed to draft an information note on the links between forests, climate change, desertification and biodiversity, to be distributed at relevant meetings. This note will be ready before the thirteenth session of the COP to the UNFCCC and will also be made available at the ninth meeting of the COP to the CBD (May 2008).

B. Adaptation to climate change

15. The Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change (NWP) (FCCC/SBSTA/2007/MISC.4) was developed within the UNFCCC with the objective of assisting countries to improve their understanding and assessment of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation; and to make informed decisions on actions and measures to respond to climate change. Opportunities for communication and cooperation emerging from the NWP were noted by the COP to the CBD at its eighth meeting. The UNFCCC secretariat called for active participation of the secretariats of the CBD and the UNCCD in this work programme and invited both secretariats to nominate a focal point.¹

16. It was noted that the process of national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs) provides opportunities for synergies at the local level, in particular with regards to the design and implementation of projects that contribute to biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of land. Moreover, it was noted that the NAPA process could provide valuable information to the process of national action programmes under the UNCCD.

17. The JLG agreed to draft an information note on adaptation activities, plans and programmes adopted within the framework of each convention, to be distributed at relevant meetings. This note should be ready before the thirteenth session of the COP to the UNFCCC. The UNFCCC secretariat invited the secretariats of the CBD and the UNCCD to study the information contained in the following documents: “Synergy among multilateral environmental agreements in the context of national adaptation programmes of action”² and “Annotated guidelines for the preparation of national adaptation programmes of action”.³

V. Update on outreach activities, capacity-building and technology transfer

18. Participants provided an update on activities relating to outreach, capacity-building and technology transfer. Opportunities for future cooperation were highlighted and include the interoperability of databases, the joint calendar and a communications strategy. In the case of outreach, it was suggested that the JLG could have exhibits during major environmental events, including meetings of the bodies of each convention.

19. The communications teams of the three conventions have completed a full report on the Rio Conventions Calendar Project 2006-2007. This report confirms that both calendars were successfully produced and appreciated by the target audiences. The financial support that was mobilized through a sponsorship arrangement met the financial goals of the project. The teams are recommending in a memo to the Executive Secretaries that the project continue in a two step process: first, that the current memorandum of understanding between the conventions and the corresponding licensing agreement be extended for one year to cover the production of a 2008 calendar; and second, that the recommendations in the report be considered with a view to assessing a more in-depth strategy for cooperation in 2009–2010.

¹ The CBD secretariat has already nominated a focal point, and has also provided responses to calls for submissions issued by the SBSTA to the UNFCCC for information on experiences, tools and methods for implementation of the NWP.

² <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2005/tp/eng/03.pdf>.

³ http://unfccc.int/files/cooperation_and_support/ldc/application/pdf/annguide.pdf.

20. The role of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) in capacity-building activities relevant to the objectives of the three conventions was referred to, as was the need for these activities to be addressed in an integrated way. However, the JLG noted that initiatives on reporting may present complications, as reporting obligations are specific to each convention and their requirements and purpose vary significantly.

21. On technology transfer, Mr. Djoghlaif noted that the CBD has established the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Technology Transfer and Scientific and Technological Cooperation, which has a mandate similar to that of the Expert Group on Technology Transfer under the UNFCCC. The group will hold its first meeting on 10–12 September 2007 in Geneva. He also noted that other opportunities for cooperation in capacity-building and information and outreach may arise from the work to meet the 2010 biodiversity target.

22. Cooperative activities agreed on by the JLG relating to capacity-building, education and outreach, and technology transfer are also identified in annex I.

VI. Other matters and emerging issues

23. Following a suggestion by the Chair, the group agreed to continue to discuss the opportunities for cooperation surrounding the topic of deforestation in the thirteenth session of the COP to the UNFCCC in Bali. The note referred to in paragraph 14 above, will be available before that COP and its development will provide an opportunity for further discussions between the secretariats.

24. The secretariat of the UNCCD noted that an event on adaptation will be held during the high-level segment at the eighth COP to the UNCCD in Madrid, Spain (September 2007). The Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC was invited to participate in this event.

VII. Closure

25. The Chair thanked participants for their active participation. He proposed that the UNFCCC secretariat take the lead in advancing work on the preparations for the next meeting of the JLG and on the tasks agreed, including a proposal for time frames for the agreed notes and the process for considering the options for activities for the secretariats contained in the document presented by the CBD.

26. The next meeting of the JLG, to be chaired by the UNFCCC, will take place on 12 September 2007 in Madrid at the margins of the high level segment of the eighth session of the COP to the UNCCD. Its objective will be to take stock of the activities agreed at this meeting and further define joint activities.

27. The CBD secretariat will chair JLG meetings during 2008. It was proposed that the first meeting of the JLG in this year be held in Bonn during the ninth meeting of the COP to the CBD. Mr. Djoghlaif stated that this meeting of the COP offers a unique opportunity for the three secretariats of the Rio Conventions to organize joint events, as the secretariats of the UNFCCC and the UNCCD are located in Bonn.

VIII. Next steps

28. The UNFCCC secretariat will make a proposal for a timetable and means to advance and complete the following tasks:

- (a) Draft an information note on the links between forests, climate change, desertification and biodiversity;
- (b) Draft an information note on adaptation activities, plans and programmes adopted within the framework of each convention;

- (c) Further analyse the activities contained in annex I.

Annex I

Agreed list of activities at the level of secretariats for further consideration

Support for collaboration among national focal points

- Make the joint Rio calendar available on the websites of all three conventions;
- Make available relevant notifications to other conventions' focal points through the web;
- Compile, where available, lessons learned and case studies on national mechanisms for coordination among focal points;
- Draft and distribute, at least once per year, a newsletter on synergies between the Rio Conventions.

Support for cooperation on national-level planning

- Share reports and reviews of national planning processes, where available, and highlight lessons learned that may be relevant across conventions;
- Provide comments on the papers: "Synergy among multilateral environmental agreements in the context of national adaptation programmes of action"¹ and "Annotated guidelines for the preparation of national adaptation programmes of action"² (see also paragraph 17).

Collaboration at the level of convention bodies and secretariats

- Continue to facilitate joint meetings between the chairs of the scientific bodies of the conventions
- Share reviews and lessons learned regarding the functioning of the convention bodies
- Keep staff in other secretariats informed of discussions and decisions on relevant synergistic activities or programmes

Technology transfer

- Enhancing the inter-operability of the UNFCCC and CBD technology databases such that a single search can return results from both sources;³
- Continuing the sharing of experiences by secretariat staff in forums such as the CBD Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Technology Transfer and the UNFCCC Working Group in Technology Transfer or its successor;
- Enhance cooperation with UNEP to explore the nature and scope of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building with a view to identify possible collaborative activities and options to synergize.

Forests and climate change

- Continue to provide input+
- and views on forest issues as requested by the subsidiary bodies of the conventions;
- Ensure that the Parties are kept informed of relevant initiatives in other conventions.

Climate change adaptation

¹ <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2005/tp/eng/03.pdf>.

² http://unfccc.int/files/cooperation_and_support/ldc/application/pdf/annguide.pdf.

³ As some reservations were expressed with this activity, the group agreed to discuss its meaning and its technical implications.

- Continue to provide inputs and views on adaptation as requested by the subsidiary bodies of the conventions;
- Provide case studies and lessons learned on the integration of biodiversity and desertification issues within national adaptation plans of action under the UNFCCC.⁴

Capacity building

- Support, as appropriate, joint side events at relevant meetings.

Research and monitoring/systematic observation

- Identify options for the development of research partnerships, such as the CBD Consortium of Universities, including the identification of possible sources of funding for such partnerships (e.g. the European Union Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development);
- Provide a mechanism through which research needs of the conventions are communicated to the scientific community;
- Provide the focal points of all three conventions with up-to-date information on relevant assessments, research programmes and monitoring tools.

Information exchange and outreach

- Continue collaboration on the development of common messages and products on the links between climate change, biodiversity and desertification;
- Collaborate, where appropriate, on development of educational materials and on capacity-building for communication, education and public awareness;
- Share experiences reported by Parties on communication, education and public awareness including through the use of the CBD Clearing-House Mechanism or other such means;
- Establish joint web-based information and communication tools.

⁴ This activity may be difficult to put into practice and requires consultation with Parties

Annex II

List of participants

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Annex III

Agenda

**Joint Liaison Group
CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC**

Seventh meeting

Thursday, 7 June 2006

UNFCCC secretariat - Haus Carstanjen, Bonn, Germany

Chair: Yvo de Boer, UNFCCC

Draft provisional agenda

- I. Welcome and opening
- II. Adoption of the agenda
- III. Main results from the consideration of the document on options for enhanced cooperation among the three Rio Convention in each convention process
- IV. Identification of next steps and main areas for future collaboration:⁵
 - A. Reducing deforestation
 - B. Adaptation to climate change
- V. Update on outreach activities, capacity-building and technology transfer
- VI. Other matters and emerging issues
- VII. Closure

⁵ Includes sharing of main outcomes from each process relevant to the topic under discussion, including mandates given to the Joint Liaison Group in each convention process.