

Decisions of the Seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) of relevance to the UNFCCC

- Extracts of COP decisions provided by the CBD secretariat -

The seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 9 to 20 and 27 February 2004 successfully concluded. Representatives from 162 countries, as well as from international organizations, indigenous and local community organizations and non-governmental organizations, attended the meeting. Thirty-six decisions were adopted during this meeting, all of which will be available at: <http://www.biodiv.org/decisions/>.

Extracts of decisions of particular relevance to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) are provided below.

Decision VII/15: Biodiversity and Climate Change.

In this decision, the COP:

“Welcomes the report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biological Diversity and Climate Change as scientific advice provided in response to paragraphs 11 and 18 of decision V/4, as a basis for future work” (Paragraph 1);

“Invites Parties, other Governments, international organizations and other bodies to make use of the report on climate change and biodiversity prepared by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biological Diversity and Climate Change in order to promote synergies at the national level between the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol and the Convention on Biological Diversity, when implementing climate-change activities and their relation to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity” (Paragraph 2);

“Invites the national focal points for the Convention on Biological Diversity to bring the report to the attention of their counterpart focal points for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and for other relevant agreements, in order to promote synergy at national level”; (paragraph 3), and

“Notes with appreciation that the Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technical Advice of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has welcomed the report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group and has encouraged Parties to the UNFCCC to make use of it for their national purposes as a relevant source of useful information for their national purposes” (Paragraph 4).

The COP:

“Notes also that there are opportunities to implement climate change mitigation and adaptation activities in ways that are mutually beneficial and synergistic, and that contribute simultaneously to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, the Convention on Biological Diversity, (...), and other international agreements, all within broader national development objectives” (paragraph 7);

“Further notes that the ecosystem approach provides a framework for the integrated management of land, water and living resources. Its application could facilitate the formulation of climate change mitigation and adaptation projects that also contribute to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use at the national level” (paragraph 8);

“Invites Parties, other Governments, international organizations and other bodies to facilitate building capacity related to accessing information and tools, and for enhancing coordination at national level to ensure that climate change mitigation and adaptation projects deliver environmental and social benefits and are consistent with national priorities” (paragraph 9); and

“Calls for where national circumstances allow case-studies on interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change following a common format developed by the joint liaison group” (paragraph 10).

Further, the COP:

“Requests the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, as the next stage of its work on the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change to develop, for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties, advice or guidance for promoting synergy among activities to address climate change at the national, regional and international level where appropriate, including activities to combat desertification and land degradation, and activities for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity” (paragraph 14); and

“Invites the conferences of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to collaborate with the Convention on Biological Diversity, through the joint liaison group as appropriate, in the development of advice or guidance to Parties in implementing activities that are mutually supportive of the objectives of the three conventions at the local, sub-national, and national levels; and to involve biodiversity experts in relevant activities of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including methodological issues” (paragraph 15).

“Requests the Executive Secretary, in preparation for the next stage of the work on climate change and biodiversity by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, gather in collaboration with, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and other relevant organizations, within their given mandates, relevant material for promoting synergy between climate-change mitigation and adaptation activities and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, drawing upon:

- (a) Case-studies, contributed by Parties and others, illustrating the potential of biodiversity both to mitigate and adapt to global climate change, and lessons from these experiences, including lessons learned from extreme climate events;
- (b) Existing relevant tools, approaches and processes for designing projects, and evaluating their economic, environmental and social implications, related to mitigating or adapting to climate change within the broader context of sustainable development both at the national and regional level (paragraph 20)”

Decision VII/26: Cooperation with other conventions and international organizations and initiatives.

In this decision, the COP, “Welcoming the support of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA Resolution A/58/112) for the ongoing work of the liaison group of the secretariats and officers of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the UNFCCC, the UNCCD and the CBD (...)” and “Recognizing the role of the Joint Liaison Group in supporting cooperation between the Rio conventions, (...):

“Urges 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 programs, within existing resources” (paragraph 1); and

“Requests the Executive Secretary (...) to examine options for a flexible framework between all relevant actors, such as a global partnership on biodiversity, in order to enhance implementation through improved cooperation, and to report to the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting on possible ways forward” (paragraph 3).

Decision VII/30: Strategic Plan: future evaluation of progress

This decision provides a framework to facilitate assessment of progress towards the 2010 biodiversity target, and communication of this assessment; to promote coherence among the various programmes of work of the Convention; and to provide a flexible framework within which national and regional targets may be set, and indicators identified, where so desired by Parties. The 2010 target is part of the Strategic Plan adopted by Decision VI/26: “to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth.” This target was subsequently endorsed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

The framework includes seven focal areas, one of which is “Addressing the major threats to biodiversity, including those arising from invasive alien species, climate change, pollution, and habitat change” (paragraph 1). In Annex 2 of the decision the following Goals and Sub-targets are included under this focal area:

Goal 7. Address challenges to biodiversity from climate change, and pollution

Target 7.1: Maintain and enhance resilience of the components of biodiversity to adapt to climate change.

The COP “Invites related conventions, assessment processes and relevant organizations to contribute reports and information that assist the monitoring of progress towards the 2010 targets” (paragraph 9).

Decision VII/2: Biological Diversity of Dry and Sub-Humid Lands

In this decision, the COP:

“Requests the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the secretariats of the other Rio conventions and other biodiversity-related conventions, to further develop mechanisms for facilitating the synergistic implementation of these conventions, especially at the national level, as described in sections III and IV of the note by the Executive Secretary on dry and sub-humid lands prepared for the eighth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/10). Such mechanisms could include:

- (a) Joint work programmes at the national level as appropriate;
- (b) The activities of the joint liaison group of the three Rio conventions and potential additional members, and
- (c) Joint activities with a focus on several elements:

- (i) Integration of activities related to national biodiversity strategies and action plans with national action programmes for the Convention to Combat Desertification, national adaptation programmes of action under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Ramsar wetland policies and other relevant programmes, including national strategies for sustainable development and poverty reduction;
- (ii) Capacity-building, information systems, institutional arrangements and joint planning activities between the coordinating bodies and focal points of the conventions;
- (iii) Development of criteria for synergy projects and development and application of “good practice” synergy projects at the national level;
- (iv) Sound preparation, formulation of objectives, organization and follow-up of national and regional synergy workshops;
- (v) Training courses and awareness-raising among relevant stakeholders;
- (vi) Consultation, decision-making and implementation processes with the full participation of relevant stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and local communities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

These mechanisms should take into account existing experience, as documented by, inter alia, the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification (CRIC), and the “Operational Guidelines for Expedited Funding of National Self Assessment of Capacity-building Needs” of the Global Environment Facility, and the role and responsibilities of the Global Environment Facility and the Global Mechanism of the Convention to Combat Desertification in promoting synergy” (paragraph 5);

“Further requests the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the other Rio and other biodiversity-related conventions, to facilitate at the national level the review of the national biodiversity strategies and action plans under the Convention on Biological Diversity, in order to harmonize them with the national action programmes under the Convention to Combat Desertification and the national adaptation plans of action under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, with a focus on poverty alleviation and intersectoral integration” (paragraph 6).

The annex of decision VII/2 contains a synthesis table of expected outcomes and timeframes, an indicative list of potential actors, and indicators of progress in the implementation of the programme of work on dry and sub-humid lands, which includes UNFCCC as a potential collaborator.

Decisions decision VII/4 (Biological diversity of Inland Water Ecosystems), decision VII/5 (Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity), decision VII/27 (Mountain Biological Diversity), and decision VII/28 (Protected Areas).

By these decisions COP-7 adopted new or updated programmes of work. In each of these decisions and the programmes of work annexed thereto, the COP identifies climate change as a threat to biological diversity that needs to be addressed in the implementation the each of the programmes of work and identifies the UNFCCC as partner in this the implementation.

Specifically, decision VII/4 on *the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems* specifies that “The programme of work should pay particular attention to the impacts of climate change and the role of inland waters in mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. In this process, the programme of work should consider, support and collaborate with ongoing and/or new initiatives in these areas and in particular those related to the conservation and sustainable use of

peatlands”(paragraph 7). “The Executive Secretary is expected to continue and further develop collaboration, and avoid duplication, with programmes, organizations, institutions, conventions and stakeholders working with research, management and conservation of inland water biological diversity. These include (...) the UNFCCC (...)” (paragraph 5). The UNFCCC and its subsidiary bodies are considered as main partners in the implementation of selected activities under Goals 1.1 and 2.1 of the revised programme of work on inland water biodiversity (annex to the decision).

In decision VII/5 on *marine and coastal biological diversity*, the COP “agrees that the programme of work on marine and coastal biodiversity should address issues related to biodiversity and climate change, and further encourages Parties to make use of [the report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on biodiversity and Climate Change] as relevant source of useful information and take measures to manage coastal and marine ecosystems, including mangroves, seagrass beds and coral reefs so as to maintain their resilience to extreme climatic events” (paragraph 8). Further, COP “Urges Parties to urgently address, through appropriate integrated marine and coastal management approaches, all threats (...) in order to maximize the effectiveness of marine and coastal protected areas and networks in achieving their marine and coastal biodiversity objectives taking into account possible effects of climate change such as rising sea levels” (paragraph 26)”.

A specific work plan on coral bleaching, is contained in Appendix 1 to programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity. The aim of this work plan is to facilitate management actions and strategies to support reef resilience, rehabilitation and recovery. The following actions are included in the work plan: “Promote the inclusion in national reports under the regional seas conventions, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change a section for reporting of ecological and socio-economic impacts of coral-bleaching events” (Action 3 (b) (ix)), and “Initiate efforts to develop joint actions, including between national focal points, among the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Convention on Wetlands to: (i) develop approaches for assessing the vulnerability of coral-reef species to global warming; (ii) Build capacity for predicting, monitoring and managing the impacts of coral bleaching and related mortality; (iii) Identify approaches for developing response measures to coral bleaching; Provide guidance to financial institutions, including the Global Environment Facility (GEF), to support such activities (Action 4(b))”.

The programme of work *mountain biological diversity* adopted by decision VII/27 focuses on addressing characteristics and problems that are specific to mountain biological diversity. These include: “The fragility of mountain ecosystems and species and their vulnerability to human and natural disturbances, in particular to land-use change and global climate change (such as the retreat of glaciers and increased areas of desertification)”. The Programme of Work calls for the promotion of synergy in the implementation of international and regional conventions including UNFCCC as a way of enhancing the legal, policy, institutional, and economic framework of the programme of work on mountain biological diversity (programme element 2, goal 2.1, activity 2.1.12).

Among the suggested activities for Parties in the programme of work on *protected areas* (Decision VII/28) is to “Integrate climate change adaptation measures in protected area planning, management strategies, and in the design of protected area systems” (Activity 1.4.5). It is also recognized that “Protected Areas provide opportunities for research including for adaptive measures to cope with climate change” (Annex, paragraph 1). The UNFCCC and its SBSTA is recognized as a main partner for some goals of the Programme of Work.

Decision VII/13. Alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species.

In this decision, the COP “Recognizes the need to strengthen further institutional coordination among international organizations and requests the Executive Secretary to promote fuller consideration of issues relating to invasive alien species in other international forums, including through 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, and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests” (paragraph 4).

Decision VII/16: Article 8(j) and related provisions

In this decision the COP Requests the Executive Secretary to continue to promote synergies between international environmental instruments, in particular through the joint liaison group of the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on issues of relevance to Article 8(j) and related provisions of the Convention” (paragraph G.5).

Decision VII/29:Technology Transfer and Technology Cooperation

In this decision, COP adopted a programme of work on technology transfer and technological cooperation. In doing so COP was “*Mindful* that the activities under its programme of work (...) should draw upon experiences from other international conventions and processes such as the UNFCCC”. Further COP “Requests the Executive Secretary to establish an expert group on technology transfer and scientific and technical cooperation, (...) which shall assist the Executive Secretary, (...) in the (...) Exploration of possibilities and mechanisms of cooperation with processes in other Conventions and international organizations, such as the UNFCCC Expert Group on Technology Transfer (EGTT)” (paragraph 7).

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