

Convention on Biological Diversity
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora
Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
UNESCO – World Heritage Convention
Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-Related Conventions

Third meeting of the Biodiversity Liaison Group
Gland, Switzerland, 10 May 2005

REPORT OF THE MEETING

Opening of the meeting

1. The Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-Related Conventions was established following a request of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (decision V/26) to enhance cooperation among the five biodiversity-related conventions. The third meeting of the liaison group took place on 10 May 2005 in Gland, Switzerland, at the headquarters of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar). The heads of the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and Ramsar were present, as well as representatives of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the World Heritage Convention (WHC). In line with the practice established at the second meeting of the liaison group, the third meeting was chaired by Peter Bridgewater, Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the host convention. A full list of participants is provided in Annex 1.
2. The Chair welcomed participants to the meeting. It was noted that at its 7th meeting, the executive committee of the WHC had welcomed the initiative to establish the Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG).

Adoption of the agenda

3. The agenda was adopted (see document BLG-3/1).

Agenda item 2: Cooperation and the 2010 Biodiversity Target

Agenda item 2.1 – Cooperation in achieving the 2010 target (see document BLG-3/3)

4. It was noted that the target “to achieve, by 2010, a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level,” had been adopted by the Conference of the Parties of the CBD and also endorsed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development. This broad support for the 2010 target, at the highest levels, means that it can provide a unifying focus for cooperation among all relevant Conventions and organizations. Among the biodiversity-related conventions, besides the CBD, the 2010 target has been recognized by the Conference of the Parties of CITES in decision 13.2, and by the CMS Standing

Committee in the draft Strategic Plan of CMS (2006 – 2011). The target is due to be considered by the Conferences of the Parties of CMS, Ramsar and WHC during 2005.

5. It was recognized that the Framework of goals and targets to evaluate progress towards the 2010 target (adopted by CBD Decision VII/30) can be applied *mutatis mutandis* to all five conventions. Some of the targets are particularly relevant to the various biodiversity-related conventions. For example, target 1.2 (“Areas of particular importance to biodiversity protected”) is particularly relevant to both the WHC and Ramsar, while target 4.3 (“No species of wild flora or fauna endangered by international trade”) relates directly to the mandate of CITES. However, more generally, most of the targets have some relevance to the broad objectives of most of the conventions.

6. It was further recognized that the Framework of goals and targets provides a flexible framework at the national level as well.

7. The Liaison Group noted that the CBD Conference of the Parties has recognized links between the Convention’s objectives and programmes of work, and the Millennium Development Goals (decision VII/31). However, there is a need to better integrate biodiversity concerns in the UN Millennium Project to reach the MDGs. As well, there is a need to reach out to sectors besides the environment, to mainstream biodiversity concerns into areas that have a major impact on biodiversity (e.g., agriculture, fisheries).

8. Participants noted that the 2010 target is fast approaching, and that there is a need to look beyond that date. Longer-term goals and targets will need to be developed, keeping in mind the inertia between when actions that impact on biodiversity occur, and when results are observed.

9. The Liaison Group supported the view that, given the overlapping mandates of the other conventions with that of the CBD, it would be appropriate to present a more integrated image of the five conventions, and for GEF to provide support for all five conventions.

10. The Liaison Group welcomed the Countdown 2010 initiative and proposals to expand similar initiatives in regions beyond Europe.

*Agenda item 2.2: Consideration of options for a global partnership on biodiversity
(see document BLG-3/4)*

11. Achieving the 2010 target, and monitoring progress towards it, will require improved coordination, synergy and partnership among various actors and programmes. Better coordination and partnerships are also needed in order to ensure effective mainstreaming of biodiversity and the 2010 target into relevant international programmes, projects, processes and initiatives. In view of the above imperatives, and in support of the Strategic Plan, the Conference of the Parties of the Convention of Biological Diversity, in decision VII/26, requested the Executive Secretary, in close collaboration with relevant conventions, organizations and bodies, 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.

12. The Liaison Group discussed options for the Global Partnership, including: its role in promoting policy coherence versus implementation of agreed goals; the nature of the partnership and its size and structure. The following points were noted:

- The BLG itself is a suitable mechanism for promoting coherence among the five biodiversity related conventions in policy and implementation;

- A wider partnership could be constructed as an inner core-group and one or more supporting networks;
- Other organizations that might have a role in a core group, in addition to the five biodiversity-related conventions, include:
 - UNEP and IUCN
 - FAO, UNESCO, DESA
 - Selected major, global, mainstream NGOs, for example: World Wide Fund for Nature, Birdlife International, Wetlands International (nb. these are the core partners of Ramsar);
- Additional organizations might be engaged through issue-specific networks, perhaps aligned with each CBD programme of work;
- The partnership should serve to raise the profile of biodiversity issues, and so link to partners skilled at outreach, and with scientists to support the outreach messages;
- The biggest challenge is to engage stakeholders beyond the biodiversity-sector;
- The BLG could facilitate the identification of issue-specific networks or partnerships.

13. The Partnership should work in harmony with existing organizations and networks, and seek to complement current activities and initiatives rather than displacing these. The Partnership should enhance the work of all partners by providing a common focus around the 2010 target and—as these are developed—around longer-term goals for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

14. It was agreed that these views would be communicated to the CBD-Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention (WGRI), which will consider this matter further.

*Agenda item 2.3: Cooperation in assessing progress towards the 2010 target
(see document BLG-3/5)*

15. The framework to evaluate progress towards the 2010 target adopted by the CBD Conference of the Parties in 2004 includes a set of indicators for assessing progress at the global level towards the 2010 target and for effectively communicating trends in biodiversity related to the three objectives of the convention. The CBD Conference of the Parties has invited related conventions, assessment processes and relevant organizations to contribute reports and information that assist in the monitoring of progress towards the 2010 target. A number of bodies, including Ramsar and CMS, were represented at an ad hoc Technical Expert Group of the CBD that met in October 2004 in Montreal to develop and refine methodologies for indicators and to provide data for these.

16. The Liaison Group agreed that it would be useful for each Convention, as appropriate, to adopt indicators that are consistent with the Framework of goals and targets adopted by the CBD. This would help to promote coherence among the conventions in policy and implementation and would, for example, foster greater efficiency in reporting. Many of the indicators developed for the CBD Framework are relevant to the other biodiversity-related conventions. The indicators of the status and trends of biodiversity are seen as particularly useful. Some of the indicators—for example, indicators of the trends in abundance and distribution of selected species and of the change in status of threatened species—could be disaggregated to provide indicators of direct relevance to Ramsar, CMS or CITES, by focusing, for instance, on wetland species, migratory species, or species threatened by international trade. The Liaison Group considered that indicators of ‘sustainable use’ would be the most challenging to develop.

17. The indicators will be used, *inter alia*, in reporting on progress towards the 2010 target through the second edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO), to be released at CBD COP-8 in March 2006. The GBO will also report on actions taken to achieve the 2010 target. It

was agreed that the BLG should review the draft Global Biodiversity Outlook prior to the public peer-review process.

18. There is a need to pool information available to the five conventions. For instance, the CMS Global Register of Migratory Species (GROMS)—which appears to be used more widely in developing countries than in developed—and the Monitoring of the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) system can contribute specifically to monitoring progress towards the 2010 target, by providing data for indicators.

Agenda item 2.4: Harmonisation of national reporting (see document BLG-3/6)

19. In order to reduce the reporting burden on Parties to the five conventions, the Liaison Group considered how each convention's national reporting process could be harmonised. It was noted that the issue of national reporting harmonisation is a difficult one, and has been under discussion for more than 20 years. Achieving harmonisation is challenging because of the evolving guidance on reporting occurring within each convention, the conventions' different reporting timetables, and the differing types of reports required. However, the Liaison Group recognized that there are some promising possibilities for increased harmonisation:

- A web-portal could be developed to facilitate access to reports and guidelines of each of the conventions (following the example of the Collaborative Portal on Forests)
- Common reporting modules could be used for certain themes (e.g. biodiversity of inland waters as a potential common element of the Ramsar and CBD reports)
- The conventions could facilitate harmony in the gathering and management of common data at national level.

20. The Liaison Group noted that the rationale for harmonization is not to save costs, but rather to facilitate coherent implementation of all five biodiversity-related conventions at the national level.

21. The Liaison Group agreed that they would keep each other informed of proposed developments in national reporting under each of the conventions, with a view to aligning approaches where possible. It was further agreed that each convention would inform its respective Conference of the Parties or other bodies of the results of the harmonisation exercise undertaken at the UNEP-WCMC workshop in Haasrode, Belgium, 22-23 September 2004. It was suggested that further work by UNEP-WCMC on the issue of national report harmonisation await further feedback from the bodies of the five conventions.

Item 3: Future work of the liaison group

Agenda item 3.1 Matters for consideration at future meetings of the group, and modalities for preparing for such meetings (see document BLG-3/2)

22. All present at the meeting agreed that the BLG was a useful mechanism. Actions agreed on to further the work of the BLG are as follow:

- The BLG would have a visibility at the Conferences of the Parties and, as appropriate, at the other meetings of the five conventions. At each Conference of the Parties one of the members of the group (in addition to the host secretariat) would be present to represent the wider group. (A preliminary list of the Conference of the Parties and other relevant meetings of each of the five conventions is given in Annex 2A). In addition, BLG side events would be organized at the conventions' Conference of the Parties. (Specifically, a BLG side event on "Half-way to 2010" would be held at CBD-COP-8).

- A Liaison Group member might be nominated to represent the biodiversity-related conventions at relevant meetings of other conventions and organizations (e.g. FCCC and CCD). (A preliminary list of meetings of mutual interest is provided in Annex 2B). This would be a useful mechanism given the large number of meetings relevant to biodiversity concerns, and could allow for substantial savings in costs of travel and time. Any joint statement prepared would be circulated among BLG members prior to the meeting.
 - The joint web site would be developed further.
 - International Biodiversity Day provides a useful focus for cooperation, and joint activities could be developed around this event.
23. The Liaison Group agreed to:
- the preparation by the five secretariats of a common paper on “options for enhanced cooperation among the five biodiversity-related conventions” which would be made available to upcoming meetings (i.e., the CBD-WGRI, the Conferences of the Parties of CMS and Ramsar, the Governing Body of WHC, and the Standing Committee of CITES. Document BLG3/2 is a starting point for this paper.
24. The above inter-sessional work of the Liaison Group would be facilitated by relevant staff. The heads of the secretariat would nominate focal points for this purpose (Annex 3). A limited access website would be developed to facilitate their work and also stimulate cooperation among other staff of the five secretariats.
25. In future, the Liaison Group would consider development of a joint strategic vision and joint work plan for the five conventions.

Agenda item 3.2: Date and venue of next meeting.

26. It was agreed that in principle, CMS would host the next meeting of the BLG. CMS would liaise with the other conventions to set dates, probably in early October 2005.
27. The items for discussion at the next meeting would include:
- a review of the outcomes of the CBD-WGRI;
 - preparation of inputs to the upcoming Conferences of the Parties of CMS, Ramsar and the Governing Body of WHC;
 - development of future work plans.

Annex 1.
List of participants

CBD:

Hamdallah Zedan, Executive Secretary
David Cooper, Senior Programme Officer, Interagency and Programme Coordination

CITES:

David Morgan, Chief, Scientific Support Unit

CMS:

Robert Hepworth, Executive Secretary
Paola Deda, Inter-Agency Liaison Officer

Ramsar:

Peter Bridgewater, Secretary General
Nick Davidson, Deputy Secretary General
Sebastià Semene, Convention Development Officer

UNESCO – WHC:

Elizabeth Wangari, Senior Programme Specialist, Chief, Africa Unit

Annex 2.
Upcoming meetings (June – December 2005)

A. Upcoming meetings of the biodiversity-related conventions

| Convention | Meeting | Suggested BLG representative |
|------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| June | | |
| Ramsar | 31st Meeting, Ramsar Standing Committee Gland, Switzerland, 6 - 10 June 2005 | None |
| CBD | Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Protected Areas Montecatini, Italy, 13 - 17 June 2005 | Ramsar |
| CITES | 53 rd Meeting of the Standing Committee, CITES Geneva, Switzerland, 27 June – 1 July 2005 | None |
| July | | |
| WHC | 29 th Session of the World Heritage Committee Durban, South Africa, 10 – 17 July 2005 | t.b.d. |
| September | | |
| CBD | Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on the Review of Implementation of the Convention Montreal, Canada, 5 - 9 September 2005 | CMS |
| October | | |
| WHC | General Assembly of the States Parties to the World Heritage Committee Paris, France, 10 - 11 October 2005 | t.b.d. |
| November | | |
| Ramsar | 9th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties , Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Kampala, Uganda, 7 - 15 November 2005 | CBD or CMS |
| CMS | 8th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the CMS (COP-8) - Scientific Council and Standing Committee Meeting Nairobi, Kenya, 16 - 25 November 2005 | CBD or CITES |
| CBD | Eleventh meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice Montreal, Canada, 28 November - 2 December 2005 | Ramsar |
| December | | |
| CBD | Second meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Protected Areas Montreal, Canada, 5 - 9 December 2005 | Ramsar |

B. Upcoming meetings organized by other conventions and organizations

| Convention/ Organization | Meeting | Suggested BLG representative |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| June | | |
| OECD | OECD Workshop: Multilateral Environmental Agreements and Private Investment: Promoting Business Contribution to Addressing Global Environmental Problems Helsinki, Finland, 16 - 17 June 2005 | CBD |
| ITTO | Thirty-eighth Session of the International Tropical Timber Council and Associated Session of the Committees Brazzaville, Congo, 19 - 21 June 2005 | t.b.d. |
| FAO | FAO Council (128th Session) Rome, Italy, 20 - 25 June 2005 | t.b.d. |
| IOC | Twenty-third Session of the Assembly of Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) Paris, France, 21 - 30 June 2005 | t.b.d. |
| WTO | WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures Geneva, Switzerland, 29 - 30 June 2005 | t.b.d. |
| July | | |
| Basel Convention | 4th Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention on the Control of the Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal (OEWG-IV) Geneva, Switzerland, 4 - 8 July 2005 | t.b.d. |
| WTO | WTO Committee on Trade and Environment Geneva, Switzerland, 5 - 6 July 2005 | t.b.d. |
| UN - ECOSOC | 2005 ECOSOC Substantive Session (including coordination, operational activities, humanitarian affairs, general and conclusion segments) New York, United States of America, 5 - 27 July 2005 | t.b.d. |
| WTO | WTO Committee on Trade and Environment (Special Session) Geneva, Switzerland, 7 - 8 July 2005 | t.b.d. |
| Society for Conservation Biology | 19th Annual Meeting of the Society for Conservation Biology: "Conservation Biology Capacitation & Practices in a Globalized World" Brasilia, Brazil, 15 - 19 July 2005 | t.b.d. |
| UNEP | The 2005 Children's World Summit for the Environment Toyohashi City, Toyota City, Japan, 26 - 29 July 2005 | t.b.d. |
| WTO | WTO General Council Geneva, Switzerland, 27, 29 July 2005 | t.b.d. |
| August | | |
| COHAB 2005 | COHAB 2005 - The First International Conference on the Importance of Biodiversity to Human Health Galway, Ireland, 23 - 25 August 2005 | CBD |
| September | | |
| WTO - TRIPS | Council for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights - Special Session | t.b.d. |

| Convention/ Organization | Meeting | Suggested BLG representative |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| | Geneva, Switzerland, 16 September 2005 | |
| UNEP - Rotterdam Convention | Second Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-2) to the Rotterdam Convention Rome, Italy, 26 - 30 September 2005 | t.b.d. |
| October | | |
| GBIF | 11th Meeting of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility Governing Board Stockholm, Sweden, 10 - 14 October 2005 | CBD |
| WTO | WTO Committee on Trade and Environment Geneva, Switzerland, 12- 14 October 2005 (Special Session: 13 –14 October) | t.b.d. |
| UNCCD | Seventh Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP-7) to the Convention to Combat Desertification Bonn, Germany, 17 - 28 October 2005 | CMS |
| WTO | WTO General Council Geneva, Switzerland, 19 - 20 October 2005 | t.b.d. |
| IMPAC 1 | The First International Marine Protected Areas Congress Geelong, Australia, 23 – 27 October 2005 | CBD |
| WTO | WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures Geneva, Switzerland, 26 - 27 October 2005 | CBD |
| November | | |
| ITTO | Thirty-ninth Session of the International Tropical Timber Council and Associated Session of the Committees Yokohama, Japan, 7 - 12 November 2005 | t.b.d. |
| DIVERSITAS | First DIVERSITAS International Conference on Biodiversity: Integrating Biodiversity Science for Human Well-Being" Oaxaca, Mexico, 9 - 12 November 2005 | CBD |
| FAO | FAO Conference (33 rd Session) Rome, Italy, 19 – 26 November 2005 | t.b.d. |
| Bern Convention | Bern Convention Standing Committee Strasbourg, France, 28 November - 1 December 2005 | CMS |
| UNFCCC | First Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (MOP-1) and the Eleventh Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention (COP-11) Montreal, Canada, 28 November - 9 December 2005 | CBD |
| December | | |
| WTO | WTO General Council Geneva, Switzerland, 1 – 2 December 2005 | t.b.d. |
| GEF | Consultations and GEF Council Meeting Washington D.C., United States of America, 5 - 9 December 2005 | CBD |

Annex 3.
Designated focal points among the biodiversity-related conventions

| Convention | Focal Point | Position | E-mail |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| CBD | David Cooper | Senior Programme Officer, Interagency and Programme Coordination | david.cooper@biodiv.org |
| CITES | Marie-France Barreto | Personal Assistant to the Secretary General | marie- france.barreto@unep.ch |
| CMS | Paola Deda | Inter-Agency Liaison Officer | pdeda@cms.int |
| Ramsar | Nick Davidson Sebastià Semene, | Deputy Secretary General Convention Development Officer | davidson@ramsar.org semene@ramsar.org |
| WHC | Elizabeth Wangari | Senior Programme Specialist; Chief, Africa Unit | e.wangari@unesco.org |