



UN Biodiversity Conference results in significant commitments for action on biodiversity

Agreements reached on actions to integrate biodiversity in forestry, fisheries, agriculture, and tourism sectors and to achieve the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development

- *Pledges and commitments in support of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity made by Business; Cities and Subnational Authorities, IPLCs and Youth;*
- *Capacity-building strategy agreed for the Convention and its Protocols;*
- *Protected areas on the land and in the oceans and seas, expanding considerably, with Mexico increasing marine protection to 23 per cent;*
- *Marine agenda advances with work on marine debris, underwater noise and spatial planning;*
- *Decisions made on Climate-related Geoengineering, synthetic biology and others.*

18 December 2016 - Governments agreed on actions that will accelerate implementation of global biodiversity targets, and enhance the linkage of the biodiversity agenda with other global agendas including the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Agreement and others.

Governments from 167 countries agreed on a variety of measures that will intensify the implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, including mainstreaming, capacity-development and mobilization of financial resources as well as actions on specific themes including protected areas, ecosystem restoration, sustainable wildlife management and others.

Governments followed through on the commitments in the Cancun Declaration made by ministers at the high-level segment of the meeting that took place on 2 and 3 December 2016. Parties agreed to advance mainstreaming biodiversity, the main theme of the meeting proposed by the Government of Mexico and use an integrated approach that would promote not only cross-sectoral linkages, but also linkages between efforts to implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans and Sustainable Development Goal strategies and plans.

“Governments demonstrated their commitment to achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and showed that the biodiversity agenda is central and essential to the global sustainable development and climate change agendas,” said Bráulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary to the Convention on Biological Diversity. He also said: “With the integration of three meetings addressing the Convention and its two Protocols, the world community also realized the importance of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing in effectively contributing to the Targets and sustainable development”



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“We received impressive commitments from governments, including excellent ones from the government of Mexico, in support of many of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets which gives us the momentum we need to achieve our goals by 2020.”

“The agenda of mainstreaming biodiversity provided Mexico with the momentum to conclude agreements which had eluded us for decades, such as the alignment of agricultural subsidies to preserve forests, or the protection of a vast proportion of our seas,” said Rafael Pachiano Alamán, Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico.

“For the next two years, Mexico will work with countries to translate the principles of the Cancun Declaration into legislation, policies and actions to meet the commitments we made.”

“We applaud and support the global community's commitment made during this COP to integrate biodiversity considerations into the activities of other critical sectors of our economies: agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and tourism; and value its natural capital for sustainable development, as expressed in the Cancun Declaration” said Naoko Ishii, Chief Executive Officer of the Global Environment Facility.

“The GEF, as the financial mechanism of the convention, is proud to have been confirmed in its critical role to support countries to meet their commitments under the Convention and its Protocols. We also feel encouraged by the strong support of many donor and recipient countries to maintain consistency with our current biodiversity programming strategy with integrated approaches in response to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, while seeking out new innovative and creating financing opportunities” she said”

Capacity-building

The Parties agreed on an action plan (2017-2020) that will enhance and support capacity-building for the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols based on the needs of Parties with a focus on strengthening the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets. For the Protocols, emphasis will be on supporting the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and promoting the universal ratification of the Nagoya Protocol and the development of measures to ensure that it is fully operational, consistent with national legislation (Aichi Target 16).

The Parties also welcomed the Biobridge Initiative established at COP 12 by the Government of the Republic of Korea to contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets

Pollinators

The ‘Thematic Assessment of Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production’ by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) was discussed. The COP encouraged Parties, other Governments, relevant United Nations and other organizations, as well as multilateral environment agreements, and stakeholders to use the assessment, as appropriate, in particular the responses outlined in the document to help guide efforts to improve conservation and management of pollinators, address drivers of pollinator declines, and work towards sustainable food production systems and agriculture.

Protected Areas

Protected areas and Aichi target 11 also advanced starting with commitment of the Group of Like Minded Megadiverse Countries to achieve Aichi target 11, and the announcement of the Host Country to announce establishment of marine protected areas that contribute achieving 23 per cent of marine areas within national jurisdiction under protection, which is more than double than that of global target of 10 per cent. The COP welcomed the progress towards achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 and recognized how this will contribute to the implementation of other Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, relevant targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, and Articles 5,7 and 8 of the Paris Agreement.

Restoration

COP 13 adopted a short term plan of action on ecosystem restoration, as a contribution to reversing the loss of biodiversity, recovering connectivity, improving ecosystem resilience, enhancing the provision of ecosystem services, mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change, combating desertification and land degradation, and improving human well-being while reducing environmental risks and scarcities. The action plan will help Parties, as well as any relevant organizations and initiatives, to accelerate and upscale activities on ecosystem restoration and supports achievement of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. As part of the Forest Landscapes Restoration Day at the Rio Conventions Pavilion, the Secretariat also reported on advancements under the Forest Ecosystem Restoration Initiative launched by the Republic of Korea at COP12.

Marine Agenda

Parties welcomed a new set of areas described from regional workshops as ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) in the Seas of East Asia, the North-West Indian Ocean and the North-East Indian Ocean. Parties also discussed means to enhance scientific methodologies and approaches to the description of EBSAs. Parties adopted a voluntary specific workplan to maintain and enhance the resilience of ecosystems in cold water areas within the jurisdictional scope of the Convention.

A decision on marine spatial planning and training initiatives, encouraged the application of marine spatial planning (MSP) and requested further technical work by the Secretariat as well as calling for further capacity building work under the Sustainable Ocean Initiative.

Parties took note of voluntary practical guidance on preventing and mitigating the impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats. The guidance contains actions to enhance understanding of the scale and impacts of marine debris, improve waste management and recycling, reduce the production and consumption of plastics, increase production of environmentally friendlier materials and other actions.

Parties also requested the Secretariat to continue their work on the compilation, synthesis and dissemination of experiences and scientific research on the adverse impacts of underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity

Biodiversity and climate change

COP 13 adopted a decision that welcomes the Paris Agreement and encourages Parties and other Governments, when developing their Nationally Determined Contributions, to fully take into account the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems. It encourages Parties to take biodiversity into consideration when undertaking climate change mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction

measures, and requests the Executive Secretary to prepare, in collaboration with relevant organizations, voluntary guidelines for the design and effective implementation of ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

Climate-related geoengineering

The Conference of the Parties reiterated the importance of the precautionary approach in relation to climate-related geoengineering, the importance of reducing anthropogenic emissions by sources and by increasing removals by sinks of greenhouse gases under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the need for more research and knowledge-sharing in order to better understand the impacts of climate-related geoengineering.

Article 8(j)

COP 13 took considerable steps to ensure that traditional knowledge relevant for conservation and sustainable use is protected and its use is encouraged with the consent of indigenous peoples and local communities.

Guidelines for the repatriation of traditional knowledge were adopted for traditional knowledge that will assist Governments in developing mechanisms at the national level to guard against the unlawful appropriation of traditional knowledge.

Additionally the Nagoya and Cartagena Protocols, in recognition of the significant contributions of indigenous and local communities to their work decided to use the term indigenous peoples and local communities in their decisions and official documents. This does not change the obligations of the Parties or the legal interpretation of the Protocols.

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Work will continue on a glossary of key terms and concepts to be used for the Convention's work on traditional knowledge and related issues and to finalize guidelines for the repatriation of traditional knowledge in order to assist indigenous peoples and local communities in restoring knowledge systems, for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Financial Mechanism

The COP adopted strategic guidance for the next 4-year replenishment period of its financial mechanism, the Global Environment Facility. The four-year framework of programme priorities adopted by the COP guides the GEF in its development of its biodiversity strategy and the associated funding priorities for the 2018-2022 period. Parties took also note of the assessment of financial needs undertaken for the seventh replenishment which identified the need to double biodiversity allocation, and requested the Secretariat to transmit it to the GEF.

Resource Mobilization

The COP urged Parties to increase their efforts to achieve the targets, including the doubling of total biodiversity-related international financial resource flows to developing countries. Parties are to report their progress accordingly, with a view to consider a more comprehensive stocktaking and an updated analysis of financial reports received, at SBI-2 and COP-14.

Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

COP-MOP 8 adopted operational definitions of unintentional transboundary movements and illegal transboundary movements under the Cartagena Protocol. They also agreed to prioritize, under the Strategic Plan for Biosafety by 2020, operational objectives on biosafety legislation, risk assessment, risk management, detection and identification of LMOs, and public awareness, education and training to implement the Cartagena Protocol. Parties deliberated on the voluntary Guidance on Risk Assessment of LMOs as a tool to assist in conducting risk assessment in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol while acknowledging that other guidance documents and national approaches can also assist in conducting risk assessment in accordance with the Protocol. They also agreed to extend the Online Forum on Risk Assessment and Risk Management of LMOs.

COP-MOP 8 also agreed to make available information in the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) with regards to transit and contained use of LMOs; Extend the Programme of Work on public awareness, education and participation until 2020 with priority areas/activities; Migrate the BCH to a new platform to integrate the clearing-houses of the Convention and its Protocols; Extend the mandate of the expert group (AHTEG) on socio-economic considerations; and to establish expert groups, as appropriate, to provide advice on one or more scientific and technical issues.

Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing

Governments also agreed to a series of actions to further bolster the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing, which entered into force in 2014. During their second meeting held as part of the UN Biodiversity Conference, Parties considered progress made thus far, as well as the next steps to be taken to support the implementation of the Protocol. Among the decisions adopted at this meeting are progress made towards Aichi Biodiversity Target 16, the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House, measures to assist in capacity-building and cooperation with other international organizations or initiatives. It should also be noted that Antigua and Barbuda and Argentina deposited their instruments of ratification to the Protocol during the meeting, thus bringing the total number of Parties to 93.

Furthermore, both the Parties to the CBD (COP13) and the Parties to the Protocol (COP-MOP 2) addressed the issue of digital sequence information on genetic resources and decided to consider, at their next respective meetings, any potential implications of the use of this information for the objectives of the CBD and the Protocol, respectively.

Decisions were also taken on Synthetic Biology, Invasive Alien Species, Sustainable Wildlife Management and others topics under the Convention and its Protocols. The decisions, in the form they were presented to the Parties for adoption (L documents), are available on the website of the Convention at: www.cbd.int/cop2016

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NOTES TO EDITORS

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 196 Parties so far, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the

development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing are supplementary agreements to the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol, which entered into force on 11 September 2003, seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 170 Parties have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies. It entered into force on 12 October 2014 and to date has been ratified by 93 Parties. For more information visit: www.cbd.int. For additional information, please contact: David Ainsworth on +1 514 287 7025 or at david.ainsworth@cbd.int; or Johan Hedlund on +1 514 287 6670 or at johan.hedlund@cbd.int.

About SEMARNAT

SEMARNAT is the Mexican Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources. Its mission is to incorporate criteria and instruments that ensure the optimal protection, conservation and sustainable use of Mexico's natural resources.

About the GEF

The Global Environment Facility, established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, is a catalyst for action on the environment—and much more. Through its strategic investments, the GEF works with partners to tackle the planet's biggest environmental issues. www.thegef.org
