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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CHM workshops (every day at lunch time) 2. Cybercafé 3. Discussion of Agenda item 8: Assessment and review of the operation of the clearing-house mechanism. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The CHM and its Pilot Phase 2. National Focal Points 3. Regional Workshops 4. Informal Advisory Committee |
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THE DISSEMINATOR

Newsletter of the **Clearing-House Mechanism** of the Convention on Biological Diversity

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The

Clearing-House Mechanism

A Brief Outline

Visit our web site at:

www.biodiv.org/chm.html

The Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) aims to promote and facilitate technical and scientific co-operation between Contracting Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity and participating partners. It will play an important role in the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention. The CHM will also facilitate the global access to and exchange of information on biodiversity, its sustainable use and the equitable sharing of its benefits. Article 18(3) of the Convention on Biological Diversity is the basis for the development of the CHM.

CHM main characteristics :

- Compatible with national capacities
- Needs-driven
- Decentralized in nature
- Provides access to information
- Supports the decision-making process
- Involves the private sector

THE CHM PILOT PHASE

The CHM is in its pilot phase, which will last until the end of 1998. Its guiding principles emphasize that the CHM should be neutral, cost-effective, efficient and have a transparent and independent structure. It should use printed and electronic means of communication. The CHM will gradually be developed in response to clear and identified demands. It also has to promote and facilitate the access to technology and capacity building. For more information visit:

<http://www.biodiv.org/chm.html>

SBSTTA 3 Recommendations

At the last meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention of September 1997, the following CHM recommendations were made to the COP:

1. Provide guidance to the GEF for financial support (a) for the pilot phase as an enabling activity, (b) to strengthen national

biodiversity information systems and networks.

2. Request Parties to develop examples of best practices in the use of the CHM .

3. Request Governments, bilateral and multilateral funding institutions to provide funding to further develop and implement the CHM.

4. Invite Parties to provide information on funding sources using the CHM.

5. Invite Parties and partners to use the CHM logo.

6. Secretariat (SCBD) to facilitate access to the CHM network and to make information available on the Secretariat's work.

7. SCBD to provide a list-server with all the CHM focal points and partners.

8. SCBD to improve synergies with other conventions and initiatives

9. CHM to be practical, innovative, decentralized and creative. And based on a network of partners; use a simple structure and be designed to continue beyond the pilot phase.

10. Pursue an independent review of the pilot phase and present it at SBSTTA 4.

INFORMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Informal Advisory Committee (IAC) of the CHM was established at the last Conference of the Parties to the Convention. The IAC will guide the development of the CHM's pilot phase and will also ensure that all the members of the Convention can participate in this pilot phase. The committee was established by the Executive Secretary of the Convention in a transparent manner and requested the nomination of two delegates per geographic region. The following countries are now part of the IAC: Burkina Faso, Canada, Colombia, Germany, Indonesia, Jamaica, Malaysia, Malawi, Poland and Russian Federation. In addition, BIN 21 (Biodiversity Information Network 21), Biodiversity Conservation Information System (BCIS), the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN), and the Organization of Economic Commerce and Development (OECD) Working Group on Bioinformatics are observers to this committee.

Dr. Calestous Juma, Executive Secretary of the Convention, will convene the IAC during COP 4.

For more information visit :

www.biodiv.org/chm/iac/iacchm.html

NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS

National Focal Points (NFPs) have been nominated by their respective governments to promote, facilitate and implement the work of the CHM at the national level. Countries need to nominate their Focal Point to the CHM to access GEF funding to implement their national clearing-house. A total of 108 National Focal Points have been nominated so far.

We are looking forward to posting news on the developments of the CHM at the national level and the progress made by the CHM focal points. More information on the CHM Focal Points can be obtained at:

www.biodiv.org/chm/nfpchm.html



CHM Regional Workshop for Latin American and the Caribbean in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia

REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

As requested by the last Conference of the Parties, the Secretariat of the Convention organized four regional workshops on the CHM to identify information needs and priorities at national and regional levels. The workshops focused on information content, information structure and capacity building. The recommendations proposed focussed on information content, information structure and capacity building and they will be considered during COP 4 negotiations. Four regional workshops were held for:

- **Latin America and the Caribbean** (13-15 October, 1997 in Cartagena, Colombia)
- **Central and Eastern Europe** (27-29 October, 1997 in Gödöllő, Hungary)
- **Asia** (3-5 December, 1997 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

- **Africa** in Nairobi, Kenya (5-7 March 1998).

These workshops were convened thanks to the special additional voluntary contributions made by the Governments of Australia, Austria, Canada, Germany, the Republic of Korea, Japan, the Netherlands and the UK.

The documents, results and recommendations of these workshops can be found at:

www.biodiv.org/chm/chm-meet.html

How to contact us:

If you have any questions on the CHM or if you would like to receive a free copy (printed or electronic) of this newsletter, kindly send us a message to :

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WE LOOK FORWARD TO RECEIVING YOUR COMMENTS AND INPUTS

This newsletter can also be obtained electronically :

www.biodiv.org/chm/news1.html

Other Scheduled Events for COP4

GBF Forum: CBD Clearing-House Mechanism: Building a Network of Networks (1-3 May 1998)

