

Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions



Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
Convention on Biological Diversity
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat
International Plant Protection Convention
International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
International Whaling Commission

Thirteenth meeting of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions 18 to 19 September 2018 Hosted at UNESCO headquarters by the World Heritage Centre, Paris, France (Room VIII, Floor -1, Fontenoy Building)

Chair's Report

Introduction

1. The thirteenth ordinary meeting of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions was held on 18 and 19 September 2018 at the headquarters of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris, France (in Room VIII, Floor -1, Fontenoy Building). It was hosted by the World Heritage Centre (WHC), which serves as the secretariat to the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention).
2. The Director of the WHC chaired the meeting. The list of participants is available as Annex I of this document.

Item 1 Opening of the meeting and procedural matters

3. The Chair conveyed the apologies of the UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture who could not attend the opening session as planned, due to the meeting of the Preparatory Group of UNESCO's Executive Board. The Chair gave the welcoming remarks on his behalf in her capacity as the Director of the Heritage Division of the Sector for Culture. She reflected on UNESCO's multidisciplinary mandate on both cultural and biological diversity, and recalled the global biodiversity crisis. The special event organised by the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions during the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in July 2018 in New York had been a success, proving the Group's relevance and importance of joint action. The Chair noted current challenges, including climate change and the loss of biodiversity and cultural diversity, and emphasised how culture can contribute to biodiversity conservation. The Chair also reminded that the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions had been used to model UNESCO's Culture Conventions Liaison Group (CCLG). The Chair also referred to the meetings organised in conjunction with the liaison group meeting, including the exchange with CCLG and the UNESCO biodiversity-related programmes.
4. The Chair provided an overview of the agenda and invited comments and the adoption of this agenda and its proposed organization of work. She informed that some members of the Group would be

joining parts of the discussion online and conveyed the apologies for absence received from IPPC. The Chair proposed that the Group would adopt the minutes of the previous meeting under item 2.

5. The Chair noted that the Group was for the representatives of the biodiversity-related conventions, and that the staff present in the meeting was from the World Heritage Convention secretariat. The Chair proposed that UNESCO's focal point on biodiversity would have the possibility to join the meeting when the Group would discuss with the representative of IPBES. The Group agreed.

Item 2 Review of implementation of outcomes of the twelfth meeting of the Liaison Group

6. The Chair invited the review and adoption of the minutes of the twelfth meeting of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions that had been organised on 28 September 2017 in Rome, Italy.
7. At the invitation of the Chair, the Secretary of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the Chair of the 12th meeting presented key outcomes of the meeting via a conference call. He thanked the Group, as hosting of the 12th meeting had been an important occasion for FAO. The meeting had captured a lot of attention by FAO senior management and provided an opportunity for the conventions' (ITPGRFA and International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)) host organization to provide inputs to the meeting. He recalled that the 12th meeting had been productive as to reinforce collective effort and to elevate the visibility of biodiversity on the global agenda, including through the joint engagement during the 2018 High-level Political Forum on sustainable development.
8. The Group agreed to review the action points of the 12th meeting one by one as presented in the annotated agenda of the 13th meeting. The representative of the Ramsar Secretariat had no further remarks related to the contribution of the Group members to its activities including the world's wetlands reports.
9. The Group welcomed the special event, "Living planet – the foundation of sustainable development," that had been organised by the Secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions at the 2018HLPF, and thanked the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on the coordination. While the Group was unable to provide any joint output such as a declaration, the Group considered that event had been beneficial. **Drawing from the lessons of the event, options for similar future action could be considered.** The representative of the CBD Secretariat noted that the CBD COP had identified a need for stronger joint communication on biodiversity for sustainable development, including enhanced web presence (item 7).
10. The Group agreed to return to issues of bilateral collaboration and practical synergies under item 5 of the agenda.
11. The Group discussed the effort undertaken by the Secretariat of the CBD to compile a joint calendar of events and timeline of the governing bodies, notably in order to prepare a plan towards the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and plan for the meeting of the liaison group. Building on efforts done previously by UNEP and the good practice of the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), **the members agreed to provide information to Secretariat of the CBD on the conventions' key events** in order to facilitate synergies and the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The criteria for selecting such events was discussed but the Group agreed that each convention secretariat would decide on the level of detail of their event calendars they would find useful to share with the Group.

12. With reference to the inputs of the Conventions' governing bodies to the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, the representative of the CBD Secretariat welcomed the efforts undertaken by the CMS Secretariat to sensitise the CMS COP on the post-2020 biodiversity framework. He re-called for substantive contributions from the conventions in the process and help in identifying opportunities for side events, and recalled the road map in annex of CBD COP decision XIII/24 that had been made available for comments. The Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) had also requested comments from parties, who had found it useful to know what was going on, in order to prioritise action. The usefulness of the liaison group in sharing information and addressing the post-2020 biodiversity framework collectively was recalled.
13. The Group discussed the meeting report format of the liaison group, and discussed the possibility to **aim for concise but descriptive reports with clear action points**, while audio records, if available, would only be used to facilitate the preparation of the chair's report. The minutes of the meetings would be **approved by the Group members by email and published no later than two months after the meeting** (see discussion on Item 9 updated modus operandi) **on the dedicated website** of the liaison group (<https://www.cbd.int/blg/>). The Group did not agree for the audio recordings to be uploaded for public access to the BLG meetings, which are not statutory meetings.

Item 3 Updates from the conventions

14. Through a *tour de table*, the Chair invited the members to provide updates on significant developments under the conventions.
15. The Secretary of ITPGRFA reviewed key issues of the Seventh Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA GB 7) held in Kigali, Rwanda, 30 October to 3 November 2017, noting particularly the establishment of an expert group on farmers' rights and their contribution to food security and plant diversity, as well as the development of a fundraising strategy.
16. For CBD, the focus has been on preparatory work for the forthcoming fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 14) and the concurrent meetings of the Parties to the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols, Egypt, 17 to 29 November 2018, with a number of intersessional meetings organised (Annex 2). Two work streams are notably important, including the conceptualization of the process for the post-2020 biodiversity agenda and the progress towards the current Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; in particular, to explore how the vision of the Strategic Plan can be enhanced and how a framework for the renewed strategy can be provided. While progress in meeting some of the targets had been made, an assessment indicated that the global community would not be achieving the plan, which would in turn affect how any future targets would be framed under the framework for 2030. Other topics of common interest included the work on mainstreaming biodiversity in productive sectors, including agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism, which is closely linked to FAO's work through its biodiversity platform. The forthcoming COP 14 will substantively address mainstreaming biodiversity in energy and mining, infrastructure, manufacturing and processing, and health sectors. Digital sequence information on genetic resources and synthetic biodiversity are topics of growing political interest and attention by the CBD parties. Currently, CBD is the only intergovernmental body that addresses these issues, which include technologies for sustainability and well-being, but which may also entail detrimental impacts on biodiversity. CBD is also contributing to the discussions on marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). Events at the margins of COP 14 could provide increasing and new opportunities for partners to contribute, for example with the broadening of the scope of the Rio Conventions Pavilion and the

convening of a Nature and Culture Summit. The CBD Secretariat also referred to a series of other parallel events being organized in conjunction with the COP which are of interest for other Conventions to participate, such as the biodiversity summit for local and sub-national governments and the Business and Biodiversity Forum.

17. The twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CMS (CMS COP 12) was organised in Manila, Philippines, 23 to 28 October 2017 and has examined a nearly complete review of all resolutions of the convention over 30 years. This significant effort resulted in 65 resolutions and 107 decisions benchmarking the convention, and consolidating previous decisions and updating existing resolutions, with the aim to reduce repetitive resolutions. In this way, the COP 12 has set a new starting point thanks to which new resolutions cannot be adopted on themes that are already tackled by the convention. Existing resolutions can only be updated. This new approach is similar to CITES. At the same time, there is still scope for fine-tuning, which will be dealt with by the next COP 13. The COP 12 also adopted a set of indicators to assess progress towards the achievement of the targets of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species (mirroring the Strategic Plan on Biodiversity), which should in turn contribute to assessing and demonstrating the contribution of CMS to CBD and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The COP established mechanisms for reviewing implementation to support Parties in cases of non-compliance, and an associated National Legislation Programme. The launching of this review mechanism aims to support individual Parties in addressing cases of non-compliance with specific provisions of the convention, including through filling gaps in their legislation. The African carnivore initiative is implemented in cooperation with CITES, aiming at supporting implementation of decisions related to four carnivore species (African wild dog, cheetah, lion, leopard). The convention is also in the process of revising the format for national reports with the main aims to better align it with the structure of the strategic plan, improve its input to the review mechanism and streamline it. The preparations for the COP 13 in February 2020 have already started, following a change of periodicity of the COPs to avoid overlaps with CBD meetings. A detailed list of *Meetings & Events* of relevance to CMS is published on the CMS website.
18. The thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 13) to the Ramsar Convention will take place in United Arab Emirates from 21 to 29 October 2018 with the overarching theme “urban wetlands for sustainable development”. It was foreseen to discuss the issue of wetlands and sustainable development, the global wetlands outlook and 26 draft resolutions, including on governance of the convention, climate change and peatlands, synergies with MEAs, coastal blue carbon, urbanisation and gender equality. The COP would also give an award to well-managed wetlands cities, and a side event would be organised on the UN Ocean Conference’s Community of Ocean Action for Mangroves, for which Ramsar is the focal point.
19. The International Whaling Commission (IWC) met in Florianopolis, Brazil, from 4 to 14 September 2018. The commission adopted 1 Schedule Amendment and 6 non-binding Resolutions. The Schedule Amendment was a historical decision on Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling (ASW) to allow multi-year quotas, assuming that science and aboriginal needs would be unchanged over the time period. Another proposed Schedule Amendment on resuming commercial whaling did not pass. The Resolutions adopted addressed to anthropogenic underwater noise, a declaration on the IWC, follow up to the governance review and ecosystem functioning. A voluntarily funded by-catch mitigation initiative was also endorsed as well as a new online Whale Watching Handbook. The Secretariat noted its interest in seeking collaboration with other liaison group members on fundraising. The Secretariat informed of having functioned on a deficit budget for a number of years, with its budget divided between the costs of the Secretariat, meetings and scientific reviews.

20. The CITES Secretariat organised a number of intersessional meetings, including the 69th meeting of the Standing Committee from 27 November to 1 December 2017, as well as the Animals and Plants Committee Meetings in July 2018, with an increasing number of participants and interest by stakeholders. Key themes of the meetings have included increased engagement in tropical timber trade, funded by the European Commission, as well as marine issues, especially sharks and rays and national legislation processes. Investments in compliance and enforcement have significantly improved the effectiveness of the convention and its impact. The 70th meeting of the Standing Committee is taking place in Sochi (Russian Federation) from 1 to 5 October 2018. Work is also on-going on the question of synthetic DNA (e.g. synthetic rhino horn) as well as on the integration of local communities in CITES' work at ground level. While great progress has been made, the current workload for the Secretariat and Parties is considered unsustainable. The Parties continue to prioritise concrete and operational cooperation with other conventions, such as that with CMS on the African carnivore initiative. The eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties will be organised in Colombo (Sri Lanka) from 23 May to 3 June 2019.
21. The 42nd session of the World Heritage Committee (24 June to 4 July 2018, Manama, Bahrain) examined progress in synergies with biodiversity- and culture-related conventions, and reports on the state of conservation of 157 World Heritage properties. Some reports are of direct relevance for the other conventions, such as the case of vaquita porpoise within the Islands and Protected Areas of the Gulf of California World Heritage property in Mexico. The Committee also appealed to Member States to cooperate in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural objects and illegal wildlife trade, including through effective implementation of related conventions (CITES). The May 2018 edition of World Heritage magazine was dedicated to "World Heritage and illicit trade". A forthcoming issue is dedicated to wetlands, including contributions from the Ramsar Secretariat. At the request of the Committee, the WHC is currently compiling a policy compendium to support decision-making and compliance. The WHC also undertakes a review of the policy on climate change, and is increasing its cooperation with the insurance and finance sectors for appropriate safeguards on World Heritage related to extractive industries and other development activities with potential negative impact on the World Heritage sites. The World Heritage Centre is also fully committed on pursuing dialogue with the civil society and is interested in learning from the experiences of other Conventions on this.
22. Based on the above and the discussions under the Ramsar Convention on extractive industries, the WHC and the Ramsar Secretariat agreed to exchange on synergies regarding safeguards on sites.
23. Referring to the WHC's State of Conservation Information System (SOC), the process of developing a database for IWC and the CBD decision tracking tool, **the secretariats agreed to discuss the development and management of databases further.**

Item 4 Process for the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

24. Under this item, members were invited to consider the outcomes of the meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) in July 2018¹ and to share views on approaches for the preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. A supplementary note that summarizes the current status and the envisaged next steps was provided to the meeting by the CBD Secretariat. Reference was also made to CBD [SBI recommendation 2/9](#) which, in paragraph 12 of its draft decision for COP 14, includes a request to organize a workshop in early 2019 to facilitate discussions among Parties of the biodiversity-related conventions. This meeting could be organised back-to-back with a meeting of the

¹ All SBI 2 meeting documents and outcomes are available at the following URL: <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/SBI-02>

liaison group, and could follow the approach of the 2016 meeting on synergies. Members were also invited to consider appropriate means to sensitize their Parties to the opportunity provided to contribute to an inclusive, comprehensive and participatory process for the post-2020 framework, for which the 2030 Agenda would provide an important framework.

25. **The Group agreed to update the calendar of key events** to serve the post-2020 planning process, which would be drafted by the CBD Secretariat.
26. The National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, which have also helped harness synergies among the conventions, would likely remain relevant for the new biodiversity framework. Similarly, the new framework would likely build on the current Strategic Plan and Aichi Targets. More precise and smart targets might be needed in establishing measures to implement, and measure progress.
27. While some members had already formally initiated consultations with their Parties for the post-2020 process, notably CMS and CITES, it was agreed that the **CBD Secretariat would provide an explanatory note to the secretariats on the organisation of the proposed consultation meeting with parties for early 2019, indicating what the mandate of each of them would be.**
28. The option of organising relevant **events during the governing body meetings on the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework** was discussed, and **would be considered further. Standard communication material could be developed and shared by the CBD Secretariat,** including the flyer on the Liaison Group.

Item 5 Cooperation and synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions

29. CBD Secretariat presented the status of implementing the CBD decision XIII/24², including the consultations held by the Capacity Development Coordinators of Biodiversity-related Convention Secretariats and Relevant International Organizations, a group established following the twelfth meeting of BLG.
30. A briefing was provided by video link by the Chair of the informal advisory group on synergies (IAG) established under the CBD through decision XIII/24. The IAG had been mandated by the COP to provide advice on the implementation of the road map to enhance synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions at the international level 2017-2020. The IAG's recommendations were reported to SBI in documents CBD/SBI/2/10/Add.1 and CBD/SBI/2/INF/14. Members of the liaison group noted that while possibly including useful elements, some recommendations would not fit in the current mandate of the liaison group, and would need to be formally addressed by parties. Members flagged the importance and clear opportunities on increasing bilateral cooperation between the conventions, and noted the time and staff constraints to invest in resource-intensive processes. The Group agreed that the **CBD Secretariat would send an explanatory note** to the secretariats regarding implementation of the CBD decision XIII/24 and the recommendations of the informal advisory group. This would enable **the secretariats to examine them in more detail and provide their comments**, in light of their respective mandates and other related initiatives, notably the UNEP synergy project and InforMEA.
31. Reference was made to CMS COP 12 resolution 11.10 (rev. COP 12) inviting liaison group members to seek enhanced cooperation with respect to online reporting systems; outreach and communication;

² Available at the following URL: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-13/cop-13-dec-24-en.pdf>

monitoring and indicators; and crosscutting issues such as climate change, bush meat and invasive alien species. These could nourish the liaison group discussions in future. The CBD governing bodies have received reports of CMS' close involvement in the Aichi Targets, but the CMS secretariat considered that an assessment of results and national-level coordination would be required.

32. Among concrete cooperation efforts, the CITES Standing Committee had considered the African carnivore initiative with CMS useful. The IWC in turn has flagged areas of interest, such as a whale-watching handbook (developed in collaboration with CMS) and the By-catch Mitigation Initiative, which the Secretariat could address collectively with other conventions as useful.
33. The CITES and Ramsar secretariats shared their current practice of staff exchange which was considered practical and useful cooperation to enhance capacities. The Chair referred to the formal UN system for staff exchange to assist with the process.
34. The Executive Secretary of IWC expressed an interest to exchange with colleagues concerning staff management, IT systems and archiving, programme (notably issues of tourism, by-catch, underwater noise), capacity building and fundraising.
35. The Director of the WHC referred to past examples of joint work or areas of common interest, including: the governance review of all UNESCO intergovernmental bodies; reflection on periodic reporting, which had consulted the biodiversity-related conventions; cooperation with other bodies such as UNESCO category 2 centres; 2018 collaboration with CITES on the World Heritage magazine; and recent decisions adopted by the World Heritage Committee on state of conservation. The general decision on state of conservation adopted by the Committee annually provides opportunities to address key themes with relevance to other conventions. With extra-budgetary funding, the WHC implements special programmes, including on marine World Heritage and sustainable tourism, with potential for synergies (e.g. on whale-watching with IWC). Regarding engagement with civil society, the WHC highlighted a successful workshop organized together with WWF prior to the 42nd session of the World Heritage Committee to discuss civil society engagement in the processes of the Convention. The workshop included contributions of CITES, which already has strong civil society participation. In addition, **WHC invited the other MEAs to keep it informed about arising issues, which could potentially be important for the state of conservation of World Heritage properties and can be brought to the attention of the World Heritage Committee.**
36. The representative of CMS invited the members to consider the possible development of standard species lists to be used as taxonomic and nomenclature references, which was positively received by CITES and Ramsar representatives. **CMS secretariat agreed to share a background note with liaison group for feedback.**
37. The CBD Secretariat drew attention to document CBD/SBI/2/10/Add.1 which, in addition to reporting on the work of the informal advisory group on synergies, had reported, among other things, on many examples of bilateral cooperation among the conventions based on inputs that had been provided by each of the secretariats.

Item 6 Possible programmatic areas for new or renewed joint attention by BLG

38. The Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) was connected by video link to provide a briefing with specific focus on the IPBES Global Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, including background, current status and a road map. The next session of the IPBES Plenary (IPBES-7) will be hosted by France, and

will be held at the UNESCO Headquarters from 29 April to 4 May 2019, with two key items to be considered: 1) adoption of the summary for policy makers of the Global Assessment and 2) the next work programme. The Executive Secretary of IPBES reiterated a **call for potential topics to be addressed in the next work programme to be submitted 30 September 2018, while multilateral environmental agreements will have the opportunity for late submissions of requests** to take their specific schedules into account. The Executive Secretary of IWC expressed their interest in participating in IPBES review process, given that a resolution on ecosystem functioning was adopted at their last annual meeting. The CMS Secretariat expressed their intention to submit a proposal concerning connectivity for the next work programme, currently under discussion with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and possibly jointly with other conventions. He also flagged whether IPBES assessment process can be adjustable to better single out the needs of biodiversity-related conventions, to which the Executive Secretary of the IPBES Secretariat responded to the point that some adjustment is under way. The CITES Secretariat also expressed their interest in responding to the call, especially on the sustainable use of wild species assessment after their Standing Committee in late September. He also appealed for what IPBES can offer CITES and not just vice versa, for new insights beyond natural science. The Executive Secretary of the IPBES Secretariat ended her call by expressing her wish to meet members of the liaison group in person for the future meetings, and the Chair concluded that **the Group will keep her updated including whether to organize the next BLG meeting back to back with IPBES-7.**

39. Following the exchange with the Executive Secretary of IPBES, the Group discussed a possibility of submitting a joint proposal for the next work programme of IPBES. The WHC expressed its interest in jointly submitting the proposal concerning connectivity, given that global change has been increasing isolation of protected areas while leading to a loss of connectivity. The CBD Secretariat echoed WHC, and proposed that each convention share their inputs to the new work programme in order to identify proposals that have broad interest and value for multiple conventions. The Executive Secretary of IWC noted that their engagement will be primarily through their Scientific Committee. The CITES Secretariat stressed the importance of having support from member states to put forward such proposals, while indicating that CITES cannot entirely focus on connectivity per se. **The CMS Secretariat agreed to share a draft proposal with other conventions upon obtaining agreement by the UNCCD to explore the possibility of submitting a joint proposal for the next work programme. It was also reiterated and agreed that a joint statement will be made on the occasion of IPBES-7, and the Group will also look into the possibility of organizing a side event back-to-back.**
40. The CBD Secretariat referred to possible options for future work or joint attention by the Group listed in the annotated agenda, including ones identified by the Capacity Development Coordinators of Biodiversity-related Convention Secretariats and Relevant International Organizations. With regard to gender mainstreaming, Director of WHC flagged that it is integrated in the Policy Document for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention since 2015. In terms of specific areas of interest, climate change was mentioned by WHC and the Ramsar Secretariat, as well as bush meat, invasive alien species and dialogue with civil society (WHC) and cultural values of indigenous people and local communities (Ramsar). As for a practical way forward, the **CBD Secretariat proposed to strengthen informal technical connections through focal points on particular areas, as well as sharing information through the BLG mailing list.** The CMS Secretariat also suggested that it would be useful to exchange contacts of focal points for each programme in order to facilitate the exchange of information at BLG level. The CITES Secretariat reiterated that it is Parties that guide general direction, while acknowledging the BLG provides a good overview of what is going on. Some members also recognized the usefulness of sharing experiences in

national reporting. The CMS Secretariat questioned about the “Caring for Coasts Initiative”, to which the CBD Secretariat agreed to provide further information through the CBD focal point.

Item 7 Joint outreach/communications and global biodiversity communications

41. The Chair revisited the discussion under Item 6 and reiterated the possibility of organizing a side event during the IPBES-7. She also noted that WHC will upload a web news on the BLG meeting which can be linked to the websites of other conventions.
42. The CBD Secretariat highlighted some of the on-going collaboration in the area of communication, including joint work among communication officers such as disseminating messages on International Days related to biodiversity and amplifying social media. The Executive Secretary of IWC announced that they will start tweeting exclusively on by-catch and whale watching, and requested other to re-tweet if possible. The WHC requested the CBD Secretariat to look into the possibility of reviving regular consultation among communication officers, especially for messages on international days, also taking into account the funding issue. **The CBD Secretariat agreed to convey the request for reviving the regular exchange on communication and providing a proactive role in fostering cooperation for global communication on biodiversity** which is part of its mandate. The CBD Secretariat also referred to the project being implemented by UNEP for enhancing synergies among the global biodiversity conventions, and noted that a meeting will be convened in the margin of the Ramsar COP 13 to which the communication focal points of all the biodiversity-related convention secretariats have been invited. Only the CMS Secretariat and CBD Secretariat confirmed their participation to the meeting taking place during the Ramsar COP.
43. The CBD Secretariat flagged the importance of enhancing communication and public awareness among targeted groups in the development of the post-2020 framework, and noted that the Executive Secretary of the CBD has devoted to enhance political attention through a series of meetings and dialogues. The Director of WHC also underlined their effort to enhance political attention against rapid biodiversity loss. The Ramsar Secretariat proposed to organize joint meetings/statements at high-level meetings such as the High-Level Segment during the CBD COP to raise profiles of BLG. **The CBD Secretariat agreed to convey the interest of BLG for the joint statement during the High-Level Segment.** The CMS Secretariat expressed his concern that the African Biodiversity Summit organized back-to-back with the CBD COP 14 makes no reference to biodiversity conventions while referring to the Rio Conventions. The CBD Secretariat noted that while the African Summit is organized by the host country, he will draw attention of the focal point regarding this issue.

Item 8 Possible joint inputs and activities for/at meetings of the conventions and other relevant intergovernmental bodies

44. Some members expressed their interests in exploring how they can engage in the Rio Conventions Pavilion during the CBD COP 14, especially through displaying materials for BLG as well as from each convention (e.g. brochures, kakemonos, etc.). **The CBD Secretariat will look into the opportunities for engagement in the Rio Conventions and will share these with the Group.** The CMS Secretariat informed the Group that they are planning to organize three side events focusing on post-2020, illegal killing, and mainstreaming biodiversity across conventions and sectors during the COP.
45. The WHC flagged that biodiversity is a priority agenda for France together with climate change, and suggested to consider making joint statements by BLG to raise its profile on the occasions of G7 in 2019 and the IUCN World Conservation Congress in 2020, both hosted by France.

46. The CBD Secretariat explained a process of sharing calendars; sharing the information with the CBD Secretariat who can take a first step to make the information available through the current website facility. He noted that the CBD Parties have an interest in developing more prominent web portal / information repository which can also serve as a common resource hub among different conventions, as put forward by the informal advisory group on synergies, and that the CBD Secretariat is currently looking into the possibility with UNEP-WCMC. Some members expressed their concerns that it might duplicate what already exists (i.e. InforMEA) and that **it has to be done with caution and with clear objectives taking into account additional workload that can cause.**

Item 9 Updated modus operandi

47. In accordance with the action point agreed at the last BLG meeting, the CBD Secretariat introduced proposed revisions to the modus operandi, which provides updates of the Group's membership and history as well as some editorial adjustments. The Group agreed to the proposed amendments without any substantive changes. Some members proposed to delete the paragraph on the date and place of meeting, and **the CITES and CMS Secretariats informed the CBD Secretariat that their Resolutions need to be updated and that they will submit correct references in writing.** The Executive Secretary of IWC proposed to add a clause "subject to availability of resources" in the document and also to attach work plan / to do list after every meeting to be more specific. **As for the circulation of meeting reports, the Group allowed two months instead of 30 days, highlighting action points.** The members considered useful to set approximate timing for the meeting in order to plan in advance, and some members expressed their preference for September each year. Updated modus operandi needs to be adopted by the executive heads of each convention once the members agreed on the revision. **The updated version will be circulated to the members by the CBD Secretariat to be adopted electronically.**
48. A question was asked concerning any overlaps between InforMEA and BLG and the CBD Secretariat clarified the differences between them: while the former is a practical tool for information management across a large number of MEAs, facilitated by UNEP, the latter serves a purpose of dialogue across the biodiversity-related conventions to help foster greater cooperation among them. Another question was asked about the Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions (CSAB) and the BLG. The CBD and CITES Secretariats clarified the distinctions, noting that CSAB emerged from the BLG and shares the same secretariats, but has been inactive due to the lack of resources.

Item 10 Next meetings of the Liaison Group

49. Under this item, **the Group agreed that the next liaison group meeting be organized either in September 2019 or earlier in April 2019** by taking advantage of IPBES-7 in Paris to organize the BLG meeting back-to-back. **If the next meeting is to take place in September, the Group will still consider organizing a side event during IPBES-7.**

Item 11 Any other business

50. Under this item, the Executive Secretary of IWC requested for guidance in relation to human resource management. **The Chair proposed to share with her conditions of exchanging staff within the UN system.**

Item 12 Closing

51. The Chair thanked the members of the liaison group for lively debates and all the inputs. She informed that a meeting between BLG and CCLG would follow in the afternoon. The members also thanked the Chair for her hospitality in hosting the successful meeting. The meeting was closed at 1.20 p.m.

List of enclosures / referenced documents

Minutes of the twelfth meeting of the Liaison Group;

Existing [Modus Operandi of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions](#);

Updated Modus Operandi of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions;

Note to BLG 13 on preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework;

[Recommendation SBI-2/9 on Cooperation with other conventions, international organizations and partnerships](#);

[CBD/SBI/2/10/Add.1 – Implementation of options to enhance synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions](#);

[CBD/SBI/2/INF/14 – Report of the informal advisory group on synergies among biodiversity-related conventions](#);

[CMS resolution 11.10 \(Rev COP 12\)](#).

Annex 1

**Thirteenth Meeting of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions
18-19 September 2018, Paris, France**

List of participants

Neil Pratt, Senior Environmental Affairs Officer, Mainstreaming, Cooperation & Outreach Support, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

David Morgan, Officer-in-Charge and Chief, Governing Bodies and Meeting Services, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

Marco Barbieri, Scientific Adviser, Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

Jonathan Barzdo, Deputy Secretary, Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention)

Rebecca Lent, Executive Secretary, International Whaling Commission (IWC)

Kent Nnadozie, Secretary, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) – by video link

Mechtild Rössler, Director, Heritage Division and World Heritage Centre, UNESCO

Guy Debonnet, Chief of Unit, Nature, Sustainable Tourism and Outreach, World Heritage Centre

Richard Veillon, Project Officer, Policy and Statutory Meetings Unit, World Heritage Centre

Susanna Kari, Associate Programme Specialist, Africa Unit, World Heritage Centre

Clemens Küpper, Junior Professional Officer, Europe and North America Unit, World Heritage Centre

Akane Nakamura, Junior Professional Officer, Asia and the Pacific Unit, World Heritage Centre

Resource persons

Anne Larigauderie, Executive Secretary, Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) – by video link

Hesiquio Benítez, Director General, International Cooperation and Implementation of CONABIO; Chair of the Informal Advisory Group on Synergies established under the CBD COP – by video link

Meriem Bouamrane, Programme Specialist, MAB Networking: Biosphere Reserves and Capacity Building; UNESCO Focal Point for Biodiversity and IPBES

Annex 2

Listing of recent and forthcoming meetings under the conventions

A. Meetings of the conventions held since the twelfth BLG meeting:

Meetings of governing bodies:

Twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP 12), Manila, Philippines, 23 to 28 October 2017³;

Seventh Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA GB 7), Kigali, Rwanda, 30 October to 3 November 2017;

21st session of the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France, 14 to 15 November 2017⁴;

IPPC – 13th session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM 13), 16 to 20 April 2018;

International Whaling Commission - IWC 67, Florianopolis, Brazil, 4-14 September 2018

Intersessional meetings:

CITES – 69th meeting of the Standing Committee, Geneva, Switzerland, 27 November to 1 December 2017;

CBD – Twentieth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 20), Montreal, 11 to 14 December 2017, tenth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions (WG-8(j) 10), Montreal, 13 to 16 December 2017, twenty-first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 21), Montreal, July 2018 and second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI 2), Montreal, July 2018;

Ramsar – 21st Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) on 15 January 2018 and 54th Meeting of the Standing Committee (SC54), 23 to 27 April 2018, Gland, Switzerland;

International Whaling Commission - Scientific Committee 67B, Bled, Slovenia, from 21 April to 6 May 2018

CMS – Third meeting of the Sessional Committee of the CMS Scientific Council (ScC-SC3), Bonn, 29 May to 1 June 2018.

World Heritage Committee – 42nd session, Manama, Bahrain, 24 June to 4 July 2018.

B. Upcoming meetings of the governing bodies in 2018 and 2019:

Ramsar – Thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 13), United Arab Emirates, 21 to 29 October 2018;

³ CMS COP 12 is preceded by the 46th Meeting of the CMS Standing Committee, 22 Oct 2017

⁴ The World Heritage Committee will hold its twelfth Extraordinary session during the 21st session of the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention

CBD – Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 14) and the concurrent meetings of the Parties to the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols, Egypt, 10 to 22 November 2018; and
IPPC – Thirteenth meeting of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-14), 1 to 5 April 2019 (tbc), Rome, Italy
CITES – Eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP 18), 23 May-03 June, Sri Lanka, 2019;
22nd session of the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France;
ITPGRFA, Eighth Session of the Governing Body, 11 - 16 November 2019
IWC Scientific Committee and pre-meetings, pre-workshops, 6-22 November 2019, Nairobi, Kenya.

Intersessional meetings:

Ramsar - 55th Meeting of the Standing Committee, 21 October 2018;
Ramsar - 56th Meeting of the Standing Committee, 29 October 2018;
CMS – 48th meeting of the Standing Committee, 23-24 October 2018;
IPPC Standard Committee meetings, 19-23 November 2018, Rome, Italy;
ITPGRFA, Third meeting of the Compliance Committee, 31 January - 01 February 2019;
World Heritage Committee – 43rd session, Baku, Azerbaijan (2019);
CBD – Twenty-third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 23), November 2019 (tbc)
CITES – 70th meeting of the Standing Committee