



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Modus Operandi for the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related Conventions

Introduction

The six secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions currently comprising the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related Conventions (BLG) are:

- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
- the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);
- The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS);
- The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar);
- The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (WHC); and
- The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA).

Mandate

The mandate for establishing the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions was set out by the Parties to the CBD, in decision VII/26 (paragraphs 1 and 2) which states that:

“Recognizing the role of the Joint Liaison Group in supporting cooperation between the Rio conventions, and the role of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in enhancing cooperation and coordination on Forest issues, where the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity is the focal agency on forest biodiversity and traditional forest-related knowledge,

1. 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;

2. Requests in this context, the Executive Secretary, to invite the secretariats of the other four biodiversity conventions (CITES, Ramsar, CMS and World Heritage Convention¹) to form a liaison group to enhance coherence and cooperation in their implementation, and to report on progress made to the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;”

This mandate has been further supported by several follow up decisions of the governing bodies of the member secretariats, namely:

¹ ITPGRFA joined the BLG at its 5th meeting in September 2006.



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- CBD Decisions VIII/16, IX/27 and X/20 (excerpts are given below);
- CITES Resolutions 10.4 and 14.2;
- CMS Resolutions 8.11 and 9.6;
- Ramsar Resolutions IX.5; X.1 and X.11;
- World Heritage Convention Decisions 30 COM 6 and 33 COM 5C; and
- International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (IT/GB-1/06/Report and Resolution 8/2011)

Through CBD COP decision IX/27 (paragraphs 3 and 4) the Conference of the Parties to the CBD underlined the important role of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions, encouraged more regular meetings and invited the Group to identify options for improved implementation of and cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions. CBD COP decision X/20 then sought a strengthening of the effectiveness of the Biodiversity Liaison Group, enhanced cooperation and a coherent approach on cross-cutting issues, paragraphs 4, 8 and 9 state that:

“4. Requests the Executive Secretary to prepare, in consultation with the executive heads of the other biodiversity-related conventions, proposals on ways to strengthen the effectiveness of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions, its relevance to the needs of Parties, and its linkages to the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio conventions;

8. Invites the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related Conventions to continue giving consideration to the harmonization of national reporting and, in this context, welcomes the progress made in the GEF Project on Facilitating National Reporting to Rio Conventions (FNR-Rio), as well as the project to streamline reporting by Pacific island countries to the biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements;

9. Invites the scientific advisory bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions and the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related Conventions to address at their future meetings options for enhanced cooperation, inter alia, with regard to work on cross-cutting issues, such as climate change, scientific criteria for the identification of ecologically or biologically significant areas in need of protection, and invasive alien species, in a manner consistent with their respective mandates, governance arrangements and agreed programmes of work and with a view to developing a coherent approach on these matters;”

Guiding Principles

The following principles guide the work of the BLG:

Principle 1: The BLG is a platform to exchange information and to enhance implementation at the national level of the objectives of each respective convention whilst also promoting synergies at the national level.



Principle 2: The BLG recognises the distinct and specific objectives of each convention and their different Parties, as well as the individual mandates and independent status of their treaty bodies and Secretariats.

Principle 3: The aim should be to maximise effectiveness and efficiency and avoid duplication of effort in joint activities of BLG members.

Principle 4: Activities on the ground are contingent upon the availability of financial and other resources.

History

The BLG held seven regular meetings between 2004-2009, plus a special meeting in April 2011. In addition one retreat was held with the participation of BLG members in September 2010.

The BLG meeting of 16 August 2004 agreed upon modalities for the operation of the BLG, which form the basis of this Modus Operandi. A record of all of these meetings (and future meetings, once held) can and will be found at: www.cbd.int/blg.

Areas of Activity

Cooperative activities will include, but not be limited to, the following areas:

- Provide support for achieving the objectives of the Strategic Plans of its members, including the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 in line with respective mandates;
- Explore practical ways that identify and reinforce mutual coordinated support for the implementation of relevant decisions adopted by the respective COPs;
- Support Parties in the revisions and implementation of updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAPs);
- Support Parties activities in public awareness and education including the respective International Days of the Conventions;
- Support Parties in capacity-building activities and other forms of technical assistance; and
- Assist Parties with any future priorities identified by the respective COPs of the BLG members.

Modus Operandi

Secretariat

The CBD will act as the secretariat for the BLG.

Officers

The meetings of BLG will be chaired by rotation amongst the Executive Heads of the conventions being a member of the BLG on an annual basis unless otherwise agreed.



Date and Place of Meeting

An annual face-to-face BLG meeting in the form of a retreat will be held on 4th September in Château de Bossey, Switzerland. An alternative venue for the annual meeting can be proposed and agreed by the BLG members.

Arrangements for a second annual meeting, and any additional BLG meetings, can be proposed and agreed by the BLG members, and may involve video conferencing.

Membership and Participation

BLG members are the Executive Heads (or their deputies or representatives, in the absence of the Executive Head) of the following conventions: CBD, CITES, Ramsar, CMS, World Heritage, and ITPGRFA, plus any other biodiversity-related conventions which may be adopted in the future and invited by BLG to join as a member. Supporting staff may attend meetings as necessary.

Others (e.g., subsidiary body chairs, other convention secretariats) may be invited to participate in BLG meetings at the invitation of the Chair, as mutually agreed with the other members.

Agenda and Documentation

The provisional agenda and documentation for BLG meetings will be prepared by the Chair in consultation with, and with support from, the CBD as the secretariat for the BLG. The documentation will be circulated for comments of other BLG members, finalized and distributed at least four weeks in advance of any meeting.

Agenda items will be mutually agreed by the members and include matters of mutual or common interest emanating from governing body decisions, subsidiary body recommendations and other items proposed by the members.

Documentation prepared for a meeting will not normally be available publicly unless mutually agreed by the members.

Conduct of Business

BLG meetings will normally not be open to the public unless mutually agreed by the members.

Decision-making

Decisions will be taken by consensus.



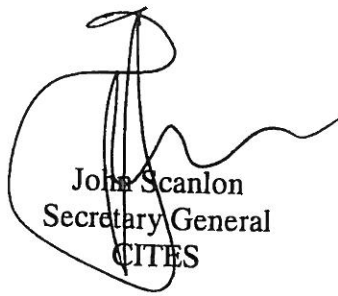
Reports of meetings

BLG meeting reports will be prepared by the Chair in consultation with the CBD as the secretariat in consultation with other BLG members, and finalised and distributed to members within 30 days of the meeting's closure.

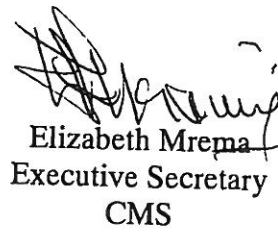
Meeting reports will be archived and available at www.cbd.int/blg and may also be made available through hyperlinks on the websites of the other BLG members.

Reports on the activities of the BLG will be submitted to the respective meetings of the COP of the members for their information and attention. Members will also bring the issues discussed at the meetings to the attention of the respective subsidiary bodies such as standing committees, scientific councils/committees, as well as to national focal points, as appropriate, with a view to promoting synergies and coordination in the implementation of the conventions.

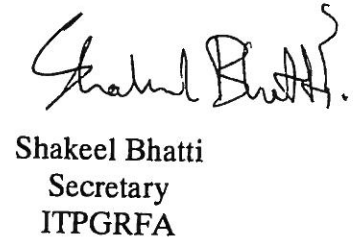
Signed at Château de Bossey, Switzerland on 4 September 2011



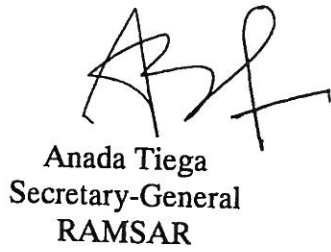
John Scanlon
Secretary General
CITES



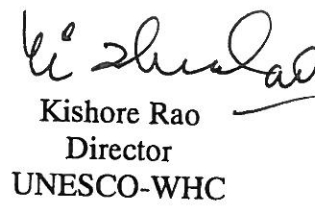
Elizabeth Mrema
Executive Secretary
CMS



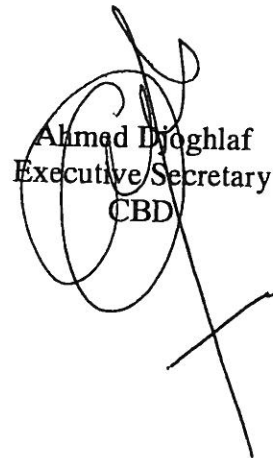
Shakeel Bhatti
Secretary
ITPGRFA



Anada Tiega
Secretary-General
RAMSAR



Kishore Rao
Director
UNESCO-WHC



Ahmed Djoghlaoui
Executive Secretary
CBD