



**CONVENTION ON  
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**AD HOC OPEN-ENDED INTER-SESSIONAL WORKING  
GROUP ON ARTICLE 8(j) AND RELATED  
PROVISIONS OF THE CONVENTION ON  
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

Third meeting

Montreal, 8-12 December 2003

Item 6 of the provisional agenda\*

**MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE THE EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF INDIGENOUS AND  
LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN MATTERS RELATED TO THE OBJECTIVES OF ARTICLE 8(j)  
AND RELATED PROVISIONS**

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

*Addendum*

**REPORT ON COLLABORATION AMONG THE DIFFERENT CONVENTIONS WITH  
REGARD TO THE PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT OF INDIGENOUS AND  
LOCAL COMMUNITIES, RELATING TO THE MAINTENANCE AND  
APPLICATION OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

**A. Background**

1. In paragraph 25 of decision VI/10, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity requested the Executive Secretary to consult with the secretariats of relevant environmental conventions and programmes, such as the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971), the Convention on the Conservation on Migratory Species of Wild Animals, and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and to explore the possibility of cooperating in order to facilitate collaboration among the different conventions with regard to the participation and involvement of indigenous and local communities in discussions related to the maintenance and application of traditional knowledge relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

\* UNEP/CBD/WG8J/3/1.

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2. In addition, in the 2000-2001 joint work plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar, Iran, 1971), endorsed in decision IV/4 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ad Hoc Open-ended Inter-Sessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions is requested to consider the Ramsar Guidelines for establishing and strengthening the participation of local communities and indigenous people in the management of wetlands, and supporting case studies and resource materials in their work, and to consult with other environment conventions about developing a multi-convention approach to examining this cross-cutting area.

3. Pursuant to the above-mentioned decisions, the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the Ramsar Bureau, consulted with the secretariats of relevant environmental conventions and programmes to explore ways and means to support collaboration between these institutions, through exchange of information, cooperation and coordination of activities to ensure that they are mutually supportive with regard to the maintenance and application of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices and the involvement and participation of indigenous and local communities in relevant activities. To that effect, a teleconference was held on 6 November 2002 and further consultations were held throughout 2002 and 2003.

### ***B. Participants***

4. The following secretariats of environmental conventions and relevant programmes were consulted by the Executive Secretary: the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on the Conservation on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention).

## **II. RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION**

### ***A. Collaboration among environmental convention secretariats***

5. The secretariats recognized the cross-cutting nature of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices and the importance of promoting the effective participation of indigenous and local communities in the work of the various environment conventions, at the local, national and international levels.

6. The following actions were identified as the first step towards the development of a collaborative approach to ensure the involvement of indigenous and local communities in discussions related to the maintenance and application of traditional knowledge and practices relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity:

(a) Increase the representation of indigenous and local communities at meetings held under the conventions to ensure effective participation;

(b) Further improve communication networks amongst the different convention secretariats and key indigenous and local community organization;

(c) Develop effective communication networks amongst key indigenous and local community organizations involved in the work of the conventions;

- (d) Create a trust fund to provide financial support to assist indigenous and local community projects and activities in the conservation and management of biodiversity and the environment;
- (e) Encourage Parties to the different conventions to include indigenous and local community representatives on official delegations;
- (f) Raise awareness about the cross-cutting nature and significance of issues concerning indigenous and local communities relating to biodiversity and the environment;
- (g) Compile and disseminate information on existing initiatives related to indigenous and local communities;
- (h) Encourage and provide financial support for local projects involving both the indigenous and local communities and national authorities;
- (i) Request convention secretariats to develop databases of indigenous and local community experts;
- (j) The conferences of the parties of the relevant conventions to give guidance to the Global Environment Facility to review its policy to provide funds to indigenous and local community organizations for conservation and management activities and projects, including from developed countries;
- (k) The secretariats to continue to collaborate to develop further the above points, as well as the elements for the development of a collaborative approach identified below.

7. The following elements were also recommended for the development of a collaborative approach:

- (a) Capacity-building;
- (b) Development of a fund to support the participation of indigenous and local communities at meetings of the relevant conventions and processes;
- (c) Development of a multi-convention action plan regarding indigenous and local community involvement and participation in the work of the conventions;
- (d) Development of a set of principles to guide such involvement and participation;
- (e) Identification of policy-making activities to strengthen the collaboration between conventions and agencies.

8. While many convention secretariats recognize the importance of indigenous and local community involvement in the management and conservation of the environment and biodiversity, some felt restricted as to how they would commit to the participation and involvements of indigenous and local communities in their work, as their conventions did not give specific recognition to indigenous and local communities.

9. It was noted that apart from the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification and the Ramsar Convention, indigenous and local community issues are not mentioned specifically in other international environmental conventions, and agency policies and decisions, although they are sometimes covered by references to sustainable use, which can also refer to traditional activities of indigenous and local communities.

***B. Ramsar guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands***

10. The Ramsar guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands were adopted in 1999 by resolution VII.8 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. Since then, Parties have showed a growing interest for indigenous and local community issues. The guiding principles for identifying the cultural aspects of wetlands and incorporating them into the effective management of sites adopted by resolution VIII.19 of the Conference of the Parties, in 2002, for example, were developed from that perspective. It was noted however, that, according to the latest national reports from Parties to the Ramsar Convention, there is relatively limited national commitment toward the implementation of the guidelines.

11. As follow-up to the guidelines, the Ramsar Conference of the Parties, at its eighth meeting, also adopted resolution VIII.36, on participatory environmental management as a tool for management and wise use of wetlands, which includes an outline of the benefits of participatory environmental management, and guidance on aspects to be taken into account in the preparation and application of participatory environmental management strategies. The Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) is currently preparing methodologies or guidelines for the effective implementation of participatory environmental management, for the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, which will be held in 2005.

12. Along with the joint work plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the guidelines contribute to international policy harmonization and cross-cutting integration. Thus, the guidelines could be used as a starting point in the development of a multi convention approach on the participation of indigenous and local communities.

13. In the course of the consultations, secretariats of environmental conventions and relevant programmes have recognized the value of the Ramsar guidelines. However, considering their particularity and the rapid evolution of principles, they further recommended to review the existing mechanisms and, if appropriate, to discuss the nature of the required guidance prior to undertaking any action. The importance of closely involving all stakeholders in the elaboration process of the guidance was emphasized.

***C. General considerations***

14. Some convention secretariats, such as that of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and other agencies emphasized that capacity-building activities were not carried out by the secretariats but by implementing agencies, based on parameters decided by the Parties.

15. For this reason, matters concerning the participation of indigenous and local communities could also be discussed in the UNEP Environmental Management Group, and an action plan could be elaborated. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII) and the Indigenous Programme Unit of the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, together with the convention secretariats, could also be invited to participate in such discussions.

16. Considering the mandate, the funding criteria and the complex procedure of the existing financial mechanisms, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), several officials of convention secretariats and relevant programmes recommended to explore the possibility of creating within each convention a special voluntary fund exclusively dedicated to the participation of indigenous and local communities. These funds could, for example, focus on a specific type of action and provide financial support to indigenous and local community organizations from developing countries.

17. The secretariats and relevant programmes expressed their willingness to continue informal discussions and information-sharing.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

18. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Inter-Sessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity may wish to recommend that the Conference of the Parties:

(a) *Requests* the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on 8(j) and Related Provisions to prepare a set of elements for a multi-convention participatory management plan for the involvement and participation of indigenous and local communities based on the guidelines endorsed at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands, as the basis for the development of a multi-convention approach for collaboration amongst environmental conventions for the involvement and participation of indigenous and local communities in the respective areas covered by the conventions. The plan should include a set of principles for collaboration, and identify common obligations and expected outcomes;

(b) *Further requests* the Ad Hoc Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions to consider the outcome of the methodologies and guidelines being prepared by the Ramsar Scientific Technical Review Panel (STRP) for participatory environmental management (Ramsar resolution VIII.36) to support the further development of a multi-convention participatory conservation management plan based on the existing participatory guidelines prepared under the Ramsar Convention at the seventh meeting of its Conference of the Parties.

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