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JOINT LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL MEETING ON THE CLEARING- HOUSE MECHANISM AND THE INTER- AMERICAN BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION NETWORK: BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH EFFECTIVE NETWORKING

Cancun, 12-14 August 2003

Item 2 of the provisional agenda*

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Annotations to the provisional agenda

INTRODUCTION

1. Article 18, paragraph 3, of the Convention on Biological Diversity establishes a clearing-house mechanism to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation.
2. The Santa Cruz Summit of the Americas meeting of Heads of State, held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, from 7 to 8 December 1996, established the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network to provide the networking information infrastructure (such as formats, protocols and standards) and biodiversity-information content required by the countries of the Americas to improve education and decision-making, particularly for issues at the interface of human development and biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.
3. In decision VI/18, the Conference of the Parties urged the Executive Secretary to convene additional capacity-building workshops at the national, subregional and regional levels referred to in decision V/14 of the Conference of the Parties for clearing-house activities and training in support of national capacities to implement the Convention.

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4. Within its programme of work, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN) seeks to provide the capacity to address critical issues at a regional level such as invasive alien species, migratory birds, amphibian declines, and the spread of diseases, among others.

5. Accordingly, the Executive Secretary and the IABIN Executive Council have organized the present meeting to provide countries of the region with an opportunity to express their needs and expectations with regard to efforts by the clearing-house mechanism and the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network's to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation, particularly in collaboration with recently established international thematic focal points and other relevant international initiatives and organizations.

6. The organization of the meeting also responds to the recommendation of the informal advisory committee for the clearing-house mechanism, made at its meetings of 11 March 2001, 11 November 2001, 10 April 2002 and 9 March 2003, that the Executive Secretary should focus on the use of the clearing-house mechanism to promote technical and scientific cooperation, particularly within the programme areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention, including invasive alien species, the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI), coastal and marine biodiversity and the ecosystem approach.

7. The meeting further supports recommendations made during the sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), particularly recommendation VI/4, paragraph 22, which called for the clearing-house mechanisms to be used to facilitate scientific and technical cooperation.

8. The meeting will consider issues relevant to the operation of the clearing-house mechanism, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, and other international organizations and initiatives in the Latin America and Caribbean region. Specific objectives for the meeting include:

(a) The identification of areas of collaboration between the clearing-house mechanism, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, and other international organizations and initiatives within the programme areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention with a view to promoting and facilitating technical and scientific cooperation and reducing duplication of effort;

(b) The consideration of an architecture for the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and a project plan to implement the Network as designed in order to address the objectives of the clearing-house mechanism, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, and other international organizations and initiatives within the Americas.

(c) The determination of the regional information requirements and mechanisms needed to promote and facilitate scientific and technical cooperation activities under the clearing-house mechanism, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, and other international organizations and initiatives programme of work at the local and national level;

(d) The identification of likely problems and the proposal of solutions in the implementation and ongoing development of the clearing-house mechanism, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, and other international organizations and initiatives activities in the region, particularly in the use of new information technologies;

(e) The identification of obstacles to the implementation of recommendations related to the thematic areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention;

(f) The establishment of a joint work programme between the clearing-house mechanism, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, and other international organizations and initiatives.

Participants

9. Each Party to the Convention on Biological Diversity in the Latin America and Caribbean region, participants in the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, and those countries in the Americas that are members of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, have been invited to nominate experts qualified in the fields of management of clearing-house mechanism issues, information-sharing systems, biodiversity-information networks and database-management, and/or experience with the clearing-house mechanism. the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, and/or the Global Biodiversity Information Facility. Nominations were requested from the national focal points for the Convention on Biological Diversity on 2 July 2003.

10. In order to further assist the deliberations, Parties, Governments and relevant organizations have also been requested to submit their views and needs with regard to the operation of the clearing-house mechanism and the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, as well as any other relevant information they may wish to convey prior to the meeting.

11. In addition to these participants, representatives of the following organizations active in clearing-house mechanism issues have also been invited to participate as observers:

(a) The Commonwealth Knowledge Network (CKN), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC);

(b) BirdLife International, BioNet International, Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP), Centro de Referência em Informação Ambiental (CRIA), the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI), Indigenous Biodiversity Information Network (IBIN), Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS), NatureServe, North American Biodiversity Information Network (NABIN), Species 2000;

(c) Donor organizations, particularly from those Governments that have indicated their interest in funding capacity-building activities to enable the active participation of developing countries in pilot projects promoted by the clearing-house mechanism;

(d) The Chair of the informal advisory committee for the clearing-house mechanism.

Documents

12. A list of documents for the meeting is attached as annex I below.

Expected outcome of the meeting

13. It is expected that the meeting will facilitate a better definition of the needs of countries of the region with regard to the further development of the clearing-house mechanism and the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network. It is also expected that new initiatives will emphasize participation between the clearing-house mechanism, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, and established international thematic focal points, and will recommend possible solutions to overcome the identified constraints and impediments.

14. The recommendations of the meeting will be communicated to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting, to be held in Kuala Lumpur in February 2004.

ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

15. The meeting will be held Cancun, Mexico. It will be opened by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity or his representative and the Chair of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network Council at 9 a.m. on 12 August 2003.

ITEM 2. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

2.1. Election of officers

16. The meeting will be invited to elect its Chair and Rapporteur from among its members. Proposals will be made from the floor.

2.2. Adoption of agenda

17. The meeting will be invited to adopt its agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CBD/CHM/LAC.Reg/1/1).

2.3. Organization of work

18. The proposed programme of work for the meeting is shown in annex II below.

19. Participants will be invited to discuss the issues relevant to the promotion of technical and scientific cooperation as reflected in decision VI/18 of the Conference of the Parties, the recommendations of the sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and recommendations of the informal advisory committee for the clearing-house mechanism and the work programme of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, as well as issues pertaining to regional needs assessment in relation to use and future development of the clearing-house mechanism and the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network. To facilitate these discussions, it is proposed that these issues be clustered under two headings:

(a) Implementation of a joint work plan between the clearing-house mechanism, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, and other international organizations and initiatives in support of technical and scientific cooperation across the programme and cross-cutting areas of the Convention;

(b) Regional needs to implement effectively recommendations related to the joint work plan.

20. Each of these headings will encompass various relevant issues. Following an introduction to the topic, participants will be invited to discuss relevant issues, with a view to making recommendations relevant to the objectives for the meeting.

ITEM 3. PROMOTING SYNERGIES AMONG CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS, INTER-AMERICAN BIODIVERSITY NETWORK NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS, AND GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION FACILITY NODES AND NATURE RESERVE CONSERVATION DATA CENTRES, AMONG OTHERS

21. Under this item, representatives of the clearing-house mechanism, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility will make presentations on the responsibilities of national focal points, nodes and conservation data centres respectively, and propose joint work-plans and cooperative activities among these mechanisms.

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Presentations by the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network will focus on its Global Environment Facility project process and on its implementation plan.

22. Participants to the meeting will be invited to discuss and propose ways and means to ensure collaboration and sharing of expertise among the above mechanisms.

ITEM 4. POTENTIAL JOINT INITIATIVES BETWEEN THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM AND THE INTER-AMERICAN BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION NETWORK AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMMES IN SUPPORT OF TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION ACROSS THE PROGRAMME AND CROSS-CUTTING AREAS OF THE CONVENTION

23. Representatives of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility will make short presentations on issues relevant to this item based decision VI/18 of the Conference of the Parties and the programme of work of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and Global Biodiversity Information Facility. Observers will also be invited to make brief presentations on their potential role in promoting cooperation among global information networks and mechanisms and regional and global initiatives. Accordingly, it is proposed that this item of the agenda cover the following elements:

(a) Collaborative projects pertaining Invasive alien species, particularly within the context of the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP) and the IABIN Invasives Information Network (I3N);

(b) Global Taxonomy Initiative and taxonomic authorities, including metadata and controlled vocabularies;

(c) Implementation of the ecosystem approach;

(d) Protected areas including marine and coastal protected areas;

(e) Pollinators.

24. These issues will be considered in the light of decision VI/18 of the Conference of the Parties, SBSTTA recommendation VI/4, paragraph 22, the programme of work of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and the minutes of the meeting of the informal advisory committee for the clearing-house mechanism held on 9 March 2003. They will also include cross-cutting issues related to Article 8(j) and the transfer of technology.

ITEM 5. REGIONAL NEEDS TO IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVELY RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO THE POTENTIAL JOINT INITIATIVES

25. In considering this item, participants will be invited to consider the regional needs to implement effectively recommendations related to the establishment of a joint work plan in support of Convention objectives between the clearing-house mechanism, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and other international organizations and initiatives. Participants will also be invited to reflect upon the potential role of international thematic focal points and international networks and initiatives, and regional capacities needed to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation, particularly within the context of the programme areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention.

26. Participants expressing an interest in hosting the IABIN hub (a secretariat for IABIN) will be invited to make presentations describing the contribution their agency or institution is prepared to make to

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support the hub and its responsibilities in addressing the joint work programme(s) of the clearing-house mechanism, the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and other international organizations and initiatives in the Americas. Participants will be invited to define a process by which a host for the IABIN hub will be selected.

27. Possible group discussions that could be held under this item with a view to determining options for technical and scientific collaboration include:

- (a) Setting of priorities;
- (b) Harmonization of initiatives and activities;
- (c) Potential roles and responsibilities;
- (d) Planned activities;
- (e) Strategies for the establishment of joint initiatives by clearing-house mechanism, IABIN and other international organizations and initiatives;
- (f) Strategies for sustainable funding for joint initiatives implemented by the clearing-house mechanism, IABIN and other international organizations and initiatives;
- (g) Standards, formats and protocols to be used for the implementation of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network;
- (h) Modifications to IABIN Project Implementation Plan.

ITEM 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

28. Participants will be invited to formulate general conclusions and recommendations on the issues considered at this meeting.

ITEM 7. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

29. Participants will consider and adopt the report of the meeting, on the basis of the draft report of the meeting and draft recommendations to be presented by the Rapporteur.

ITEM 8. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

30. It is expected that the meeting will be closed at 5 p.m. on 14 August 2003.

Annex I

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS FOR THE JOINT LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL
MEETING ON THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM**

PLEASE NOTE:

**For reasons of economy, documents will be available at the meeting in a limited number.
Participants are requested to bring their copies of the documents to the meeting.**

Working documents

UNEP/CBD/CHM/LAC.Reg/1/1	Provisional agenda
UNEP/CBD/CHM/LAC.Reg/1/1/Add.1	Annotations to the provisional agenda

Background documentation

Decision VI/18 of the Conference of the Parties

Minutes of the meeting of the informal advisory committee for the clearing-house mechanism, 9 March 2003 ^{1/}

Report of the Informal Meeting on Formats, Protocols and Standards for Improved Exchange of Biodiversity-related Information, Montreal, 19 to 20 February 2002 ^{2/}

The clearing-house mechanism matrix of work ^{3/}

^{1/} <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/chm/chmiac-2001/official/chmiac-2001-03-11-minutes-en.pdf>.

^{2/} <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/cop/cop-06/information/cop-06-inf-18-en.pdf>.

^{3/} <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/ref/chm-matrix-work-en.pdf>.

Annex II

PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE JOINT LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL MEETING ON THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM

<i>12-14 August 2003</i>	
9 a.m.	<i>Item 1: Opening of the meeting.</i>
9.15 - 9.30 a.m.	<i>Item 2: Organizational matters:</i> 2.1. <i>Election of officers;</i> 2.2. <i>Adoption of the agenda;</i> 2.3. <i>Organization of work.</i>
	<i>Item 3. Promoting synergies among clearing-house mechanism national focal points, Inter-American Biodiversity Network national focal points, Global Biodiversity Information Facility nodes and NatureServe conservation data centres.</i>
9:30 – 10:30 a.m.	Presentations under item 3
10:30 – 11 a.m.	Break
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Presentations and discussion under item 3
1–2 p.m.	Lunch
	<i>Item 4. Discussion on potential joint initiatives between the clearing-house mechanism and the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network and other international organizations and programmes in support of technical and scientific cooperation across the programme and cross-cutting areas of the Convention.</i>
2-3 p.m.	Presentations under item 4
3 – 3.30 p.m.	Break
3.30 – 5 p.m.	Discussion under item 4
<i>13 August 2003</i>	
9 – 10.30 a.m.	Discussion under Item 4
10:30 – 11 a.m.	Break
	<i>Item 5. Regional needs to implement effectively recommendations related to the potential joint initiatives</i>
11 a.m.–1 p.m.	Presentations and discussion under Item 5
1–2 p.m.	Lunch
2:– 3 p.m.	Discussion under Item 5
3 – 3:30 p.m.	Break
3:30 – 5 p.m.	Discussion under Item 5
<i>14 August 2003</i>	
9 – 10.30 a.m.	Discussion on recommendations
10.30 – 11 a.m.	Break

11 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Discussion on recommendations
1 – 2 p.m.	Lunch
2 – 3 p.m.	Discussion on recommendations
3 – 3.30 p.m.	Break
3.30 – 4.30 p.m.	Adoption of report
4.30 – 5 p.m.	Closure of meeting
