



**CONVENTION ON  
BIOLOGICAL  
DIVERSITY**

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**REPORT OF THE FIRST PLANNING MEETING OF CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES AND  
RESEARCH CENTRES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE  
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

*Montreal, 26 September 2006*

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. In order to mobilize the scientific and technical communities of the host country, a Letter of Intent was signed with several Canadian universities and research centres on 23 May 2006 on the occasion of the celebration of International Biodiversity Day. The first planning meeting of this partnership was held on 26 September 2006 at the seat of the Secretariat, in Montreal.
2. The meeting was attended by the representatives from the following Canadian universities: McGill University, Université de Montréal, Université du Québec à Montréal, Université de Laval, University of Toronto and Carleton University of Ottawa. The Director of Montreal Nature Museums (comprising the Botanical Garden, the Biodôme, the Insectarium, and the Planetarium of Montreal) also attended this meeting. The meeting was held with the participation of the representative of Canadian focal point of SBSTTA as well as the representative of the government of Québec. The representative of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in Canada also attended this meeting. A full list of participants is contained in annex III below.
3. The present report provides a summary of the proceedings (section II), an overview of the ideas shared by participants on potential areas for enhanced collaboration (section III), and a suggestion for ways forward (section IV).

**II. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS**

4. Dr Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention opened the meeting, welcoming the representatives from each university, as well as the other organizations and government observers. He noted the success of the round-table discussion in May, and encouraged the continued involvement of the universities in this initiative. He said that efforts to enhance cooperation at the national level could further serve as a platform for enhancing international technical and scientific cooperation for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
5. The Executive Secretary took the opportunity to introduce two other initiatives that might be of interest for university collaboration. He said that, on 27 March 2006, on the margins of the High-Level Segment of the eighth meeting of the Conference of Parties, a Memorandum of Understanding had been signed establishing a Consortium of Scientific Partners (CSP). The purpose of the Consortium was to leverage the expertise and experience of the member institutions in order to implement education and

training activities to support developing countries that were building scientific, technical and policy skills in the area of biodiversity.

6. The Executive Secretary also informed the participants of the proposal discussed at the fifth meeting of the Biodiversity Liaison Group held on 14 September 2006 in Gland, Switzerland, on the possibility of establishing a Biodiversity Virtual Academy and invited the participants to consider ways and means to provide support to this initiative.

7. Following the Executive Secretary's remarks, Mr. Jo Mulongoy provided a brief outline of the scientific and technical needs of the Secretariat arising from the implementation of major areas of work based on the crosscutting themes and programmes of work. He said that key research needs were also being identified and could be used by universities as a starting point for development of an action plan. He noted that of the most pressing concerns of many of the Parties was information on new and emerging issues, on which universities were at the leading edge and could provide invaluable assistance. He highlighted the 2010 biodiversity target, together with the work that remained to be done on indicators to assess progress towards its achievement.

8. Mr Mulongoy also made a presentation on the possible role of the universities and potential areas of collaboration in meeting scientific and technical needs. He said that cooperation between the Secretariat and the academic and research community could take many forms, and could be approached from various angles. Such cooperation could also be a platform for universities to expand their scientific and technical cooperation in support of biodiversity with institutions in other nations, particularly developing countries. Universities were in the unique position of offering help in three, interrelated areas: the development and/or strengthening of capacity; knowledge in the form of research, methodology, technologies and assessments; and through direct actions relating to conservation, sustainable use and benefit-sharing. There was also a possibility of providing training to focal points of the Convention during meetings organized by the Secretariat, as well training seminars for the staff.

### **III. IDEAS FOR ENHANCED COLLABORATION**

9. Participants exchanged views on the on the elements of a draft programme of action for the partnership for the biennium 2006-2007. There was general consensus that increased collaboration between the Convention Secretariat and research institutions was to be welcomed, and that the institutions would be interested in further exploring ways to make this collaboration concrete and effective.

10. Various views were expressed regarding enhanced collaboration varied, but several focal areas were identified as being of particular interest to the universities:

- Training and capacity-building was raised as an important issue by several universities. The need to enhance North-South international cooperation in accordance with Article 16 of the Convention was emphasized. It was agreed that there is a need to train experts in biodiversity within the countries themselves.
- The lack of implementation due to lack of means is a very important issue that need to be addressed. To this end, the Centre de Développement de la Recherche Internationale en Environnement (CEDRIE) will be organizing, at the Botanical Garden of Montreal, on 17-18 May 2007, a multidisciplinary international seminar on the implementation of the Convention focusing on emerging issues such as biosafety and access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing.
- There is a need for more interdisciplinary research, such as:
  - On the synergies between environmental stressors, for example: between biodiversity, climate change and alien species;
  - On macroeconomics and how biodiversity is related to it;

- On indigenous peoples and ethical questions, and how these interrelate with biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.
- Another focal area mentioned was valuation of biodiversity: finding ways of increasing awareness of biodiversity and its importance to ecosystem health and human quality of life.
- Also addressed was the question of engagement of students and increasing the awareness and knowledge of biodiversity in the student body, as well as creating an environment that promotes the principles of conservation and sustainable use. This can be done in several ways, an example being “Campus Greening Projects”. Certainly, students graduating from greener campuses will be more likely to consider biodiversity issues important as they move forward in their professional careers. Projects such as these also offer a unique opportunity to engage students in global issues of biological diversity, at a level where the impacts of their actions are seen and felt, thereby acting as a window to these large-scale concerns.
- The celebration of the International Day for Biodiversity by the partners was also identified as an effective way of collaborating with universities to raise awareness of specific issues concerning biological diversity. Universities have the capacities to actively involve the community in biodiversity-related activities to help raise awareness of the threats and dangers.

#### **IV. WAYS FORWARD**

11. Following the meeting with the Executive Secretary, representatives from the universities continued the meeting with two co-chairs: Mr. Benoît Limoges and Dr. Ole Hendrickson. The final result was the formation of a working group of five individuals, whose mandate is to develop a proposal of working modalities for the collaboration. They will aim to provide the Secretariat with a work plan containing their objectives, both long and short-term goals, and the actions to be taken within the next year. The working group consists of the following individuals: Dr. Céline Nègre, Université de Montréal (Chair); Dr. Nancy Doubleday, Carleton University; Dr. Claude Hamel, UQAM; Dr. Michel Loreau, McGill University; Dr. Philippe Le Prestre, Université de Laval. Given widespread agreement that cooperation should proceed while a work plan is being developed, it was agreed that the next meeting will be held at the Montreal Botanical Garden on 16 May 2007.

12. As a follow-up of the first planning meeting, Carleton University established the Carleton Network on Biodiversity, and a joint statement by the Executive Secretary and the Vice President of Carleton University was signed on 3 October 2006.

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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