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**COORDINATION MECHANISM FOR THE
GLOBAL TAXONOMY INITIATIVE**

Eleventh meeting

Montreal, Canada, 3-4 June 2011

**REPORT OF THE ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE COORDINATION MECHANISM FOR
THE GLOBAL TAXONOMY INITIATIVE**

INTRODUCTION

1. The Conference of the Parties at its tenth meeting requested the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Coordination Mechanism for the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI), national focal points for the Initiative and relevant institutions, bodies and organizations, to develop a comprehensive capacity-building strategy for the Global Taxonomy Initiative at global and regional levels that addresses the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (paragraph 16 of decision X/39).

2. At the tenth meeting of the Coordination Mechanism for the Global Taxonomy Initiative, held at the Nagoya Congress Center in Japan on 24 October 2010, the Executive Secretary was requested to consider organizing the eleventh meeting of the Coordination Mechanism before the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, and preferably before the meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) at which the comprehensive strategy for capacity-building for taxonomy of the GTI would be considered. Accordingly, the Coordination Mechanism of the GTI was convened to collect input from its members on this matter in particular. Other relevant subjects were also included as agenda items for the meeting.

3. The eleventh meeting of the Coordination Mechanism for the GTI was held at the offices of Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Montreal on 3-4 June 2011. The list of participants is annexed below. Some participants participated in the meeting by teleconference and/or submitted their comments in writing. The meeting was convened with the generous financial support of the Government of Japan.

ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

4. A representative of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity opened the meeting at 1.15 p.m. on 3 June 2011. The representative welcomed participants and explained the process of developing the comprehensive capacity-building strategy for the GTI and its possible endorsement by the Convention.

5. Participants then introduced themselves, highlighting their specific interests in the meeting.

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6. The meeting noted apologies from Argentina, Malaysia, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility for their absence due to other commitments. One participant from the Russian Federation could not attend due to health reasons. Canada stated that as the official representative, Mr. Mark Graham, had other commitments, Mr. Robert Hanner of the International Barcode of Life would represent Canada during the eleventh meeting of the Coordination Mechanism. The Coordination Mechanism welcomed Mr. Hanner as the representative for Canada at the meeting.

7. The meeting contained two separate time slots for tele/videoconferencing to collect information and suggestions from members who could not physically participate in the meeting. The members who participated by tele/videoconference, and/or later, in writing, are indicated with an asterisk (*) in the list of participants annexed below.

ITEM 2. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

2.1. Adoption of the agenda

8. Mr. Christoph Häuser, outgoing Chair of the Coordination Mechanism of the GTI, addressed the group and discussed the items on the provisional agenda. It was agreed that the taxonomic indicators to monitor the progress of implementation of the GTI over the period 2011-2020 should be the first item on the agenda so that interested participants who could only attend via teleconference could also join in the discussion.

9. The Coordination Mechanism adopted, with some changes, the provisional agenda that had been circulated as UNEP/CBD/GTI-CM/11/1. Items covered were as follows:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
 - 2.1. Adoption of the agenda;
 - 2.2. Informal brainstorming session;
 - 2.3. Election of officers.
3. Substantive matters:
 - 3.1. Taxonomic indicators to monitor the progress of implementation of the GTI 2011-2020;
 - 3.2. Amendment of the terms of reference for the GTI Coordination Mechanism;
 - 3.3. Standard format for taxonomic needs assessment;
 - 3.4. Training courses planned for 2011 (regional capacity-building training workshops);
 - 3.5. Outreach materials for the GTI;
 - 3.6. Presentation of the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI) logo prepared by Germany;
 - 3.7. Capacity-building strategy for the GTI 2011-2020.
4. Other matters.
5. Closure of the meeting.

2.2. *Informal brainstorming session*

10. A one-hour informal brainstorming session, facilitated by the Secretariat, immediately followed the adoption of the agenda. During that time, participants discussed the state of progress of capacity-building needs for taxonomy, regional needs and opportunities, and a global indicator for taxonomy. Informal discussion of these topics was intended to initiate open dialogue and encourage participants to express their views on existing opportunities and challenges for taxonomy. There appeared to be consensus among members of the Coordination Mechanism on the need move away from the “taxonomic impediment” toward taxonomy as an “imperative”.

2.3. *Election of officers*

11. The Coordination Mechanism of the GTI elected Mr. Mark Graham, Canada, to serve as the Chair of the Coordination Mechanism in 2011 and 2012.

12. It was agreed that the possibility of adding two Co-Chairs, one from a developed and one from a developing country, should be discussed in the next Coordination Mechanism meeting.

13. After the new Chair of the Coordination Mechanism was elected, the meeting was chaired by Mr. Robert Hanner, International Barcode of Life, on behalf of Canada for this meeting, as agreed by the members of the Coordination Mechanism present at the meeting.

ITEM 3. SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS

3.1. *Taxonomic indicators to monitor the progress of implementation of the GTI 2011-2020*

14. At its tenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Coordination Mechanism for the GTI and the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Post-2010 Indicators, to consider developing an indicator in order to assess the progress on the implementation of the programme of work for the Initiative as needed (paragraph 18 of decision X/39).

15. Accordingly, the Executive Secretary, together with the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), BioNET-INTERNATIONAL and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, jointly prepared a draft indicator (and sub-indicators) for taxonomy. UNEP-WCMC presented the draft to the Coordination Mechanism members by teleconference. The presentation addressed how the indicator and sub-indicators for taxonomy were selected, followed by a discussion among members of the Coordination Mechanism on the components upon which the indicator would be based. These included baseline, accuracy of data, objectivity and the unit of measurement used to gauge progress, among other elements. It was agreed that the indicator should address the development and maintenance of species inventories used for decision-making.

16. The members of the Coordination Mechanism expressed their full support in favour of the establishment of an indicator for taxonomy.

17. The Coordination Mechanism requested a review of the first sub-indicator based on discussions, while leaving the second and third sub-indicators as proposed in the draft, and adding a fourth sub-indicator. UNEP-WCMC, BioNET-INTERNATIONAL and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, together with the Secretariat, agreed to make the required revisions.

18. It was noted that the indicator for taxonomy would be presented at the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) Meeting on Indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity being held from 20 to 24 June 2011 in High Wycombe, United Kingdom.¹

3.2. Amendment of the terms of reference for the GTI Coordination Mechanism

19. Participants discussed amendments of the terms of reference for the Coordination Mechanism for the GTI. The original terms of reference for the Coordination Mechanism annexed to decision V/9 indicated only a general mandate to be completed by the timing of the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in April 2002. As decision X/39, adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in October 2010, contained a request to the Executive Secretary to develop a comprehensive capacity-building strategy for the Global Taxonomy Initiative in collaboration with the Coordination Mechanism, there was a revised terms of reference for the Coordination Mechanism to accommodate the additional requirements involved.

20. A draft of the revised terms of reference was prepared by the Executive Secretary in collaboration with the tenth meeting of the Coordination Mechanism, resulting in the draft shown as annex III of UNEP/CBD/GTI-CM/10/3. Notification SCBD/STTM/JM/RH/JSH/75785 (2011-081) of 14 April 2011 called for a peer-review of the draft. Comments were received from Parties (Austria, Belgium, Russia and Sweden) and incorporated in the subsequent draft.

21. There was discussion among the Coordination Mechanism members about how to increase representation by Parties in the Coordination Mechanism. It was noted that lack of funding can constitute a barrier to participation.

22. The Coordination Mechanism also noted the need to identify synergies among activities in support of other programmes of the Convention, including its Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization.

23. The terms of reference were subsequently revised accordingly and the Coordination Mechanism agreed to submit the revised terms of reference to the fifteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 15) as an information document (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/15/INF/5).

3.3. Standard format for taxonomic needs assessment

24. In paragraph 17 of decision X/39, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to develop a standard format for taxonomic needs and capacity assessments for use by Parties.

25. The participating Coordination Mechanism members were asked to review the draft standard format for taxonomic needs and capacity assessments, and it was agreed that participants would provide constructive feedback on the following day.

26. Members of the Coordination Mechanism agreed that the standard format should be divided into two parts. One more general questionnaire would assess taxonomic capacity, and another would be aimed specifically at organizations that have confirmed biological collections. The Coordination Mechanism

¹ The proposal was later presented at the meeting of the AHTEG for indicators (see UNEP/CBD/AHTEG-SP-Ind/1/inf/10). The meeting's report (UNEP/CBD/AHTEG-SP-Ind/1/3) contained the proposed indicator ("Number of maintained species inventories being used to implement the Convention") as an indicator for target 19 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

suggested acknowledging the contributions of the Natural History Museum, United Kingdom, and BioNET-INTERNATIONAL to the development of the prototype of the needs assessment format.

27. It was agreed that the finalized document would be presented as an information document to participants at SBSTTA 15.²

3.4. Training courses planned for 2011 (regional capacity-building workshops)

28. The representative of the Executive Secretary informed the members of the Coordination Mechanism that the generous contribution of the Government of Japan would make it possible to hold two capacity-building workshops for the GTI in 2011. These workshops would be aimed at increasing the awareness of CBD and GTI national focal points about the GTI programme of work and its deliverables. The workshops would enable such focal points to assist Parties to deliver their commitments, for example when reporting on the status of biodiversity in their fifth and sixth national reports.

29. It was noted that priority regions for the workshops in 2011 were Latin America and Africa. It was expected that, subject to the availability of funding, priority regions for 2012 would be Asia and small island developing States (SIDS).

30. It was strongly supported by the Coordination Mechanism that at least two such workshops should be completed by 2014 to facilitate cross-sectoral communication and set the basis for additional workshops until 2020, contingent on funding. These regional training workshops would enable the CBD and GTI national focal points to assist Parties to deliver their commitments and at least two such workshops should be completed by 2014 set the basis for additional workshops until 2020, contingent on funding. These regional workshops would seek to both enhance cross-sectoral communication and strengthen collaboration among experts in the education sector.

3.5. Outreach materials for the GTI

31. Members of the Coordination Mechanism agreed that outreach materials should be closely linked to regional workshops, and that the Coordination Mechanism could work on specific modules for those workshops. Some members suggested that one module should relate taxonomy to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and another module should focus on technical cooperation and research networks. It would be relevant to include case studies, including in relation to access and benefit-sharing and the Nagoya Protocol, particularly Article 8 (a), to promote international technology transfer to build capacity in taxonomy.

32. It was agreed by the members of the Coordination Mechanism that outreach materials should include presentations that explain the basic functions and priorities of the Global Taxonomy Initiative, and that they should also promote a stronger web presence.

33. The Coordination Mechanism agreed that it was necessary for the GTI to undergo a “rebranding” in order to give taxonomy a more positive spin and appeal, thereby shifting the focus away from the taxonomic impediment toward taxonomy as an imperative.

3.6. Presentation of the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI) logo prepared by Germany

34. A member of the Coordination Mechanism, Mr. Christoph Häuser, presented a new logo that was developed by Germany for the website of the Global Taxonomy Initiative. The Coordination Mechanism

² UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/15/INF/4.

thanked Germany for its generosity. It was also suggested by some that members of the Coordination Mechanism should send a more formal thank you note to the Government of Germany.

35. The Coordination Mechanism suggested that the logo be included on the Convention's website for the GTI as an engaging symbol of the GTI. It was agreed that the new GTI logo would be used by Parties, partners or the Secretariat for any occasion relevant to the GTI. These occasions might also include events organized for the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity. It was agreed that the logo could be modified by Parties who wished to use it on their GTI websites as needed. It was suggested that the logo would be registered under a creative commons license.

36. Members also discussed the addition of information to the GTI website to ensure that Parties were made aware of how to cite the new GTI logo, all the while promoting its use.

37. Discussion also ensued regarding the possibility of adding a tagline to the logo that could help to explain what the GTI seeks to achieve. It was agreed that any member of the GTI who had relevant ideas for a tagline would send their suggestions to the Secretariat via email for discussion by the Coordination Mechanism at a subsequent meeting.

3.7. Capacity-building strategy for the GTI 2011-2020

38. In decision X/2 the Conference of the Parties adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 with its Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

39. The Executive Secretary prepared a draft comprehensive capacity-building strategy for the Global Taxonomy Initiative (UNEP/CBD/GTI-CM/11/2) for consultation with the Coordination Mechanism and discussed the elements necessary in a global and regional strategy to develop capacity for the GTI.

40. Several participants who could not be present at the meeting joined this discussion by teleconference so their comments and concerns were reflected in the revised draft comprehensive capacity-building strategy for the GTI. Other members submitted their comments in writing.

41. Participants stressed the need to maintain consistency between the comprehensive capacity-building strategy to be discussed, the existing programme of work for the GTI, and the outcome-oriented deliverables annexed to decision IX/22. They also stressed the need to strike a balance between an ambitious strategy and one that was realistic in its goals, expectations and that also considered the national capacity of Parties to meet expected goals.

42. Each of the operational objectives, targets and planned activities included in the GTI programme of work were considered in the draft comprehensive capacity-building strategy for the GTI, in an effort to establish links between the GTI strategy and other programmes of work.

43. There was a recommendation that Parties should be assisted in improving their infrastructure, which notably included modern tools and up-to-date information.

44. Members of the Coordination Mechanism noted that emphasis should be placed on increasing efforts to promote the description of species in under-studied organisms, taxa and biomes and communicating the results to the public, taking into account that covering all possible taxa and ecosystems did not seem to be realistic. However, it was stressed that the development of databases and species inventories would be instrumental to this effort as it facilitated a wide range of capacity development through collaboration with relevant stakeholders and projects.

45. To overcome the difficulty of covering all taxa, participants suggested designing and developing programmes tied to ecosystem services, including pollinators, or other thematic approaches focusing on biodiversity hotspots, protected areas and invasive alien species.

46. It was noted that a variety of directories highly relevant to the GTI existed, such as the Registry of Biological Repositories (<http://www.biorepositories.org/>), the Biodiversity Collections Index, the Culture Collections information of the World Federation for Culture Collections, the Index Herbariorum, and the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) Components and Services Registry. However, they were not centralized under the GTI. Members of the Coordination Mechanism pointed to the need to develop a centralized registry of existing directories in which people could register their databases. The centralization of data was also relevant to collections-based institutions so that the appropriate attributions could be made.

47. The Coordination Mechanism recommended that collections, including private collections, be registered to help raise their profiles and so that they might eventually find homes.

48. Participants also stressed that global information should be coordinated with national and regional levels of work for biodiversity. Any global species checklist should thereby also be examined at the national level so that Parties could incorporate relevant information appropriately and reflect the use of a broad series of tools and sources of information in their national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs).

49. It was also agreed that taxonomic-needs assessments should be conducted prior to regional workshops as an important tool for understanding the gaps in taxonomic capacity development for the purpose of reflecting such gaps in NBSAPs. It was emphasized that the language used in such workshops should be easily understandable and accessible to stakeholders, including decision makers, GTI and CBD national focal points and others. It was also noted that information resulting from the regional workshops should be centralized by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

50. It was recognized that it was crucial that existing networks, partnerships, local, regional and global institutions be included in the GTI capacity-building strategy and that encouraging their engagement in implementing the GTI and other relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention needed to be a part of the strategy.

51. It was reiterated that indicators for taxonomy were very important to assess and monitor Parties' achievements in taxonomic-capacity development. It was agreed that the indicator and sub-indicators for taxonomy discussed during the meeting be presented to the AHTEG on indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and be reflected in the actions of the capacity-building strategy.

52. The Chair of the SBSTTA Bureau, Ms. Senka Barudanovic, stated positive surprise at how closely aligned the proposed draft of the capacity-building strategy was with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and proposed stressing procurement of human resources to further foster that close relationship. Suggestions were incorporated in the subsequent draft of the capacity-building strategy by members of the Coordination Mechanism.

53. A representative of the Executive Secretary noted that the draft capacity-building strategy approved by the Coordination Mechanism would be presented to the SBSTTA Bureau meeting being held on 5-6 June 2011, for the preliminary review of the Bureau. It was understood that following the meeting additional modifications could be made by the Coordination Mechanism prior to the peer review process. The final draft, reviewed by the Coordination Mechanism followed by the peer review process, could then be submitted to the fifteenth meeting of SBSTTA being held from 7 to 11 November 2011.

ITEM 4. OTHER MATTERS

54. Participants in the meeting expressed the view that full participation of regional representatives in official meetings should be ensured by providing support for travel costs for members from eligible countries.

55. The Coordination Mechanism advised the Executive Secretary to convene physical meetings in the margins of upcoming meetings of SBSTTA and the Conference of the Parties with maximum participation of the regional representatives to follow up the discussion of this meeting. If funding was not sufficient, teleconference or other electronic means should be considered in order to provide further strategic guidance on implementation of the capacity-building strategy when it was approved by the Conference of the Parties.

56. A representative of the Executive Secretary, thanked the outgoing Chair of the Coordination Mechanism, Mr. Christoph Häuser, of Germany for his years of dedicated and instrumental service as Chair of the Coordination Mechanism, and the acting Chair at this meeting, Mr. Robert Hanner, International Barcode of Life, on behalf of Canada, for his tireless encouragement to the members and leading of the discussion with structured views.

ITEM 5. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

57. The meeting was closed by a representative of the Executive Secretary at 11.30 p.m. on 4 June 2011.

*Annex***LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

The following individuals participated in the meeting of the GTI Coordination Mechanism. Not all Coordination Mechanism members were present. Members in this list marked with an asterisk (*) participated either by teleconference or submitted their comments in writing. The full membership of the Coordination Mechanism is provided through the GTI portal at <http://www.cbd.int/gti/coordination.shtml>.

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