

# CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/WG.1/CRP.4  
2 May 2012

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

## SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

Sixteenth meeting

Montreal, 30 April – 5 May 2012

### WORKING GROUP I

Agenda item 7.3

## TECHNICAL AND REGULATORY MATTERS ON GEOENGINEERING IN RELATION TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

### *Draft recommendation submitted by the Co-Chairs*

The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice recommends that the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh meeting adopts a decision along the following lines:

#### *The Conference of the Parties*

1. *Takes note of* the report on the impacts of climate related geoengineering on biological diversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/28) and the study on the regulatory framework of climate-related geoengineering relevant to the Convention on Biological Diversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/29);
2. *Further takes note of* the main messages presented in sections II and III of the note by the Executive Secretary on technical and regulatory matters on geoengineering in relation to the Convention on Biological Diversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/10);
3. *Emphasizes* that anthropogenic climate change should be addressed primarily through rapid and significant reductions in greenhouse-gas emissions from human activities, together with adaptation to those climate-change impacts that are unavoidable, including through ecosystem-based approaches to mitigation and adaptation;
4. *Notes* the following definitions of climate-related geoengineering:
  - (a) Any technologies that deliberately reduce solar insolation or increase carbon sequestration from the atmosphere on a large scale that may affect biodiversity (excluding carbon capture and storage from fossil fuels when it captures carbon dioxide before it is released into the atmosphere) (decision X/33 of the Conference of the Parties);
  - (b) Deliberate intervention in the planetary environment of a nature and scale intended to counteract anthropogenic climate change and its impacts (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/10);
  - (c) Deliberate large-scale manipulation of the planetary environment (IPCC 32<sup>nd</sup> session);
5. *Notes* that many geoengineering techniques do not meet basic criteria for effectiveness, safety and affordability, are difficult to deploy or govern and have not been well researched;
6. *Further notes* that, there remain significant gaps in the understanding of the impacts of climate-related geoengineering on biodiversity, including:
  - (a) The overall effectiveness of techniques to counteract anthropogenic climate change, based on realistic estimates of their scalability;
  - (b) How the possible geoengineering techniques are likely to affect weather and climate at the national, regional and global levels;
  - (c) How biodiversity, ecosystems and their services are likely to be affected by and respond to geoengineering activities;

(d) The intended and unintended effects of different possible geoengineering techniques on biodiversity;

(e) The socio-economic, cultural and ethical issues associated with possible geoengineering techniques, including global justice, the unequal spatial distribution of impacts, benefits and risks, and intergenerational equity;

(f) The cost effectiveness of geoengineering approaches.

7. *Notes* that the fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change will consider different geoengineering options, their scientific basis and associated uncertainties, the potential impacts on human and natural systems, risks, research gaps and the suitability of existing governance mechanisms and a Synthesis Report will be available in September 2014 and that this process is expected to prepare a comprehensive assessment of the scientific and technical evidence that could inform decision-making;

8. *Reaffirms* paragraph 8 (w) of decision X/33 and *requests* Parties to report on measures undertaken in accordance with this paragraph and on any climate-related geoengineering activities with potential impacts on biodiversity;

9. *Reaffirming* paragraph 8 (x) of decision X/33, *notes* resolution LC-LP.2 (2010) of the London Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, 1972 and its 1996 Protocol, adopting the “Assessment Framework for Scientific Research Involving Ocean Fertilization”, and *further notes* the ongoing consideration by the Intersessional Working Group on Ocean Fertilization of marine-based geoengineering issues that fall within the scope of the London Convention and Protocol;

10. *Notes* that customary international law, including the obligation to avoid causing significant transboundary harm and the obligation to conduct environmental impact assessments where there is risk of such harm, as well as the application of the precautionary approach, may be relevant for geoengineering activities but would still form an incomplete basis for global regulation;

11. *Further notes* of the potential relevance of work done under the auspices of existing treaties and organizations for the governance of potential geoengineering activities, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the London Convention and its Protocol, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and its Montreal Protocol, and regional conventions, as well as the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization;

12. *Notes* the lack of a comprehensive science-based, global, transparent and effective framework for climate-related geoengineering, and *recognizes* that the need for such a framework is most necessary for those geoengineering concepts that have a potential to cause significant adverse transboundary effects, and those deployed in areas beyond national jurisdiction and the atmosphere;

13. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to transmit the reports referred to in paragraph 1 above, to the secretariats of the treaties and organizations referred to in paragraph 11 above as well as the Convention on the Prohibition of Military and Other Hostile Uses of Environment Modification Techniques (ENMOD), the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, the Outer Space Treaty, the Antarctic Treaty System, the United Nations Council on Human Rights and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Committee on World Food Security for their information;

14. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with relevant organizations;

(a) To compile information reported by Parties referred to in paragraph 8 above, and make it available through the clearing-house mechanism;

(b) To update information on the potential impacts of geoengineering techniques on biodiversity, and on the regulatory framework of climate-related geoengineering relevant to the

Convention on Biological Diversity, drawing upon, *inter alia*, the IPCC Synthesis Report on geoengineering;

(c) Building on the overview of the views and experiences of indigenous and local communities and stakeholders (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/30), to solicit the further views of indigenous peoples, local communities, and stakeholders, taking account gender considerations, on the potential impacts of geoengineering on biodiversity, with particular attention to sustainable use, socio-economic and cultural rights, and the right to food.

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