



Convention on Biological Diversity

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SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

Sixteenth meeting

Montreal, 30 April - 5 May 2012

Item 7.3 of the provisional agenda*

RECOMMENDATION ADOPTED BY THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE AT ITS SIXTEENTH MEETING

XVI/9. Technical and regulatory matters on geoengineering in relation to the Convention on Biological Diversity

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), the study on the regulatory framework of climate-related geoengineering relevant to the Convention on Biological Diversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/29) and the overview of the views and experiences of indigenous and local communities and stakeholders (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/30);

2. *Further takes note of* the main messages presented in 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);

Option 1

[3. *Emphasizes* that [anthropogenic climate change should be addressed primarily] [the priority is to tackle anthropogenic climate change] 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;]

Option 2

[3. *Emphasizes* that the priority is to tackle anthropogenic climate change through reductions in greenhouse-gas emissions from human activities, together with adaptation to those climate-change impacts that are unavoidable;]

* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/1.

4. *Notes* that climate-related geoengineering may be defined as:

(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/or its impacts (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/10);

(c) Deliberate large-scale manipulation of the planetary environment (IPCC 32nd session);

(d) Technological efforts to stabilize the climate system by direct intervention in the energy balance of the Earth for reducing global warming (IPCC Fourth Assessment Report¹).

5. *Notes* the findings contained in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/28, that there is no single geoengineering approach that currently meets basic criteria for effectiveness, safety and affordability, and that approaches may prove difficult to deploy or govern;

6. *Further notes* that, there remain significant gaps in the understanding of the impacts of climate-related geoengineering on biodiversity, including:

(a) How biodiversity and ecosystem services are likely to be affected by and respond to geoengineering activities at different geographic scales;

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

(c) The socio-economic, cultural and ethical issues associated with possible geoengineering techniques, including the unequal spatial and temporal distribution of impacts.

7. *Recognizes* that the IPCC, as the body whose purpose is to provide comprehensive assessments of the scientific and technical evidence of issues relating to climate change and its impacts, will consider, in its fifth Assessment Report, 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 *requests* SBSTTA to review the Synthesis Report when it becomes available in September 2014 and report on implications for the Convention on Biological Diversity to the Conference of Parties;

8. *Reaffirms* paragraph 8 (w) of decision X/33 and *invites* Parties to report on measures undertaken in accordance with this paragraph;

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”;

[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;]

¹ Noting that this definition includes solar radiation management but does not encompass other geoengineering techniques.

11. *Further notes* 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;

Option 1

[12. *Further notes* that the need for a comprehensive science-based, global, transparent and effective mechanism may be most relevant for those geoengineering concepts that have a potential to cause significant adverse transboundary effects, and those deployed in areas beyond national jurisdiction and in the atmosphere;]

Option 2

[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, to:

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

(b) Invite the IPCC to include an in-depth consideration of biodiversity when addressing geoengineering in its fifth Assessment Report;

15. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary to prepare, provide for its peer-review and submit to a future meeting of SBSTTA for its consideration:

(a) An update 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 all relevant reports such as the IPCC's fifth Assessment Report;

(b) An overview of the further views of indigenous and local communities [and other stakeholders] on the potential impacts of geoengineering on biodiversity, and associated social, economic and cultural impacts, taking into account gender considerations, and building on the overview of the views and experiences of indigenous and local communities (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/30).