

# Eleventh Meeting of the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions

Monday 11 April, 2011 10:00 am – 3:00 pm  
UNCCD Headquarters, Langer Eugen-Room 2712, Bonn, Germany

Chair: Luc Gnacadja, UNCCD Executive Secretary

## Opening of the meeting

1. The eleventh meeting of the Joint Liaison Group (JLG) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2011 at the UNCCD Secretariat premises in Bonn. The host of the meeting, Mr. Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, chaired the meeting.
2. Mr. Gnacadja, opened the meeting welcoming all participants (see annex 1 for the list of participants). In opening the meeting, Mr. Gnacadja stated that the meeting offers an opportunity to consider the requests made by the respective decision-making bodies to the different convention secretariats. Ms Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC secretariat, mentioned that this JLG meeting was relevant for the identification of concrete ways to move forward, guided by common principles for the conventions secretariats. Mr. Ahmed Djoglaf, Executive Secretary of the CBD secretariat, shared his views on the full engagement that parties have envisaged for the JLG and that great progress has been made by staff of the three secretariats over the past years on coordinated approaches.
3. The executive secretaries of the Rio Conventions adopted the agenda for the JLG11 meeting as presented in annex II. The main objective of the meeting was to take stock of the activities agreed at the previous meeting of the Joint Liaison Group and to clarify how to address proposals for joint activities as an outcome of mandates given to the JLG by the respective COPs. This would be done with a view to defining common principles and terms of reference for the JLG as further elaborated under item 2 below.

## Item 2: Stocktaking and purpose of the JLG: an overview

4. Ms. Figueres highlighted that there is a need to exchange, agree upon and define the common framework, common purpose and guiding principles of work for the JLG, taking into account that the main objective should be to support Parties in their efforts to implement the respective conventions. The common framework could be built on the following components:

**Principle 1:** The JLG is not an implementation body. Its purpose is to exchange information with the aim to support Parties in implementing the conventions and in addressing desertification, loss of biodiversity and climate change. There is a differentiation of the level of activity that can clearly be distinguished: (a) The conventions level; (b) the secretariats level and (c) the Parties efforts and policies

to address the objectives of the UNFCCC, UNCCD and CBD at the national level. It should be recognized that it is at the national level where synergies can best be implemented. Therefore the JLG should focus its attention on how to support activities by Parties at the national level.

**Principle 2:** Fundamental respect for the existing differences in the *modus operandi* among the Conventions secretariats. There are three different mandates given to the secretariats; therefore the secretariats need to respect the fact that each secretariat functions according to the modalities defined by its Parties. The secretariats should also be careful with regards to JLG documentation (for example in the use of logos) which should be approved and agreed upon by all three secretariats prior to external use.

**Principle 3:** Aim at decreasing, not increasing the level of bureaucracy at the secretariats. Decreasing the level of bureaucracy would mean in practice to follow an issue-based approach, which would also be realistic in always considering whether funding for planned activities would be available.

**Principle 4:** Reducing costs. The aim of the secretariats' collaboration should be to make work easier for the respective country Parties.

**Principle 5:** Actions need to be realistic in terms of time implications and funding, having clear funding or envisage concrete fundraising (good sense of getting the funding); this issue should be part of the collaboration among the secretariats.

5. Mr. Ahmed Djoglaf indicated his full agreement and positive response to the principles spelled out by Ms. Figueres and suggested that a Terms of Reference (ToR) for the JLG should be developed, which would outline those principles and further define the *modus operandi* of the JLG such as the periodicity of the meetings, the rotation of the chair and the guiding principles. This ToR should be shared with the Parties to each convention, to help creating a common understanding by Parties under each Convention on the role and functions of the JLG. This may help avoid the situation in which the JLG receives diverse or conflicting requests from Parties from the different conventions. He stressed that the JLG is not an implementing body, nor the representative of the conventions, and not a substitute to the Parties. With respect to Rio+20 he added that the JLG may provide advice to governments, as appropriate, by highlighting progress in the implementation of the conventions.
6. With the endorsement of Mr. Gnacadja on the common purpose of the conventions, it was agreed that the ToR for the JLG should be developed within the next three months in a cooperative fashion among the three secretariats, and shall be discussed at the next JLG meeting, to be held in a videoconference format, during the first week of July 2011. After that, the same will be presented to Parties to each convention.

### **Item 3: Options for joint implementation of the NAPs, NBSAPS and NAPAs/NAPs on a pilot basis**

7. Mr. Djoghlafl informed the meeting that after the adoption of the Aichi targets, the main challenge for CBD is to translate those targets into action plans, since most of the Parties' NBSAPS are out of date. The CBD is in the advantageous situation to have received 10

Million US Dollars of funding from Japan to support this process and is now aiming at addressing this task through a series of regional and sub-regional workshops. The aim is that with these workshops a revision of NBSAPs could be finalized for CBD's COP 11 in November 2012. He then passed the floor to Ms. Jaime Webbe who shared that CBD was successful in mobilizing 50,000 US Dollars as additional start-up funding to support synergy in the implementation of the Rio conventions. She informed the meeting that CBD and UNCCD have agreed to move forward jointly on this initiative and have started discussions on dates and venues for a series of sub-regional workshops aiming to seize the opportunity to bring together at national level participants who represent national level experts for the three conventions. A discussion among focal points for these issues of each secretariat took place at the sidelines of this JLG meeting to discuss further details on schedules, curricula, etc. Ms. Webbe highlighted that the reason why this issue was brought to the JLG was for the UNFCCC secretariat to consider the possibilities for joining this capacity-building initiative by taking part in some of the workshops.

8. Since UNCCD had prepared additional information on the ongoing initiative of piloting joint implementation of NAPs and NAPAs in some selected LDC countries., Mr. Sergio Zelaya briefed the meeting on this initiative to further support the discussion. In his presentation, he pointed out that discussions have been ongoing between the two secretariats since 2008 on this initiative. However, since funding for only one pilot country could be secured, it was decided that this pilot activity would be set aside and instead the JLG would focus on the CBD-CCD capacity-building for updating NBSAPs and NAPAs.
9. Mr. Desanker informed the meeting that the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) of the UNFCCC is revising a paper on guidelines for promoting synergies amongst multilateral environmental agreements that is part of the annotated guidelines for the preparation of NAPAs. In this context, the LEG would make such a paper available as a contribution towards future regional workshops. He also noted that this is an issue of practical implementation and not a policy matter for the JLG.
10. It was agreed that this initiative of sub-regional and regional capacity building workshops presents a unique opportunity to promote synergies in implementation of the Rio conventions through a combined process of review, alignment and elaboration of their planning instruments. Ms. Figueres emphasized that, given the resources available and the feasibility of this proposal, the NAP-NAPA pilot initiative should be taken as part of the capacity-building workshops, to be implemented if funding is available, as mentioned by Mr. Zelaya, or could be set aside and the focus shifted to other efforts. She confirmed that the UNFCCC secretariat will be participating in the meeting of the focal points of the secretariats on the capacity building initiative as proposed by Mr. Djoglaf. At that moment, the respective focal points of the secretariats left the meeting to start, in parallel, the working group on the initiative.

#### **Item 4: Cooperation on Gender Integration into Thematic Areas**

11. Ms. Figueres briefed the meeting on the outcome of UNFCCC COP in Cancun with regards to gender and underlined that the Cancun Agreement included mandates on the integration of gender under six thematic areas. She invited Ms. June Budhooram to share some additional information on the concept note that was presented for consideration by the JLG, which contained proposals to address gender integration in the three following areas:

- (a) Target political commitment at highest level to recognize the importance of integrating gender aspects
  - i. One option could be to report to the UN Chief Executive Board (CEB)
  - ii. Another activity would entail the creation of a political platform
- (b) Cluster the activities for increased impact and common messaging on gender
  - i. The workshop in Costa Rica is one example of such activity
  - ii. Joint side events at the COPs should be planned
  - iii. Organisation of an event at Rio+20 at which the three Conventions report to Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Head of UNWomen
- (c) Take the opportunity of the ongoing revision and alignment process of the NAP, NAPA and NBSAP to ensure gender mainstreaming and gender-proofing as part of the capacity building process.

Mr. Djoglaf welcomed the initiative of the UNFCCC secretariat and informed that the CBD secretariat had a mandate from its COP to mainstream gender and for this purpose has had a gender focal point in place since 2008. He raised a concern that reporting to CEB might not be well perceived by other agencies, which also have a mandate to work on gender. He emphasized that priority should be given to the third proposed area on mainstreaming gender in revised and aligned NAPAs, NAPs and NBSAPs. With regards to planned activities in the second proposed area, he highlighted that activities planned to showcase gender integration at Rio+20 could be undertaken within the context of the Ecosystem Pavilion. He further offered that a CBD-related magazine titled "Satoyama" could be transformed into a joint magazine of the Rio Conventions, and proposed that a special edition on Gender could be published for the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Rio Conventions.

- 12. It was agreed by the three executive secretaries that Gender should be showcased in the context of the Ecosystem Pavilion at each COP, that a joint side event on gender is organized and the report of such event be forwarded to Ms. Michelle Bachelet. The executive secretaries highlighted that a special edition of the Satoyama magazine could be published on the occasion of the Conventions' 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary (at Rio+20). The executive secretaries agreed that the magazine shall be published in various formats (online and hardcopy) and the title of the magazine shall be reconsidered.
- 13. It was also agreed that the gender focal points of the three Conventions should prepare a workplan on the above-mentioned activities and coordinate follow-up actions for its implementation.

#### **Item 5: Preparation of Rio 2012 Summit**

- 14. Mr. Djoghlafl briefed the meeting on the proposal for a simultaneous Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the Conferences of the Parties to the Rio Conventions at the Earth Summit 2012 (Rio+20). Based on the background document prepared for this agenda item. Mr.

Gnacadjia, suggested to also discuss alternatives to the proposal to hold an Ex-COP at the sidelines or Rio+20, such as to organize a meeting of the Bureaus or a high level event.

15. Ms. Figueres felt the proposal to organize a simultaneous Ex-COP was not realistic, highlighting the procedural, practical and operational difficulties and the political risks involved. She also stated that the alternative suggestion to hold a joint meeting of the Bureaus is not a feasible option, since the mandate and procedures of the Bureaus are very particular and differ from Convention to Convention, with UNFCCC Bureaus having a focus largely on procedural issues. Ms. Figueres emphasized that she supports the idea to target the inclusion of text on synergies among Rio Conventions and encouraging Parties to align their implementation of the three Rio Conventions as part of the outcome of the Rio+20 summit, which will be a focused political document. She underlined this text should be folded into a ministerial declaration. The text should thus be prepared by the secretariats, and provided to the UNCSD secretariat as input into the Rio+20 process for its inclusion into the political declaration and referenced by Heads of State and Government.
16. Mr. Djoglaf suggested that the three secretariats of the Rio Conventions together with the CSD Secretariat could organize a breakfast to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the three Conventions. The celebration should aim to bring together the incoming and outgoing COP presidents of the Rio Conventions, as well as the host president.
17. It was agreed to organize a breakfast at the sidelines of Rio+20 to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rio Conventions, aiming to win some high level champions to support the draft negotiation text on synergies among Rio Conventions. It was further agreed that showcasing on gender shall be integrated into the Ecosystem Pavilion, and that the pavilion and the special edition of the magazine could be launched at the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, should the timing suit.
18. Mr. Djoglaf briefed the meeting on the Pavilion based on the background document prepared for this agenda item. He welcomed the proposal to invite heads of state to get involved in the Ecosystem Pavilion at Rio+20. Mr. Gnacadja thanked Mr. Djoglaf for leading this initiative and recognized the successful implementation of the Ecosystem Pavilion so far. He highlighted that in the context of Rio+20 it would be important to agree on a confined set of themes and propose them to the partners of the Pavilion. He underlined that the three suggested thematic clusters (oceans, food and water security, and forests) need to be carefully considered and suggested to exclude the thematic cluster on oceans from the proposed list and keep the focus on forests and Food and Water Security and Sustainable Land Management. Mr. Kevin Grose argued that the theme(s) should be anchored in strategic thinking linked to how the Conventions can reinforce perceptions of delivering common benefits.
19. It was agreed to (1) focus the Ecosystem Pavilion on the themes of Forests and Food and Water Security and Sustainable Land Management and to include gender integration in the ecosystem pavilion; (2) Organize and invite to a breakfast for the celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conventions, focusing on synergy and inviting in-coming and outgoing presidencies of the respective COPs; (3) to request to the UNCSD Secretariat to add these issues into the official agenda of Rio+20 and to reach out to the office of the Secretary-General to assess whether these events could be included in his agenda for Rio+20.

#### **Item 6: Exchanges between the scientific subsidiary bodies of the Rio Conventions**

20. Based on the documentation prepared by the UNCCD secretariat, Ms. Elysabeth David presented to the meeting some options on how to improve exchanges between the scientific subsidiary bodies of the Rio Conventions, many of which were of institutional nature. Ms. Rocio Lichte, the UNFCCC secretariat focal point for science, suggested to focus on scientific and technical themes per se that the three Rio Conventions share in common, and avoiding involving institutional structures or creating additional mechanisms, thereby keeping a low level of bureaucracy. She further suggested that since the scientific work and observations on climate change is undertaken by the research and scientific community outside the Convention, and then brought into the UNFCCC process, it may be useful for the JLG to consider how to catalyze cooperation and synergy in activities by relevant institutions and organizations in ways that their work may contribute to all three Conventions, where relevant. Mr. Djoglaf agreed that thinking about mechanisms of cooperation should be based on identification of topics that the three Rio Conventions want to address jointly. The executive secretaries agreed on addressing common thematic issues instead of placing institutional cooperation as a premise; i.e. to take an issue-based approach as a basis for cooperation on scientific matters.
21. The JLG took note of the proposal made during the last meeting of GEF/STAP held in March 2011 to have the STAP convene a meeting among chairpersons of the scientific subsidiary bodies of the conventions to develop an action plan for collaboration.

#### **Item 7: Harmonization of reporting requirements by Parties**

22. Based on the documentation prepared by the UNCCD secretariat on that agenda item, Mr. Massimo Candelori informed the meeting of the mandate the UNCCD COP gave to the Secretariat to harmonize and facilitate the reporting requirements of the Parties to the Rio Conventions. He highlighted the specific invitation of the COP to the JLG to provide technical assistance relating to the UNCCD 10-Year Strategic Programme 2008-2028, particularly on outcome 2.5 and impact indicator SO 4-4, which measures the contributions from innovative sources of funding, such as ecosystem services. He outlined the various options, which could enhance synergy in reporting and underlined that national level synergy through enhanced cooperation and data-management seems to be the most feasible option. At global level, linkages between data management systems, information portals and glossaries could be elaborated. He further informed about the initiative of the GEF aiming to produce a joint reporting template to be launched at Rio+20.
23. Mr. Djoglaf stated that for CBD harmonized reporting is only of interest if modular reporting on specific themes is considered as an option. He informed the meeting that CBD has decided that the fifth and sixth reporting cycle will focus on reporting on the implementation of the NBSAPs to feed in the midterm evaluation on 2012. He suggested that the UNCCD could as well select a reporting theme related to the implementation of their Action Plans. Mr. Candelori informed the meeting that UNCCD secretariat is not in a position to select a reporting theme as such, since the United Nations Common Coding System (UNCCS) has just finalized developing the set of 18 performance indicators. He further explained that since UNCCD is in the process of developing impact indicators, there is some potential for harmonization especially since some of the indicators have

clear linkages to climate change or biodiversity, such as for example the areas affected by land degradation, or carbon storage above and below ground.

24. Ms. Figueres took note of the GEF initiative and pointed out that it would be very difficult to harmonize reporting under the UNFCCC, given the focus of information on climate and related to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and removals. Nevertheless, some raw data might be used to create information for reporting to the other Conventions and Parties should be encouraged to use the same raw data and to establish coordinated or joint data-management systems. She highlighted that the UNFCCC does not have a definition on innovative sources of funding and therefore it is not in a position to provide any technical assistance in this regard.
25. Mr. Candelori informed that the UNCCD secretariat is in the process of developing a glossary as part of the Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS) reporting portal and would welcome comments and inputs from the other Conventions with a view to harmonize the definitions. Ms. Figueres indicated that the UNFCCC has a glossary on its web-site comprising more than 200 definitions negotiated by Parties and that it might be difficult to change any such definitions. Mr. Djoglaf advised that no such list exists under the CBD.
26. It was agreed that UNCCD will share their glossary with the secretariats of the other conventions for their input and will also consider the UNFCCC glossary in order to increase consistency to the extent possible or otherwise create linkages pointing out the differences in conceptual understanding of the same terms. It was also agreed that UNCCD will share with the JLG the document on harmonized reporting, which will be prepared for COP 10 in response to the mandate given by its Parties.

#### **Item 8: Outreach and Communication**

27. Ms. Yukie Hori from the UNCCD secretariat informed the meeting about the ongoing and planned joint outreach and communication activities among the three Conventions. Noting that communication and outreach is one of the areas where the secretariats' cooperation is quite dynamic, she noted that the opportunities have been further increased since last year by the implementation of the Rio Conventions' Ecosystems and Climate Change Pavilion initiative. She also highlighted the need for continuous collaboration to develop joint activities and messages to promote the UN Decade for Deserts and Fight against Desertification (2010-2020) and the UN Decade on Biodiversity (2011-2020).
28. Ms. Hori recalled that the last JLG meeting postponed the decision on the updating needs of two JLG brochures produced jointly, "Adaptation: Under the frameworks of the CBD, the UNCCD and the UNFCCC" and "Forests: Climate Change, Biodiversity and Land Degradation." She added that, in view of increasing cooperation opportunities such as the Rio+20, a consideration could be given to a new JLG brochure on common interests, such as business and gender. The Executive Secretaries saw the usefulness of updating the existing brochures. Mr. Gnacadja suggested making the update of the forest brochure a priority, considering that this is the International Year of Forest and the focal Ministry for the UNCCD COP10 is Korea Forest Service. The Executive Secretaries also agreed to publish a new brochure under the theme gender. Mr. Kevin Grose of the UNFCCC secretariat suggested that these brochures should also be available digitally.

29. Further, the CBD secretariat introduced a proposal on a joint workshop on synergies in the area of technologies for (i) adaptation to climate change; (ii) sustainable land management; and (iii) the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Mr. Djoglaf informed the meeting that the CBD secretariat received a mandate from its COP to harness experience from UNFCCC workshops on technology transfer and that there is funding available to organize a workshop for the three conventions bringing together experts on technology transfer. He noted that the workshop should be organized in the framework of technology transfer rather than on awareness raising. The JLG welcomed this proposal and offer from Mr. Djoglaf.
30. Mr. Kevin Grose from the UNFCCC secretariat pointed out that the 2012 Rio Conventions Calendar to be prepared this year has a focus on technology and sustainable development and that the outcomes of this workshop could feature in the introduction of the Executive Secretaries to the Rio Convention Calendar, if the content is received in time. Mr. Djoglaf pointed out that in 2012 the Rio Calendar could be dedicated to commemorating the anniversary of the Rio Conventions that may be usefully referenced in the introduction. He further welcomed the proposal to coordinate activities of the Conventions contributing to the achievement of the goals of the two mentioned UN Decades. He further informed the meeting that the CBD secretariat has launched a business forum at CBD COP 10 in Nagoya and plans to hold a second business forum in conjunction with the high level segment of CBD COP 11 in India. In line with the envisaged capacity workshop on transfer of technology the theme of the second business forum will be technologies for sustainable development and biodiversity.
31. Ms. Figueres noted that the UNFCCC secretariat will soon begin to develop a strategy to further enhance private sector engagement in the UNFCCC process. Ms. Hanna Hoffmann from the UNFCCC secretariat informed the meeting that, during a recent exchange in the context of the Private Sector Initiative of the Nairobi Work Programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change with IUCN's Director General who had recently been appointed to the Board of the UN Global Compact, she learned that the Joint Inspection Unit of the UN is currently looking into the activities of the Global Compact, and suggested that it may be interesting to consider the related outcome when elaborating further activities towards Rio+20. Mr. Gnacadja informed the meeting that the UNCCD secretariat is also planning the organization of a business forum for the next COP 10 in the Republic of Korea and will be able to provide more detailed information on this at the next JLG meeting. It was agreed to continue exchanges on private sector involvement.

#### **Item 9: Closing and next meeting**

32. With regards to the next meeting, Mr. Gnacadja recalled that it had been agreed to have a videoconference during the first week of July in 2011. As the Chair, the UNCCD will develop a draft agenda and coordinate for the timing. He thanked Ms. Figueres and Mr. Djoglaf for their continued collaboration. Both also joined in thanking the chair for hosting this meeting.

#### **Annex 1: List of Participants**

#### **Annex II: Agenda of the meeting**