

Twelfth Meeting of the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions

22 January 2013

**15:00 – 17:00 hrs, Room LE-1013
Langer Eugen building, UN Campus
Bonn, Germany**

Chair: Christiana Figueres, UNFCCC

1. Welcome and opening

1. Ms. Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in her capacity of Chair of the 12th meeting of the Joint Liaison Group (JLG) opened the meeting by welcoming Mr. Braulio Dias and Mr. Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretaries of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), respectively.
2. The minutes from the 11th meeting of the JLG were considered by the JLG as adopted.
3. In her welcome remarks, Ms Figueres expressed her desire for the JLG to seek better communication and coordination among the three Executive Secretaries, and to have greater impact on the national level, while also being aware of the scarce resources available. She noted that the JLG should seek to attain results that each secretariat cannot attain individually.

2. Adoption of the agenda

4. The draft agenda was adopted with two additions:
5. It was proposed to add a sub-item under agenda item 3 for Mr. Dias to inform on the progress made on the call for Ecosystem Restoration (Hyderabad call) launched in Hyderabad, India during the CBD COP11.
6. It was proposed to add a sub-item under agenda item 6, other matters, to discuss ways to engage with and inform in a coordinated manner the various processes towards the post-2015 development agenda currently underway in New York.

3. Reports and updates

3.1 General report (overview of JLG-related activities during 2012)

7. It was noted that since JLG 11 a number of activities have been undertaken. Mr. Gnacadja provided a summary report of these joint actions:
 - 7.1.1. The TOR of the JLG were developed following JLG 11, including a common vision for collaboration, and it was agreed to bring them to the attention of the respective constituencies of the Conventions;
 - 7.1.2. The joint Rio Conventions Calendar was prepared and issued;

- 7.1.3. The Rio Conventions Pavilion has been present at COPs of each Convention and in Rio for the Rio+20 summit;
- 7.1.4. Cooperation on gender has continued among the three secretariats;
- 7.1.5. Activities in Rio+20 included a joint statement of the three Executive Secretaries and the respective COP Presidents of each Convention.
- 7.1.6. Work in regards to consultation among secretariats on harmonization on reporting has taken place.
- 7.1.7. Work on capacity-building has been carried out with limitations as there were challenges in the implementation.
- 7.1.8. The JLG members noted with satisfaction the joint action undertaken during the period.

3.2 CBD: report on COP 11, Hyderabad, India & Ecosystem Restoration Call

8. Mr. Dias provided an overview on the progress achieved at CBD's COP 11, where a major focus was on implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 – 2020 and support needed for Parties to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. COP 11 adopted a decision on resource mobilization, including a target to double international financial flows to support implementation of the Strategic Plan by 2015¹.
9. There were also discussions related to climate change, including decisions on geo-engineering, ocean acidification and REDD-plus and biodiversity safeguards. The REDD+ discussions took cognisance of developments under the UNFCCC so as to align the approaches on safeguards under the UNFCCC and CBD.
10. Another important decision related to marine biodiversity and conservation in oceans, including the identification of ecologically or biologically significant areas beyond national jurisdiction.
11. The Nagoya Protocol, which received attention at COP 11, needs 38 more ratifications to enter into force (90 days after the necessary number of ratifications is reached, the Protocol will enter into force). There were also discussions on minimal legislation necessary for ratification of the Nagoya Protocol.
12. The CBD Secretariat launched - with the support of the other two Rio Conventions - a call on ecosystem restoration in the Rio Conventions Pavilion, which Mr. Dias noted may be an issue that could galvanize action by the three Rio Conventions. The COP adopted decision XI/16 aimed at helping Parties to achieve Aichi Target 15 (e.g. 15% of degraded ecosystems should be restored by 2020) by providing some guidance on ecosystem restoration. Target 15 urges Parties to conserve and restore biodiversity in order to contribute to combating climate change and land degradation.
13. Mr. Dias had discussions with ALBA countries in regards to REDD-plus and indigenous peoples. He noted the need to see how to take on board their concerns.

¹ Decision XI/4 . The decision to double financial flows is referenced against a baseline of the average of financial flows between 2006 and 2010.

14. As regards the participation at the Global Soil Week, he noted that since then (November 2012) he has been having conversations with delegations whereby he is highlighting that issues of soil conservation can be addressed under the existing Conventions and whether it would be necessary to seek a new Convention on this issue.
15. The CBD will have two meetings of the SBSTTA before its next COP, in October 2013 and in June 2014. There will also be a meeting of the intergovernmental committee on the Nagoya Protocol (ICNP). An upcoming meeting in Switzerland of Friends of CBD will look at how to better engage stakeholder groups, how to support on implementation best, and how to enhance information on implementation. Mr. Dias noted his desire to do more regional and sub-regional workshops and have a follow-up process to these, strengthening cooperation with regional institutions. He suggested that the three Conventions could benefit from these workshops.
16. Mr. Dias noted that there has been too much focus on indicators for the environmental community, but that it is now necessary to translate these for the development community.
17. The CBD Secretariat informed as well that they are also expecting to recruit a new Gender focal point soon.
18. Ms. Figueres took the opportunity to congratulate Mr. Dias on his approach to COP 11 and the need to keep in mind that implementation is important. If progress is made, the ambition can be raised. She encouraged the JLG to maintain a 'can-do' attitude.
19. On the call on Ecosystem Restoration, Mr. Dias expressed that this could be something useful to address in the JLG in the future and posed the following questions to the other secretariats: Where do you see opportunities for action? Could you share your views? What could be some next steps?
20. The JLG members agreed action on the issues raised by Mr. Dias was to exchange ideas, and to explore possible consideration of taking up action undertaken on these issues at the next JLG meeting.

3.3 UNCCD: preparations for CST-3, Fortaleza, Brazil

21. Mr. Gnacadja provided an overview of the preparations for the upcoming meetings of the UNCCD subsidiary bodies: the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), including the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference, and the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC). The CST S-3 was originally planned for early February in Fortaleza, Brazil. However, it was needed to postpone it and the meeting will now be held in Bonn during April 2013.
22. The thematic topic to be considered by the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference is "Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas". The results of the conference will be brought to the attention of the CST S-3.
23. It was highlighted that the CRIC 11 session will, for the first time discuss reports submitted by Parties using both, performance indicators (investment at country level targeting desertification and drought) and impact indicators. It was noted that there are 11 impact indicators under the UNCCD, 2 of which are mandatory and 9 indicators are optional. There is on-going work on

the refinement of the optional indicators. Establishing indicators has been a lengthy process which has also included a big effort in collecting data.

24. In summary Mr. Gnacadja informed that the CRIC 11 will be held on the 3rd week of April (15-19 April 2013) in Bonn and the UNCCD COP 11 will be held in September 2013 (16-27 September 2013). There are two offers for hosting the next COP: one from Namibia, the other one from China.
25. The JLG members took note of the issues raised by Mr. Gnacadja and commended him for these as well as wished the UNCCD all the success in these meetings.

3.4 UNFCCC: report on COP 18/CMP8 in Doha, Qatar

26. In regards to COP 18/CMP 8, Ms. Figueres noted that the political possibilities that had been expected after an in-depth analysis were achieved. She noted that there were also some unexpected decisions, all of which contributed to good progress in Doha.
27. Ms. Figueres noted as well that there were three main negotiation tracks. In this regards, the AWG-LCA track closed and has now moved to its implementation phase, although many groups established under this track have already been working for some time. On the Kyoto protocol, negotiations reaching agreement on its 2nd Commitment Period also closed. Regarding the third negotiating track, Ms. Figueres explained that the ADP has 2 workstreams: raising ambition right away, and reaching a universal climate agreement by 2015. Now these two issues are the main focus of the negotiations. The Conference in Doha also gave several new mandates to the secretariat, which is now looking into ways to deliver on all these mandates and also deliver on other issues of strategic importance to its work. The UNFCCC secretariat is now looking into fostering a culture of innovation and efficiency.
28. The next UNFCCC COP will be in Poland in mid-November 2013, and the secretariat is planning for the 3 year period and the respective COPs towards the 2015 agreement.
29. The interest in the finalization of the World Conference Center in Bonn was discussed by the JLG. Mr. Gnacadja noted that it may be possible to host a UNCCD COP in Bonn, but due to the involved costs it is more attractive for the UNCCD to accept potential offers from Parties to host the COP. It was noted that so far, it is not in all cases convenient to carry out meetings in Bonn as it is less expensive to hold meetings in Geneva due to costly arrangements with the City of Bonn. While there are advantages for the UNCCD secretariat's work to have meetings in Bonn, the cost aspect makes Geneva a better option. However the latter implies early booking of conference facilities.
30. It was noted that Germany has advantages in terms of visas, transportation, hotels and privileges & immunities for UN meetings. However, Bonn is probably not suitable for UNFCCC COPs due to the large numbers of participants.
31. Ms. Figueres noted that the new UNFCCC office building on the UN Campus in Bonn will be ready this year, and there will also be some new meeting rooms available for use by the UNCCD. The UNFCCC will have some meetings in the new buildings and shall inform the other secretariats regarding the experiences during these meetings. The CBD would also be interested in the outcomes of the discussions with the City of Bonn, to consider Bonn as a potential meeting venue.

32. The JLG members took note of the issues raised by Ms. Figueres and, after commending her for these, thanked the information related with using Bonn as a venue for the international events organized individually by the three secretariats.

4. The Rio Conventions Pavilion

33. Mr. Dias noted that there were good activities at the Rio Conventions Pavilion in Rio during Rio+20. There were some challenges as the Pavilion site had to be built. The Pavilion also convened during CBD COP 11, where it was positively received. He noted that the Pavilion has been a positive endeavour, bringing side events together organised in thematic days. He expressed that it would be good to have some concept for its continuation, including outside the COPs of the three Conventions.
34. Mr. Gnacadja congratulated the CBD Secretariat for the work done in coordinating the Pavilion. He expressed that the Pavilion helped in working together and showcasing what the secretariats mean by integrated approaches. The UNCCD secretariat noted that it has internally discussed CBD's proposal on the future direction of the Pavilion, and fully support the continuation of the Pavilion in future. It also shared the view of the CBD secretariat about the importance of steady financial base for the continuation and possible expansion of the Pavilion activities. In this regard, the CBD's suggestion for jointly developing a fully elaborated project proposal was appreciated. The UNCCD secretariat further suggested consultations with the current and potential partners about broadening the Pavilion beyond the COP meetings of the three Conventions.
35. The potential role of the GEF for developing the Pavilion as a steady long-term partner and/or funder was discussed. Upon exchange of views on how and if the GEF would benefit from the Pavilion for its replenishment, Mr. Dias requested the UNCCD and UNFCCC secretariats to send an official response to the letter in which he proposes to explore options to continue working on the Pavilion. In turn, Mr. Dias will approach the GEF with a proposal to join in further work on the Pavilion.
36. The UNCCD secretariat also made a suggestion about increasing the private sector involvement in the Pavilion, building on the experience at Rio+20. Mr. Dias commented that one that needs a very cautious approach, having clarity on limitations and 'rules of engagement'.
37. The UNFCCC secretariat noted that the Pavilion has benefits for events outside its own COPs, such as Rio+20. It noted that resources are already over-stretched at its COPs, and have difficulties to engage in some partnerships. It also highlighted that the Pavilion also poses a challenge in achieving a balance with the official side events, in which the UN side events are organised through the HLCP Working Group on Climate Change. It was noted that at COP 18 in Doha, there were 25 side event requests for every slot available. The UNFCCC secretariat also noted that it is looking at an option on what could be done at its next COP for a presence of the three Rio Conventions. There are several priorities and restrictions in preparing the host country agreement of the UNFCCC COP, which makes it difficult to include the Pavilion.
38. Mr. Dias stressed that the key aspect is availability of space and that the CBD included the Pavilion in its negotiations for the host country agreement of its last COP. He noted the Pavilion has helped the CBD organize itself in a way that suits its objectives.

39. Mr. Gnacadja expressed that the Pavilion provides the UNCCD with an opportunity to highlight issues of common interest. Among the positive aspects noted was the fact that it helps bringing partners together and organising events along thematic clusters.
40. An option of exploring a timeframe for the Pavilion that is shorter than the two week period of the COP was discussed. The UNFCCC noted that it is not in a position to commit on a regular, predictable and reliable basis for the Pavilion given that each COP has very different conditions. It was agreed that the secretariats would look into options on what and how could be done for key events, including COPs where possible.
41. The SIDS conference in Samoa next year could present an opportunity for the Pavilion. It was noted that UNDP will be making national consultations on the post-2015 development agenda, which could also present other opportunities.
42. The JLG members agreed on the following actions:
 - UNFCCC and UNCCD to send letters to CBD in response to the proposal letter on the Rio Conventions Pavilion.
 - Each secretariat will nominate focal points on logistics and substance for the Pavilion.
 - Three secretariats will explore and identify key events, including the upcoming COPs of UNCCD and UNFCCC for a Rio Conventions Pavilion presence, and to explore possibilities, options and formats for the Pavilion at these events.
 - CBD is called to initiate preparations for fundraising for the Pavilion for targeted events, including approaching the GEF.

5. Main lines of cooperation within the JLG context (follow-up JLG11 and other issues)

5.1 TOR/principles of work for the JLG

43. The TOR were formally approved by the JLG and can be posted on the website of the respective Conventions
44. The JLG members agreed to bring the TORsto the attention of the respective constituencies of the Conventions.

5.2 Joint reporting

45. The UNCCD secretariat gave an overview on recent activities regarding reporting under the three Conventions. The UNCCD secretariat has shared with the other secretariats the revised multi-lingual glossary for the UNCCD reporting. The revision has been undertaken to ensure consistency in the terminology used in other processes on matters of common concerns, with particular reference to adaptation and mitigation.
46. It was noted that the UNCCD secretariat – as well as the other two secretariats - continued the cooperation on joint reporting within the framework of the “Piloting Integrated Processes and Approaches to Facilitate National Reporting to Rio Conventions Project” (FNR-Rio Project). The joint template devised by the project has been uploaded on the UNCCD on-line reporting

platform (the PRAIS portal) and it is ready for a pilot test. However, further consultations at the Project Steering Committee level are required before its implementation, since a number of the FNR Rio Project pilot countries could not complete their report yet.

47. Cooperation with the UNFCCC and the CBD secretariats was also established with regard to a data access policy that the Bureau of the CRIC has requested to devise with regard to data published on the PRAIS portal. Document ICCD/CRIC(11)/13, which has been recently issued as official document for the forthcoming CRIC 11, contains a section on data access policy which was prepared in consultation with and with advice provided by, the two secretariats.
48. In the discussion, it was noted that the ultimate goal of “joint reporting” would be to increase effectiveness of reporting while alleviating the reporting burden of countries, especially for small and least developed countries. However, it was also noted that having a single template for reporting under the three Rio conventions would be hardly achievable and ultimately of limited impact, because of conventions-specific information to be provided by country Parties, difference in reporting entities and relating reporting obligations, and difference in reporting and review timeframes under the three conventions.
49. Under the UNFCCC, developed countries have been reporting already for some time. The UNFCCC secretariat is now translating the data for others to be able for download and use. Reporting by developing countries is now under negotiation and the reporting requirements will probably increase, leading to a further decrease in the overlap in reporting requirements.
50. It was noted many other actions may be considered in order to increase the effectiveness of reporting under the Rio conventions, including adopting common definitions, facilitating access to data, improving data management and ensure interoperability of reporting platforms.
51. It was also noted that an extension of the FNR Rio project may be considered soon by the GEF. It was further noted that providing a common feedback from the secretariats of the three conventions on joint reporting would be relevant to any further action to be taken in this regard.
52. The JLG members agreed on the following actions:
 - The Executive Secretaries of the three conventions will address a joint letter, to the GEF CEO, sharing their common view on joint reporting and possible follow-up to the FNR Rio Project.

5.3 Pilot Partnership for the national implementation of synergies among the Rio Conventions

53. It was noted that Parties to each Convention ask for synergies but they do not provide for this in their respective countries. The CBD secretariat has been making progress in this regard with a pilot partnership project for the national implementation of synergies among the Rio Conventions, and it was noted that it would be useful to bringing in other key organizations such as the UNEP and IUCN to get the project extended.
54. It was also noted that the CBD is sending experts to a training of the LDC Expert Group (LEG) under the UNFCCC and to regional workshops organised by the GEF. There is an on-going conversation between the secretariats identifying concrete steps for collaboration in this regard. It was noted that it would be useful to identify who can attend various workshops and meetings

also on the side of the UNCCD. The UNCCD expressed interest in joining effort with the other two Conventions on this exercise.

55. It was highlighted that there are some issues which can be prioritized under the NAPAs/NBSAPs/NAPs processes of the Conventions. Mr. Gnacadja noted that these projects help countries and provided the experience of the Minister of Senegal's immediate strong support to the idea.
56. The interest in having further collaboration among the secretariats on ecosystem-based adaptation was also noted.
57. The JLG members agreed on the following action:
 - The Adaptation Programme of the UNFCCC secretariat to contact the UNCCD secretariat on LEG trainings.

6. Other matters

6.1 Informing the post-2015 development agenda process

58. Mr. Dias noted that there are various processes underway towards defining the post-2015 development agenda, including developing sustainable development goals (SDGs), reviewing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and an overall post-2015 sustainable development framework. The complementarity and overlaps among the various processes can be confusing and it is important that the post-2015 development agenda process takes into account in an appropriate manner the relevant issues of each of the Rio Conventions. Mr. Dias noted that he has already been asked for briefings on biodiversity.
59. It was also noted that the three Executive Secretaries of the Rio Conventions should explore options of convening a joint briefing session on issues of interest in New York to the relevant fora mentioned in paragraph 58 above. It was noted that it would also be useful to have an external resource person on board who could give a presentation on the big picture. Mr. Tomas Lovejoy has expressed his willingness to support convening this meeting in his capacity of Chair of the GEF STAP. The idea for this type of meeting would be to show the links between the Rio Conventions and issues under the sustainable development agenda currently being discussed in New York.
60. It was further noted that it would be useful to do a "masterclass" from the point of view of the planet, not just about the Conventions, but with the support of the three Executive Secretaries.
61. The JLG members agreed on the following actions:
 - CBD, through Ms. Nandhini Krishna (Liaison officer of CBD and UNCCD in New York), to provide an overview of each of the post-2015 development agenda processes, including major milestones and meetings.
 - The three secretariats to explore and suggest a female expert in social science from a developing country that could take part in providing the briefing (together with Mr. Lovejoy).

- CBD to follow up on the preparation of a concept note, including objectives, for this event.

7. Closing

62. It was decided that, in accordance to the practice of rotating the chairing of the JLG, the next meeting would be chaired by the Executive Secretary of the CBD. Opportunities for the next meeting were mentioned, including the meeting of the SBSTTA towards the end of 2013 in Montreal, or a meeting early 2014. It was noted that the UNCCD suggested the following two options as preference for meetings of the JLG: in April/May when meetings on sustainable development are organized, as well as in other fora in which the three ES could coincide.

63. The JLG members agreed on the following actions:

- The three secretariats will undertake a coordinated approach and make the proper arrangements for the next meeting of the JLG and CBD is invited to take the lead on behalf of the other two Executive Secretaries

Annex I: List of Participants

Convention on Biological Diversity

- Mr. Braulio Dias, Executive Secretary
- Mr. David Cooper, Senior Programme Officer
- Ms. Sakhile Koketso, Programme Officer
- Ms. Veronica Lo, Programme Officer

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

- Mr. Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary
- Mr. Sergio Zelaya, Coordinator
- Ms. Yukie Hori, Coordinator
- Mr. Massimo Candelori, Coordinator
- Ms. Jasmin Metzler, Associate Expert

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

- Ms. Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary
- Mr. Daniele Violetti, Chief of Staff
- Mr. Fernando Castellanos Silveira, Programme Officer

Annex II: Agenda

Twelfth Meeting of the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions

22 January 2012

15:00 – 17:00 hrs, Room LE-1013

Langer Eugen building, in UN Campus

Bonn, Germany

Chair: Christiana Figueres, UNFCCC

1. Welcome and opening (*UNFCCC*)
2. Adoption of the agenda (*UNFCCC*)
3. Reports and updates (*All*)
 - 3.1 General report (overview of JLG-related activities during 2012)
 - 3.2 CBD: report on COP 11, Hyderabad, India, and Ecosystem Restoration Call
 - 3.3 UNCCD: preparations for CST-3, Fortaleza, Brazil
 - 3.4 UNFCCC: report on COP 18/CMP8 in Doha, Qatar
4. The Rio Conventions Pavilion (*CBD*)
5. Main lines of cooperation within the JLG context (follow-up JLG11 and other issues)
 - 5.1 TOR/principles of work for the JLG (*UNFCCC*)
 - 5.2 Joint reporting (*UNCCD*)
 - 5.3 Pilot Partnership for the national implementation of synergies among the Rio Conventions (*CBD*)
6. Other matters (*All*)
 - 6.1 SDG/post-2015 agenda
7. Closing
