



## Convention on Biological Diversity

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CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE  
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY  
Thirteenth meeting  
Cancun, Mexico, 4-17 December 2016  
Agenda item 2

### **DECISION ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

#### **XIII/19. Article 8(j) and related Articles: other matters related to the programme of work**

##### **A. IN-DEPTH DIALOGUE ON THEMATIC AREAS AND OTHER CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES**

*The Conference of the Parties,*

*Noting* that the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions at its ninth meeting conducted an in-depth dialogue on the topic “challenges and opportunities for international and regional cooperation in the protection of shared traditional knowledge across borders for the strengthening of traditional knowledge and the fulfilment of three objectives of the Convention, in harmony with Nature/Mother Earth”,

1. *Encourages* Parties, other Governments, relevant organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities, and stakeholders, and *requests* the Executive Secretary, to consider the advice and recommendations emanating from the dialogue, annexed to the report of the Working Group,<sup>1</sup> when implementing the relevant areas of work of the Convention, including tasks 7, 10, 12 and 15 of the programme of work for Article 8(j) and related provisions;

2. *Decides* that the topic for the in-depth dialogue to be held, subject to the agenda of the meeting and the time available, at the tenth meeting of the Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions, should be:

“Contribution of the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with particular emphasis on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity”;

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<sup>1</sup> UNEP/CBD/COP/13/3.

**B. GLOSSARY OF RELEVANT KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS TO BE USED  
WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF ARTICLE 8(J) AND RELATED PROVISIONS**

*Noting* that clarity in terms and concepts within the context of Article 8(j) and related provisions can assist in the effective and consistent implementation of Article 8(j) and related provisions, where appropriate and in accordance with national legislation, in order to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 18 by 2020,

1. *Recommends* further consideration of the glossary of key terms and concepts<sup>2</sup> by the Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions at its tenth meeting to allow Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in considering the proposed glossary;

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to make the draft glossary of key terms and concepts available for peer review by Parties, Governments, relevant organizations and indigenous peoples and local communities for further refinement, prior to the tenth meeting of the Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions, with a view to its adoption at the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

**C. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT  
FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES TO THE CONVENTION ON  
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

*Recalling* decision XII/12 F on the terminology “indigenous peoples and local communities”,

*Noting* the recommendations contained in paragraphs 26 and 27 of the report of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on its tenth session,<sup>3</sup>

1. *Invites* the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to consider taking a decision to apply, mutatis mutandis, decision XII/12 F of the Conference of the Parties;

2. *Notes* the recommendations of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues made at its thirteenth<sup>4</sup> and fourteenth<sup>5</sup> sessions, and *requests* the Executive Secretary to continue to inform the Permanent Forum on developments of mutual interest;

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<sup>2</sup> UNEP/CBD/COP/13/17, annex I “A Glossary of relevant key terms and concepts to be used within the context of Article 8(j) and related provisions”.

<sup>3</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2011, Supplement No. 23* (E/2011/43-E/C.19/2011/14), available at <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=E/C.19/2011/14>, and Corr.1, available at <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=E/C.19/2011/14/Corr.1>.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 2014, *Supplement No. 23* (E/2014/43-E/C.19/2014/11), available at <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=E/C.19/2014/11>, and Corr.1, available at <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=E/2014/43/Corr.1>.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 2015, *Supplement No. 23* (E/2015/43-E/C.19/2015/10), available at <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=E/2015/43>.

**D. TASK 15 OF THE MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 8(j) AND RELATED PROVISIONS: BEST-PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR THE REPATRIATION OF INDIGENOUS AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE**

1. *Takes note* of the progress made in the development of the Rutzolijirisaxik<sup>6</sup> Voluntary Guidelines for the Repatriation of Traditional Knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Relevant for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity, annexed to the present decision, in particular their objective, purpose, scope and guiding principles for repatriation;

2. *Invites* Parties, other Governments, relevant organizations,<sup>7</sup> indigenous peoples and local communities, and stakeholders interested or involved in repatriation of traditional knowledge to submit to the Executive Secretary information on good practices and actions undertaken at various levels, including through community-to-community exchanges, to repatriate, receive and restore traditional knowledge relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To compile the information received on good practices and actions, as referred to in paragraph 2 above, and to make the compilation available for the consideration of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Inter-sessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions at its tenth meeting;

(b) To prepare a revised draft of the Rutzolijirisaxik Voluntary Guidelines for the Repatriation of Traditional Knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Relevant for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity, taking into account developments in various international bodies, instruments, programmes, strategies, standards, guidelines, reports and processes of relevance as referred to in paragraph 5 of the annex, and based on: (i) an analysis of the information received as referred to in paragraph 2 above; (ii) the report of the Expert Meeting on the Repatriation of Traditional Knowledge Relevant to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity;<sup>8</sup> and (iii) the annex to the present decision containing the objective, purpose, scope and guiding principles for repatriation;

4. *Requests* the Ad Hoc Open-ended Inter-sessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions at its tenth meeting to complete a draft of the guidelines for consideration and adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its fourteenth meeting.

*Annex*

**PROGRESS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RUTZOLIJIRISAXIK VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR THE REPATRIATION OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES RELEVANT FOR THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

**Introduction**

1. The international community has recognized the close and traditional dependence of many indigenous peoples and local communities on biological resources, notably in the preamble to the Convention on Biological Diversity. There is also a broad recognition of the contribution that traditional

<sup>6</sup> In the local traditional language, Maya Kaqchikel, this expression means “the significance of returning to the place of origin”.

<sup>7</sup> May include entities such as museums, universities, herbaria and botanical and zoological gardens, data-bases, registers, gene-banks, libraries, archives and information services, public or private collections and other entities storing or housing traditional knowledge and related information.

<sup>8</sup> UNEP/CBD/WG8J/9/INF/4.

knowledge can make to both the conservation and the sustainable use of biological diversity — two fundamental objectives of the Convention — and of the need to ensure the equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of traditional knowledge. For this reason, Parties to the Convention undertook, in Article 8(j), to respect, preserve and maintain the knowledge, innovations and practices (hereinafter referred to as traditional knowledge) relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and to promote its wider application.

2. To address the effective implementation of Article 8(j) and related provisions, in decision V/16, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted the programme of work on Article 8(j) and related provisions, including task 15, which it requested the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions to develop guidelines that would facilitate repatriation of information, including cultural property, in accordance with Article 17, paragraph 2, of the Convention on Biological Diversity in order to facilitate the recovery of traditional knowledge of biological diversity.

3. The Conference of the Parties further considered the task at hand in its decision X/43, paragraph 6, and in its decision XI/14 D, annex, and adopted terms of reference to advance the task clarifying:

“The purpose of task 15 is to develop best-practice guidelines that would facilitate enhancement of the repatriation of indigenous and traditional knowledge relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, including of indigenous and traditional knowledge associated with cultural property, in accordance with Article 8(j) and Article 17, paragraph 2, of the Convention, in order to facilitate the recovery of traditional knowledge of biological diversity.”

4. The guidelines for repatriation of traditional knowledge, builds on relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties, including paragraph 23 of the Tkarihiwaié:ri Code of Ethical Conduct to Ensure Respect for the Cultural and Intellectual Heritage of Indigenous and Local Communities Relevant to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity,<sup>9</sup> as well as decision VII/16 with regard to registries and databases.

5. The guidelines take into account the various international bodies, instruments, programmes, strategies, standards, guidelines reports and processes of relevance and the importance of their harmonization and complementarity and effective implementation, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,<sup>10</sup> especially Article 31, as well as other relevant articles; and in particular the mandate of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization concerning cultural property, as well as the mandate of the World Intellectual Property Organization, which deals with intellectual property issues. As such, they highlight the importance of international cooperation for the repatriation of traditional knowledge, including by providing access to traditional knowledge and related information for indigenous peoples and local communities, to facilitate the repatriation of traditional knowledge relevant to conservation and sustainable use, in order to assist these communities in knowledge and cultural restoration.

### Objectives

6. The objective of these guidelines is to facilitate the repatriation of the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, including related information in accordance with Article 8(j) and Article 17, paragraph 2, of the Convention, in order to facilitate the recovery of traditional knowledge

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<sup>9</sup> Decision X/42, annex.

<sup>10</sup> General Assembly resolution 61/295, annex.

relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and without limiting or restricting its continued use and access.

7. The guidelines may also assist in the effective implementation of the global Plan of Action on Customary Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity, endorsed by the Conference of the Parties in decision XII/12 B.

### **Purpose**

8. The guidelines are intended to be practical guidance to Parties, Governments,<sup>11</sup> international and regional organizations, museums, universities, herbaria and botanical and zoological gardens, databases, registers, gene banks, libraries, archives and information services, private collections and other entities storing or housing traditional knowledge and related information, and indigenous peoples and local communities, in efforts to repatriate traditional knowledge and related information.

9. They are a guide to good practice which will need to be interpreted taking into account the political, legal, economic, environmental and cultural diversity, as appropriate, of each Party, entity and indigenous peoples and local communities, and applied in the context of each organization's mission, collections and the relevant communities, taking into account community protocols and other relevant procedures.

10. The guidelines are not prescriptive or definitive.

11. Given the political, legal, economic, environmental and cultural diversity of States and indigenous peoples and local communities, it is unlikely that these guidelines will cover all the issues that may arise in professional practice. However, they should provide guidance for those wishing to pursue repatriation.

12. The guidelines should enable those working on repatriation, including information professionals to make sound judgments regarding appropriate responses to any issues, or provide some ideas about where to go for assistance if more expertise is required.

13. The guidelines should assist indigenous peoples and local communities in the recovery and revitalization of their traditional knowledge related to conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

### **Scope**

14. These guidelines apply to the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities, embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, including related information,<sup>12</sup> within the scope of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

### **Guiding principles for repatriation**

15. Repatriation is best facilitated building on the following principles and considerations:

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<sup>11</sup> Including subnational governments and government departments, which may hold indigenous and/or local community traditional knowledge and related information relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

<sup>12</sup> Related information could include information on where, when and from whom the traditional knowledge was collected and for what purpose, when it is not confidential.

- (a) Developing ongoing relationships with indigenous peoples and local communities in order to build trust, good relations, mutual understanding, intercultural spaces, knowledge exchanges and reconciliation;
- (b) Recognition and respect for indigenous peoples and local communities' world views, cosmologies, values, practices, customary laws, community protocols, rights and interests; with due respect for international norms;
- (c) Preparedness of institutions holding traditional knowledge and related information relevant for conservation and sustainable use to repatriate, including preparedness to cooperate with indigenous peoples and local communities to develop appropriate measures;
- (d) Assisting indigenous peoples and local communities in preparedness to receive and keep safe, repatriated traditional knowledge and related information in culturally appropriate ways as specified by them;
- (e) Considering measures to address the repatriation of traditional knowledge that is already publicly available and widespread;
- (f) Recognition of the importance of repatriating secret or sacred, gender-specific or sensitive traditional knowledge and related information as a priority for indigenous peoples and local communities and as identified by them;
- (g) Repatriation can be enhanced by developing the awareness and professional practice of those working on repatriation, including information professionals and indigenous peoples and local communities, in accordance with best practice ethical standards, including the Tkarihwaí:ri Code of Ethical Conduct to Ensure Respect for the Cultural and Intellectual Heritage of Indigenous and Local Communities Relevant to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity;<sup>13</sup>
- (h) Repatriation includes recognition and support of community-to-community efforts to restore traditional knowledge relevant to conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

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<sup>13</sup> See decision X/42, available at <https://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/default.shtml?id=12308>.