



United Nations Decade on Biodiversity

STATEMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

OF THE

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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On the occasion of the

SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

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Distinguished members of the Permanent Forum, delegates, and representatives of indigenous peoples,

I wish to acknowledge the traditional owners of this land we are gathered upon, the Haudenosaunee Confederation, and to greet both the continuing Permanent Forum members and new members.

I wish you success in this seventeenth session and look forward to working closely with you, in pursuit of our common objectives.

I will take the opportunity under agenda item 4, "Implementation of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum", to brief you on matters of mutual interest concerning the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

To date, the programme of work on Article 8(j) and related provisions has produced significant results, including:

(a) The composite report on the status and trends of traditional knowledge¹ bringing together detailed information from every region and the identification of processes at the national and local levels that may threaten the maintenance, preservation and application of traditional knowledge;

(b) Guidelines for the conduct of cultural, environmental and social impact assessments (the Akwe: Kon voluntary guidelines for the conduct of cultural, environmental and social impact assessments regarding developments proposed to take place on, or which are likely to impact on, sacred sites and on lands and waters traditionally occupied or used by indigenous and local communities);²

(c) The Tkarihwaí:ri Code of Ethical Conduct to Ensure Respect for the Cultural and Intellectual Heritage of Indigenous and Local Communities³ and the global Plan of Action on the Customary Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity;⁴

(d) The Mo'otz Kuxtal⁵ Voluntary Guidelines on Traditional Knowledge, for the development of mechanisms, legislation or other appropriate initiatives to ensure the "prior and informed consent", "free, prior and informed consent" or "approval and involvement", depending on national circumstances, of indigenous peoples and local communities⁶ for accessing their knowledge, innovations and practices, for fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of their knowledge, innovations and practices relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and for reporting and preventing unlawful appropriation of traditional knowledge.⁷

Additionally, the Conference of the Parties will consider voluntary guidelines for the repatriation of traditional knowledge⁸ and a glossary of relevant key terms and concepts to be used within the context

¹ "Phase two of the composite report on the status and trends regarding the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of Biological Diversity" (UNEP/CBD/WG8J/5/3), available at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=WG8J-05>

² Decision VII/16.

³ Decision X/42.

⁴ Decision XII/12 B, annex.

⁵ Meaning "roots of life" in the Maya language.

⁶ The use and interpretation of the term "indigenous peoples and local communities" in these Guidelines should refer to decision XII/12 F, paragraphs 2 (a), (b) and (c).

⁷ Decision XIII/18. The adoption of the Mo'otz Kuxtal voluntary guidelines has also advanced the work being pursued by the Working Group on Article 8(j) on *sui generis* systems for the protection of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities by highlighting the potential role of community protocols and procedures for access to traditional knowledge.

⁸ Rutzolijirixaxik Voluntary Guidelines for the Repatriation of Traditional Knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Relevant for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity.

of our work on traditional knowledge,⁹ at its fourteenth meeting, which will be held from 10 to 22 November 2018, in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.

Although not originally envisaged by the programme of work, and as issues related to indigenous peoples and local communities are regarded as cross-cutting for the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Conference of the Parties will consider recommendations to recognize the collective actions of indigenous peoples and local communities and to develop an indigenous specific safeguard framework under the Convention.

Regarding the Mo'otz Kuxtal voluntary guidelines,

These guidelines, when implemented effectively at the national level, will assist in achieving the Convention's Aichi Target 18 on traditional knowledge, which provides that:

By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels.

In order to assist Governments in taking measures to reach Target 18 on traditional knowledge and contribute towards Target 16 on the Nagoya Protocol concerning traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources, by 2020, the Secretariat, supported by the Japan Biodiversity Fund, together with indigenous partners, are preparing four regional training workshops for 2018, based on the Mo'otz Kuxtal voluntary guidelines, in order to assist Parties, together with indigenous peoples, in developing national actions plans for traditional knowledge. Indigenous peoples are warmly encouraged to apply.

The regional workshops are:

- (a) Latin America and the Caribbean: Tepoztlan, Mexico, April 2018;
- (b) Pacific: Whangārei, New Zealand, May 2018;
- (c) Asia: Kandy, Sri Lanka, August 2018;
- (d) Africa: Marrakesh, Morocco, October 2018.

In addition to these practical measures, I am pleased to announce that the Convention on Biological Diversity is entering a new exciting era in our relationship with indigenous peoples.

Starting at the second meeting of the Convention's Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI 2), which will be held from 9 to 13 July 2018, Parties together with indigenous peoples will commence discussions on institutional arrangements for continuing the work on traditional knowledge and customary sustainable use in the post-2020 biodiversity framework. Parties have shown particular interest in fully integrating indigenous peoples into the full scope of work under the Convention.

Additionally, the Secretariat has issued a notification requesting views and proposals for possible elements of work for a fully integrated programme of work in the post-2020 biodiversity framework. These ideas will be collated and considered, along with recommendations from SBI 2 on institutional arrangements, at the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

It is expected that the Conference of the Parties at its fourteenth meeting will consider both institutional arrangements and possible elements of work, in order to prepare for the Parties to make a final decision on a fully integrated programme of work on traditional knowledge at the fifteenth meeting, which will be held in China in 2020, as part of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

I warmly encourage solid contributions from both the Permanent Forum's expert members and indigenous peoples more broadly. The door is open for your thoughts on how the Convention's future

⁹ See the glossary of relevant key terms and concepts to be used within the context of Article 8(j) and related provisions (CBD/WG8J/10/3).

work can be more relevant to indigenous peoples and the broader global processes, including the Sustainable Development Goals and climate action.

Finally, the Secretariat of the Convention, together with indigenous peoples and other agencies and Governments, is preparing for a Summit on Nature and Culture, to be held over four days during the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (15-18 November). The Summit will draw together lessons learned from the Joint Programme of Work with UNESCO on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity.

The Summit has the laudable goal of encouraging the 196 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to embed considerations of the links between biological and cultural diversity and the concept of "biocultural diversity" in the post-2020 arrangements for the Convention as well as other global arrangements, such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, in order to bring about a rapprochement of nature and cultures in the post-2020 period.

Just as the Convention is facing great change as we prepare for the post-2020 biodiversity framework, I see from your new agenda that the Permanent Forum is also embracing new working methods and new directions. I applaud your efforts and wish you every success as the Permanent Forum works towards an exciting vision of the future where indigenous peoples are in control of their destinies and empowered to contribute to the grave global problems facing humanity and safeguarding life on Earth.

Thank you for your attention.
