

**Global biodiversity mechanisms:
a thematic review of recent developments and future evidence needs**

Strand Palace Hotel, London 20th May 2009

MEA Briefing

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

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Briefing Note: Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

The CBD is one of the three international conventions – together with the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Desertification Convention- that were opened for signature at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. From 19 to 30 May 2008 the CBD held its 9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CBD COP 9) in Bonn Germany. Around 5000 participants attended this meeting including official delegates from over 180 of the 189 parties to the convention.

The Convention has three main objectives:

- Conservation of Biodiversity.
- Achieving sustainable use of biological diversity and its components
- The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of biological diversity (mainly genetic resources).

On the agenda for COP 9 were eight items for in depth consideration, as follows.

- Agricultural Biodiversity
- Global Strategy for Plant Conservation
- Invasive Alien Species
- Forest Biodiversity
- Incentives
- Ecosystem Approach
- Progress in achieving the 2010 target and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
- Financial resources and the Financial Mechanism (GEF)

In addition there were 17 other substantive agenda items

The main achievements of CBD COP 9 included: adoption of the "Bonn roadmap" for the negotiation of the international regime on access and benefit-sharing (ABS); adoption of scientific criteria and guidance for marine areas in need of protection; adoption of the Convention's first resource mobilization strategy; a decision on biodiversity and climate change, including language cautioning against ocean fertilization; and agreement on biofuels. The most difficult negotiations were around access and benefit sharing, climate change, biofuels and new and additional financing.

Of particular interest to the UK delegation were decisions¹ on:

Biofuels: no agreement was reached on sustainability criteria for biofuel production but the issue was incorporated into the agricultural biodiversity work programme and Parties were encouraged to promote the positive, and minimise the negative, impacts of biofuels on biodiversity.

¹ <http://www.cbd.int/decisions/cop/?m=cop-09>

Ecosystem approach and incentive measures: The CoP continued to promote the use of the ecosystem approach and to consider this in the achievement of the MDGs and adaptation to and mitigation of climate change. With respect to incentive measures, the CoP placed more emphasis on the assessment of values of biodiversity and ecosystem services, promotion of sustainably-produced biodiversity-derived products, and studies on market and payment schemes for ecosystem services.

Climate change: the CoP agreed to include climate change as a cross-cutting theme across all of its work programmes including assessing the potential impacts, both negative and positive, of mitigation and adaptation activities. It also recognised the need to provide biodiversity-relevant evidence to the UNFCCC and to ensure that ocean fertilisation activities do not take place until a good scientific basis to justify such activities is established. The CoP also noted the importance of the conservation of wetland biodiversity, particularly peatlands, in addressing climate change.

Protected areas: Sensible and useful actions were agreed to improve the the governance and management effectiveness of protected areas through mainstreaming, application of the ecosystem approach, the development and sharing of tools and best practice, and the analysis of capacity gaps. There was strong pressure to agree to new and additional financing for protected areas and resistance to attempts to link protected areas to funding already available for sustainable development, climate change and wider implementation of the convention. UK didn't agree with either of these positions but eventually conceded a little on both issues.