

**CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

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CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Third meeting
Buenos Aires, Argentina
4 to 15 November 1996
Item 16.1 of the provisional agenda

**SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO REVIEW
IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21**

Note by the Executive Secretary

1 INTRODUCTION

1. In its decision II/18, the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) decided to consider at its third meeting the provision of a report from the perspective of the Convention's three objectives to the Special Session of the General Assembly to review implementation of Agenda 21.
2. The Special Session of the General Assembly will take place at the United Nations headquarters, New York, from 9 to 13 June 1997. The fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) will take place in New York from 7 to 25 April 1997.
3. Preparations for the fifth session of the CSD and planning for the Special Session of the General Assembly are being coordinated by the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD). The Executive Secretary participated in the eighth meeting of the IACSD which took place from 10 to 12 July 1996. The report of the eighth meeting of the IACSD will be available at this meeting as document UNEP/CBD/COP/3/Inf.42

4. At its eighth meeting the IACSD agreed that it would be essential for the 1997 review to go beyond assessment of progress achieved in the CSD and in the United Nations system and to come up with a frank and analytical appraisal of progress made and problems encountered at the international, national and local levels.

5. It is expected that, in addition to the reports of the Secretary-General, many organizations of the United Nations system will make their own contributions to the review process. Annex V of the report of the eighth meeting of the IACSD identifies eight documents to be prepared by the Secretary-General. In addition it is anticipated that the 1997 Review will consider a report on the Global Freshwater Assessment, an assessment to be prepared by the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development on Trade and Environment, the World Health and Environment Report to be prepared by the World Health Organisation (WHO), a mid-term review of the achievements in reaching the goals set by the World Summit for Children, and the final report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF). It is also expected that inputs will be received from the World Food Summit and from the 19th session of the Governing Council of UNEP.

6. The IACSD noted that other important contributions could be received from Regional Commissions and from relevant conventions.

7. The IACSD stressed that organizations undertaking or considering making contributions to the 1997 Review should strive to make their results available before the fifth session of the CSD, with a view to enhancing their impact on the final outcome of the Special Session.

2. A REPORT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE CONVENTION'S THREE OBJECTIVES

8. At its first meeting, the COP decided to transmit a Statement to the third session of the CSD. This Statement (contained in the annex to decision I/8) informed the CSD of the decisions of the first meeting of the COP, of its medium-term programme of work, and of the importance the COP attached to the development of a substantive relationship between it and the CSD.

9. The COP stated that the Convention leaves no doubt that biological diversity is a cross-cutting issue and that many aspects of the programme areas to be considered by the CSD at its third session corresponded to the objectives and provisions of the Convention. Under item 10.3 of the agenda of the present meeting, the COP will consider a future programme of work for terrestrial biological diversity in the light of the outcome of the third session of the CSD.

10. By its decision II/9, the COP transmitted a Statement on biological diversity and forests to the IPF.

11. The COP may therefore wish to consider transmitting a further Statement to the fifth session of the CSD and to the Special Session of the General Assembly. Such a Statement might elaborate on the previous Statements, highlighting how the three objectives of the Convention can contribute to the implementation of the objectives contained in Agenda 21. It could inform the CSD and the Special Session of activities being undertaken under the Convention, and activities to be undertaken in light of decisions made at the present meeting, relevant to those recommended in Agenda 21.

12. In light of the intention to undertake an appraisal of progress made and problems encountered, and to analyze the effectiveness of inter-agency arrangements established to follow-up UNCED and to suggest, on the basis of experience gained, ways of promoting effective and efficient UN system-wide support in the area of sustainable development for the period after 1997, the COP may wish to consider including its evaluation of these matters and its recommendations, in light of activities undertaken and experience gained by the Convention. It might, for example, wish to inform the CSD and the Special Session of the priority it gives to the cooperation with the CSD and biodiversity-related conventions, other international agreements, institutions and processes of relevance. It may wish to consider suggesting ways of promoting effective and efficient mechanisms and arrangements that will assist in realizing the objectives of the Convention.

13. The COP will wish to be mindful of the recommendations of the IACSD concerning the timing of any inputs into the 1997 review. The Bureau of the COP, at its meeting in May 1996, noted that attention needs to be paid to the mode of any input as well as to the content.