

Decision II/3: CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISMThe Conference of the Parties,

1. *Takes note* of the document prepared by the Secretariat on the establishment of the clearing-house mechanism to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation (document UNEP/CBD/COP/2/6);
2. *Notes* that many information systems and activities relevant to the objectives of the Convention have been and are being established at international, subregional, regional and national levels;
3. *Notes* that the enhanced cooperation between these information systems and activities will contribute to capacity-building, and notes that, in this context, the role of the Secretariat is to promote and facilitate access to this clearing-house mechanism;
4. *Decides*, as a contribution to the implementation of the objectives of the Convention, that the clearing-house mechanism, established by decision I/3 adopted at its first meeting in accordance with Article 18, paragraph 3 of the Convention, should be developed:
 - (a) Starting with a pilot phase for 1996-1997;
 - (b) Through specific and focused areas of activities related to the promotion of international technical and scientific cooperation;
 - (c) By gradually building up its functions in response to clear and identified demand based on experience gained and resources available;
 - (d) In a neutral, transparent, cost-effective, efficient and accessible manner;
 - (e) As a decentralized mechanism using such resources as print and electronic media, including the Internet;
 - (f) By making full use of existing facilities, which will avoid any duplication or overlap of activities and allow for the early implementation of the mechanism;
 - (g) In close cooperation with relevant international organizations and entities as active partners in the clearing-house mechanism to maximize the existing experience and expertise;
 - (h) By enhancing networking between existing national, regional, subregional and international centres of relevant expertise, as well as governmental and non-governmental institutions and the private sector;
5. *Decides also* that, during the pilot phase for 1996-1997, the Secretariat should act as a focal point and should:
 - (a) Encourage the development of a network of active partners, such as those specified in 4(h). These partners should focus initially on:
 - (i) developing national capabilities through exchanging and disseminating information on the experiences and lessons learned by Parties on the implementation of the Convention. This can be done through guidelines, training programmes, seminars, workshops, where appropriate, and upon request, and by using the clearing-house mechanism;

(ii) facilitating access to and dissemination of research relevant to the objectives of the Convention;

(iii) facilitating the transfer of technology through exchanging and disseminating information on experiences and technologies relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;

(b) Provide information on and facilitate access to these operating active partners;

(c) Support the active partners to develop specific training for the effective participation of users in the clearing-house network;

6. (a) *Decides also* to provide funding for the pilot phase through the budget of the Convention;

(b) *Calls also* upon the international community to make additional voluntary contributions for the implementation of the pilot phase;

7. *Takes note* of the designation by Parties of their national focal point for the clearing-house mechanism (document UNEP/CBD/COP/2/Inf.5) and calls upon those who have not designated their focal point to do so, where appropriate, as soon as possible, and no later than February 1996;

8. *Invites* all relevant international, regional, subregional and national organizations and entities willing to offer their cooperation as active partners in the operation of the clearing-house mechanism to communicate the details of their offer and requests the Executive Secretary of the Secretariat to enter into collaborative arrangements and to report to its third meeting on the results of such arrangements;

9. *Requests* the Global Environment Facility to explore the modalities of providing support through the financial mechanism to developing country Parties for capacity-building in relation to the operation of the clearing-house mechanism and report to the Conference of the Parties at its third meeting;

10. *Decides* to review the implementation of the pilot phase of the clearing-house mechanism at its third meeting and requests the Executive Secretary to submit a progress report;

11. *Decides also* to review the implementation of the pilot phase at its fourth meeting and requests the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to provide scientific and technical advice.