



Convention on Biological Diversity

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CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Fourteenth meeting

Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, 17-29 November 2018

Item 19 of the provisional agenda*

THE SHARM EL-SHEIKH DECLARATION ON NATURE AND CULTURE

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Nature and Culture Summit – Biological and Cultural Diversity for Biodiversity and Human Resilience Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement was organized by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity jointly with the Government of Egypt, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation – Cairo Office, the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, SwedBio at Stockholm Resilience Centre, the Indigenous Women's Biodiversity Network, the United Nations Development Programme's Equator Initiative, the Global Environment Facility's Small Grants Programme, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-AIS). Held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, from 22 to 24 November 2018, the Summit was attended by 210 participants from diverse world regions, including Africa, Asia, North, Central and South America, the Caribbean, the Arctic, Central and Eastern Europe, and the Pacific.

2. The Summit concluded with a peoples' declaration, which is reproduced here in the form and languages in which it was provided to the Secretariat.

* CBD/COP/14/1/Add.1/Rev.1.



FINAL DECLARATION



The Sharm El-Sheikh Declaration on Nature and Culture

22-24 November 2018

More than two hundred participants from all walks of life, united by their passion for nature and culture, came together at the Nature and Culture Summit, to advance an alliance to save life on earth, in all its beauty and diversity.

We, the participants in the Nature and Culture Summit held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, a land of great cultural and natural heritage, cradle of ancient civilizations, and birthplace of irrigated agriculture;

With deep gratitude to the Government of Egypt and the indigenous and local communities of this ancient land;

Recognizing and building on the lessons learned from the Joint Programme of Work between the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and UNESCO on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity (2010-2020);

Recalling the Muchtanbal Summit Declaration of December 2016; Malama Honua-Nature-Culture Journey of September 2016; Ishikawa Declaration on Biocultural Diversity of October 2016; Florence Declaration on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity of April 2014, that have explored and promoted the links between biological and cultural diversity for the resilience of ecosystems and landscapes, and the place of humanity within them;

Acknowledging initiatives by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to recognize the rights and participation of indigenous peoples through the establishment of a new membership category of IUCN Indigenous Peoples' organisations;

Acknowledging that biological and cultural diversity are not only closely linked but also mutually reinforcing, and that cultural elements are a fundamental part of the life and cosmological vision of indigenous peoples and local communities, who actively pursue an intrinsic and balanced relationship between Mother Nature, human-beings and the Universe;

Considering that approaching biological and cultural diversity separately results in diverging and even conflicting agendas, and that such dual approaches have led to varying and sometimes competing interests within the same geographic location;

Emphasising that reversing the current trends in dramatic loss of biodiversity and the weakening of cultural diversity requires innovative approaches to bridge the artificial divide between biological and cultural diversity which persists in siloed sectoral practices, institutions, policy-making, management and interpretation;

Acknowledging that increasing awareness and knowledge on the links between biological and cultural diversity require collaboration through the sharing and adaptation of good practices on the inter-relationships between nature and culture;

Recognizing indigenous peoples and local communities as proponents of biological and cultural diversity, and the crucial role of indigenous and local community women in conserving nature and culture;

Emphasising that success in the vision of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Sustainable Development Goals necessitates the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities and recognition of their rights to territories, natural resources, customary sustainable use and their related traditional knowledge;

Recognizing the importance of normative instruments to protect the world's biological and cultural diversity, including biodiversity-related conventions and culture conventions;

Reaffirming that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offer a framework to respect and recognize the rights of indigenous peoples to ensure and promote both cultural and biological diversity in the attainment of its Sustainable Development Goals;

Acknowledging the importance of a rights-based approach for the resilience of systems of life, good health, education and the use, management and conservation of natural resources;

Acknowledging the customary management of biodiversity, customary law, traditional knowledge and ways of life represented by customary procedures and biocultural community protocols;

Reaffirming the Paris Agreement¹ acknowledgement of the value of traditional knowledge and local knowledge systems for climate change adaptation, and the stated need for the creation of a UN Framework Convention on Climate Change platform on local communities and indigenous peoples;

Recognizing the Local Biodiversity Outlook as a useful tool for the mobilization of traditional knowledge, innovations, technologies and practices, as well as participatory methodologies which help make the voices, actions and stories of indigenous peoples and local communities visible in national and international data sets and reporting;

Acknowledging that indigenous, traditional and local languages epitomize the links between cultural and biological diversity, as recognized by the United Nations International Year of Indigenous Languages (Resolution 71/178) in 2019;

Emphasizing that the full enjoyment of human rights, including the rights to life, health, food and water, depend on the services provided by ecosystems;

The Summit considered visions of futures - Living in Harmony with Nature; the contributions of community conservation and approaches that enhance biocultural diversity and relevant indicators, as well as human rights for thriving and resilient indigenous peoples, local communities and healthy ecosystems.

We, the participants, therefore commit to work at local, national, regional and global levels to:

1. *Reach out*, during the biennium (2019-2020) and beyond, to all actors and sectors of society², to build a broad partnership, and to collaboratively develop joint elements of work aimed at bringing about a rapprochement of Nature and Culture in the Post-2020 era;
2. *Urge* the establishment of a multi-partner International Alliance on Nature and Culture, as a platform for international cooperation on links between biological and cultural diversity to achieve the global vision of humanity “Living in Harmony with Nature” by 2050;
3. *Invite* strategic partners working on and/or culture, including international cultural organizations, to contribute possible elements of work on Nature and Culture;

¹ See https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf

² Leaders of Governments, United Nations Organizations, programs and mechanisms and other inter-governmental bodies and entities, indigenous peoples’ and local or traditional communities’ organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations, academia, research academies and philanthropic organizations, faith-based communities and the private sector

4. *Mobilize* human and financial resources to strengthen the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities and the development and implementation of activities to promote the links between biological and cultural diversity;
5. *Recommend*, recognizing the importance of local actions and solutions, the full and effective involvement and participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, in particular women and youth, to ensure that the links between Nature and Culture, traditional territories – the territories of life- and the cosmological vision of the indigenous peoples and local communities are considered in the development of the Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework;
6. *Support and promote* the intergenerational transmission of indigenous and local languages³ and knowledge, to regenerate, restore and revitalize knowledge systems and institutions to promote the recovery of cultural and biological diversity;
7. *Promote* a sustained dialogue between science and indigenous and local knowledge systems to provide a foundation for a new paradigm, generating the best possible knowledge and solutions for biological and cultural resilience;
8. *Further promote* cross-cultural awareness training for scientists and others working with indigenous peoples and local communities;
9. *Continue to explore* the intersectionality of biological and cultural diversity and a growing awareness of the concept of “biocultural diversity”;
10. *Promote* and further develop culturally-relevant and community-based monitoring and reporting indicators which can provide strong evidence, lead to better tracking, and enable meaningful action on the ground to address local issues and key threats;⁴
11. *Promote* education, training, capacity development opportunities through awareness raising programmes and activities on the links and interactions between biological and cultural diversity, in line with the perspectives of indigenous peoples and local communities, especially women and youth;
12. *Advocate* that education for a sustainable future empowers learners and stakeholders to respect, protect and maintain biological and cultural diversity of our planet now and in the future;
13. *Continue to advocate and promote* the integration of links between biological and cultural diversity within all economic, social and cultural development policies and programmes;
14. *Continue to advocate and promote* reforms which support the integration, harmonization and adaptation of practices from both the cultural and natural heritage sectors;
15. *Enhance* synergies between interlinked provisions of international conventions and programmes dealing with biological and cultural diversity;

³ Related to this initiative UNESCO is currently hosting the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), see: <https://en.unesco.org/decade-rapprochement-cultures?language=es>

⁴ Which may include biocultural indicators.

16. *Explore* further the contributions of culture, traditional knowledge, innovations and practices and collective indigenous initiatives and self-determined community initiatives in nature conservation and biological and cultural diversity;
 17. *Explore* the links between harmony between peoples (peace) and harmony between humanity and nature;
 18. *Explore* the interplay and consequences between human rights and biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, including the human right to a healthy environment;
 19. *Call for* concrete measures to protect environmental and human rights defenders;
 20. *Calls* for multi-partner strategies that aspire to a whole Earth approach equitably governed and sustainably managed with increased protection of both Nature and Culture within mosaic biocultural landscapes;
 21. *Calls* upon Parties to accelerate the recognition of indigenous peoples' lands, waters and territories of life as a means to trigger a transformational change in the protection of biological diversity and cultural heritage, for all life on Earth.
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