

Convention on Biological Diversity

The **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, known informally as the **Biodiversity Convention**, is a **multilateral treaty**. The Convention has three main goals:

1. conservation of biological diversity (or **biodiversity**);
2. sustainable use of its components; and
3. fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from **genetic resources**

In other words, its objective is to develop national strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. It is often seen as the key document regarding **sustainable development**.

The Convention was opened for signature at the **Earth Summit** in Rio de Janeiro on 5 June 1992 and entered into force on 29 December 1993.

At the 2010 10th Conference of Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity in October in **Nagoya**, Japan, the Nagoya Protocol was adopted.^[1]

1 Origin and Scope of the Convention

The notion of an international convention on biological diversity was conceived at a **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on Biological Diversity in November 1988. The subsequent year, the Ad Hoc Working Group of Technical and Legal Experts was established for the drafting of a legal text which addressed the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, as well as the sharing of benefits arising from their utilization with sovereign states and local communities. In 1991, an **Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee** was established, which was tasked with finalizing the convention's text.^[2]

A Conference for the Adoption of the Agreed Text of the Convention on Biological Diversity was held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1992, and its conclusions were distilled in the **Nairobi Final Act**.^[3] The Convention's text was opened for signature on 5 June 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Rio "Earth Summit"). By its closing date, 4 June 1993, the convention had received 168 signatures. It entered into force on 29 December 1993.^[2]

The convention recognized for the first time in international law that the conservation of biological conservation of biodiversity is "a common concern of humankind" and is an integral part of the development process. The agreement covers all **ecosystems**, **species**, and genetic resources. It links traditional conservation efforts to the economic goal of using biological resources sustainably. It sets principles for the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources, notably those destined for commercial use. It also covers the rapidly expanding field of biotechnology through its **Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety**, addressing technology development and transfer, benefit-sharing and **biosafety** issues. Importantly, the Convention is legally binding; countries that join it ('Parties') are obliged to implement its provisions.

The convention reminds decision-makers that natural resources are not infinite and sets out a philosophy of **sustainable use**. While past **conservation** efforts were aimed at protecting particular species and habitats, the Convention recognizes that ecosystems, species and genes must be used for the benefit of humans. However, this should be done in a way and at a rate that does not lead to the long-term decline of biological diversity.

The convention also offers decision-makers guidance based on the **precautionary principle** which demands that where there is a threat of significant reduction or loss of biological diversity, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to avoid or minimize such a threat. The Convention acknowledges that substantial investments are required to conserve **biological diversity**. It argues, however, that conservation will bring us significant environmental, economic and social benefits in return.

The Convention on Biological Diversity of 2010 would ban some forms of **geoengineering**

2 Issues

Some of the many issues dealt with under the convention include:

- Measures the incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.
- Regulated access to genetic resources and **traditional knowledge**, including Prior Informed Consent of the party providing resources.

- Sharing, in a fair and equitable way, the results of research and development and the benefits arising from the commercial and other utilization of **genetic** resources with the Contracting Party providing such resources (governments and/or local communities that provided the traditional knowledge or biodiversity resources utilized).
- Access to and transfer of technology, including **biotechnology**, to the governments and/or local communities that provided traditional knowledge and/or biodiversity resources.
- Technical and scientific cooperation.
- Coordination of a global directory of taxonomic expertise (Global Taxonomy Initiative).
- Impact assessment.
- Education and public awareness.
- Provision of financial resources.
- National reporting on efforts to implement treaty commitments.

3 Cartagena Protocol

Main article: [Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety](#)

The **Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety** of the Convention, also known as the Biosafety Protocol, was adopted in January 2000. The Biosafety Protocol seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology.

The Biosafety Protocol makes clear that products from new technologies must be based on the **precautionary principle** and allow developing nations to balance public health against economic benefits. It will for example let countries ban imports of a **genetically modified organism** if they feel there is not enough scientific evidence the product is **safe** and requires exporters to label shipments containing **genetically modified** commodities such as corn or cotton.

The required number of 50 instruments of ratification/accession/approval/acceptance by countries was reached in May 2003. In accordance with the provisions of its Article 37, the Protocol entered into force on 11 September 2003.

4 Global Strategy for Plant Conservation

Main article: [Global strategy for plant conservation](#)

In April 2002, the parties of the UN CBD adopted the recommendations of the Gran Canaria Declaration Calling for a Global Plant Conservation Strategy, and adopted a 16-point plan aiming to slow the rate of plant extinctions around the world by 2010.

5 Parties

As of 2016, the Convention has 196 parties, which includes 195 states and the **European Union**.^[4] All UN member states—with the exception of the United States—have ratified the treaty. Non-UN member states that have ratified are the **Cook Islands**, **Niue**, and the **State of Palestine**. The **Holy See** and the **states with limited recognition** are non-parties. The US has signed but not ratified the treaty,^[5] and has not announced plans to ratify it.

6 International bodies established

Conference of the parties: The convention's governing body is the Conference of the parties (COP), consisting of all governments (and regional economic integration organizations) that have ratified the treaty. This ultimate authority reviews progress under the Convention, identifies new priorities, and sets work plans for members. The COP can also make amendments to the Convention, create expert advisory bodies, review progress reports by member nations, and collaborate with other international organizations and agreements.

The Conference of the Parties uses expertise and support from several other bodies that are established by the Convention. In addition to committees or mechanisms established on an ad hoc basis, two main organs are:

Secretariat: The CBD Secretariat, based in **Montreal**, operates under the **United Nations Environment Programme**. Its main functions are to organize meetings, draft documents, assist member governments in the implementation of the programme of work, coordinate with other international organizations, and collect and disseminate information.

Subsidiary body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA): The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA). The SBSTTA is a committee composed of experts from member governments competent in relevant fields. It plays a key role in making recommendations to the COP on scientific and technical issues. 13th Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-13) held from 18 to 22 February 2008 in the **Food and Agriculture Organization** at Rome, Italy. SBSTTA-13 delegates met in the Committee of the Whole in the morning to finalize and adopt recommendations on the in-depth reviews of the work programmes on

agricultural and forest biodiversity and SBSTTA's modus operandi for the consideration of new and emerging issues. The closing plenary convened in the afternoon to adopt recommendations on inland waters biodiversity, marine biodiversity, invasive alien species and biodiversity and climate change. The current chairperson of the SBSTTA is Dr. Senka Barudanovic.

7 Country implementation

7.1 National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP)

"National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) are the principal instruments for implementing the Convention at the national level (Article 6). The Convention requires countries to prepare a national biodiversity strategy (or equivalent instrument) and to ensure that this strategy is mainstreamed into the planning and activities of all those sectors whose activities can have an impact (positive and negative) on biodiversity. To date [2012-02-01], 173 Parties have developed NBSAPs in line with Article 6."^[6]

For example, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Tanzania have carried out elaborate responses to conserve individual species and specific habitats. The United States of America, a signatory who has not yet ratified the treaty,^[7] has produced one of the most thorough implementation programs through species Recovery Programs and other mechanisms long in place in the USA for species conservation.

Singapore has also established a detailed National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. The National Biodiversity Centre of Singapore represents Singapore in the Convention for Biological Diversity.

7.2 National Reports

In accordance with Article 26 of the Convention, Parties prepare national reports on the status of implementation of the Convention.

8 Executive secretary

The current executive secretary is Bráulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, who took up this post on 15 February 2012.^[8] Dr Ahmed Djoghlaif was the previous executive secretary.

9 Nagoya Protocol

Main article: [Nagoya Protocol](#)

The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity^[9] is a supplementary agreement to the Convention on Biological Diversity. It provides a transparent legal framework for the effective implementation of one of the three objectives of the CBD: the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. The Protocol was adopted on 29 October 2010 in Nagoya, Aichi Province, Japan, and entered into force on 12 October 2014. Its objective is the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, thereby contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.^[10]

10 Meetings of the parties

10.1 1994 COP 1

The first ordinary meeting of the parties to the convention took place in November and December 1994, in Nassau, Bahamas.^[11]

10.2 1995 COP 2

The second ordinary meeting of the parties to the convention took place in November 1995, in Jakarta, Indonesia.^[12]

10.3 1996 COP 3

The third ordinary meeting of the parties to the convention took place in November 1996, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.^[13]

10.4 1998 COP 4

The fourth ordinary meeting of the parties to the convention took place in May 1998, in Bratislava, Slovakia.^[14]

10.5 1999 EXCOP 1

The First Extraordinary Meeting of the Conference of the Parties took place in February 1999, in Cartagena, Colombia.^[15]

10.6 2000 COP 5

The fifth ordinary meeting of the parties to the convention took place in May 2000, in **Nairobi, Kenya**.^[16]

10.7 2002 COP 6

The sixth ordinary meeting of the parties to the convention took place in April 2002, in **The Hague, Netherlands**.^[17]

10.8 2004 COP 7

The seventh ordinary meeting of the parties to the convention took place in February 2004, in **Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**.^[18]

10.9 2006 COP 8

The eighth ordinary meeting of the parties to the convention took place in March 2006, in **Curitiba, Brazil**.^[19]

10.10 2008 COP 9

The ninth ordinary meeting of the parties to the convention took place in May 2008, in **Bonn, Germany**.^[20]

10.11 2010 COP 10

The tenth ordinary meeting of the parties to the convention took place in October 2010, in **Nagoya, Japan**.^[1]

10.12 2012 COP 11

Main article: **2012 Hyderabad Biodiversity Conference**

Leading up to the Conference of the Parties (COP 11) meeting on biodiversity in **Hyderabad, India** 2012, preparations for a **World Wide Views on Biodiversity** has begun, involving old and new partners and building on the experiences from the **World Wide Views on Global Warming**.

10.13 2014 COP 12

Under the theme, “Biodiversity for Sustainable Development,” thousands of representatives of governments, NGOs, indigenous peoples, scientists and the private sector gathered in **Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea** in October 2014 for the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity

(COP 12). <http://www.cbd.int/cop2014>; Webcasting: <http://www.liveto.com/cop12/floor/index.html>

From 6–17 October 2014, Parties discussed the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which are to be achieved by the end of this decade. The results of Global Biodiversity Outlook 4, the flagship assessment report of the CBD informed the discussions.

The conference gave a mid-term evaluation to the UN Decade on Biodiversity (2011–2020) initiative, which aims to promote the conservation and sustainable use of nature.

At the end of the meeting, the meeting adopted the “Pyeongchang Road Map,” which addresses ways to achieve biodiversity through technology cooperation, funding and strengthening the capacity of developing countries. (Source <http://www.cbd.int/doc/press/2014/pr-2014-10-06-cop-12-en.pdf>)

10.14 2016 COP 13

The thirteenth ordinary meeting of the parties to the convention will take place between 2 and 17 December 2016 in Cancun, Mexico.

11 Commemorative periods

2010 was the **International Year of Biodiversity**. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity is the focal point for the International Year of Biodiversity. On 22 December 2010, the UN declared the period from 2011 to 2020 as the **United Nations Decade on Biodiversity**. They, hence, followed a recommendation of the CBD signatories during COP10 at **Nagoya** in October 2010.

12 Criticism

Although the convention explicitly states that all forms of life are covered by its provisions,^[21] examination of reports and of national biodiversity strategies and action plans submitted by participating countries shows that in practice this is not happening. The fifth report of the European Union, for example, makes frequent reference to animals (particularly fish) and plants, but does not mention bacteria, fungi or protists at all.^[22] The International Society for Fungal Conservation has assessed more than 100 of these CBD documents for their coverage of fungi using defined criteria to place each in one of six categories. No documents were assessed as good or adequate, less than 10% as nearly adequate or poor, and the rest as deficient, seriously deficient or totally deficient.^[23]

13 See also

- 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership
- 2010 Biodiversity Target
- Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs)
- Biodiversity banking
- Biological Diversity Act, 2002
- Biopiracy
- Bioprospecting
- Biosphere Reserve
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
- Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna
- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat
- Ecotourism
- Endangered species
- Endangered Species Recovery Plan
- Environmental agreements
- Environmental Modification Convention, another ban on weather modification / climate engineering.
- Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)
- Green Development Initiative (GDI)
- Holocene extinction
- Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
- International Cooperative Biodiversity Groups
- International Organization for Biological Control
- International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
- International Year of Biodiversity
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918
- Red Data Book of Singapore
- Red Data Book of the Russian Federation
- Satoyama
- Sustainable forest management

- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
- United Nations Decade on Biodiversity
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
- World Conservation Monitoring Centre

14 References

- [1] Welcome to COP 10
- [2] History of the Convention, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD); accessed 14 November 2016.
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- [6] "National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NB-SAPs)".
- [7] Watts, Jonathan (27 October 2010). "Harrison Ford calls on US to ratify treaty on conservation". *The Guardian*. London.
- [8] <http://www.cbd.int/doc/press/2012/pr-2012-02-15-Dias-en.pdf>
- [9] "Text of the Nagoya Protocol". *cbd.int*. Convention on Biological Diversity.
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- [19] "Eighth Ordinary Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 8)".
- [20] Welcome to COP 9
- [21] "Text of the CBD". *www.cbd.int*. Retrieved 7 November 2014.

- [22] “Fifth Report of the European Union to the Convention on Biological Diversity. June 2014” (PDF). www.cbd.int. Retrieved 7 November 2014.
- [23] “The Micheli Guide to Fungal Conservation”. www.fungal-conservation.org. Retrieved 7 November 2014.

This article is partly based on the relevant entry in the CIA World Factbook, as of 2008 edition.

15 Further reading

- Davis, K. 2008. A CBD manual for botanic gardens English version, Italian version Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI)

16 External links

- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) website
- Text of the Convention from CBD website
- Ratifications at depositary
- Case studies on the implementation of the Convention from BGCI website with links to relevant articles
- Introductory note by Laurence Boisson de Chazournes, procedural history note and audiovisual material on the *Convention on Biological Diversity* in the Historic Archives of the United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law

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