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The Convention on Biological Diversity

I. Introduction

The Convention on Biological Diversity was adopted at the Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992. The Convention entered into force on 29 December 1993 and a total of 196 States are currently Parties.

II. Objectives of the Convention

The objectives of this Convention are clearly stated in Article 1, which are: the conservation of biological diversity (i.e., the variety of living things found on Earth); the sustainable use of components of biological diversity; and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources.

The Convention also contains a number of Definitions in Art. 2 which are decisive in clearly delimiting the terms of the Convention. In this sense, biological diversity comprises: the variability among living organisms from all sources, including, inter alia,

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terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; it includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

III. Key elements of the Convention

The key elements of the Convention are the obligations of the Parties. Parties undertake to cooperate with other states and international organisations to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. In this regard, they shall:

- Develop timely strategies and integrate biodiversity protection into national decision-making and multidisciplinary plans, programmes and policies;
- Identify and monitor biodiversity and the factors that influence it;
- Conserve biodiversity through the following actions:
 - establish and properly manage protected areas and protect ecosystems and natural habitats;
 - promote environmentally sound and sustainable development in areas adjacent to protected areas;
 - restore degraded ecosystems and assist in the recovery of endangered species;



- regulate, manage and control the risks associated with the use and release of living modified organisms from biotechnological means, those genetically modified;
- prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate invasive alien species;
- protect and promote the traditional use of biological resources;
- adopt complementary conservation measures.

IV. Other obligations of the Parties

The Convention also establishes other obligations for the Parties. Thus, its signatories shall:

1. integrate biodiversity considerations into the national decision-making process;
2. avoid or minimise negative impacts resulting from the use of biological resources (e.g. through environmental impact assessments);
3. promote cooperation on biodiversity conservation between authorities and the private sector and establish incentives for this;
4. assist developing countries to identify, conserve and make sustainable use of their biological diversity through the provision of research, scientific and technical education and timely training;



5. promote awareness among the general public of the importance of biodiversity;
6. assess the impact that decisions may have on biodiversity and on their neighbours.



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