

**UPDATE ON THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE JOINT CONFERENCE OF PARTIES
(COP5 OF THE NAIROBI CONVENTION AND COP8 OF THE ABIDJAN CONVENTION)**

SOUTH AFRICA, 11-14 SEPTEMBER 2007

Progress

You will recall the first announcement on the Joint Conference of Parties (the Joint COP) emailed on 15th December 2006 (see below). A number of preparatory activities have been undertaken in the lead-up to the Joint COP:

- A road map for preparations and for the Conference itself has been prepared;
- Focal Points have been briefed at a meeting in December 2006 for the Abidjan Convention and in March 2007 for the Nairobi Convention;
- An NGO consultative forum for the Nairobi Convention was held in April 2007, to begin the process of better involving the NGOs and to gather initial suggestions for the Nairobi Convention Work Programme;
- The review process for the draft Protocols Concerning Land-Based Activities and Sources of Pollution (LBA Protocols) are ongoing for both Conventions, and should be completed in time for the Joint COP;
- Initial versions of the work programmes and COP decisions are being drafted, and will be communicated to Technical Steering Committees by end of June;
- A meeting will take place in Pretoria, May 15-16, between representatives of the Conventions' Secretariat, UNEP's Conference Services and the South African Joint COP Task Team, to finalise the logistical arrangements. Following this meeting we shall communicate to you the practical details of the conference, such as meeting venues, accommodation and other relevant information.

Conference Structure

South Africa will be hosting the upcoming Joint Conference of Parties to the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions for four days. On the first day, there will be two Experts meetings, one for each Convention. The Expert meetings will review and make conclusions on the draft Work Programmes for the Convention for 2007-2011, the draft decisions for the COP and the priorities for the Joint Heads of Delegation meetings. On the evening of the first day, there will be two meetings of the Bureaux of the two conventions, to discuss COP organisation matters.

On the second day, there will be Stakeholders' Workshops, one for each Convention, held in parallel sessions. Participants will primarily be drawn from NGOs and the private sector. Participants will be engaged in issue-based discussion relating to how best to involve NGOs in the Conventions' work and also recommending priorities for the Convention.

The Heads of Delegations (HOD) of the two Conventions will meet in parallel sessions on the third day. The HODs will take decisions based on the outputs from day one and two.

On fourth day, a joint Heads of Delegations meeting for both Conventions will be held within the framework of the African Union/NEPAD. The meeting will examine commonalities in the priorities of both conventions resulting in a Joint Ministerial Declaration. The Declaration will support the conventions by securing political commitment to the two conventions, endorsing the conventions' Work Programmes for 2007-2011 as

NEPAD work programmes, and encouraging the Conventions to use Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) as the base for the operational structures for the Abidjan Convention. During the four days of the meeting, there will be an area for participants to set up poster displays (please contact us if this interests you).

The main theme of the Joint COP is 'Building on Success', with a clear focus on the progress that has been achieved since the 1998 PACSICOM conference and on sharing of experiences. Focal Areas will include:

- Article 76 of the UN Law of the Sea and the UNEP Shelf Programme, focussing on the urgency and importance of the related application process, which will allow countries to expand and lay claim on their marine territory
- Oil and gas exploration and extraction
- Strategic environmental assessment
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Ecosystem-based management approaches

The outcomes of the Joint COP will include endorsement of the LBA Protocol for both Conventions, enhanced visibility for the Conventions, and a collaborative work plan for each Convention.

The Original Email, sent December 15 2006:

Dear all

The Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention, in their 7th Conference of Parties (COP) meeting held in Gabon in March 2005, requested the Republic of South Africa to host the 8th Conference of Parties meeting. The COP meeting further requested the secretariat for the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions to organize joint COP meetings for the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions at the same time and venue. The Focal Points for the Nairobi Convention, in a meeting held in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania in November 18, 2005, endorsed the request, and asked the secretariat to plan for a Joint COP meeting in 2007.

The secretariat for the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions subsequently held several discussions with the Vice - Chair responsible for the work program for the two conventions Honourable Madame Rejoice Mabudafhasi, Deputy Minister Ministry of Environmental Affairs and Tourism and Bureau members for the two conventions. Based on the discussions, 5-7 September 2007 has been fixed as the date for the Joint Conference of Parties Meeting and Cape Town as the venue for the meeting. The Joint meeting will provide a framework for the contracting parties to discuss mechanism for cross-jurisdictional management of shared marine and coastal resources based on ecosystem-based management approaches.

The ultimate goal is to develop a long-term vision for coastal and marine management in sub-Saharan Africa and to promote sub-regional and national level programs that strengthen regional implementation of the Nairobi and the Abidjan Conventions.

Directors and Managers of on going and planned regional projects will be requested to present lessons learned and to demonstrate new approaches in large marine ecosystems management.

Major Regional and National NGOs will be invited to participate in a one-day stakeholder's forum that will precede the Joint COP meeting.

The purpose of this e-mail is to kindly request you to mark the 5-7 September 2007 as the dates for COP5 for the Nairobi Convention and COP8 for the Abidjan Convention in your calendar before 2007 fills up.

Best regards

Dixon Waruinge