

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

SOUTH AFRICA, 10-14 SEPTEMBER 2007

Progress

A meeting took place in Pretoria on May 15-16, between representatives of the Conventions' Secretariat, UNEP's Conference Services and the South African Joint COP Preparatory Committee, to finalise the logistical arrangements. The South African Committee conveyed their decision to host the Joint COP on 10th to 14th of September, rather than 5th to 7th. We apologize to all those who had marked the 29th-31st August or 5th-7th September, and hope that you are still able to attend, despite this change of dates. A number of other logistical matters were covered, and a Country Host Agreement is currently being negotiated with the Republic of South Africa; this agreement covers such issues as protocol for Heads of Delegations, security, support staff and accommodation bookings. The Committee is currently finalising the logistics for conference facilities to accommodate about 160 participants and to provide room for several parallel sessions.

The meetings for the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions will be held back-to-back with other key meetings: 1) WIO-LaB project steering committee meeting on the 10th September; and 2) the second meeting of "Signatory States to the Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa" (MOP2) of the Convention on Migratory Species' (CMS) on the 10th and 11th, with around 40 participants from West Africa, including 10 NGO/IGO observers.

The outcomes from the WIO-LaB meeting (an agreement on the draft SAP) and the MOP2 decisions will feed into the respective Experts meetings held in parallel sessions on the 11th. The experts will agree on the decisions that will be tabled for adoption by the parallel Heads of Delegations meetings. Stakeholder workshops will be held on the 12th for both the Abidjan and Nairobi Conventions, followed by parallel Heads of Delegations meetings on the 13th. The Joint COP will finish with the Joint Heads of Delegations meeting on the 14th.

On the margins of the Joint COP, the "Consortium for Conservation of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems in the Western Indian Ocean" (WIO-C) will be launched. The WIO-C is an NGO-led forum, anchored in the Nairobi Convention, which aims to improve coordination between NGOs working on coastal and marine environment issues in the Western Indian Ocean region.

There will also be two side events, scheduled for the 13th and 14th: a) South-South Cooperation by UNEP DEWA; and b) the implementation of the UNEP Shelf Programme on the delineation of the continental shelf and the application of Article 76 of UNCLOS by Grid Arendal. NGOs will also be encouraged to host events during lunch sessions on the 11th and 12th, and to set up displays of their activities.

As part of the preparatory process, a consultative forum for Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) projects and the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions is being planned for the first week of July. Key representatives of the LME projects will be hosted by UNEP in Nairobi for a one day meeting. The purpose is to seek greater synergy between the Regional Seas and LME programmes in the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions areas. After the LME meeting, there will be a meeting of the Bureaus of the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions.

The Joint Secretariat of the Abidjan and Nairobi Conventions wishes to use the preparations towards the Joint COP as an opportunity to expand the network of partners,

including NGOs. We would therefore like to encourage organisations and institutions to communicate to the Secretariat their interest in attending the Joint COP, as well as their requirements for displaying posters or information materials to highlight their activities to a wide audience.

We shall shortly circulate the agenda and the timing for all the meetings.