



Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

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Listing, classification and packing

Considering invasive alien species as environmental hazardous living organisms

Transmitted by the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)*

I. Introduction

1. The Convention on Biological Diversity entered into force on 29 December 1993, with the objectives of conserving biological diversity, the sustainable use of the components of biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. The Conference of the Parties is the governing body of the Convention, and advances implementation of the Convention through the decisions it takes at its periodic meetings. There are currently 196 Parties in the Convention.
2. Invasive alien species¹ have been recognized as an important threat to biodiversity and, through Article 8(h) of the Convention² the Parties are encouraged to prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species. The Conference of the Parties recognized invasive alien species as a crosscutting issue for the work of the Convention (decision VI/1) and has adopted a set of guiding principles for the implementation of Article 8(h) (decision VI/23).
3. The importance of strengthening international collaboration and cooperation among various organizations and stakeholders to address the issue of invasive alien species has been continuously highlighted by the Parties to the Convention. In this respect, some decisions of the Conference of the Parties have focused on cooperation, on addressing gaps in the international regulatory framework (e.g. decisions VII/13, VIII/27 and IX/4), and an Inter-Agency Liaison Group on invasive alien species was established in 2009. Through this liaison group, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has been receiving

* A/78/6 (Sect. 20), table 20.5.

¹ **Alien species** refers to a species, subspecies or lower taxon, introduced outside its natural past or present distribution; includes any part, gametes, seeds, eggs, or propagules of such species that might survive and subsequently reproduce. **Invasive alien species** means an alien species whose introduction and/or spread threaten biological diversity.

² <https://www.cbd.int/convention/text/>.



information and advice on matters related to invasive alien species which has resulted in decisions and recommendations for the Conference of the Parties.

4. The Conference of the Parties has also recognized the role of conveyances as pathways for invasive alien species, and in decision XII/17, has encouraged Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to take actions to address pathways, such as marine biofouling, ballast water, emergency relief, aid and response, and tourism, among others. The decision includes a call to Parties to use the pathway categorization framework provided in document CBD/SBSTTA/18/9/Add.1, which facilitates an analysis of pathways and their relative importance for prioritizing management actions.

5. The Conference of the Parties has also acknowledged the gaps in international standards that can be used at an international level to avoid the spread of invasive alien species that are not covered by current standards, as well as on information needed to support international efforts on invasive alien species. Based on this, a number of technical guidance documents and reference tools have been developed under the Convention to address the threat posed by invasive alien species including:

(a) alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species (Article 8 (h)): further consideration of gaps and inconsistencies in the international regulatory framework³;

(b) guidance on devising and implementing measures to address the risks associated with the introduction of alien species as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, as live bait and live food⁴;

(c) invasive alien species: addressing risks associated with trade, experiences in the use of biological control agents, and decision support tools⁵;

(d) supplementary voluntary guidance for avoiding unintentional introductions of invasive alien species associated with trade in live organisms⁶;

(e) CBD Technical Series No. 1 (Assessment and Management of Alien Species that Threaten Ecosystems, Habitats and Species);

(f) CBD Technical Series No. 2 (Review of the Efficiency and Efficacy of Existing Legal Instruments Applicable to Invasive Alien Species);

(g) CBD Technical Series No. 48 (Pets, Aquarium and Terrarium Species: Best Practices for Addressing Risks to Biodiversity);

(h) CBD Technical Series No. 91 (The Application of Classical Biological Control for the Management of Established Invasive Alien Species Causing Environmental Impacts); and

(i) CBD Technical Series No. 94 (The Global Taxonomy Initiative 2020: A Step-by-Step Guide to DNA Barcoding).

A. Requests from the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity related to TDG Sub-Committee

6. In paragraph 3 of decision XIII/13 the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity encouraged actors in trade and industry to apply the voluntary measures indicated in the *Guidance on devising and implementing measures to address the risks associated with the introduction of alien species as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, and as live bait and live food, mutatis mutandis*, when trade in wildlife takes place, for example the use of labelling on consignments of live alien species to identify it as a potential

³ COP/DEC/VIII/27.

⁴ Annex to COP/DEC/XII/16.

⁵ COP/DEC/XIII/13.

⁶ Annex to COP/DEC/14/11.

hazard for biodiversity and the proper identification of species with the scientific name, taxonomic serial number or its equivalent⁷.

7. Later, in paragraph 13(a) of decision 14/11 the Conference of the Parties requested the secretariat to explore with the secretariat of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, the World Customs Organization and the Inter-Agency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species the possibility of developing a system of classification and labelling, consistent and in harmony with international agreements, for consignments of living organisms that pose a hazard or risk to biological diversity related to invasive alien species, supplementary to and in line with existing international standards.

8. Further, in paragraph 12(a) of decision 15/27 the Conference of the Parties requested the secretariat to prepare a draft proposal to the TDG Sub-Committee on a globally harmonized labelling system for consignments of environmentally hazardous living organisms or propagules, consistent and in harmony with the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other international agreements and in consultation with the Inter-Agency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species and the secretariat of the Sub-Committee.

9. In light of the above, the secretariat to the Convention on Biological Diversity has prepared the following document to consult on this matter and seek advice from the secretariat of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, in order to address the request made by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. It is expected that this consultation will serve as the first step on the development of system of classification and labelling for invasive alien species.

II. Proposal

A. Objective of the proposal

10. Seek the support of the TDG Sub-Committee⁸ to develop a system of classification and labelling for invasive alien species as environmentally hazardous living organisms in the *Recommendations of the Transport of Dangerous Goods – Model Regulations*.

B. Justification

11. The impacts of invasive alien species have been recognised globally. Many invasive alien species have been intentionally introduced around the world for their perceived benefits without consideration or knowledge of their negative impacts, but there have also been many unintentional introductions, including as contaminants of traded goods and stowaways in shipments. Indirect drivers of change, particularly those associated with economic activities, of which international trade is the most important, are increasingly facilitating transport and introduction, the early stages of biological invasion.

12. Prevention of introduction and spread of invasive alien species through pathway management⁹ has been recognized as a critical element to mitigate the negative effects of

⁷ The Latin scientific name is given by taxonomists as a unique universal identifier for species (a species is defined as a potentially interbreeding group of organisms that can produce viable offspring that themselves can interbreed). A taxonomic serial number is a permanent and unique numeric code assigned to an individual taxonomic name.

⁸ Please refer to paras. 41 and 42 of the sixty-third session of the TDG Sub-Committee report [ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/126](#).

⁹ An introduction pathway refers to the many ways in which species are moved from one location to another by human activities that give rise to an intentional or unintentional introduction. Pathway management is any action taken (single or via systems approach) towards a particular anthropogenic invasive alien species arrival pathway (e.g. trade) to prevent or address the threats and risks of an invasive alien species arriving and establishing via that pathway either between or within jurisdictions (Robertson et al., 2020).

invasive alien species worldwide as reflected by target 15.8¹⁰ of the Sustainable Development Goals and, more recently, through target 6¹¹ of the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework¹².

13. Conveyances have been identified as an important pathway for the introduction and spread of alien species, (e.g. vessels, floating timber, equipment and machinery, household goods, packaging and containers, waste materials, air transport vessels, tourist vessels, etc.)¹³ as they provide physical means to transport stowaway live organisms attached to transporting vessels, equipment, and media¹⁴.

14. The Summary for Policymakers of the thematic assessment on invasive alien species and their control¹⁵ of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services provides the most recent evaluation of the situation of biological invasions and invasive alien species. Information relevant for this proposal includes:

(a) invasive alien species are a major threat to nature, nature's contribution's to people and good quality of life. These species are being introduced by human activities to all regions of the world at unprecedented rates, causing negative and in some cases irreversible impacts on nature upon which humanity depends;

(b) the estimated annual economic costs of biological invasions in 2019, was more than US\$ 423 billion;

(c) the increase in the transport and introduction of invasive alien species worldwide is primarily influenced by economic drivers, especially the expansion of global trade and human travel. In particular, international trade, represents the most important pathway through which invasive alien species are transported worldwide; and

(d) biosecurity measures at international borders have not kept pace with the growing volume, diversity and origins of global trade (including e-trade) and travel, however the threat of invasive alien species could be reduced with closer collaboration and coordination across sectors and countries to support the management of biological invasions.

15. As noted in decision VII/13, specific gaps in the international regulatory frameworks at global, regional and national levels persist, notably in relation to species that are invasive, but do not qualify as plant pests under the regulations of the International Plant Protection Convention and other international agreements or animal diseases under the regulations of the World Organization for Animal Health and other international agreements with regard to different pathways. These gaps and inconsistencies in the international regulatory framework are significantly hindering countries' efforts to manage threats arising from the introduction, establishment and spread from invasive alien species.

16. Under the current circumstances, environmentally hazardous organisms (invasive alien species in the destination and countries of transit) are not recognized by the competent authorities and the individuals handling the consignments. With rapid growth of international trade, e-commerce and associated fast carrier services, vast numbers of hazardous living organisms (e.g. vertebrate animals, insects, plant seeds, fungi etc. and associated living organisms within their consignments) in broad range of taxa are moved and handled by

¹⁰ Target 15.8 "By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species".

¹¹ Target 6 "Eliminate, minimize, reduce and or mitigate the impacts of invasive alien species on biodiversity and ecosystem services by identifying and managing pathways of the introduction of alien species, preventing the introduction and establishment of priority invasive alien species, reducing the rates of introduction and establishment of other known or potential invasive alien species by at least 50 per cent by 2030, and eradicating or controlling invasive alien species, especially in priority sites, such as islands".

¹² [Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#).

¹³ [CBD/COP/DEC/VIII/27](#).

¹⁴ [UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/9/Add.1](#).

¹⁵ Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, *Thematic Assessment Report on Invasive Alien Species and their Control: Summary for Policymakers of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* (Bonn, 2023).

individuals who are not aware of the risks posed by possible accidental escapes during transport, nor of the impacts of invasive alien species. Therefore, risk communication related to the transport of living organisms is extremely difficult. To address the issues above, a globally harmonized classification and labelling for consignments of living organisms with risk of biological invasions is necessary and could be accompanied by handling protocols that promote environmental safety during transport.

17. Inclusion of invasive alien species as environmentally hazardous living organisms will strengthen global efforts to prevent and reduce the introduction and spread of these species across the globe and reduce the risks associated with escapes from confined conditions and inappropriate disposals of materials associated with the consignments of live organisms that have negative impacts on the world's environment and biodiversity. Moreover, labelling invasive alien species as environmentally hazardous living organisms would directly assist prevention measures needed in the transport of live organisms. It would provide the handlers with specific guidance on how to manage these live organisms during their transport and storage as well as the correct disposal of the materials associated with their transport.

18. As per the principles underlying the regulations of the transport of dangerous goods, this process is regulated to prevent, as far as possible, accidents to persons or property and damage to the environment, the means of transport employed or to other goods. At the same time, regulations should be framed so as not to impede the movement of such goods, other than those too dangerous to be accepted for transport. With this exception, the aim of regulations is to make transport feasible by eliminating risks or reducing them to a minimum.

19. While Class 9 of chapter 2.9 of the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods – Model Regulations Revision 23*¹⁶ considers UN numbers for environmentally hazardous substances (solid and liquid) that are pollutants to the aquatic environment, and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and micro-organisms, these categories do not completely cover invasive alien species, which are broader, are not necessarily a genetically modified organism, and have impacts on ecosystems beyond the aquatic environment. For these reasons, the CBD secretariat consider that assigning a new specific UN number to these species would be more appropriate for addressing biological invasions and their prevention during transport.

C. Requests to the TDG Sub-Committee

20. The support and advice of the TDG Sub-Committee is requested to:

(a) develop a system of classification and labelling for invasive alien species as environmentally hazardous living organisms in the *Model Regulations*, under a new UN number; and

(b) suggest which type of label should be used according to their model regulations (e.g. an existing one or a new label).

¹⁶ UN *Model Regulations Rev. 23* (2023) UNECE.