

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

2 July 2019

Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods Fifty-fifth session

Geneva, 1-5 July 2019

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Listing, classification and packing

Environmentally hazardous articles (living organisms)

Transmitted by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity on behalf of the Inter-agency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species¹

Objective

1. Seek the support of the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (TDG Sub-committee) to consider the inclusion of environmentally hazardous living organisms into ‘*Chapter 2.9 Class 9 - Miscellaneous Dangerous Substances and Articles, including Environmentally Hazardous Substances*’ to prevent the introduction of invasive alien species² by escaping from the confined conditions and inappropriate disposals of materials associated with the consignments of live organisms, in response to decision 14/11³ of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In this decision COP requested the Executive Secretary of the CBD 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 about 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 (paragraph 13(a) of decision 14/11).

Background

2. The entries and subsequent establishment of alien (non-native) species into the environment outside natural distribution have significant impacts on ecosystems, habitats and native species populations. The global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem

¹ The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention, the World Organisation for Animal Health, the World Customs Organization, the CAB International and the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

² Alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species, as it states in article 8(h) of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

³ CBD COP decision 14/11 <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-14/cop-14-dec-11-en.pdf>

services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)⁴ in 2019 revealed that the numbers of invasive alien species per country have risen by some 70 per cent since 1970.

3. Invasive alien species can have devastating effects on biodiversity. The analysis on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species⁵ showed that invasive alien species were considered to be a contributing cause of 25% of plant extinctions and 33% of animal extinctions, globally. A single invasive pathogen species, *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, is a threat to nearly 400 amphibian species worldwide and has already caused extinctions³.

4. Impacts from invasive alien species also cause loss of production in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and loss of trade opportunities in countries where biological invasions occur, which negatively impacts on sustainable development, globally. The cost of management of invasive alien species is huge and increasing, for example, over € 12 billion has been spent every year in the European Union⁶, and \$3.77 billion in Australia⁷ for managing invasive alien species. The U.S. agriculture loses \$13 billion annually in crops from invasive alien insects⁸.

5. The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD adopted voluntary guidance: (i) “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”⁹ in 2014; and (ii) “Supplementary voluntary guidance for avoiding unintentional introductions of invasive alien species associated with trade in live organisms”¹⁰ in 2018 to prevent escapes of invasive alien species from confined conditions throughout the value chain of the living organisms in trade and transport, as well as associated unintentional introduction of invasive alien species (contaminants and stowaways).

Issues

6. The Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods - Model Regulations Twentieth revised edition indicates environmentally hazardous substances that are pollutants to the aquatic environment, and genetically modified organisms and micro-organisms. 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, and the hazardous living organisms are transported and handled by individuals who are not aware of the risks posed by, and the impacts of biological invasions. Therefore, risk communication related to the transport of living organisms is extremely difficult. To address the issues above, a globally harmonized

⁴ IPBES <https://www.ipbes.net/news/ipbes-global-assessment-summary-policymakers-pdf>

⁵ Bellard C et al. *Biology Letters* 12 (2)2016 <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsbl.2015.0623>

⁶ European Environmental Agency, 2016 The impacts of invasive alien species, <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/de2eb7f5-15f8-461d-9a2c-dfa0c0a2ac6f/language-en>

⁷ Benjamin D. et al. *NeoBiota* 31 1-18,2 016 <https://neobiota.pensoft.net/articles.php?id=6960>

⁸ U.S. Fish &Wild Life Service, The cost of Invasive Species, <https://www.fws.gov/verobeach/pythonpdf/costofinvasivesfactsheet.pdf>

⁹ Annex to decision XII/16 <https://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/default.shtml?id=13379>

¹⁰ Annex I to decision 14/11 <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-14/cop-14-dec-11-en.pdf>

classification and labelling for consignments of living organisms with risk of biological invasions is needed.

Proposal of ways forward

Option 1

7. Experts on biological invasions, working with experts on standard setting on sanitary and phytosanitary measures, will elaborate and propose an appropriate classification and labelling for consignment of living organisms under the process of the CBD inviting members of the inter-agency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien species with guidance of the UNECE Secretariat. The CBD Secretariat would then inform the result of the above meeting to the TDG Sub-Committee for its consideration and assigning UN numbers at the future meeting.

Option 2

8. The Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods may wish to defer consideration of this issue to an informal working group. The Secretariat of the CBD and members of the Inter-agency Liaison Group gladly offer to send technical experts to consider the above in collaboration with the TDG Sub-Committee.
