

**Report of the meeting of the  
Global Biodiversity Outlook Advisory Group  
Geneva, 22 and 23 November 1999**

Opening of the meeting

The meeting was opened by the Executive Secretary at 10:00 a.m. He welcomed participants<sup>1</sup> and thanked them for agreeing to put their skills and experience at the service of the Convention.

Apologies for absence

The Executive Secretary conveyed the apologies of members of the Advisory Group unable to be present at the meeting (see Annex II).

Background to the Global Biodiversity Outlook and timetable for publication

The Executive Secretary recalled that at its first meeting, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) had recommended that the Conference of the Parties request the Secretariat to prepare a periodic report on biological diversity (recommendation I/6<sup>2</sup>). It had made suggestions as to what such a report could include. In its decision II/1, the Conference of the Parties had endorsed this recommendation. At the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (May 1998), the Secretariat had distributed a preliminary draft to members of the bureaux of the Conference of the Parties and of SBSTTA for comment. Further preparatory work had since taken place. The intention of the Secretariat was to prepare a full draft for presentation to the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in May 2000.

Role of the Advisory Group

In recommendation I/6, SBSTTA had emphasized the need for widespread dissemination of scientific and technical information relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and the importance of scientific and technical research in achieving the goals and objectives of the Convention. It had recommended that the GBO reflect the views of the scientific community. The Executive Secretary noted that the GBO has the potential to become an authoritative report on global biological diversity, provided it is based upon the best available scientific expertise. He had established the Advisory Group to ensure that such expertise would be available to the Secretariat in the preparation of the report.

Introduction to the first draft

The Secretariat introduced the draft texts that had been distributed to participants, noting that some sections were drawn from the May 1998 draft while other sections were drawn from other work in progress that could, if appropriate, be adapted to the purposes of the GBO.

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<sup>1</sup> A list of participants is contained in Annex II to the present report

<sup>2</sup> Recommendation I/6 of SBSTTA is included in Annex III to the present report

### Discussion of the first draft

A general discussion took place on the matters raised under items 3 to 5, following which it was agreed that consideration of the structure and content of the GBO needed to be preceded by agreement on the goals of the publication and its intended audience.

The meeting agreed that the purpose of the GBO was to assist in assessing progress in the implementation of the Convention. The primary audience should be decision-makers who need to take account of the objectives of the Convention, the obligations on Parties and the decisions of the Conference of the Parties. The GBO should be an information resource available to national focal points, members of delegations and others directly involved in the processes of the CBD for their use in advocating implementation of the Convention, particularly at the intra- and inter-departmental levels.

Following consensus on the goals and audience, the meeting considered the structure and content of the GBO, on the basis of the elements identified in SBSTTA recommendation I/6.

The meeting also considered aspects relating to the production process, including format and method of publication, and the periodicity of future editions. It noted that the GBO and the Handbook of the Convention (requested in decision IV/16) should complement each other. It also noted that the scope and content of future editions of the GBO should be defined in light of the decision to be taken by the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties on guidelines for national reporting.

### Conclusions and recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations of the Advisory Group are contained in Annex I to this report.

The meeting agreed that any further comments could be submitted to the Secretariat in the next two weeks. The Secretariat would prepare a new draft by the end of February 2000, on the basis of the structure recommended by the meeting, for submission to the Advisory Group. Following receipt of comments, it would be decided whether to convene a second meeting of the Advisory Group prior to the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. A full pre-publication draft should be ready for circulation at the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

### Closure of the meeting

The meeting was closed at 2:00 p.m. on 24 November 1999 by the Executive Secretary, who thanked participants for their contributions to a successful and productive meeting.

## Annex I

### Conclusions agreed by the Advisory Group

#### Goals

The GBO should constitute a tool that can be used by contracting Parties and other stakeholders to review progress in implementing the Convention to meet its three objectives, to identify barriers to implementation, to help set priorities for implementation, and to communicate progress and advocate needs to decision-makers.

#### Audience

The GBO should be principally directed at key players in implementation of the Convention and other decision-makers and planners who need to take account of achievements in and limitations to meeting the objectives of the Convention, in such sectors as (though not limited to) trade, finance, agriculture, fisheries and industry.

#### Structure

The GBO should be concise, written in language accessible to the informed layperson and should emphasise implementation of the Convention, drawing on existing and ongoing assessments of the status of biodiversity. A possible outline is:

#### **Introduction** to the GBO

The Introduction should explain the genesis of the report, its function and structure.

#### **Chapter 1:** The Convention: its context and related processes

This chapter should be concise (circa 10 pages) and describe the Convention as a process, stress implementation; contents should not be controversial.

#### **Chapter 2:** Status and trends of global and regional biodiversity

This chapter should: draw upon and refer to existing assessments (with a possible baseline of 1992) in order to measure the impact of the Convention on the status of biodiversity; clarify sources; emphasise human dimension; use graphics, charts and tables where possible; include information on changes in status at the global level where possible; ensure a balance in discussion between ecosystem, species and genetic levels of diversity; stress constraints on data; use existing and up-to-date information. It should be circa 30 pages in length.

Consideration should be given to including an overview of threats to biodiversity and of goods, values and services derived from it. Alternatively this could be included in Chapter 4.

#### **Chapter 3:** Review of implementation of the Convention at the national level

- National reports
- Conservation – progress, constraints and emerging issues
- Sustainable use – progress, constraints and emerging issues
- Benefit sharing – progress, constraints and emerging issues
- Development of capacity

This section should be drawn from submitted national reports, as well as case studies submitted by Parties to the Secretariat, biodiversity country studies and national biodiversity strategies and

action plans. Consideration should be given to organising the section under the operative Articles of the Convention.

**Chapter 4:** Global and regional trends in the implementation of the Convention

This chapter should include a general review of global and regional activities and initiatives that support the implementation of the Convention: the three objectives of the Convention should each be covered in reviews at regional and global level to the extent possible. If not included in Chapter 2, an overview of threats to biodiversity and of goods, values and services derived from it should be included here.

**Chapter 5:** Analysis of implementation of COP decisions and SBSTTA recommendations

- Programmatic areas and cross-cutting issues
- Finance and other services in support of implementation, including the financial mechanism
- Role of the CBD institutions in implementation

This chapter should cross-refer to relevant parts of chapters 3, 4 and 6 and to the Handbook of the Convention.

**Chapter 6:** Overview of co-operation with other biodiversity-related conventions and processes

- Related Conventions
- Related intergovernmental and non-governmental processes
- Scientific and technical co-operation

**Chapter 7:** Prospects and outlook

This chapter should derive from the preceding chapters, providing an objective summary. It should identify priority issues and consider targets for the future.

**Process**

- A pre-publication draft should be distributed at COP-5 for comments;
- The GBO should be made available in hard copy and on the Internet;
- Issues concerning the method of publication (i.e. whether to seek a commercial publisher or to self-publish) and the possibility of producing other language versions need to be considered;
- The involvement of other organisations in production of certain sections of future editions should be recommended.

**Periodicity**

The GBO should be produced periodically with a suitable interval to allow meaningful progress to be measured. A possible interval would be to produce an edition for every second meeting of the COP (on the assumption that the COP will decide to meet every two years). It was suggested that shorter, thematically-focussed outputs could be produced at shorter intervals.

## Annex II

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### Annex III

#### Recommendation I/6: Global Biodiversity Outlook

In view of the need for a large dissemination of scientific and technical information relevant to the conservation and the sustainable use of biological diversity;

In view also of the importance of scientific and technical research in achieving the goals and objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

The first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), held in Paris from 4 to 8 September, recommends that the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 6 to 17 November 1995, consider:

1. Requesting the Secretariat to prepare, under the guidance of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties and the SBSTTA, a periodic report on biological diversity. Such a report, which may also reflect the views of the scientific community, may include, *inter alia*:
  - (a) A brief summary of the status and trends of biological diversity at global and regional level;
  - (b) An analysis of the global and regional trends in the implementation of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity on the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources;
  - (c) A summary of the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity at the national level on the basis of the information contained in national reports to be submitted by Parties in accordance with Article 26 of the Convention;
  - (d) An overview of the cooperation with other biological-diversity-related conventions and intergovernmental processes; a
  - (e) A presentation on the implementation of the decisions of the Conference of the Parties and the recommendations adopted by the SBSTTA.
2. The implications of this proposal in terms of financial and human resources in relation to other tasks to be fulfilled by the Secretariat.