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OVERVIEW OF VIEWS SUBMITTED BY PARTIES ON THE INTEGRATION OF BIODIVERSITY INTO CLIMATE-CHANGE-RELATED ACTIVITIES

Note by the Executive Secretary

INTRODUCTION

1. In preparation for the first meeting of the Second Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Biodiversity and Climate Change, the Conference of the Parties, in paragraph 14 of its decision IX/16 B, requested the Executive Secretary to prepare a compilation of the views submitted by Parties on ways to integrate biodiversity considerations in climate-change-related activities for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), prior to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Accordingly, on 21 August 2008, the Executive Secretary circulated a notification 1/ to Parties requesting their views. Eight submissions were received from Parties. 2/

2. In addition to the views submitted by Parties, annex III of decision IX/16 calls for an ad hoc Internet-based discussion group or an online conference to be convened by the Executive Secretary in multiple languages, in order to support the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group.

3. Given the relevance of the views and online dialogue contributions to the terms of reference of the AHTEG, the following document was prepared by the Executive Secretary as a summary of views that relate to the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and the enhancement of links between climate change mitigation and biodiversity. The document also outlines some of the challenges Parties identified to the further integration of biodiversity into climate-change-related activities.

* UNEP/CBD/AHTEG/BD-CC-2/1/1.

1/ SCBD/STTM/JW/ac/64561 (2008-106).

2/ Australia, China, Comoros, Cuba, France (on behalf of the European Union and including examples from the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany and the United Kingdom), India, Mauritius and Norway.

I. BIODIVERSITY AND IMPACT AND VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS

4. Many Parties revealed specific activities within national impact and vulnerability assessments focusing on biodiversity. In Australia, for example, impact studies have been conducted for marine biodiversity and fisheries. Australia is also conducting vulnerability assessments for its National Reserve System and World Heritage sites (including the Great Barrier Reef). The Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic has also completed assessments of the impacts of climate change on biodiversity at all three main levels, while the National Action Plan for Climate Change in India will include biodiversity within its thematic missions on impact assessments. China has also completed its national report on assessment of climate change, which includes a scientific analysis of the impacts of climate change on biodiversity.

5. The impacts of climate change on biodiversity are also being increasingly reflected in national biodiversity strategy and actions plans (NBSAP), such as the national biodiversity strategy of the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom biodiversity action plan and the national biodiversity action plan of India.

6. Parties also called for further action with regard to:

(a) Increasing knowledge on the direct and indirect impacts of climate change on biodiversity, including identifying species or ecosystems for which alternative pathways for conservation may be necessary;

(b) Improving monitoring schemes; and

(c) Linking climate change impacts to biodiversity-based livelihoods.

II. BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION

Maximizing synergies

7. A number of views acknowledged that the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity can serve as a cost-effective and low-risk mitigation option. Furthermore, some Parties expressed the view that the effort required to develop guidelines and implement impact assessments, while seeming complicated and time consuming, is, in fact, negligible when compared to the increase in the efficiency of climate policies that such efforts would yield.

8. In their submissions, Parties identified a number of specific actions that could promote the integration of biodiversity within climate change-related activities. Most responding Parties focused on wetlands, agricultural landscapes and forests, and the actions mentioned included:

(a) Identifying measures that contribute to both climate-change mitigation and biodiversity conservation and sustainable use (such as the identification of high-biodiversity-value forests for consideration when reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation);

(b) Protecting and restoring degraded wetlands and other natural ecosystems;

(c) Promoting the sustainable management of production landscapes, including forests and agricultural areas;

(d) Exploring how funding for mitigation can create incentives for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use (including through establishing a mechanism whereby one single financial transaction can yield climate change, biodiversity and social benefits);

(e) Developing and disseminating new technologies that contribute to climate-change mitigation and biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, including new agricultural technologies; and

(f) Strengthening education, training and public awareness on the links between biodiversity and climate change mitigation.

9. A number of actions in support of the above activities have already been implemented. For example, the Government of Norway has declared its willingness to contribute up to 3 billion Norwegian krone per year to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries. In disbursing these funds, the Government of Norway recognizes that its goals cannot be achieved over the long term without the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in tropical forests as a contribution to poverty reduction, improved forest governance, and to support the rights of indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities.

10. Other Parties identified additional forest-related activities to enhance carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation and sustainable use including: lengthening harvest rotations, promoting the sustainable harvesting of wood products, improving fire management, and restoring riparian forests.

11. Furthermore, the role of intact ecosystems in climate-change mitigation is acknowledged by all submitting Parties in light of the fact that, of annual emissions of 9 billion tonnes of carbon, 5 billion tonnes is reabsorbed by terrestrial and marine ecosystems. Accordingly, approaching synergies by considering ecosystem services as a main entry point is already being explored as one option to achieve the objectives of the biodiversity and climate-change conventions.

12. Through its submission, Australia identifies its "Caring for Our Country" programme as an overall approach to maintaining ecosystem services in a changing climate. In doing so, a link is drawn between biodiversity, ecosystem services and climate change. In Germany, the Muritz National Park Peat-bog Initiative aims at the restoration of ecosystem services for biodiversity and carbon benefits. In the Czech Republic, the impacts of climate change on ecosystem services is already reflected in a number of landscape management documents such as the National Forest Programme II and the Territorial Systems of Ecological Stability of the Landscape. Finally, in China, the National Climate Change Programme, launched in 2007, includes the conservation of natural forests (including mangrove forests) and the improved management of natural reserves.

13. In agricultural landscapes, China and Comoros identified improved agricultural management, agroforestry and "ecoagriculture" as steps that have been taken to enhance carbon sequestration in productive landscapes while maintaining agricultural biodiversity (including soil biodiversity).

Avoiding negative impacts

14. In addition to maximizing synergies between biodiversity and climate change mitigation, Parties identified the need to ensure that the negative impacts of mitigation activities on biodiversity are evaluated and considered. To accomplish this, Parties identified a number of possible actions including:

(a) Identifying the potential negative impacts of climate-change mitigation activities;

(b) Ensuring that new mitigation mechanisms adequately address potential negative impacts through the establishment of safeguards;

(c) Developing biodiversity guidelines to be applied to mitigation measures that pose a potential risk to biodiversity including building on voluntary guidelines developed under the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe and the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy;

(d) Conducting environmental impact assessments during the development of mitigation measures, including renewable energy;

(e) Integrating the costs of biodiversity loss within economic analysis of mitigation options through, for example, polluter-pays principles; and

(f) Adopting the precautionary principle (including the concept of "do-no-harm").

15. Actions that have already been taken by Parties to avoid possible negative impacts on biodiversity include, in Mauritius, a requirement that was put in place where at least 10 per cent of afforestation and reforestation areas must be replanted with native species. A number of submissions (European Union, Mauritius and Norway) also revealed that environmental impact assessments and biodiversity impact assessments are already being employed to a certain degree, in order to prevent negative impacts and unintended consequences.

16. Many Parties expressed concerns about developing a new mechanism to evaluate the impacts of climate-change mitigation on biodiversity. In such cases, Parties considered it more effective to evaluate existing natural resource management frameworks in order to assess whether or not they are suitable for climate change mitigation activities. In cases in which existing frameworks are judged to be adequate, there is no need for additional steps to be taken although it is still important to monitor the situation in case additional legislation is required.

III. CHALLENGES TO ENHANCING SYNERGIES

17. While Parties recognized that building stronger links between biodiversity and climate change at the national and international level can enhance implementation of both conventions, a number of challenges were identified including methodological issues and procedural issues.

Methodological issues

18. Although ecosystems are acknowledged as important sinks, the evaluation of the amount of carbon stored in some systems, such as wetlands and soil, is currently very difficult. In addition, the lack of general knowledge concerning the value of ecosystem services may lead to an undervaluation of some ecosystems (including their carbon-sequestration activities) when compared to ecosystems in which such knowledge is readily available.

19. The level of technical details between the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity and that of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is also divergent. Furthermore, the terminology used under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity varies, making information sharing and harmonized reporting more difficult.

20. Finally, many land-based mitigation activities have a long time-horizon (especially when considering afforestation and reforestation). Some Parties expressed difficulties in mobilizing the private sector to invest in such projects despite existing incentive frameworks.

21. In order to address some of these methodological issues, countries such as China have established national coordination mechanisms for climate change that also include stakeholders from biodiversity-related ministries such as environment, forestry and agriculture.

Procedural issues

22. The Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change have committed themselves to negotiating a post-2012 regime by the fifteenth meeting of its Conference of the Parties, which is scheduled for Copenhagen in December 2009. Given such a short time-frame, Parties expressed many views that some issues that must be resolved in order to improve linkages between biodiversity and climate change will not likely be negotiated in time (including: methodological issues in peatlands and other wetlands, financing mechanisms to promote synergies under Reducing Emissions from Deforestation in Developing Countries (REDD)).

23. There was also a call for legal regulations and financial incentives to be carefully designed in order to avoid unintended consequences and negative side-effects. However, ensuring this is difficult given the short time available for the consideration of regulatory and financial options under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

24. Finally, as the Convention on Biological Diversity has no specific compliance mechanisms, there may be a tendency to rely on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and Kyoto Protocol processes and guidelines during national implementation.

IV. SUMMARY OF THE ONLINE DIALOGUE

25. Annex III to decision IX/16 B calls for an ad hoc Internet-based discussion group or an online conference to be convened by the Executive Secretary in multiple languages to support the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group.

26. Accordingly, an online dialogue was held from the 6 to 17 October, 2008 in English, French and Spanish. Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations were invited by the Executive Secretary to participate in the dialogue through notification SCBD/STTM/JW/ac/65050 (2008-126) of 26 September 2008. A total of 43 comments were posted to the online dialogue and the complete discussion threads can be viewed online at: http://www.cbd.int/climate/forums/public/.

27. Following initial discussion, four main opportunities and challenges were identified for further discussion as outlined in the table below.

Table: Summary of opportunities and challenges identified during the online dialogue

Issue	Views for Discussion
Botanic gardens and seed banks may have a role to play in reducing vulnerability and assessing the impacts of climate change on biodiversity. What steps are necessary to better integrate the knowledge held in botanic gardens and seed banks within global and national climate change impact assessments?	Through their living collections, botanic gardens have information on where plants are able to grow in cultivation, how to propagate and grow a wide range of species, taxonomic data, distribution of species over time, phenological data, vegetation maps, levels of threats to species, identification of plant hotspots and *ex situ* conservation data. Further examples of data provision to other bodies include: (i) vegetation survey data showing current (and predicted future) species distribution made available to relevant government departments; (ii) species conservation assessments data fed into IUCN Red Lists; (iii) phenological records shared with national and global networks; and (iv) plant morphological trait data for climate-change-prediction models. Collection data and specimen information from botanic gardens should be incorporated in national biodiversity databases and should be made available globally. A global database of plants in cultivation should be linked to

Issue	Views for Discussion
	information about species distribution in the wild including through the collection of information related to conservation status.
Forests and forest degradation defined in any REDD mechanism may have an impact on biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. What definition or elements of these definitions should be included in a REDD mechanism in order to ensure positive impacts on biodiversity?	Since there are many definitions of degradation appropriate to different national and sub-national circumstances and it would be hard to find a "one-size-fits-all" definition. Biome-based definitions would be best. The higher tiers of the IPCC methodologies be used for reporting on REDD. It is essential to have a definition that clearly distinguishes between natural forests and plantations. The definition should include: a stand of mature trees forming a closed canopy and which is climatically resilient.
Ecosystem degradation, particularly within wetlands and forests, is currently being evaluated in terms of its contribution to emissions and possible inclusion in future emission reduction mechanisms. What additional quantifiable benefits could be captured from projects and programmes to reduce degradation, in addition to carbon sequestration, and what monitoring systems would have to be put in place to assess these?	Payments for reducing degradation have important potential in tipping the balance from non-sustainable use to sustainable community-based natural resource management. Remote sensing is a key technique to stratify forest cover into major forest types however, intensive sampling are essential for validation of remote sensing models. Frequent monitoring is needed, on an annual basis or more, this requires continuity of high resolution imagery with a wide geographic coverage and access to derived data products. National systems for monitoring forest cover and related changes in carbon stocks need to be developed or further strengthened, where necessary complemented by sub national monitoring efforts
How can we realize multiple benefits for carbon sequestration, and biodiversity conservation and sustainable use?	Agroforestry is increasingly being viewed as a vehicle to capture carbon while promoting on-farm biodiversity Community-based forest management can also contribute to carbon sequestration by enhancing forest carbon stocks in low biomass forests while protecting habitats, restoring biodiversity, providing connectivity, and mimicking nature in plantations Improved protected areas management as a tool for avoiding carbon emissions while protecting key habitats and species and providing income generation opportunities for local communities

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