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AFRICA REGIONAL MEETING ON THE
CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM
Nairobi, 31 March – 2 April 2003

REPORT OF THE AFRICA REGIONAL MEETING ON THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM

INTRODUCTION

A. *Background*

1. In its decision VI/18, the Conference of the Parties also urged the Executive Secretary to convene additional capacity-building workshops at the national, subregional and regional levels referred to in decision V/14 for clearing-house mechanism activities and training in support of national capacities to implement the Convention. Furthermore, the clearing-house mechanism, having completed successfully its information-exchange phase, is now able to focus on the promotion of technical and scientific cooperation, with an emphasis on capacity-building initiatives.

2. Accordingly, the Executive Secretary organized the Africa Regional Meeting on the Clearing-house Mechanism in Nairobi from 31 March to 2 April 2003 with a view to provide countries of the region with an opportunity to express their needs and expectations with regard to the clearing-house mechanism's new efforts and initiatives to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation, particularly in collaboration with recently established international thematic focal points, inter-governmental organizations, the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

3. The organization of the meeting also responded to the recommendation of the informal advisory committee (IAC) made at its meetings on 11 March 2001, 11 November 2001, April 2002 and 9 March 2003, requesting the Executive Secretary to focus the use of the clearing-house mechanism to promote technical and scientific cooperation, particularly with the thematic and cross-cutting areas of the Convention, including invasive alien species, the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI), coastal and marine biodiversity and the ecosystem approach.

B. *Attendance*

4. Each Party to the Convention in Africa was invited to nominate one participant, with experience with the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention. In response to that invitation, participants from the following countries were nominated by their respective focal points and attended the meeting: Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Ghana, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zimbabwe.

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5. Representatives of the following bilateral donor and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations participated in the meeting as observers and/or resource persons:

(a) *Bilateral donor*: Belgium;

(b) *Intergovernmental organizations active in information-exchange and scientific cooperation issues*: Africa Environment Information Network (AEIN), CAB International, Commonwealth Secretariat/Commonwealth Knowledge Network, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);

(c) *Non-governmental organizations*: BirdLife International and the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP).

6. The full list of participants is contained in annex II to the present report.

ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

7. The meeting was opened at 9 a.m. on Monday, 31 March 2003. It was addressed by Mr. Marcos Silva, Programme Officer, clearing-house mechanism of the Convention Secretariat, on behalf of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

8. Mr. Silva welcomed the participants to the meeting. After an introduction to the new phase of the clearing-house mechanism, he presented a brief summary on new initiatives to facilitate technical and scientific cooperation with regard to the programme areas and cross-cutting areas of the Convention, including invasive alien species, the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI), the ecosystem approach, coastal and marine biodiversity and Article 8(j), traditional knowledge, innovations and practices. He then invited countries to use the meeting to identify their priority needs regarding capacities to participate in these new initiatives under the clearing-house mechanism. With regard to the development of the Biosafety Clearing-House, Mr. Silva noted the synergies and distinctions between the clearing-house mechanism and the Biosafety Clearing-House and summarized the lessons learned from the project. He also discussed the new version of the Biosafety Clearing-House, developed in anticipation of the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. Mr. Silva concluded by expressing his gratitude to the Government of Belgium for providing financial support for the meeting.

ITEM 2. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

2.1. Election of officers

9. At the 1st session of the meeting, on 31 March 2003, Mr. Joseph Masinde (Kenya) was elected to serve as Chair and Mr. Koffi Edinam Dantsey (Togo) to serve as Rapporteur.

2.2. Adoption of agenda

10. The Regional Meeting adopted the following agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda circulated in advance of the meeting (UNEP/CBD/CHM/Afr.Reg/1/1):

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
 - 2.1. Election of officers;
 - 2.2. Adoption of the agenda;

- 2.3. Organization of work.
3. Use of new information technologies to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation.
4. Regional needs to implement effectively recommendations related to the thematic areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention.
5. Conclusions and recommendations.
6. Other relevant items
7. Adoption of the report.
8. Closure of the meeting.

2.3. Organization of work

11. At its 1st session, on 31 March 2003, the Regional Meeting approved the proposed programme of work as contained in annex II to the annotations to the provisional agenda (UNEP/CBD/CHM/Afr.Reg/1/1/Add.1)

ITEM 3. USE OF NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES TO PROMOTE AND FACILITATE TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION

Presentations

12. Under agenda item 3, Mr. Silva gave a presentation that had been considered at the most recent meeting of the informal advisory committee (IAC), on 9 March 2003, and was based on decisions V/14 and VI/18 of the Conference of the Parties. In his introduction, Mr. Silva described new initiatives undertaken by the clearing-house mechanism in support of technical and scientific collaboration. He also gave a brief introduction of clearing-house mechanism activities in support of the programmes of work on invasive alien species, the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI), coastal and marine biodiversity and Article 8(j), traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, particularly within the context of the establishment of international thematic focal points pursuant to item (c) in annex II to decision V/14. Mr. Silva then introduced work by the clearing-house mechanism to promote the use of common formats, protocols and standards, based on a document from the informal meeting on formats, protocols and standards for improved exchange of biodiversity information, held in Montreal on 19-20 February 2003. He concluded by stressing the clearing-house mechanism's strong new focus on technical and scientific collaboration.

13. In the ensuing discussion, comments were made by the participants from Botswana, Burkina Faso, Swaziland, Togo, and Zimbabwe and the representative of the Global Invasive Species Programme.

14. Participants noted in particular the new focus of the clearing-house mechanism in support of Article 18, paragraph 3, of the Convention and welcomed its new collaborative initiatives in support of technical and scientific collaboration.

15. Mr. Han de Koeijer, representing the Government of Belgium, gave a presentation on emerging regional and international networks, and on collaboration between the clearing-house mechanism and these networks. He described technical issues associated with linking national clearing-house mechanisms with international networks, particularly those issues related to the management of web sites and the use of new information technologies. He also described challenges associated with joint

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management of web sites, and technical issues related to the facilitation of interoperability among disparate systems residing on different platforms. Describing the programmes initiated by the Belgian clearing-house mechanism, Mr. de Koeijer requested participants to identify national needs, especially with regard to the use of new information and Web-based technologies.

16. On completion of the presentation, participants from Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania and the representative from BirdLife International posed questions on the Belgian partnering role and on the infrastructure required for the development of Web-based technologies.

17. At the 2nd session of the meeting, Mr. Tichaonezvi Ruredzo, representing the Commonwealth Secretariat, gave a brief presentation on joint initiatives undertaken by the clearing-house mechanism and the Commonwealth Knowledge Network, particularly within the context of recommendations made at the Southern Africa Regional Training Workshop on the Commonwealth Knowledge Network/Clearing-house Mechanism, which was held from 26 to 30 November 2001 in Zomba, Malawi. He stressed the need for greater collaboration and sharing of resources and expertise.

Discussion

18. Introducing issues for discussion under item 3, the Chair highlighted the relevant issues, based on documents from the fifth and sixth meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, the sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and the relevant meetings of the informal advisory committee for the clearing-house mechanism. He proposed that the meeting should consider the following elements under the issue of ongoing clearing-house projects to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation:

(a) Issues related to the use of new information technologies in the building of national and regional capacities to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation at the subregional, regional and international levels;

(b) Regional needs to implement effectively recommendations related to the programme areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention.

19. In the ensuing discussion, comments were made by the participants from Botswana, Cameroon, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and the representative from the Commonwealth Knowledge Network.

20. There was general agreement regarding the need for the African region to increase capacity with regard to new information technologies. Factors identified affecting full and effective participation by national clearing-house mechanisms in the programme areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention included lack of technical expertise, lack of access to new information technologies and lack of sustainability.

21. There was also general agreement regarding the importance of assessing the progress of implementing the clearing-house mechanism, at both the national and the regional levels. The meeting further noted the need to:

(a) Better ascertain technical capacity building, particularly with regard to issues associated with the development and sustainability of infrastructure; ensure the sustainability of clearing-house mechanism projects;

(b) Increase awareness and visibility of the clearing-house mechanism among national policy makers and its stakeholders; exchange of experiences and improvement of regional cooperation;

(c) Ensure development, operation and interoperability among national clearing-house mechanisms; and synthesize lessons learned from successful national clearing-house mechanisms.

22. There was strong agreement that an African regional clearing-house mechanism could facilitate greatly sharing of expertise and synergizing new initiatives, particularly with regard to the facilitation of technical and scientific cooperation within the context of programme areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention, which should be its primary role.

ITEM 4. REGIONAL NEEDS TO IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVELY RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO THE THEMATIC AREAS AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES OF THE CONVENTION

23. Agenda item 4 was considered at the 3rd session of the meeting, on 1 April 2003. The Chair proposed that discussion under this agenda item should cover the following elements:

(a) What are the potential and existing roles of national clearing-house mechanisms in facilitating national and regional implementation of decisions arising from the Conference of the Parties;

(b) What are the potential and existing roles of national clearing-house mechanisms in facilitating greater national and regional participation in the programme areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention, particularly in collaboration with recently established international thematic focal points.

Presentations

24. Ms Jennifer Roynon, representing UNDP/Equator Initiative, described new capacity-building activities and projects, the procedures and criteria for choosing projects, and stressed possible collaborative opportunities available to African clearing-house mechanisms.

25. Comments on the above presentation were made by Botswana, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Mauritania, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania.

26. Ms Sarah Simons, representing the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP) and CAB International, spoke on capacity-building initiatives in the Africa region. She emphasized the threat of invasive alien species to the economies and livelihoods of African countries and presented efforts undertaken by GISP to build capacity at the national and regional levels. She described the GISP 10-point strategy, placing emphasis on the promotion of international cooperation. She also discussed the programme of work under the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Secretariat of the Convention and the Global Invasive Species Programme. She concluded by requesting participants to identify national needs with regards to identification, control and/or eradication of invasive alien species, and to discuss ways to assist national clearing-house mechanisms in that endeavour.

27. Comments related to GISP were made by the participants from Botswana, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Liberia, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Togo and Zimbabwe.

28. Mr. Paul Mtiku, representing BirdLife International, gave a presentation on initiatives in the Africa region supported by Birdlife International, particularly projects at the national level. He also discussed the newly established memorandum of cooperation with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which provided a framework for collaborative projects and activities. The question of how important bird areas data can support the clearing-house mechanism and implementation of the Convention was raised and discussed, especially in light of national biodiversity strategies and actions plans. He emphasized BirdLife International's efforts to increase capacities in the African region, using as an example efforts to make data on avian biodiversity, especially threatened bird species, important bird area and endemic bird areas available to African clearing-house mechanism national focal points.

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29. Comments on the presentation were made by Botswana, Cameroon Sudan and Zimbabwe
30. Dr. David Duthie, representing the Biodiversity Enabling Activities of UNEP Division of GEF Coordination gave a presentation on GEF enabling activities, focusing on funding available in support of national clearing-house projects and initiatives. He described the procedures required in submitting proposals and noted the success of some Parties in gaining access to funding.
31. In response to the above presentation, comments were made by Burkina Faso, Liberia, Mali and Sierra Leone.
32. Mr. Charles Sebukeera, representing the Africa Environment Information Network Initiative, spoke on the need to strengthen capacity at the national level for managing and using information relevant to Africa's environmental resources. He stressed the pressing need to facilitate access to environmental data and information to improve good governance and public participation in decision-making. Issues related to the need to assist the implementation of objectives of the environmental components of the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) were described and linked with the need to establish partnerships with the clearing-house mechanism. Lastly, Mr. Sebukeera also raised the need to generate products and provide services to highlight information critical for enhancing country negotiation status. He concluded by stressing the need to establish close working relationships with the Convention clearing-house mechanism and with national clearing-house mechanisms and invited participants at the meeting to reflect on how to establish such a working relationship.
33. In the ensuing discussion, comments were made by participants from Botswana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Togo, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania.
34. Participants to the meeting also discussed the different roles of national clearing-house mechanisms, especially with regard to participation in the Convention's programmes of work on thematic areas and cross-cutting issues and partnerships with international thematic focal points and other organizations. The importance of full and effective participation was highlighted, with regard to joint work programmes and in support of technical and scientific cooperation. Participants also noted the importance of providing long-term support, particularly financial, in order to maintain national clearing-house mechanisms and ensure sustainability of projects and initiatives.
35. This agenda item was further discussed at the second session of the meeting on 1 April 2003. Comments were made by the participants from Botswana, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Zimbabwe, the Commonwealth Knowledge Network and the UNEP Division of GEF Coordination.
36. Participants further elaborated on the need to: develop partnerships and projects with international thematic focal points in a timely manner; offer greater support at the national and regional level to Parties in support of activities related to the Convention's programme areas and cross-cutting issues; and better articulate the role of the clearing-house mechanism in fostering technical and scientific cooperation.
37. In general, there was strong endorsement of the need for national clearing-house mechanisms to establish joint initiatives with international focal points, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector through initiatives such as the New Economic Partnership for African Development and to develop joint programmes of work in support of the Convention's programme areas and cross-cutting issues.
38. At the 6th session of the meeting, on 2 April 2003, Mr. Sean Khan, of the UNEP Division of Early Warning and Assessment, gave a presentation on the UNEP Environment Directory, which comprises a collaborative network for managing environmental information. He described resources

made available through the network including an authoritative roster of experts and consultants with developing country experience at the local, subregional, regional and international levels. He also spoke on the initiatives and efforts to make information available to developing countries related to potential financial resources, including international and national foundations. The network also offers access and search mechanisms to other databases and clearing-houses of global environmental conventions. Finally, users of the network are able to share their capacities and expertise among other practitioners thereby sharing expertise and knowledge among all regions of the world.

39. Comments in response to the above presentation were made by participants from Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Mali, and Togo and the representative of the UNEP Division of Early Warning and Assessment.

40. In the final general discussion, participants requested that, because of ongoing collaboration and complementarity of objectives between the Commonwealth Knowledge Network and the clearing-house mechanism, the Zomba Statement, drafted at the Southern Africa Regional Training Workshop on the Establishment and Operationalization of the Commonwealth Knowledge Network (CKN) and Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) held in Zomba, Malawi, from 26 to 30 November 2001, be included in the final report as annex III.

ITEM 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

41. Agenda item 5 was considered at the 6th session of the meeting, on 2 April 2003. The item was introduced by the Chair, who invited the Rapporteur to present the recommendations. Following discussion, the Meeting adopted the recommendations, which are attached to the present report as annex I.

ITEM 6. OTHER RELEVANT ITEMS

42. Participants took up agenda item 6 at the 6th session of the meeting, on 2 April 2003. Experts were also invited to raise and discuss other matters related to the subject-matter of the meeting.

43. There were no other relevant items raised under the item.

ITEM 7. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

44. The present report was adopted at the 6th session of the meeting, on 2 April 2003, on the basis of the draft report of the meeting (UNEP/CBD/CHM/Afr.Reg/1/L.1), and taking into account amendments made by participants, on the understanding that the finalization of the report would be completed by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

ITEM 8. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

45. The Chair declared the Africa Regional Meeting on the Clearing-house Mechanism closed at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, 2 April 2003.

Annex I

CONCLUSIONS OF THE AFRICA REGIONAL MEETING ON THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM

ITEM 3. USE OF NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES TO PROMOTE AND FACILITATE TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION

Goals and objectives	Capacity needs	Recommendations	Time-frame	Role of CHM national focal points and the Convention CHM, where appropriate and subject to available resources, in the promotion of technical and scientific cooperation
Establish an African regional CHM	Infrastructure, expertise and sustainability; Greater sharing of expertise and resources.	Begin the development of an Africa regional clearing-house mechanism.	3 years	<p>The regional African CHM should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide expertise and training for the region as a whole; Provide a platform for more effective regional exchange of data; Provide information, including guidelines, indicators, projects, etc., to assist with capacity-building in the evaluation of monitoring programmes; Establish regional discussion forums to facilitate cooperation; Create a regional roster of experts; Monitor the level of implementation and assist with capacity and development of national African CHMs.

Goals and objectives	Capacity needs	Recommendations	Time-frame	Role of CHM national focal points and the Convention CHM, where appropriate and subject to available resources, in the promotion of technical and scientific cooperation
Protect, document and promote indigenous and traditional knowledge including their innovations and practices	Implement effective legislation and encourage cultures and practices that protect traditional and indigenous knowledge; Better legislation at the national, subregional and regional level; Have indigenous and local communities benefit from their knowledge; Ascertain benefits arising from the use of traditional and local knowledge	Implement effective legislation protecting traditional and indigenous knowledge.	3 years	CHM NFPs should assist indigenous and local communities to acquire and use new information technologies and integrate the use of these technologies to foster better communication and protection of their knowledge; Assist with the documentation of indigenous and local communities' practices through the use of modern information technologies; Promote the issue of intellectual property rights and protection of indigenous and traditional knowledge; Assist countries in raising awareness of intellectual property rights; Work with the CBD thematic focal point on indigenous and local communities issues; Share knowledge of underlying social conditions, i.e., poverty, population, etc.
Protect scientific research and knowledge	Improve institutional capacities; Improve awareness of IPR issues	Encourage the implementation of effective legislation at the national level; Encourage the effective application of legislation where in force.	5 years	Make available information on IPR issues; Make available information on national and international legislation pertaining to

Goals and objectives	Capacity needs	Recommendations	Time-frame	Role of CHM national focal points and the Convention CHM, where appropriate and subject to available resources, in the promotion of technical and scientific cooperation
				IPRs; Cooperate with the African regional CHM, when established, to make available subregional and regional information on IPRs.
Better management of knowledge and information	Capacity to evaluate benefits in making information available in the public domain; Protect information where necessary;	Restrict access, where necessary, especially to protect genetic resources and knowledge, including indigenous and local communities knowledge respecting indigenous and local communities procedures; Implement mechanism to evaluate potential benefits and drawbacks of information in the public domain.	5 years	Make available information on best practices and successful casestudies pertaining to knowledge and information management, especially with regard to the programme areas and cross cutting-areas of the Convention; Share expertise at the subregional and regional levels.
Use alternative and adaptive information dissemination mechanisms to reach all institutions and communities	Evaluate alternative and adaptive technologies	Develop mechanisms using alternative and adaptive technologies, in conjunction with modern information technologies, to more effectively disseminate information.	Ongoing	Optimize use of alternative and adaptive technologies (CD-ROM, fax, pamphlets, publications, radio, etc.) to disseminate information to promote greater institutional participation in collaborative projects.
Ensure data validity and authentication	Have data and information serve national level needs; Develop procedures to ensure validity, long-term	Adhere to the use common formats, protocols and standards; identify best national institutional setup to establish sharing of information. The CHM should not act	Ongoing	Make available information on common formats, protocols and standards; Use controlled vocabularies.

Goals and objectives	Capacity needs	Recommendations	Time-frame	Role of CHM national focal points and the Convention CHM, where appropriate and subject to available resources, in the promotion of technical and scientific cooperation
	availability and authentication of data and information; Increase sharing of information at the national, subregional and regional levels.	as a data custodian.		
Ensure the availability and sustainability of the human and physical infrastructure,	Training; Access to new information technologies and expertise.	Call on Parties to fund adequately national CHMs, and, where necessary, seek alternative funding sources, either internally or externally; Encourage Parties to internalize the CHM; Use available and new funding mechanisms, including the GEF Enabling Activities; Undertake new needs assessment survey with regards to programme areas of work in the Convention; Encourage the Government of Belgium to enlarge its partnering programme; Encourage other Governments to follow the example of the Government of Belgium: Invest in training to manage and disseminate information, how to create and manage websites, listservs, databases; The CBD should work	Ongoing	Make available information on funding opportunities at the national, subregional and regional levels; Assist in the development of a regional proposal to establish an African regional clearing-house mechanism to assist in sustaining infrastructure; Promote more communication among the CHM NFPs, the Secretariat, other information networks, research institutions and other stakeholders; Promote the use of appropriate technologies and best practices.

Goals and objectives	Capacity needs	Recommendations	Time-frame	Role of CHM national focal points and the Convention CHM, where appropriate and subject to available resources, in the promotion of technical and scientific cooperation
		<p>with donors and development partners to mobilize financial resources to establish CHM national focal points; Improve on the existing CBD roster to include capacity-building expertise; Recommend the identification of innovative approaches making more effective use of existing infrastructures; Identify partners at the national, subregional and international levels to organize capacity-building activities in support of the Convention's programme areas at the national, subregional and regional levels.</p>		
<p>Continue to encourage synergy and collaboration among different networks and other relevant Conventions</p>	<p>Improve integration among different institutional sectors; Improve harmonization of programmes and information; Highlight unique role of the CHM through collaborative initiatives.</p>	<p>Identify and make available information on institutional sectors; Encourage the establishment of memoranda of cooperation with organizations and other appropriate institutions toward this goal; Elucidate the relationship among different networks as an item of discussion in capacity-building workshops and make available operational</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Identify institutional linkages and create communication channels among these institutions; Act as a portal to existing networks and initiatives; Assist in the harmonization of information among Conventions, collaborate with NFPs and national networks capacity-building initiatives;</p>

Goals and objectives	Capacity needs	Recommendations	Time-frame	Role of CHM national focal points and the Convention CHM, where appropriate and subject to available resources, in the promotion of technical and scientific cooperation
		policies and procedures for each network and initiatives; Encourage Parties to use institutional name to identify NFPs and identify contact person.		Foster collaborative initiatives among conventions' clearing-house mechanisms and/or national focal points; Use the framework of existing networks such as UNEP Infoterra and other similar initiatives to maximize resource use and eliminate duplication of effort. .
Develop and share metadata between institutions and organizations	Development of metadata standards at the national, subregional and regional levels.	Review available metadata standards, and recommend adherence to common standards; Use the regional CHM network to develop subregional and regional metadata and standards.	Ongoing	Make national metadata publicly available; Make use of controlled vocabularies; Develop metadata to describe national programmes; Make use of existing metadata standards and software for creating metadata; Use metadata to assist in the harmonization and rationalization of information among different NFPs, institutions, conventions networks and initiatives.
Increase support and use of the CHM through public-awareness programmes	Increase awareness and participation by policy makers and stakeholders; Sustain public-awareness programmes.	Develop a national inter-institutional team to increase awareness to policy makers; Develop and operationalize a national and regional clearing-house awareness programme, emphasizing the role of the CHM in technical and scientific	Ongoing	Increase proactiveness of CHM NFPs; Take initiatives; Parties with well established, active CHMs should present case studies for the region on CHM development and responsibilities; National CHMs should

Goals and objectives	Capacity needs	Recommendations	Time-frame	Role of CHM national focal points and the Convention CHM, where appropriate and subject to available resources, in the promotion of technical and scientific cooperation
		collaboration.		<p>make available a working model for the development of CHMs; Generate activities of shared interest; Increase awareness of data collected and made available; Cooperate with the Secretariat's public-awareness and education programme to increase awareness of national CHM activities and needs; Show what the CHM can offer and showcase/market its products; Articulate links with other networks to Parties and stakeholders; Publish a guide or manual on the activities of the CHM to promote greater awareness.</p>
Greater synergies and collaboration between national CHMs and biosafety-clearing-houses	Need to improve institutional cooperation	Improve communication and share resources between national CHMs and biosafety-clearing-houses whenever possible	Ongoing	<p>Encourage collaboration and joint work; Share expertise and resources whenever possible; Share infrastructure whenever possible.</p>

ITEM 4. REGIONAL NEEDS TO IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVELY RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO THE THEMATIC AREAS AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES OF THE CONVENTION

Goals and objectives	Capacity needs	Recommendations	Time-frame	Role of the CHM in the promotion of technical and scientific cooperation
Establish partnerships with international thematic focal points, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and non-governmental organizations.	Infrastructure to participate equitably in programme areas of the Convention.	Synergize activities with international thematic focal points, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and non-governmental organizations.	Ongoing	Work with international thematic focal points to establish joint initiatives and work programmes with and among international thematic focal points.
Assist countries to participate in managing invasive alien species, particularly within the work programme of the Convention and the GISP and other similar initiatives	Required expertise; Access to invasive alien species information; Access to case studies.	Establish working relationships with the GISP within the work programme of the GISP and international thematic focal point; Use and/or develop mechanisms to identify invasive alien species.	3 years	National CHM NFPs should work with the Convention clearing-house mechanism to establish working partnerships with the GISP to implement information exchange systems and join the emerging global invasive species information network; Work with the clearing-house mechanism and GISP to identify experts and implement capacity-building initiatives; Work with the GISP to improve access to the Internet and new information technologies in support of work to identify and manage invasive alien species.

Goals and objectives	Capacity needs	Recommendations	Time-frame	Role of the CHM in the promotion of technical and scientific cooperation
<p>Cooperate with BirdLife International, and other national and international non-governmental organizations to use its information resources in support of the programme areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention at the national level</p>	<p>Develop human and physical infrastructure, to use BirdLife's and other sources and information</p>	<p>Establish partnerships with BirdLife International, and other similar initiatives, particularly in support of the Convention's programme areas and cross-cutting issues.</p>	<p>3 years</p>	<p>Make BirdLife International information available through national CHMs; Cooperate with BirdLife International, and other similar initiatives, to support national programmes of the Convention; Work with BirdLife International, and other similar initiatives, in the development of local, national, subregional and regional networks; Request non-governmental organizations to facilitate the nomination of a representative to work with national CHM NFPs.</p>

Goals and objectives	Capacity needs	Recommendations	Time-frame	Role of the CHM in the promotion of technical and scientific cooperation
<p>Work with the Africa Environment Information Network and other relevant network initiatives to share resources and increase national capacity</p>	<p>Develop institutional capacities; Encourage harmonization of efforts; Assist in integrating data and information in decision-making.</p>	<p>Collaborate with the Africa Environment Information Network and other relevant network initiatives in areas related to the programme areas of the Convention; Implement joint programmes; Organize jointly capacity-building initiatives.</p>	<p>5 years</p>	<p>Establish formal links between national CHMs and the Africa Environment Information Network and other relevant network initiatives and request the CHM of the Convention to establish formal links with the Africa Environment Information Network and other relevant network initiatives; Collaborate in the development of databases and information systems in Africa and work to harmonize the information available in these systems; Collaborate in the development and maintenance of a data exchange platform, including formats, standards and protocols, database architecture and infrastructure; National CHM NFPs and the CBD CHM should work with the Africa Environment Information Network and other relevant network initiatives to establish the CHM regional network; Foster links with the NEPAD through the Africa Environment Information Network and other relevant network initiatives.</p>

Goals and objectives	Capacity needs	Recommendations	Time-frame	Role of the CHM in the promotion of technical and scientific cooperation
Establish partnerships with the NEPAD and other similar initiatives	Improved infrastructure; Improved institutional capacities.	National CHM NFPs should formalize partnerships with the NEPAD, particularly in the area of information management.	2 years	Work with the NEPAD to improve information management and exchange; Work with the NEPAD in the development and use of metadata and controlled vocabularies; Work with the NEPAD to improve access to new information technologies.
Fufil the goals of the CHM strategic plan at the national level	Develop infrastructure required to implement effectively the CHM strategic plan.	Adapt the CHM strategic plan objectives to the national level, emphasizing the importance of the second and third objectives (information exchange and network development) to the first objective (promotion of technical and scientific collaboration.)	2 years	Draft country-specific CHM strategic plans; Use the national CHM strategic plans as a guide for activities and projects; Encourage the Convention Secretariat to develop the new toolkit in line with the development of national CHM strategies.

Goals and objectives	Capacity needs	Recommendations	Time-frame	Role of the CHM in the promotion of technical and scientific cooperation
Implement paragraph 1 of decision VI/18, which invites Parties to establish or strengthen national, subregional or regional focal points for the clearing-house mechanism, if they have not done so already	Develop human and physical infrastructure	Promote the establishment of CHM NFPs in all Africa countries; Promote the development of websites in all African CHM NFPs.	3 years	National CHM NFPs and the CBD CHM should assist countries without CHM NFPs and websites to find sources of funding or partnerships; Offer advice on technical issues; Offer advice on information management.

Annex II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A. Governments Parties

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Annex III

SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP ON THE ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH KNOWLEDGE NETWORK (CKN) AND CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM (CHM) OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Zomba, Malawi, 26-30 November 2001

THE ZOMBA STATEMENT

In the twenty-first century, advances in information and communication technologies have the potential to build new and strengthen existing knowledge networks to promote and facilitate wealth creation and the conservation of life on this planet. The Commonwealth Science Council (CSC) recognizes the role these networks can play in the sharing and exchanging of information and knowledge for socio-economic development throughout the Southern African region.

Within this region there is vast wealth of knowledge, both in the public and private domains (within research institutes and universities, and also held by individuals, communities and private companies). The full potential of this knowledge, however, remains unrealized.

Acting as a knowledge broker, the CKN/CHM can make full use of these knowledge resources, and develop new programmes to assist the region in matching solutions to problems. It can also act as a repository of knowledge to facilitate the development of joint initiatives and programmes by bridging existing knowledge and information gaps which impede development and wealth creation in this region. This initiative is a fundamental requirement for the elimination of poverty, conservation of biological diversity and environmental protection.

The Southern Africa Regional Training Workshop on the CKN/CHM,

Acknowledging the vital contribution of indigenous knowledge systems, modern science and technology in the conservation of resources and the enhancement of society's developmental processes,

Realizing that CKN/CHM can provide solutions to development problems in the Southern Africa region in various science, technology and related fields that influence development of nations,

Recognizing the need to conserve and sustainably use biological biodiversity,

Noting that building and managing the CKN/CHM can act as an effective conduit for flow of knowledge information and communication,

Recognizing the tremendous potential that CKN/CHM have to solve development problems among the Southern Africa countries in the best spirit of networking,

Recommends as follows:

(a) Commonwealth member countries in the Southern Africa region should nominate national focal points (NFPs) for the CKN and CHM and establish national and regional CKN and CHM nodes and committees to report to their respective main national implementing bodies;

/...

(b) Commonwealth member countries in the Southern Africa region should set up a joint Southern Africa Technical Committee for the CKN and CHM (hereinafter referred to as –STCCC) and should establish an electronic discussion group to support its work;

(c) Commonwealth member countries in the Southern Africa region should encourage the establishment of electronic discussion groups for each respective committee to share and exchange information;

(d) Commonwealth member countries in the Southern Africa region should establish national and regional websites for CKN and CHM;

(e) Member countries should provide resources for both national and regional CKN and CHM activities;

(f) CSC should assist member countries to seek funding from other international donors such as Global Environment Facility (GEF), World Bank etc, for the establishment of CKN and CHM NFPs and capacity building activities and projects;

(g) CKN and CHM NFPs should consider developing their respective information dissemination mechanisms to make publicly available information on biodiversity and from other related conventions and on science and technology issues;

(h) National and regional CKN/CHM NFP websites should use categories of information and structure agreed upon during the CKN/CHM Malawi Workshop;

(i) CKN/CHM NFPs should develop information exchange standards and metadata between national institutions and the CKN/CHM. NFPs should consider the additional benefits of developing these standards and metadata at a regional level;

(j) National CKN/CHMs should endeavour to make biodiversity information openly accessible. Access policy development should take into account intellectual property rights, indigenous knowledge and the risk of damage to biodiversity resulting from unrestricted access to information;

(k) CKN/CHM NFPs will need the capacity to gather, filter and authenticate information for dissemination, and to set information exchange protocols to promote more effective exchange of information within, between and among countries;

(l) CKN/CHM NFPs should consider wherever possible disseminating information in all national languages. Regional CHMs should endeavour to use all official regional languages for disseminating, recognizing that translation must retain the original meaning of the information;

(m) CKN/CHM NFPs should plan to disseminate information by web, non-web (i.e., email, file transfer protocol, etc.) and traditional (i.e., paper, fax, etc.) means to ensure equitable access to information by all countries and stakeholders;

(n) Given the benefits of information disseminated by web-based systems, the CKN/CHM should consider, where necessary, establishing web sites early in the establishment of national Internet Infrastructure;

(o) CKN and CHM should share functions and resources where this brings complementarity and economies of scale;

(p) CKN/CHM NFPs, as a first step in implementation, should undertake an assessment of the financial, institutional, human, technical and infrastructure capacities needed to administer CKN/CHM functions;

(q) CKN/CHM NFPs as a second step in implementation should use their assessments to develop a needs driven plan for establishing or enhancing their respective functions.

(r) CKN and CHM NFPs should monitor and review the implementation of the Zomba CKN/CHM recommendations and should report on progress made to date through the regional CKN/CHM focal point, and to the regional member of the CSC executive committee through the national CSC member

*Zomba, Malawi
30 November 2001*