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CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE  
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY  
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Item 15.2 of the provisional agenda\*

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS: CONSIDERATION OF MEASURES  
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 13

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. In its medium-term programme of work, the Conference of the Parties decided to consider at its fourth meeting measures to provide information and share experiences on the implementation of Article 13.
2. Article 13 on public education and awareness requires Parties to:
  - (a) Promote and encourage understanding of the importance of, and the measures required for, the conservation of biological diversity, as well as its propagation through media, and the inclusion of these topics in educational programmes; and
  - (b) Cooperate, as appropriate, with other States and international organizations in developing educational and public awareness programmes, with respect to conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.
3. The present note has been prepared by the Executive Secretary to assist the Conference of the Parties in its consideration of this item. The note recalls the importance of public education and awareness for the implementation of the provisions of the Convention, provides information on relevant activities, in particular decisions of the Conference of the Parties

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\* UNEP/CBD/COP/4/1

and recommendations of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and the review by the Commission on Sustainable Development of the implementation of chapter 36 (Promoting education, public awareness and training) of Agenda 21.

4. The note proposes that Parties should be urged to promote education on biological diversity through relevant national institutions, including educational bodies, botanical gardens, museums of natural history, herbariums, aquariums and arboretums. The note considers potential activities that the Conference of the Parties can undertake on public education and awareness in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Commission on Sustainable Development, other conventions and civil society.

## II. PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

5. The lack of awareness in society of the importance and relevance of biological diversity to everyday life is a major constraint which must be overcome if the goals of the Convention are to be met. Indeed, efforts to conserve biological diversity cannot succeed without the understanding and support of the general public. Public education and awareness should therefore be an integral part of the specific actions and activities carried out under the Convention, including the work programmes being developed on the various ecosystems and thematic areas.

6. Public awareness and acceptance of the need to conserve biodiversity and to use biological resources in a sustainable manner are also essential to the broader goal of sustainable development. Efforts to implement Article 13 should reflect the reorientation of education towards sustainability called for in Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, adopted by the General Assembly at its 1997 special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21.

7. Public education activities are different from the technical training that is required by professionals to manage biodiversity. Education is a long-term process of developing an individual's capacities and ways of thinking. It requires significant investment but can lead to profound and lasting changes. Education needs to be considered in its broadest sense, as a means to bring about changes in behaviour and lifestyles, to disseminate knowledge and skills and to prepare all members of society to support the changes needed for sustainability. The concept of sustainability encompasses not only environment, but also poverty, population, health, food security, democracy, human rights and peace. Sustainability is, in the final analysis, a moral and ethical imperative in which cultural diversity and traditional knowledge need to be respected. New forms of education are therefore needed, not just in the narrow sense of teaching children about the environment, but also reforming higher education so that it can cope with and reward the interdisciplinary work required to harmonize economic, environmental and social goals.

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8. Awareness-raising seeks to affect an individual's state of knowledge through informal channels. It can be a powerful and cost-effective way of encouraging rapid changes in perception and action, and can be achieved through the use of media such as radio, television, film, newspapers, books and advertisements, ceremonies, folklore, oral traditions, popular arts and religious organizations. Developing partnerships with the private sector, non-governmental organizations, libraries and scientific bodies such as zoos, botanical gardens, natural history museums, aquariums and arboretums can also be effective in providing informal education on biodiversity to the stakeholders.

9. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) recognized the need to promote education and public awareness in order to achieve its goal of sustainable development. Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 is devoted to promoting education, public awareness and training. The chapter contains a series of wide-ranging activities to promote the objectives of education, public awareness and training. The three programme objectives of the chapter are: reorienting education towards sustainable development; increasing public awareness; and promoting training. Chapter 36 outlines the basis for action, objectives and activities for each one of these programme areas. In the context of biological diversity, these programme areas were further elaborated in chapter 15 of Agenda 21, on the conservation of biological diversity, which recommended activities, first to, develop new or strengthen existing strategies, plans or programmes of action for the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of biological resources, taking account of education and training needs; and, second, to promote and encourage understanding of the importance of the measures required for the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of biological resources at all policy-making and decision-making levels in Governments, business enterprises and lending institutions, and to promote and encourage the inclusion of these topics in educational programmes.

10. UNESCO, as the lead agency of the United Nations system for chapter 36, undertook a review of the implementation of this chapter for the special session. The Secretary-General's report on the review by the Commission on Sustainable Development of the promotion of education, public awareness and training, contained in documents E/CN.17/1996/14 and Add/1, provides a description of the status of environmental and development education programmes, the main trends emerging in the period between UNCED and the special session, further action required, constraints to action, and directions for future work.

11. The review identified significant progress in each of the broad programme areas of chapter 36. It considered the rapid expansion of access to communication technologies, the development of new technologies, the increasing impact of the mass media, globalization and the evolution of the "information society" as significantly enhancing the implementation of chapter 36. Progress was also identified in basic education.

12. At the national level, the review noted that a number of countries have included education, public awareness and training in national strategies or plans for sustainable development. During the planning process for this, interested parties and potential actors from different sectors of society have been mobilized. Certain countries are now moving towards reviewing

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school curricula or otherwise taking specific action. In many countries, the development of education for sustainable development coincides with the overall reform of formal educational systems. National policies and strategies were found to have been stimulated by regional meetings, including those organized by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and UNESCO.

13. The review also outlined numerous activities of relevance. For example, UNESCO, as task manager of chapter 36, has begun a process of consultation with educators, during which the initial concept of the goals of chapter 36 is being tested and refined with the professional community. Important activities within UNESCO, such as the inter-disciplinary and inter-agency cooperation project on environment and population, education and information for development, which was launched in 1994, were reviewed, as well as those of other organizations, including the development of agro-ecological curriculum materials by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the production of a 13-volume series entitled "Training for Elected Leadership", targeted at local civic leaders by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) (Habitat).

14. Significantly, partnerships with youth were identified as being particularly effective at this level, with reference being made to work initiated on the basis of the book Rescue Mission: Planet Earth, a children's version of Agenda 21, sponsored by Peace Child International, UNESCO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

15. The review concluded that the challenge is to integrate the concepts of human development, social development, economic development and environmental protection into a holistic, interdisciplinary conceptual framework. The review found that the gap between science and education compounds the difficulty of clarifying the content of education for sustainable development, which needs to be based on interdisciplinary, accurate, up-to-date and unbiased information. It was noted that such information is, however, slow to move from the realm of academics and experts to that of the non-specialist users of such information.

16. The review found that the political will needed successfully to reorient education, public awareness and training towards sustainable development is still lacking. Although there has been greater understanding of the fundamental importance of education since UNCED, this recognition has not been translated into the necessary financial investments. Putting money into education needs to be understood in a long-term perspective, as an investment in ensuring, over time, the essential underpinning of public support and therefore public action without which the world cannot achieve sustainability.

17. The Conference of the Parties and SBSTTA have consistently recognized the importance of developing public education and awareness within their consideration of other aspects of the Convention. The first meeting of SBSTTA, in its recommendation I/8 on coastal and marine ecosystems, encouraged the participation of local communities concerned and of resource users in the planning, management and conservation of coastal and marine areas. It also recommended the education of the general public to the possible dangers to ecosystems that could result from the release of

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ornamental species and unauthorized releases of species for sport fisheries. In its recommendation, SBSTTA noted that, although education, training and public awareness at the international and regional level were required as key delivery mechanisms, owing to insufficient time and the complexity of the issues in question, they should be discussed at the next session of SBSTTA. After further deliberation, at its third meeting, SBSTTA, in its recommendation on a proposed programme of work on marine and coastal protected areas (recommendation III/2, Programme element 3, see the report of the third meeting of SBSTTA, UNEP/CBD/COP/4/2, page 40), to be considered under agenda item 7.1 of this meeting, called for the development of appropriate education and public awareness programmes at all levels.

18. At its second meeting, the Conference of the Parties, in decision II/9 on forests and biological diversity, pointed out that the issue of public education and awareness had not been explicitly addressed in the terms of reference of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF), and called upon IPF to give high priority to the importance of education and awareness-raising at all levels of society, including local communities, local and national policy makers, forest managers, and users of forests and forest products, the importance of biological diversity, especially those components under threat.

19. At its third meeting, the Conference of the Parties, in decision III/11 on the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biological diversity, recognized that the successful implementation of policies aiming at the sustainable use of components of agricultural biological diversity largely depends on the degree of public awareness and understanding of the basic importance of agrobiodiversity for society. This decision also invited Parties to establish or enhance mechanisms for information and education, including the use of the clearing-house mechanism, specific to groups of concern at national, regional and international levels. In its decision III/19, on the special session of the General Assembly to review implementation of Agenda 21, the Conference of the Parties drew the attention of the General Assembly to the need to pay further attention to the raising of public awareness and the understanding of the importance of biological diversity through educational programmes and information.

20. Paragraph 4 of decision III/5 urged the Global Environment Facility (GEF), along with Governments, regional economic integration organizations, and competent international, regional and national organizations, to support human and institutional capacity-building programmes for Governments, non-governmental organizations and local and indigenous communities, as appropriate, to promote the successful development and implementation of legislative, administrative and policy measures and guidance on access to genetic resources, including scientific, technical, business, legal and management skills and capacities.

21. In its recommendation III/1 on inland water ecosystems, which will be considered under item 6 of the agenda of this meeting, SBSTTA recommends that Parties strengthen education and awareness programmes, in recognition that responsible environmental stewardship requires an informed public (see UNEP/CBD/COP/4/2, page 33). This recommendation notes that the question of inland waters provides both a challenge and an opportunity to educate the

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public and policy makers about the need to take an ecosystem-based approach to management, and that environmental education should be built into school curricula and should emphasize integration using inland waters as a model subject to teach problem solving.

### III. PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING OF THE IMPORTANCE OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

22. Article 13 has two distinct emphases. Subparagraph (a) calls upon Parties to undertake activities which will develop public education and awareness at the national level of the importance of the conservation of biological diversity. Subparagraph (b) calls upon Parties to cooperate at the international level to strengthen public education and awareness. Although their aims are related, the activities required to implement these provisions are different and this note will accordingly consider them separately.

23. The goal of subparagraph (a) is to foster understanding of the importance of biological diversity and the measures required for its effective management. This suggests that Parties use a combination of formal and informal education and take actions which reflect these two mutually reinforcing mechanisms.

24. An important way to develop practical and effective actions which reflect actual needs and capacities within a country is to incorporate public education concerns into the process of developing a national biodiversity strategy and action plan and, where appropriate, to use this strategy and action plan to lead to the development of a biodiversity education plan. In addition to providing the basis for an effective public awareness-building exercise, such a course of action would also provide an opportunity to assess existing public education programmes and thereby identify cultural, traditional and religious values, knowledge and practices which could be used to reinforce the successful implementation of subparagraph (a).

#### A. Formal education

25. Formal education refers to the primary, secondary and tertiary education system in a country. As noted in the programme adopted by the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly, a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable development is an adequately financed and effective education system at all levels, but particularly the primary and secondary levels, that is accessible to all. The core themes for such an effective education system include lifelong learning, interdisciplinary education, partnerships, multicultural education and empowerment. The General Assembly concluded that priority in this respect should be given to ensuring that girls and women have full and equal access to all levels of education and training. The system should also be seen as a means of empowering youth and vulnerable and marginalized groups, including those in rural areas, through intergenerational partnerships and peer education. It also noted that there is a need throughout the world to reorient education and awareness in order to increase widespread public understanding and support for sustainable development.

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26. An important preliminary step for a Party to understand the extent to which its education system meets these requirements is for it to review its overall education strategy or plan and its school curricula and to determine where biodiversity-related topics can be further developed or promoted. In undertaking this exercise, Parties should emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of biodiversity, such that it can be incorporated into the range of different subjects already in national curricula, without the need to add special courses on biodiversity.

27. The Global Biodiversity Strategy <sup>1/</sup> suggests that national curricula be developed which emphasize the contribution that biodiversity makes to community health and welfare, explain its contribution to the health of ecosystems, and tie ecological, economic and social themes together. This should be achieved through a partnership with teachers, non-governmental organizations and national ministries of education. The Strategy gives more specific guidance on such national curricula and emphasizes that locally developed curricula should supplement national ones.

28. In addition to work on curricula, Parties can also develop course materials relevant to conservation and sustainable use and build appropriate partnerships to develop these materials. In developing such materials, Parties need to take into account the diversity of their society and its differing perceptions, knowledge, attitudes, interests, values and understanding concerning the relevance of biodiversity to every day life and the consequences of its loss. This not only demands policy approaches that are targeted to specific audiences and levels of involvement, but also - and most important - means that each level of the educational system must have access to a wide range of materials which reflect these different values. The latter point is crucial in order to allow educators to develop courses which reflect their particular values and meet their specific needs. To promote one source of materials may allow the promulgation of a particular view which does not reflect the values of the community. Simply to rely upon available materials may not allow for access to a balanced source of materials. Consequently, where possible, Parties should develop catalogues of materials which reflect a diverse range of views in a balanced and impartial way. Private foundations have considerable experience in this respect and could assist Parties in the development of balanced catalogues. As recommended by the 19th special session of the General Assembly, special attention should be paid to the training of teachers, youth leaders and other educators to promote access to materials which reflect the needs of their communities.

29. Special attention should also be paid to educating children about the relevance of biodiversity to everyday life and the consequences of its loss. Children not only represent a third of the world's population, and half of the population in many developing countries, they will also become the future caretakers of the planet. Much of the fundamental reorientation in social behaviour that is needed to establish truly sustainable lifestyles will only be attained through the thoughtful education of youth and its capacity for resourcefulness, innovation and vision. The importance of focusing on youth was noted by the special session in its review of Agenda 21. Given the

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<sup>1/</sup> Global Biodiversity Strategy, World Resources Institute/World Conservation Union-IUCN/United Nations Environment Programme, 1992

nature of the issues raised by the Convention this emphasis is especially important in the context of implementing Article 13. New forms of technology, able to communicate the values of biodiversity, are especially appealing to youth. The development of the information exchange capacities of the clearing-house mechanism therefore has considerable potential to contribute to Parties' efforts in this respect.

B. Informal education and awareness raising

30. Informal education refers to the learning that takes place outside the formal education system. Informal education is about developing communication within society. Communication provides a powerful instrument for enhancing participation for attaining the goals of the Convention and for changing unsustainable behaviour. It promotes the gathering of community perceptions, an understanding of why people act as they do, and motivates and mobilizes understanding and support. It strengthens Government's capacity to anticipate the likely effects of policies on different groups within civil society and to reduce problems of non-compliance and conflict. Informal education occurs through a variety of mechanisms such as public awareness campaigns; cultural and religious systems; oral traditions; local community assistance programmes for agriculture, health-care or literacy; citizen-based conservation work programmes; displays at national parks, botanical gardens, zoos, aquariums and arboreta. In many societies, particularly in rural, local and indigenous communities, these mechanisms provide an important means of education. Consequently, building on them is vital and provides a cost-effective way to increase the level of education and awareness of biological diversity and the role it plays in society.

31. Development of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan should therefore also consider these informal mechanisms in its review of the educational capacities of a country. Developing general informal education programmes or more specialized or sectoral information campaigns is one way of educating and raising awareness through such informal systems. Designating a particular day as national biodiversity day is an example of a specialized event that relies upon these informal systems to transmit its message and to create an impact. Public awareness campaigns on the dangers of exotic species or the need for a particular environmental law, and special efforts to reach out to local communities adjacent to protected areas, are examples of specific campaigns which contribute to the implementation of Article 13 (a).

32. Many Parties do not have the financial, technical or human resources to develop and execute effective informal education programmes. Consequently, developing partnerships with the private sector, including non-governmental organizations, business, zoos, botanical gardens, aquariums, natural history museums and libraries can be an effective way to achieve particular goals. Indeed, zoos, botanical gardens and aquariums have unique facilities which are compatible with educational goals and are particularly well-suited to educating diverse groups of people. With over 600 million people visiting zoos each year, the potential outreach is considerable. To such partnerships, business can bring financing and access to expertise in

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advertising, public relations or communications, as well as better access to newspapers, television and radio. The potential that environmental non-governmental organizations non-governmental organizations have to contribute to such activities is already well known.

33. As with Parties' efforts within the formal education system, account needs to be taken of the diversity of perceptions, knowledge, attitudes, interests, values and understandings within society about the relevance of biodiversity to everyday life and the consequences of its loss. Efforts to raise awareness not only demand policy approaches that are targeted to specific audiences and levels of involvement, but also access to a wide range of materials which reflect these different values. Consequently, catalogues of materials which reflect a diverse range of views in a balanced and impartial way will play an important role in such activities. Here too, private foundations can have an important role to play in the development of balanced catalogues.

#### IV. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND PUBLIC AWARENESS PROGRAMMES

34. Paragraph 13 (b) calls upon Parties to cooperate with other States and international organizations to develop educational and public awareness programmes with respect to conservation and the sustainable use of biological diversity. Each country has its own unique qualities, conditions and circumstances and cooperation programmes should be tailored accordingly.

35. There are many ways that Parties can cooperate with other States and with international organizations. For example, programmes between States can be established bilaterally to enhance educational curricula, provide technical assistance and provide exchange experiences and training for teachers and students. 2/ Numerous activities are being carried out by international organizations, which Parties could encourage and draw on for support (see, for example, documents E/CN.17/1996/14 and E/CN.17/1996/14/Add.1).

36. Three important international activities relevant to the implementation of Article 13 are the work of the Commission for Sustainable Development and its implementation of chapter 36 of Agenda 21, the activities of other environmental conventions, and the activities of civil society. UNESCO has also proposed the establishment of joint initiative, together with the Convention, on biodiversity education, training and public awareness.

##### A. Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 and the Commission for Sustainable Development

37. Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 is a cross-sectoral chapter, which has enjoyed unanimous support from Governments, major groups and the educational communities of both developed and developing countries. Education is considered indispensable for sustainable development and for increasing the

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2/ One example of such bilateral support for the implementation of Article 13 is the Darwin Initiative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

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capacity of people to address environment and development issues. The implementation of chapter 36 is therefore seen as a keystone for the implementation of all the other chapters of Agenda 21. UNESCO is the task manager for chapter 36 of Agenda 21, in accordance with arrangements agreed to by the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD).

38. The inter-agency Task Force on Basic Social Services for All of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), within which there is a working group on basic education chaired by UNESCO, is also of importance. The work of this task force will culminate in the identification of indicators, in order to facilitate integration at national level in both thematic and operational terms, as well as the development of new guidelines for United Nations resident coordinators to ensure improved help from the United Nations system in this area.

39. The Commission for Sustainable Development considered chapter 36 at its fourth session in 1996. The Commission considered that the three main objectives which needed to be addressed were: to reorient education towards sustainable development through reform of education as a whole rather than through adjustment or adding on of separate new components to existing curricula; to increase public awareness, as public support and action are increasingly seen as the key to change; and to promote training, in order to ensure the necessary competence and human resources for planning and implementing sustainable development in sectors of human activity. The Commission also initiated a programme of work further to develop the implementation of chapter 36, which was described in the review undertaken by UNESCO for the special session as the single most important success since UNCED on public education and awareness.

40. This work programme reflects a consensus on the priorities for future action that have emerged since UNCED, namely:

- (a) Developing a broad international alliance and promoting networks;
- (b) Integrating the implementation of chapter 36 with analogous recommendations in the action plans of the major United Nations conferences and conventions;
- (c) Advising on how education and training can be integrated into national educational policies;
- (d) Refining the concept and key messages of education for sustainable development;
- (e) Advancing education and training at national level;
- (f) Providing financial and technical support to the developing countries;
- (g) Developing new partnership arrangements exploiting the communications technologies;
- (h) Working in partnership with youth;

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(i) Analysing current investments in education; and

(j) Making the relevant linkages with the Commission on Sustainable Development work programme on changing production and consumption patterns.

41. These priorities have emerged following a period of both conceptual and operational development of an understanding of the profound role of education in achieving sustainability. The work programme provides a much needed focus for action for a chapter that is extremely wide-ranging and complex, and touches on virtually every other chapter of Agenda 21. The aims of the work programme and of chapter 36 are directly relevant to the implementation of Article 13 and consequently the Conference of the Parties may wish to consider the active involvement of the Convention in this activity to be undertaken by the Commission on Sustainable Development.

42. The work programme is, however, still only a framework that needs to be developed in greater detail. While efforts in this direction have started, the far-reaching implications of the work programme still need to be recognized. The changes called for, such as reforming educational systems, rethinking the results of education, developing an interdisciplinary conceptual framework that reflects the complexity of the notion of sustainable development, agreeing on the key messages, and changing attitudes and lifestyles, will require time and the concerted effort and support of all sectors of society.

43. The special session decided that the concept of education for a sustainable future will be further developed by UNESCO, in cooperation with others. The Commission on Sustainable Development will next consider these issues (together with transfer of technology, capacity-building and science) as the cross-sectoral theme for its 1998 session, to be held from 20 April to 1 May 1998. At its fourth meeting, the Conference of the Parties will thus be able to consider the outcome of this session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and potential synergies for the implementation of Article 13.

B. Joint initiative on biodiversity education,  
training and public awareness

44. UNESCO has considerable experience of developing public education and awareness programmes. It has offered to assist the Convention with the implementation of Article 13, through the establishment a joint initiative on biodiversity education, training and public awareness. The issues raised by Article 13 represent areas where UNESCO could make a significant and distinctive contribution to the work of the Convention. UNESCO has an established network of international organizations and of scientific bodies that allow it quickly and effectively to mobilize expertise. Such partners include FAO, the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), IUCN, the Diversitas International Programme of Biodiversity Science, the Man and Biosphere Programme and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC).

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45. Such an initiative could provide an operational framework to promote and encourage the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity through developing educational and public awareness programmes at the national level.

46. The proposal of UNESCO is to collect inputs from all relevant international organizations active in this field and work towards cooperation among these diverse institutions and the harmonization of their efforts. The types of activities that have been proposed include: briefing books and manuals for science teachers; wall-charts, videos, CD-ROMs for schools, targeted at different age levels, and for universities; and information materials for the broader public, such as television programmes produced by specialist communications groups, news items and briefing kits for journalists, slide packages of public-domain photographs, question-and-answer primers for the general public and data and information exchange on the Internet. In addition, these activities will be linked, as appropriate, with training and capacity-building activities under Article 12.

### C. Other conventions

47. Promoting education and awareness raising has been repeatedly identified as an opportunity for capturing synergies through better coordination and cooperation at all levels between the environmental conventions. Improved policy coordination at the intergovernmental level, as well as more concerted efforts to enhance collaboration among the secretariats of those decision-making bodies, would make a contribution to the implementation of Article 13 (b).

48. Article 6 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and Article 19 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, contain obligations placed on their Parties with respect to public education and awareness that are similar to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change provisions of Article 13. The commitments contained in Article 6 of the were recently reiterated in Article 10 (e) of the Kyoto Protocol to that Convention, which calls on Parties to cooperate in and promote, at the international level, and, where appropriate, using existing bodies, the development and implementation of education and training programmes, including the strengthening of national capacity building, in particular human and institutional capacities and the exchange or secondment of personnel to train experts in this field, in particular for developing countries, and facilitate at the national level public awareness and public access to information on climate change. Suitable modalities should be developed to implement these activities through the relevant bodies of the Convention taking into account Article 6 of the Convention, on public information.

49. Paragraph 119 of the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 reads in part: "At the international and national level there is a need for ... enhanced public awareness-raising with respect to the conventions. Such tasks should be undertaken by United Nations Environment Programme in accordance with the relevant decisions of its Governing Council and in full cooperation with the conferences of the parties and governing bodies of relevant conventions".

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50. Recognizing the need to support conventions and to exploit synergies, UNEP has established an Information Unit on Conventions that works with various secretariats on public information and outreach activities. UNEP proposes to develop, in cooperation with the Secretariat, a comprehensive biodiversity awareness programme to promote support for the Convention and its implementation at all levels of society. This programme will first concentrate on educating the media about the Convention and on developing materials containing unbiased and carefully vetted Convention-related information designed for use by policy-makers and journalists worldwide. The programme will also promote the sharing of success stories, expertise, and copyright-free materials by Parties and organizations to facilitate the development of cost-effective national programmes for implementing Article 13.

51. Other biodiversity-related conventions, including the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, also have programmes to promote public education and awareness. There may be opportunities for synergy in extending the proposed biodiversity awareness programme to include other biodiversity-related conventions.

52. In March 1997, UNDP organized a meeting of experts, at the invitation of the Government of Israel, to examine the synergies between the three Rio conventions and the Forest Principles. The meeting noted that, in building public awareness and education, the following issues needed to be addressed: developing curricula for all levels which integrate the concerns of the four instruments and the links between socio-economic and environmental and resource management issues; utilizing regional training facilities to provide training based on a combined multidisciplinary curriculum; and building public awareness of the four instruments through the media, public service advertising, and ongoing education of the press.

53. The secretariats of the three conventions and of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) have continued discussions with UNDP on ways to implement the recommendations of the meeting.

#### D. Major groups

54. As noted above, individuals, groups and organizations have a significant role to play in supporting efforts of Governments to implement Article 13. This is the case at all levels, including international activities to promote educational and public awareness programmes. Countless non-governmental organizations and community groups are particularly active in the field of education at all levels: local, sub-national, national, regional and international. Through the effective implementation of Article 13, Parties will be enabled to engage and mobilize the experience, energy and outreach capacity of these organizations. In many countries, non-governmental organizations are the key actors in disseminating information, developing materials and providing educational and public awareness services. The UNEP Global Environmental Citizenship Programme, initiated in 1996 and supported by GEF, is aimed in particular at mobilizing non-governmental organizations and media support for promoting changes in attitude and behaviour. In the

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initial consultations between UNESCO, UNEP and IUCN on developing a broad international alliance for education for sustainable development, the crucial role of non-governmental organizations and other major emphasis has been placed on groups in facilitating the implementation of Article 13.

55. One network which is contributing to such activities is the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC). The CEC mission is to champion the strategic use of education and communication for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity as a basis of sustainable development for present and future generations by, first, integrating education and communication into national environmental plans and projects; second, analysing lessons learned in education and communication by government and non-governmental organization programmes, drawing out principles and disseminating the findings; third, seeking opportunities to use new information technologies; fourth, supporting capacity-building in the strategic use of education and communication in support of the Environmental Education and Communication Programme; and, fifth, developing alliances with international agencies and the private sector.

56. CEC is an international network of 250 education and communication experts from governmental, non-governmental, media and educational bodies. CEC is involved in practical action in 76 countries and is centrally coordinated and serviced by IUCN headquarters; the regional offices for Meso-America, South America, Southern Africa and Southeast Asia; and the country offices of Nepal, Pakistan, Uganda and the United States of America. It is decentralized and coordinated through regional networks in Asia, Europe and Latin America, enlisting the services of over 600 local experts. A steering committee develops the CEC programme. Cooperating organizations include affiliates such as the International Centre for Environmental Education in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Stichting Milieu Educatie of the Netherlands.

57. The Earth Negotiation Bulletin of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) also provides an important service, not only by keeping participants informed at meetings of the Convention, but also by disseminating the results of these meetings to a wider public. Other non governmental information networks, such as the Biodiversity Action Network (BIONET) and the Global Biodiversity Forum, make significant contributions to raising awareness and increasing the participation of civil society in the Convention process.

58. The participation of women and of youth is crucial for attaining the goals of the Convention. The importance of youth has been stressed in the preceding chapters of this note. The Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 called for priority to be "given to ensuring women's and girls' full and equal access to all levels of education and training". In considering ways to engage and mobilize civil society for the implementation of Article 13, the Conference of the Parties may wish to place particular emphasis on the need to pay special attention to ensuring full and equal access for women and girls to activities to be developed under the Convention and to ensuring that the particular experience and expertise of women and their organizations is fully utilized. Women's organizations, such as the non-governmental organization coalition Diverse Women for Diversity, provide an important way to connect local actions to global decisions.

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V. RECOMMENDATION

59. The implementation of Article 13 involves a broad range of activities, to be undertaken by a correspondingly broad range of actors. Central to the implementation of Article 13 are the domestic efforts of Parties themselves to develop their own public education and awareness programmes. While it is important that the Conference of the Parties recognize the contribution that all participants in the activities of the Convention can make, and encourage that participation, the main responsibility falls on the Parties themselves. The international activities described in chapter IV above can only supplement and support national and local level activities, and cannot be considered as substitutes for such national and local action.

60. In the light of the importance of action by Parties in the implementation of Article 13, the Conference of the Parties is invited to consider the following elements of a decision on the implementation of Article 13:

The Conference of the Parties:

(a) Recognizes:

- (i) The importance of education and communication instruments to achieve the Convention's goals;
- (ii) That the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity are social issues which require cultural understanding and sensitivity, and that efforts to promote the goals of Article 13 entail recognition of the diverse needs of people and their differing perceptions, knowledge, attitudes, interests, values and understanding in respect of the goals of the Convention;
- (iii) The opportunities for synergy between the Convention, the Commission on Sustainable Development and other bodies in public education and awareness-raising on matters related to biological diversity;
- (iv) That modern technologies and expanding Internet access bring new possibilities for promoting and encouraging understanding of the importance of, and measures required for, the conservation of biological diversity;

(b) Urges Parties:

- (i) To place special emphasis on the requirements of Article 13 in the development of their national strategies and action plans;
- (ii) To promote education on biological diversity through relevant national institutions, including educational bodies, botanical gardens, museums of natural history, herbariums, aquariums and arboretums, and to allocate appropriate resources for the strategic use of education and communication instruments at each phase of policy formulation, planning, implementation and evaluation;

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- (iii) To integrate biodiversity concerns into national education strategies, or where curricula are being revised in relation to recommendations of chapter 36 of Agenda 21 and the work programme of the Commission on Sustainable Development;
  - (iv) To support initiatives by major groups that foster stakeholder participation in biodiversity conservation and that integrate biodiversity conservation matters into their practices and educational programmes;
  - (v) To share experiences on communication and education strategies, and to make relevant case-studies available to the secretariat and for the exchange of information among Parties through regional workshops and the clearing-house mechanism;
- (c) Urges the Global Environment Facility, along with Governments, regional economic integration organizations and competent international, regional and national organizations to support human and institutional capacity-building programmes for Governments, non-governmental organizations and other major groups, in particular women, youth, indigenous and local communities, to promote measures for implementing the provisions of the Convention on public education and awareness;
- (d) Decides that public education and awareness issues shall be integrated into the sectoral and thematic items under the programme of work of the Conference of the Parties;
- (e) Invites the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to consider launching a global initiative on biodiversity education, training and public awareness and requests the Executive Secretary to explore the feasibility of such an initiative and to report to the next Conference of the Parties on the progress of any such initiative;
- (f) Invites the United Nations Environment Programme, in cooperation with other United Nations bodies, further to develop its information dissemination activities in support of the work of the Convention;
- (g) Further requests the Executive Secretary:
- (i) To facilitate the exchange of lessons learned from communication and education activities undertaken in the course of the preparation and implementation of national biodiversity policies and strategies, through the clearing-house mechanism;
  - (ii) To take into consideration the work programme under the Commission on Sustainable Development for Agenda 21 on public awareness, education and training and to seek to have the Convention's goals integrated in this work, as well as in the programmes of regional forums;
- (h) Decides to review progress on the implementation of the above activities at its seventh meeting.

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