



CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/CBD/COP/7/INF/30
27 January 2004

ENGLISH ONLY

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
Seventh meeting
Kuala Lumpur, 9-20 and 27 February 2004
Item 17 of the provisional agenda*

THEMATIC PROGRAMMES OF WORK: PROGRESS REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION AND CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE ACTION: BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF DRY AND SUB-HUMID LANDS

*Proposals prepared by UNEP-WCMC on assessing areas within dry and sub-humid lands of
particular value for biological diversity and/or under particular threat*

Note by the Executive Secretary

1. At its fifth meeting, the Conference of Parties agreed a programme of work for biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands (decision V/23). This programme included an operational objective on assessments (part A), "to assemble and analyse information on the state of the biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands and the pressures on it, to disseminate existing knowledge and best practices, and to fill knowledge gaps, in order to determine adequate activities". The programme of work identified six activities necessary for achievement of this objective, including the "Identification of specific areas within dry and sub-humid lands of particular value for biological diversity and/or under particular threat, such as *inter alia*, endemic species and low lying wetlands, with reference to Annex I to the Convention on Biological Diversity" (activity 2 of the programme of work).
2. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to review the programme of work and identify expected outcomes, further activities to achieve these outcomes, those who should implement these activities, and timetables for action and follow-up (decision V/23, paragraph 6). The Subsidiary Body of Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) through its recommendation VIII/4 (UNEP/CBD/COP/7/3, annex I) forwarded such proposals to the Conference of the Parties for its consideration.
3. The Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AGHTEG) on Dry and Sub-Humid Lands, which met twice during 2002, as well as the previously held liaison group meeting, in 2001 identified activity 2 as being of high priority for action. The synthesis table annexed to recommendation VIII/4 lists a number of key actors that could help implement this activity.

* UNEP/CBD/COP/7/1 and Corr.1.

/...

4. In response to proposals made by the eighth meeting of SBSTTA, UNEP-WCMC has submitted to the Executive Secretary a first proposal of how this activity of the programme of work could be addressed, specifically keeping in mind that the Inter-Sessional Meeting on the Multi-Year Programme of Work of the Conference of the Parties up to 2010 has recommended that the programme of work on dry and sub-humid lands be the subject of an in-depth review at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in the year 2006 (UNEP/CBD/COP/7/5, annex, recommendation 17 B) and the timeline for action and progress reports proposed through SBSTTA recommendation VIII/4.
5. The document is being reproduced in the language and form in which it was received by the Secretariat.

Annex

BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF DRY AND SUB-HUMID LANDS***Assessment of status and trends of biological diversity in dry and sub-humid lands, and identification of areas of particular value and/or threat***

1. To date no global systematic assessment of biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands has been carried out, although several current activities are identified in the Executive Secretary's report on progress in implementation of the thematic programmes of work (UNEP/CBD/COP/7/11). These include key actions by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and the Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands project (LADA), both of whom have been invited by the eighth meeting of SBSTTA to propose how, within the ongoing work of their assessment, they could address the assessment needs of the programme of work of the Convention on dry and sub-humid lands. Further ongoing work of the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Observatoire du Sahara et du Sahel (OSS) and the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme's (IGBP) land use cover change project have been explicitly mentioned in the Executive Secretary's report.
2. As UNEP-WCMC has been identified as a potential key collaborator in the implementation of various activities of the programme of work (SBSTTA recommendation VIII/4, annex I; UNEP/CBD/COP/7/3), the Centre is putting before the Conference of the Parties a concept paper for initiating priority work on Activity 2 of the dry and sub-humid lands programme of work. It is anticipated that the proposed work would be carried out in conjunction with other key stakeholders, especially including affected Parties.
3. In 2002, UNEP-WCMC prepared a visual map-based overview of mountain biodiversity and related pressures (*Mountain Watch: environmental change and sustainable development in mountain regions*^{1/}). This review included the first map-based analysis of indicators of biodiversity richness and pressures in the world's mountain regions, and provided a basis for prioritising action on these grounds. A set of case studies provided on-the-ground examples of the issues under analysis, and response options. This report was very well received at the 2002 Global Mountain Summit, and copies were provided to those attending both SBSTTA meetings when mountain biological diversity was discussed. It is now recommended that we apply a similar approach to dry and sub-humid lands, with a global analysis of areas of importance under threat, supported by local-scale case-studies.
4. The primary objective of the proposed report on dry and sub-humid lands would be to carry out an initial assessment of biodiversity, ecosystem services and risk in the world's dry and sub-humid lands, with the aim of also identifying potential global priorities for management intervention. As part of this analysis, the project would also help identify areas of particular value and/or threat.
5. The importance of different components of biodiversity and ecosystem services would be defined in close cooperation with interested stakeholders, including Parties (for example, through an AHTEG meeting), other programmes and organizations. Data would then be collated according to these criteria, analysed for use in the report, and made available for regional analyses. Components of species biodiversity addressed in the analysis and report would be expected to include: species richness, concentration of endemic species, concentration of threatened species. Ecosystem services provided by drylands would include: agricultural suitability (arable & grazing), carbon storage, fuelwood production. The definition of pressures necessarily follows from the definition of values, but it is

^{1/} UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre. 2002. *Mountain Watch: Environmental change and sustainable development in mountains*. UNEP-WCMC Biodiversity Series No. 12. UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge, UK. 80pp. Available from: http://www.unep-wcmc.org/mountains/mountain_watch

expected that data relating to habitat condition, agricultural use, infrastructure development and climatic change would be included.

6. A spatial analysis relating pressures to biodiversity and ecosystem service values in dry and sub-humid lands would be produced. The results of the assessment would be made widely available in paper and digital formats, and would be primarily of use to decision-makers in policy and planning, including those responsible for implementation of the programme of work on dry and sub-humid lands at national and international levels. It is anticipated that other conservation practitioners, students, educators, and many non-specialist parts of civil society would also be interested in the project outcomes. In addition it is noted that *Mountain Watch* received significant media attention, bringing mountain issues to a wide global audience, and that this might also be considered for the report on dry and sub-humid lands.

7. The assessment would support existing initiatives such as the thematic work programme of the Convention on dry and sub-humid lands, and provide a strong foundation for future work on dryland biodiversity. Specifically it could be used in AHTEG and liaison group meetings, and in other country consultations, as resource material that could guide discussions and lead to a politically more acceptable outcome. The assessment could also be used to promote more thorough review at the regional level, which would provide more substantial support to land-use management and conservation planning.

8. In order to promote the results of the project widely, it is recommended that a report be produced in the form of a colour booklet combining non-technical text, maps and data tables, and would be around 80 pages in length, produced by digital printing methods to minimise costs and allow electronic distribution. The maps would also be made available through an Interactive Map Server, and available for download where copyright permits. Contents would include *inter alia* review of key dryland environments, assessment of both values and pressures on those environments, and a focus on both sustainable development and protected areas. Case-studies would also be used to highlight key issues. The publication would also be supported by posters and maps for use in a variety of fora.

9. It is anticipated that the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre would compile the report working in close collaboration with the Secretariat, in consultation with interested Parties and drawing on information and experience from a range of other programmes, individuals and organisations at national and international levels. It is anticipated that initial work would take approximately four months, followed by a review with a wide range of stakeholders including Parties.

10. Resources for carrying out the proposed work are not currently available, and additional voluntary contributions would be required.
