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BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF INLAND WATER ECOSYSTEMS

Proposals on matters identified in paragraphs 2, 3 and 16 of decision VII/4 relating to targets, indicators, national reporting, other information requirements, the identification of priority threats and processes for improving the review of implementation

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraph 2 of its decision VII/4, the Conference of the Parties recognized that a major shortcoming in the review of the programme of work on the biological diversity of inland waters was the limited availability of recent information on each of the activities of the programme of work and the lack of financial resources to generate it. It further recognized the usefulness of the national reports submitted under the Ramsar Convention for a global status of the implementation of the programme of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems, and, accordingly, requested the Executive Secretary to submit, for consideration at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, a proposal on ways and means for making the review more comprehensive.

2. In paragraph 3 of decision VII/4, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to develop with the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention a proposal, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting, on streamlining and improving the effectiveness of national reporting on inland water ecosystems, taking into account the work of the Task Force on Streamlining Forest-related Reporting established in the framework of United Nations Forum on Forests and other initiatives for harmonizing biodiversity-related national reports.

3. In paragraph 16 of the same decision, the Conference of the Parties recognized the need for reliable baseline data and subsequent regular national assessments of the status and trends of, and threats to, inland water biodiversity as a basis for decision-making on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity of inland water ecosystems and, accordingly, requests the Executive Secretary, in

* UNEP/CBD/COP/8/1.

collaboration with Parties and relevant organizations, in particular the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat, the World Conservation Monitoring Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-WCMC), the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA) among others, and making use of all available information, to prepare, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting:

(a) A work plan with defined timeframe, ways, means, and capacity needs for assessing the extent, distribution and characteristics of inland water ecosystems, including, *inter alia*, biological characteristics and those chemical and physical characteristics relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including necessary requirements for ecosystem based approaches, where possible using and not duplicating the efforts of other initiatives;

(b) A report on information, and sources of information, on the trends of inland water biodiversity, definition of agreed baselines, relevant indicators and frequency of the assessments; and

(c) A work plan with ways and means for assessing processes and categories of activities which have or are likely to have significant adverse impacts on the conservation and sustainable use of inland water biological diversity.

4. Several related ongoing initiatives are relevant to all these considerations, including the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention (see UNEP/CBD/COP/8/4) and the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on the Review of Implementation of the Programme of Work on Forest Biodiversity established by decision VI/22 (see UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/11/15).

5. SBSTTA recommendation X/4 is also highly relevant as it emphasizes in this context the linkages with the activities of the Ramsar Convention in view of its role established by decision III/21 as the lead implementation partner on wetlands for the Convention on Biological Diversity. In particular, recommendation X/4 invites the Ramsar Convention to: (i) further develop the targets for the programme of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems, as appropriate, through *inter alia*, their quantification and application to specific wetland types and biogeographic regions, and to link those targets with the indicators currently being developed under the Ramsar Convention; and (ii) contribute, *inter alia*, to monitoring progress towards the achievement of the targets.

6. In addition, several of the outcomes of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar), held in Kampala from 7 to 15 November 2005, have significant bearing on the subjects under consideration; in particular in relation to targets, indicators and national and other reporting.

7. The Secretariat prepared a document on some of these subjects for the eleventh meeting of SBSTTA (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/11/12). In view of the timing of the outcomes of the aforementioned processes that document could not present a definitive version of the various proposals for the full consideration of SBSTTA.

8. Section II of the present note addresses the general issues and needs amongst these related subjects. Section III focuses on further requirements for each specific paragraph or subparagraph of decision VII/4 in the context set in section II. Both sections provide background information to support the elements for a draft decision suggested in section IV.

9. The various requirements for specific time-lines in the above decisions are noted under section III. However, the activities and processes outlined here are regarded, *inter alia*, as an essential strategic step

towards considerably strengthening the review of the programme of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems, and its implementation, scheduled to occur at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties..

II. ISSUES AND NEEDS

10. The aforementioned elements of decision VII/4 call for a systematic approach that: (i) links goals, targets, indicators, monitoring and reporting; (ii) identifies the need to develop indicators to assess progress towards targets and means to report upon them (and hence reporting on the effectiveness of implementation of the programme of work); (iii) requires the identification of priority threats, which then enables the identification of priority activities to address them; and (iv) recognizes the existing and potential role of other conventions, international organizations and initiatives.

11. The programme of work is designed to achieve outcome-oriented sub-targets that contribute to the sub-targets for the Strategic Plan, ^{1/} including by addressing threats. The review of implementation of the programme of work should therefore be against progress towards the targets set, including the extent to which threats are reduced. Relevant reporting considerations need to be aligned to this context. Reporting mechanisms should be effective in providing reliable information enabling the progress towards targets to be assessed (via indicators) and facilitate the analysis of how the implementation of the programme of work has contributed to that progress (enabling improvements in effectiveness to be made). “Status and trends” information in the current context is required, *inter alia*, primarily to assess the effectiveness of the programme of work, and enable its subsequent revision in order to improve that effectiveness. In effect, data on status and trends are indicators of the effectiveness of the programme of work including progress towards targets.

A. *Targets and sub-targets*

12. A logical “hierarchy” of targets has been developed, with the overall 2010 target identified by sub-target under the Strategic Plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity, with onward application to the programme of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems (as already covered in recommendation X/4); likewise for other programmes as they are either reviewed or developed (see decision VII/30, paragraph 12 (c)). The Conference of the Parties has stressed the need to avoid the proliferation of the sub-targets in the programmes of work; otherwise, the process of reporting and indicators would become unmanageable.

13. However, targets, and indicators of progress towards them, in general, become more robust and measurable the more specific they become. This constraint (the need for specificity, without proliferation) is addressed by promoting the further development of more specific targets with partners, which in turn contribute to this hierarchical process.

14. Current partnerships with the Ramsar Convention are a case in point. That Convention has a mandate that is specific to wetlands and, therefore, is more competent at the development of robust targets, and indicators, which are more specific to wetlands (hence, the relevant invitation to the Ramsar

^{1/} Technically, the programme of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems was developed prior to the establishment of outcome-oriented sub-targets, but, in decision VII/4, paragraph 8, the Conference of the Parties recommended that the Strategic Plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and their target of 2010 to reduce significantly the rate of biodiversity loss, should guide the implementation of the revised programme of work on inland water biological diversity. At the same time, decision VII/30, paragraphs 12 (c) and (d) and 13 (a) facilitate harmonization (if necessary) with targets and that future reviews will take those targets as the basis of measurement of progress.

Convention in recommendation X/4). A similar argument applies to the activities of other conventions, international organizations and initiatives, within their particular mandates and fields of experience. For example, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals is currently exploring how it can enhance cooperation and coordination with the Convention on Biological Diversity through the development of targets for migratory species, and relevant indicators, which contribute, *inter alia*, to the targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

B. Indicators

15. Indicators are highly relevant in this context because paragraph 14 (c) of decision VII/4, among others, notes that indicators should be cost-effective means to report on implementation of the programme of work as measured against targets.

16. Indicators can also apply to specific sub-targets (e.g., at the level of the programme of work, or for assessing progress through the Ramsar Convention) and, where appropriate, contribute to assessments at higher levels (i.e., sub-targets for the Strategic Plan). What is important, in the current context, is how indicators feature (at various levels) within a strategic framework that links the achievement of targets at various levels under the umbrella of the 2010 target.

17. When considering targets, indicators and a programme of work, three broad categories of indicators are required: (i) those that indicate trends towards outcome-oriented biodiversity targets (outcome indicators); (ii) those that provide information on the extent of implementation (process indicators); and (iii) indicators for trends in threats. All are required to effectively review the implementation of a programme of work: it is essential to know not only whether outcome targets are being achieved, but also which processes (activities) contribute to achieving them, including how and why threats have changed. Not all of these are necessary for direct use as indicators in the context of the targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which would be cumbersome, but they are a necessary part of information required to feed into ways and means to effectively review the implementation and impact of the programme of work.

C. Threats to biodiversity (drivers of change)^{2/}

18. A programme of work for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity should address threats to that conservation and sustainable use. Therefore, threats are important in the current context because it is their removal, reduction, or mitigation, which leads to progress towards biodiversity targets. Hence, threats are intimately related to monitoring, indicators, reporting and the review of the implementation of the programme of work. Because of the importance of threats, there is also reasoning that it is often better to monitor trends in threats (and be vigilant for new ones) than to measure trends in biodiversity directly. This is a particularly compelling argument for inland waters because of weaknesses in direct measures of biodiversity. Indeed, many of the indicators adopted, or currently being considered (see UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/11/12/Add.1), generate information on threats, not biodiversity levels directly, e.g., water quality, fragmentation of rivers). However, the subject of priorities for direct indicators of biodiversity *versus* indirect indicators (of threats) has not been systematically addressed for inland waters.

19. Major threats were used as a basis for the development of the revised programme of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems. However, the work programme addresses all threats equally. A much more detailed analysis is required if information on threats is to be used in practice to

^{2/} “Drivers of change” is the terminology used in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment for “threats” but it is noted that they can drive either positive or negative changes.

prioritize those activities which contribute the most towards reaching biodiversity targets (as required by paragraph 16 (c) of decision VII/4).

20. Assessing categories of activities having significant adverse impacts logically leads to the identification of priorities for activities for reducing threats and, hence, their prioritization on the basis of the likelihood of achieving the greatest progress towards biodiversity targets. Unfortunately, one does not automatically follow the other, since threats differ in the ease by which they can be addressed and the cost of doing so. There are also differences at national level in terms of the urgency or importance of threats, constraints to addressing them and capacity to act.

21. For threats to be addressed it is important to know “who” causes them, where and why. The “who” is particularly important in the current context because that is the entity that: (i) must undertake activities if the threat is to be addressed (i.e., implement the programme of work); and (ii) is likely the most knowledgeable about the threat and, therefore, amongst the best placed to report on its trend (i.e., to develop and use appropriate indicators).

22. A particularly important point for inland waters is that the threats arise from a multitude of activities at sector level. “Inland waters” is not a sector itself. Water is the basis of a very complex ecosystem that the sectors have direct and indirect impacts upon. Often there is no agency or institution at national level with overall responsibility for inland waters (although often specialized agencies may deal with aspects of the subject, such as hydropower or irrigation). Frequently, environment agencies (ministries or equivalent) take on the role of stewardship of “inland waters” but they are rarely, if ever, the source of threats and, hence, are only an intermediary in terms of addressing them, and for reporting.

23. Therefore, building appropriate partnerships with stakeholders (regarding reducing threats) is critical to both the effective implementation of the programme of work and reporting on progress towards targets.

D. Reporting

24. In the current context, reporting is a means by which, *inter alia*, information is communicated in a form which is useful for assessing progress towards targets (including generating and analysing outcome and process indicators), and which enables the implementation of the programme of work to be reviewed and subsequently modified in order to maximize its impact.

25. Reporting should operate from local through national to international levels, and by the multitude of stakeholders involved. Certainly, not all national level, and below, reporting activities, nor indeed many activities at international or regional levels, need necessarily be reported into the Convention process. However, streamlining and harmonizing all of these current or potential reporting roles is the key to an effective reporting mechanism. Reporting by any stakeholder, at any level, therefore needs to be considered in the context of reporting undertaken by others.

E. Conclusions

26. If harmony is to be achieved between goals, targets, indicators, reporting and reviews of implementation of the programme of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems, all of these elements need to be considered simultaneously and under a common framework. Activities may focus on one element, but if by doing so they lose oversight of the overall context and linkages (as described above), they will not only be less efficient but are likely to lead to tensions.

27. Likewise, effective coordination and cooperation between all relevant international conventions, organizations and bodies regarding the programme of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems, including their relevant activities relating to generating indicator information and reporting, will be best achieved if all stakeholders operate under a common framework. Having common goals and targets, or sub-targets and/or activities which contribute towards them, is the most logical means of enhancing these linkages. In short, harmony will be achieved if everybody “sings from the same sheet”. This is also a potentially effective means of clearer identification of areas for synergy between stakeholders (including between conventions).

28. In decision VII/4, Parties adopted a very comprehensive programme of work. Two major constraints to implementation will inevitably be that: (i) without substantially increased capacity, which may only be achieved in the longer term, many Parties cannot implement all necessary activities, and (ii) in many circumstances it is not clear which entities need to implement the programme of work, particularly in relation to addressing threats (nor indeed how to get those entities to adopt the programme of work and contribute to reporting on progress).

29. Therefore, a critical step in enhancing the contribution of the programme of work to the achievement of relevant targets and sub-targets requires advice, based upon analysis, on which are the priority threats to be addressed, by whom and how. Hence, priority activities can then be identified, which will enable Parties to understand what efforts (or investments) will lead to the greatest gains. To achieve this aim, there is a need for a process that should include adequate attention to means for reporting on threats and progress towards outcome-oriented targets using indicators (and who should do this).

III. ADDRESSING EACH SPECIFIC PARAGRAPH OF DECISION VII/4

Paragraph 2: ways and means of making information availability for the review of the programme of work more comprehensive

30. The requirements for paragraph 2 of decision VII/4 are largely covered under activities associated with the paragraphs below. Ways and means to improve national reporting aspects are covered under paragraphs 31-35, and improving information on related aspects under paragraphs 36-52. In addition, SBSTTA recommendation XI/9 paragraph 8, in particular subparagraph (b), refers to the need to have a strategic approach to assess and monitor threats and to identify key stakeholders and promote, where appropriate, their full involvement in reducing threats (that is, undertake relevant activities in the programme of work). The suggested elements for a draft decision (section IV) refer to ways and means to achieve this task.

Paragraph 3: proposals on streamlining and improving the effectiveness of national reporting on inland water ecosystems

31. SBSTTA recommendation XI/9, paragraph 5, requests the Executive Secretary “to invite the Ramsar Convention bodies to take the lead in developing a draft joint reporting framework on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems, taking into consideration the needs of both Conventions, including their respective needs for reporting on other matters, and as appropriate, drawing upon the Issue-Based Modules for Coherent Implementation of Biodiversity-related Conventions”. Reference is made to the modules because they are, amongst other things, a tool for analysing reporting requirements across the biodiversity related conventions. This represents the main element of the “proposal” required in paragraph 3 of decision VII/4. However, for the benefit of the Conference of the Parties, it is useful to add further background information and ways and means that this may achieve the desired outcome.

32. Resolution IX.8 of the Ramsar Convention requests its Standing Committee to review and revise its reporting process for its tenth national reports including, *inter alia*, taking into account the needs for reducing duplication with other Conventions and the need for harmony. Resolution IX.5, referring to synergies with other processes, and in particular harmonising national reporting, also requests a similar process. Both resolutions cross-reference to Ramsar resolution 1, annex D, which refers to indicators for assessing the effectiveness of the implementation of that Convention (see below). Paragraph 4 of that annex notes that its approach:

“[I]s part of an integrated updating of monitoring and reporting processes under the Ramsar Convention, including an intention to simplify the National Report Format for its COP10. Taken in combination, these updated processes will be designed in such a way that there should be no net additional burden of analysis and reporting for Contracting Parties compared to the present. In concert with moves to streamline and harmonize reporting across related multilateral environmental agreements, ideally the overall burden could in fact reduce. Some of the indicators in any event rely on analyses at global level rather than implying that this be done by Parties.”

33. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity attended the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention and, during discussions on this subject, notified the Ramsar Secretariat of the outcomes of the Ad-Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Review of Implementation, in particular its recommendation 1/9, on national reporting (UNEP/CBD/COP/8/4, annex).

34. The Convention on Biological Diversity and Ramsar Convention have both used the report of the UNEP-WCMC Workshop on Harmonizing Reporting, held in Haastroe, Belgium, 22-23 September 2004, to assist developing appropriate formats. ^{3/}

35. The stage has therefore been set for harmonization of national reports under the two conventions. General guidelines and tools for doing so are available (further guidance for national reports under the Convention on Biological Diversity is contained in document UNEP/CBD/COP/8/24). The critical requirement is that the information gathered in the national reports under the Convention on Biological Diversity must not only be harmonized with the Ramsar national reports, but both reports must also take into account information needs and sources, and potential sources, of information from other mechanisms. Hence, requirements for activities in relation to paragraph 3 of decision VII/4 must be addressed in relation to other matters considered in this document. The two secretariats would implement SBSTTA recommendation XI/9, paragraph 5, accordingly.

Paragraph 16 (a): A work plan with defined timeframe, ways, means, and capacity needs for assessing the extent, distribution and characteristics of inland water ecosystems, including, inter alia, biological characteristics and those chemical and physical characteristics relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including necessary requirements for ecosystem based approaches

36. Some current sources of information for making assessments are discussed in paragraphs 42-47 below (in that information on status and trends is generated, partly, using data on the extent, distribution and characteristics of inland water ecosystems).

^{3/} For the Convention on Biological Diversity, see document UNEP/CBD/WS-Syn.Afr/1/INF/2 and for the Ramsar Convention see document 32 of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

37. CBD Technical Series Number 22 contains information on approaches and methodologies for the rapid assessment of the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems. The document notes, however, that the methods apply largely at the species level and that further guidelines are required for making assessments at the genetic and especially the ecosystem level. An information document providing guidance on the assessment of socioeconomic and cultural aspects of the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems is also being prepared for the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. This information is also available as resolution IX.1 annex E i of the Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention. ^{4/}

38. The Ramsar Convention has recently improved the classification system for wetlands based upon hydro-geomorphological criteria (ref. Ramsar Convention resolution IX.1, annex C). This will significantly contribute to improved assessments.

39. A major source of information is the Ramsar Convention Inventory of Wetlands of International Importance. Each site listed contains relevant information in its Ramsar Information Sheet (which is to be improved after the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention, particularly in terms of descriptions of ecological character). Naturally, the information refers only to Ramsar Sites. There is a continued need to obtain improved information beyond Ramsar Sites and that Convention is already working on this in relation to the application of its “Wise Use Principles” across all wetlands. There is in particular a pressing need to improve information required for ecosystem based approaches.

40. The “work plan” for the achievement of the requirements under paragraph 16 (a) of decision VII/4 should therefore focus on collaboration with the activities of the Ramsar Convention (including its partners). Regarding a “defined time frame”, that Convention intends to make progress on this subject by the tenth meeting of its Conference of the Parties, in 2008. “Capacity needs” for this should be assessed in relation to:

- (a) What information is required;
- (b) Who is or should be generating it; and
- (c) How it should be strengthened.

41. In particular, attention needs to be given to capacity needs for national governments in relation to the overall implementation of this programme of work – and such capacity need not necessarily relate to the capacity to undertake work themselves, but in how to access, analyse and manage where necessary the work of other stakeholders.

Paragraph 16 (b): A report on information, and sources of information, on the trends of inland water biodiversity, definition of agreed baselines, relevant indicators and frequency of the assessments

42. CBD Technical Series 11 (*Status and Trends of Biodiversity of Inland Waters*) contains a review of information compiled in 2003. Annex 1 of that document includes a review of ongoing assessments and initiatives on water resources and inland water biodiversity, including frequency of the assessments covered. This is a comprehensive review but it was undertaken largely at the species level.

^{4/} http://www.ramsar.org/res/key_res_ix_01_annexei_e.htm

43. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment undertook a review of the status and trends in inland water biodiversity, in particular focussing more at the ecosystem level. Sources of information, and especially relevant indicators of trends, were incorporated into the outcomes of that assessment.

44. “Status and trends” information, including frequency of assessments, has been considered in some detail in the process of developing indicators for outcome-oriented targets under the Convention. Indicators for the sub-targets for the Strategic Plan were considered at the Ad-Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Indicators for Assessing Progress Towards the 2010 Biodiversity Target which met in Montreal from 19 to 22 October 2004 (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/10/INF/7). The outcomes of that meeting were considered by SBSTTA at its tenth meeting (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/10/9) and resulted in the detailed recommendation X/5, which noted the considerable on-going work in this area, including by other conventions, international organizations and initiatives. This process considered, and continues to consider, relevant indicators that apply (directly or indirectly) to inland waters. Several have been proposed for use also in assessing progress towards the sub-targets set under the Strategic Plan (e.g., fish genetic resources, biological oxygen demand/nitrates/sediments/turbidity, fragmentation of river systems; ref. recommendation X/5, annex). Potential indicators for the draft sub-targets applied to the programme of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/10/8/Add.2), focusing on assessments at the global level using existing data, were considered briefly at the expert group meeting on outcome-oriented targets for the programmes of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems and marine and coastal ecosystems (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/10/INF/6).

45. The Ramsar Convention has undertaken considerable work on the development of outcome-oriented indicators for wetlands (ref. resolution IX.1, annex D, on “Ecological 'outcome-oriented' indicators for assessing the implementation effectiveness of the Ramsar Convention”). This included an assessment of available status and trends data, and frequency of assessment, and work on the further improvement in this information continues.

46. Regarding “definition of agreed baselines”, the baseline for any particular information, and the point in time to which it refers, depends largely on the availability of historical data. “Baselines” would normally be set at the earliest possible time for which reliable data are available (which varies considerably between datasets). This has already been taken into account in the aforementioned reviews. However, the term “agreed” is problematic since it is not clear who is supposed to be agreeing.

47. A significant source of baseline data, where agreed criteria etc. exist, is for Ramsar Sites. At the time of site designation, the ecological character of the wetland has to be described on the Ramsar Information Sheet. However, updating this baseline information has only been required where there is a significant negative change in ecological character of a site (which generates information only on negative trends). The Ramsar Convention is currently revising this system to capture data on improvements in status, enabling a more comprehensive reporting system.

Paragraph 16 (c): A work plan with ways and means for assessing processes and categories of activities which have or are likely to have significant adverse impacts on the conservation and sustainable use of inland water biological diversity

48. This requirement is addressed largely by SBSTTA recommendation XI/9, paragraph 6, which requests the Executive Secretary to invite the Ramsar Convention, subject to resources, to take the lead in reviewing the processes and categories of activities that have or are likely to have significant adverse impacts on the conservation and sustainable use of inland water biological diversity identified by, among others, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, including in its synthesis report on wetlands and water, and the Global Biodiversity Outlook, as well as the extent to which the activities in the programmes of work of

the Convention address the major threats to the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems, and to inform Parties about the outcome of the review;

49. Paragraph 8 (b) of the same recommendation recommends that the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its eighth meeting consider further ways and means for developing a strategic approach, relevant to all programmes of work, to assess and monitor threats and to identify key stakeholders and promote, where appropriate, their full involvement in reducing threats. However, the current document notes the opportunity to also involve stakeholders in monitoring and reporting. Paragraph 3 of the elements of a draft decision (section IV) in the current document refers to a suggested mechanism by which the Conference of the Parties can address paragraph 8 (b) of SBSTTA recommendation XI/9 and include the latter consideration.

50. The above recommendations, taken together, point to a logical process for:

- (a) Identifying the drivers of change of (threats to) the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems;
- (b) Reviewing the extent to which activities in the programme of work address the drivers of change;
- (c) Prioritizing those activities in relation to their potential impact on drivers of change; and
- (d) Identifying key stakeholders (that drive change) and their full involvement in promoting positive trends in drivers of change.

51. The current document explains further the background to why these matters are related. It also points to the associated need to further involve stakeholders in monitoring and reporting on drivers of change, status and trends and implementation of the programme of work.

52. Approaches that the Conference of the Parties may adopt to develop such a strategic approach, in addition to relevant SBSTTA recommendations, are provided in the elements for a draft decision in section IV below.

IV. SUGGESTED ELEMENTS OF A DRAFT DECISION BY THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

53. The Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting may wish to consider requesting the Executive Secretary to:

- (a) *Consider* in his work with the Ramsar Convention on streamlining and harmonizing national reporting between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention (re. SBSTTA recommendation XI/9, paragraph 5), additional guidance in, *inter alia*, decisions VIII/-- [on national reporting] and VIII/-- [on the outcomes of the Working Group on Review of Implementation], the information available through indicators of progress towards outcome-oriented targets for the Strategic Plan and for the programme of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems in current use, or under development, and the reporting activities of other stakeholders and processes, and the priority information needs bearing in mind the capacity for national reporting, in order to ensure that national reports generate essential and meaningful information in a cost effective manner avoiding duplication of effort;

(b) *Invite* the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention to explore, through appropriate means and subject to available resources:

- (i) Further ways and means to improve mechanisms for assessing the extent, distribution and characteristics of inland water ecosystems, in particular paying attention to ecosystem considerations, noting the long-term need for such assessments at the national, regional and global level, including for wetlands not designated as Ramsar Sites; and
- (ii) On a provisional basis, the capacity needs at national level in relation to such assessments;

(c) *Develop* proposals for further ways and means for:

- (i) A strategic approach, relevant to all programmes of work, to assess and monitor drivers change and to identify key stakeholders and promote, where appropriate, their full involvement in reducing drivers of negative change and increasing drivers of positive change; and
- (ii) Involving stakeholders in monitoring and reporting on the drivers of change, status and trends of biological diversity and implementation of the programmes of work, and to report on progress to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice; and

(d) *Consider*, as appropriate, when undertaking this work, the relevant time-lines in relation to the review of the implementation of the programmes of work as indicated in the annex to decision VII/31.
