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CONSULTATIVE WORKING GROUP OF
EXPERTS ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS
Fourth meeting
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REPORT ON CEPA ACTIVITIES DURING THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. At its sixth meeting and recalling the provisions of Article 13 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Conference of the Parties adopted the Global Initiative on Communication, Education and Public Awareness and the Programme of Work contained in the Annex to the decision VI/19. The present document has been prepared to highlight the status of implementation of the global initiative on CEPA and solicit the views and advice of the consultative working group of experts (the group) on detailed aspects of the implementation process for the CEPA programme of work and propose for the consideration of COP-7 a set of recommendations to strengthen the CEPA components of the overall implementation process for the Convention.
2. With financial support from the Government of France and UNESCO, the group will convene at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris from 27 to 29 October 2003 to provide feedback on the Global Initiative on CEPA, and wherever appropriate, propose modalities for future reorientation of the on-going programme activities. The recommendations and conclusions of the meeting will serve as inputs in the revision and finalisation of the CEPA paper to be submitted for the consideration of COP-7.
3. Section II provides a detailed review of the status of implementation of the relevant paragraphs of decision VI/19 on the global initiative on CEPA. In particular, the section provides a synthesis of the activities that have been undertaken and the outputs generated in direct response to the provisions of paragraphs 4 and 12 of decision VI/19. Section III provides detailed review of the status of implementation and outputs that have been generated in each of the three programme elements of the Programme of Work of the global initiative on CEPA (annex to decision VI/19). Section IV analyses the lessons learned focusing on the overall implementation process and the substantive outputs that have been generated to date. The section also highlights general issues of concern for further consideration by the group. Section V contains suggested recommendations to the expert group and a clear set of requests that should guide their efforts during the 27-29 October meeting.

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II STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISION VI/19 – CEPA

Monitoring and evaluation of the Global Initiative on CEPA

4. In Decision VI/19, the 6th meeting of the Conference of Parties requested the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity to consult with UNESCO, UNEP, IUCN and experts, as well as any other relevant institutions to, among other things, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Global Initiative on Communication, Educational and Public Awareness (CEPA), specifically on the start-up phase of the Programme of Work contained in the annex to the decision. In response to this decision, the Secretariat established a working website for the group of experts on CEPA to facilitate a two-way consultative process between the Secretariat and the group and more specifically to enable the experts to review draft CEPA documentation, including the draft corporate communication strategy for the Secretariat and the draft CEPA implementation strategy as appropriate. An electronic forum was also established on the CEPA working website to foster communication and provide feedback to the Secretariat, share experiences and expertise as well as engage in discussions of relevance to CEPA.

5. The consultation will continue to be an on-going and evolving process and the outputs to be generated along the way will be particularly instrumental in enhancing the efforts of the Secretariat in the regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Global Initiative.

Review of CEPA dimensions of the CBD programmes of work

6. In response to paragraph 4 (b) of decision VI/19, the Secretariat conducted a review of the CEPA dimensions of existing thematic areas and cross cutting issues of the on-going programmes of work. A similar review was also initiated on the CEPA dimensions of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and the 2nd national reports submitted to the Secretariat. The review was intended to facilitate the work of the Secretariat in the implementation of the CEPA programme of work in support of the Convention and the Strategic Plan. A synthesis of this review highlighting key issues for the consideration of COP-7 will be prepared and incorporated into the CEPA document to be submitted to COP-7.

Development, implementation & promotion of CEPA demonstration projects

7. In response to paragraph 4 (c) of decision VI/19 the Secretariat initiated the first phase of a school outreach effort through the development of a collaborative partnership with McGill University in Montreal Canada. The primary focus of this partnership is on the implementation of joint activities to promote the exchange of biodiversity information including the provision of online educational tools on biodiversity.

8. This effort entails the development of a well-targeted website, web-based educational resources, and the implementation of discussion fora between designated pilot schools in Montreal, Canada, a native aborigine school in Australia; a school in Trinidad & Tobago and another in Palau, these being the two island states that were the first and the fiftieth to ratify the Biosafety Protocol respectively. Two more schools were identified from the Netherlands and Malaysia as hosts to COP-6 and COP-7 respectively. McGill University provided technical support in the design and implementation of this effort, currently being delivered through the CEPA Portal.

9. In addition, the Secretariat also initiated another collaborative partnership with the Roots&Shoots Program of the Jane Goodall Foundation focusing on building synergies that would contribute to the development of appropriate networking, information exchange and capacity building in CEPA-related activities. In particular, the partnership is aimed at joint development of a training model for education and community awareness programmes to be shared with the CBD National Focal Points, encouraging

Internet-based discussion groups among schools, teachers and other training experts, making optimal use of the CEPA Web site to facilitate these activities.

10. Additional information on these projects is contained in documents UNEP/CBD/GEEPA/4/2/Add.2 and UNEP/CBD/GEEPA/4/2/Add.3.

Case studies and best practices in biodiversity communication, education and public awareness

11. The Secretariat has also carried out a series of activities aimed at collecting from the Parties and other national and international organisation, relevant case studies and best practices in biodiversity communication, education and public awareness. In addition, a review of the available 2nd national reports, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan (NBSAPs), interim reports and relevant project papers were particularly valuable as sources of information on relevant case studies and best practices. Additional case studies were also obtained from relevant websites of a number of international organisations active in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development initiatives around the world. The Secretariat will soon conduct an analysis of the available case studies and best practices and propose some recommendations for the consideration of COP-7. An overview of the analysis and the proposed recommendations will be incorporate into the CEPA document that will be submitted for the consideration of COP-7.

Development and implementation of a corporate communication strategy

12. In response to paragraph 4(d) of decision VI/19, the Secretariat developed a draft corporate communication strategy for the Secretariat. The Secretariat established partnership with a private sector promotional agency specifically to, *inter alia*, revamp the corporate strategy and provide better focus for its implementation. The long-term objectives of the partnership were defined to include the following:

- i) **Foundation:** Build the Secretariat's communications infrastructure to support global media, education and public awareness activities
- ii) **Profile:** Raise the visibility of the Convention as the key instrument for preservation and promotion of biodiversity
- iii) **Relevancy:** Enhance the Secretariat's focal role as global facilitator of the implementation of the Convention
- iv) **Awareness:** Educate key publics on the importance of biodiversity, the ecosystem approach to conservation and the need for fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources
- v) **Funding:** Increase availability of financial resources to the Secretariat for implementation of its CEPA functions

13. As a first step, the Secretariat in collaboration with the private sector partner initiated a pilot phase of implementing key elements of the corporate communication strategy with a priority focus on increasing visibility and awareness whilst developing industry commitment to support initiatives that address biodiversity and the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The priority activities undertaken in this pilot phase included:

- a) Definition of target groups, priorities and activities required to effectively carry out CEPA activities as directed by The Parties

- b) Creation of key messages on Biodiversity, the Convention, the Protocol and 2010 Goals to be conveyed to different target audiences
- c) Building lasting relationships with media to promote Biodiversity, the Convention, the Protocol and 2010 target
- d) Building a strong case for the value of Biodiversity and the CBD to increase stakeholders' commitment
- e) Development of communication models that can be adapted and used by the NFPs to build their CEPA capacities and carry out CEPA activities for their local (national) stakeholders, civil society and the general public

14. Further details on the strategy can be found in document UNEP/CBD/GEEPA/4/2/Add.5.

15. In response to paragraph 12 of decision VI/19, the Secretariat carried out the following activities.

Development of partnerships with academic and research institutions for exchange of biodiversity publications

16. The Secretariat established contacts with a large number of Universities and NGOs worldwide to initiate a process of regular exchange of publications on biodiversity. As of the end of August 2003, the total number of institutions and organisations contacted stood at 93 academic and research institutions in 64 countries, 82 NGO's, IGOs, UN and other international agencies, and 11 indigenous organisations. As a start, the Secretariat disseminated the latest copy of the "Handbook of the Convention on Biological Diversity" and other promotional materials produced by the Secretariat. The exchange process will no doubt be an evolving one incorporating additional institutions and organisations and will be further enhanced as the CEPA electronic portal becomes fully operational and widely publicised.

Formal liaison with schools

17. The school outreach effort described in more details in paragraphs 28 to 29 and 40 to 42 below evolved out of the activities undertaken jointly with a number of schools in Montreal on the occasion of the International Biodiversity Day for 2003. To promote biodiversity public education and awareness among future generations, the Secretariat initiated school visits to selected Montreal area schools on the occasion of the International Biodiversity Day. Staff from the Secretariat showed a short video, followed by presentations tailored to the interests of students ranging in age from 7 to 17 about the importance of biodiversity, explaining the effects that biodiversity loss has on everyday life, and what individuals can do to help preserve this variety of life on earth. International Biodiversity Day posters were presented to all the classrooms and a list of educational Web sites related to biodiversity issues were given to the teachers for distribution to the students. The presentations by staff of the Secretariat stimulated lively discussions and the experience generated many ideas for expanded school outreach in 2004.

18. The expanded school outreach effort is therefore intended to create tools and products that will appeal to different ages with varying degrees of complexity, informative and thus help promote awareness and skills in the implementation of the objectives of the Convention and its Strategic Plan.

19. Additional information on this project is contained in document UNEP/CBD/GEEPA/4/2/Add.2

Make available all publications produced by the Secretariat in the 6 UN languages

20. The Secretariat has not produced any promotional materials or publications specifically focusing on biodiversity communication, education and public awareness for the purpose of wider dissemination to

the Parties and other partners. Lack of financial resources to cover the publication costs has precluded the commencement of this activity and it is anticipated that the formulation of the proposed operational strategy for the CEPA initiative will make appropriate provisions including budgetary allocations to address the publication and dissemination of CEPA promotional materials. However, it is worth noting that Spain has offered to publish in Spanish the Handbook of the Convention on Biological Diversity, for wider distribution.

III. STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OF THE ACTIVITIES OUTLINED IN THE ANNEX TO DECISION VI/19 PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE ON COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS (CEPA)

21. The activities outlined under the three programme elements were designed to address issues of institutional arrangements as well as programmatic priority areas in the Global Initiative on CEPA. This note provides a summary of the tasks and activities accomplished in the context of these two broad categories but does not make a separation of possible impacts of the implementation process as they relate to *communication* on the one hand and *education and public awareness* on the other.

Programme element 1

1. Develop an electronic portal & alternative information dissemination mechanism

22. In response to paragraph 4 and 12 of Decision VI/19, the Secretariat devoted resources to further developing the information tools, features and resources on the web site of the Convention on Biological Diversity (www.biodiv.org) in order that it provide support for implementation of CEPA Programme of work and more specifically the following tools and resources:

- a) The creation of distinct portal entry points on www.biodiv.org, which provide for the information needs of groups identified in the Secretariat's draft corporate communications strategy.
- b) The creation of a series of online brochures presenting educational and explanatory information on biodiversity, biosafety, and other aspects of the work of the Convention, as representative models of communication tools to be created by other Parties to the Global Initiative.
- c) The deployment of an electronic portal, which aggregates information on CEPA, facilitates cooperation between partners in the Global Initiative and provides support for the capacity-building initiatives of partners.
- d) As part of the development of a communication strategy for the Secretariat, the creation of an information-rich Press and Media.
- e) The deployment of electronic communication mechanisms in support of other CEPA programme initiatives, notably the CEPA demonstration projects including the school outreach effort such as the Schools Twinning project, The School Outreach Programme and others.

23. Additional information on this project is contained in document UNEP/CBD/GEEPA/4/2/Add.2

24. In support of Programme Element I under Decision VI/19, the CEPA portal, which is being developed as an integral part of the CBD web site enhancement exercise, will make visible:

- a roster of experts/registry on biodiversity communication and education
- moderated electronic forums on biodiversity education related issues
- hyperlinks to other relevant portals and websites
- databases and links to databases on case studies, best practices, standards and publications
- hyperlinks to educational institutions and centers of excellence

25. Alternative information and communication mechanisms, including a fax server, hardcopy of publications, template presentations, etc., will also be developed to ensure full participation and equitable access to information.

26. Users of the CEPA Portal will be encouraged to access the interactive communication mechanisms, including the feedback form, electronic forums and e-mail to the Secretariat, to submit materials, suggest improvements and recommend links and new partnerships. The Secretariat assumes that the success and effective use of the CEPA Portal will be dependent on participation and interactivity with its user community.

27. The CEPA Portal will also develop mentorship mechanisms, where experts will be able to mentor novices on specific initiatives, programmes and activities. Participants will be encouraged to submit information on biodiversity education needs, and the Secretariat will attempt to match their needs with available expertise.

28. Information on template biodiversity initiatives developed by the Secretariat, including templates and support material to implement similar programmes at the national, regional and international levels are available for review and participation of the various CEPA stakeholders. Participants involved in these initiatives are encouraged to assist novices and acculturate them on how to implement similar initiatives for their communities

29. The first education pilot projects undertaken by the Secretariat and in particular, the schools twinning project as well as the material developed for the school awareness programme with Roots&Shoots will be posted on special pages, along with a description of the project and links to Roots&Shoots world-wide network. The school twinning project discussion fora will be hosted on the CEPA portal and monitored by the Secretariat and the key partner in the project, McGill University.

30. These two pilot projects are expected to produce models that may be adopted or adapted by the Parties in order to educate students and promote awareness and understanding of biodiversity at both global and local levels. While the first target audiences are students (kindergarten through completion of secondary school), the models may also serve for community awareness especially as the content is refined and its scope broadened.

31. The Secretariat initiated discussion with McGill University's School of Computer Science, Faculty of Education and School of the Environment to establish partnerships aimed at developing Web-based educational materials for students of different ages and their teachers, and assist the Secretariat in preparing the education pages to be hosted on the CEPA Web site. It is envisaged that these Web pages would become the prototypes for education/public awareness pages of the CBD National Focal Points in collaboration with their national education institutions and other related government authorities. Together, the CBD site and the national sites would then be integral parts of the a global communication, education and public awareness network of biodiversity-related exchanges between communities, showcasing local initiatives and creating a database of educational material on biodiversity. The CBD Secretariat would be at the center of the network, recognized as the source of expertise and creating a standard of best practice.

32. A key element of this initiative is the implementation of discussion fora between designated “twinned” schools representing different regions of the world. The initial focus in implementing was on the following 3 sets of paired schools.

- The Netherlands and Malaysia (host countries for COP-6 and COP-7 respectively)
- Trinidad & Tobago and Palau, the two island states that were respectively the first and the fiftieth to ratify the Biosafety Protocol
- Australia and Canada, focusing on schools where indigenous (traditional) knowledge is fostered

33. This project, therefore, has two components: the first component entails the creation of a Web site devoted to elementary to high school (K-12) biodiversity education. There are many outstanding models available on the Internet that can guide the development of this component (e.g. the United Nations developed a rather sophisticated page for kids UNCyberSchoolBus: <http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/index.html>)

34. The second component of the project entails the design of a communications project between or among schools. This project makes use of the kids’ page and Internet-based communication tools (Internet Mail lists, reader news, chat, etc.).

2. Identify potential partners and stakeholders:

35. The Secretariat sent out requests to the CBD National Focal Points and relevant organisations and institutions to seek their advice and also nominate potential individual experts and institutions in the fields of biodiversity communication, education and public awareness who would be requested to comprise a *roster of experts, organisations and networks* on CEPA. A number of nominations have come in from several of the National Focal Points and the Secretariat continues to receive additional names of potential individual experts and national institutions and organisations. It is anticipated that when the process of establishing a comprehensive registry of key expertise and stakeholders has been completed, the roster or registry will be particularly instrumental in the exchange of specialized knowledge and expertise among professionals. It will also support the development of appropriate education, training and public awareness materials, applications and tools, the sharing of experiences through case studies and best practices and the provision of expert advice on a broad range of issues concerning communication, education and public awareness in biodiversity and the Convention.

Programme element 2

36. A review of the CEPA dimensions in the 2nd national reports and the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPS) was carried out by the Secretariat in direct response to programme element 2 of the CEPA programme of work outlined in the Annex to decision VI/19. The objective of the review was to document and analyse information contained in the reports with a view to articulating national-level needs for communication, education and public awareness. The review was based on 133 first national reports, 96 second national reports and 94 NBSAPS that had been received by the Secretariat as of 30 July 2003.

37. The analysis of the documented information is on-going although the outcome of the analysis may be of limited use given the insufficient number of reports reviewed and the inadequate nature of the information contained therein. The formats for preparation of the first and second national reports did not specifically request information related to national CEPA needs per se and the documented information is therefore of a general nature, mostly derived from responses related to the general measures undertaken by the Parties to implement the provisions of the Convention. In addition, it is also conceivable that this information may well be out of date in view of the time lapse between the submission of the first national

reports and the review of the CEPA needs in these and subsequent reports. In this regard, it is recommended that a more comprehensive approach be adopted to assess national level CEPA needs as a key element in the proposed operational strategy for the global initiative on CEPA.

38. With respect to the identification of links and the provision of searchable means to access biodiversity knowledge through the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM), the Secretariat is currently developing a CEPA Web-based portal as part of the process for establishing a global network on CEPA with operational links to the CHM. The details of the evolving Web-based portal are described in paragraphs 21 to 24 above.

39. Paragraph 12 above highlights the series of activities already undertaken by the Secretariat or currently underway concerning the collection and exchange of communication, education and public awareness projects, case studies and best practices. It is envisaged that once the analysis is completed, the outcome thereof will be repackaged in various formats (including CD-ROM, publications, etc.) and disseminated to the Parties, other partners and stakeholders through the CEPA portal, relevant workshops and other avenues as appropriate.

40. As part of the overall support to the programmes of work of the Convention, the Government of The Netherlands has provided financial support to the Secretariat specifically to build capacity of two developing countries to establish and maintain their own national CHM Websites. This activity is now implemented by the Secretariat as an integral component of the process to develop a global network on communication, education and public awareness, details of which are provide in paragraphs 21 to 24 above. The Secretariat has identified candidate countries with final selection to be made from Grenada, Palau and Mali. The basic structure for the collaborative support in the development of the national CHMs has been drafted and will soon be discussed in greater detail with the identified candidate countries. It is envisaged that the national CHMs to be developed under this programme of support will be operational in early 2004.

Programme element 3

Partnership for school awareness programme

41. In the weeks following the International Biodiversity Day in May and early June 2003, the Secretariat initiated discussions and consultations with the Roots&Shoots Programme with a view to establishing partnership to develop more extensive awareness program for schools. The Roots&Shoots, the Jane Goodall Institute's environmental and humanitarian program for young people has experience in outreach on environment topics to schools in Montreal, Canada as well as in more than 50 countries around the world. The discussions with Roots&Shoots noted that while their programme has tended to target primary school children, the partnership with the Secretariat would go beyond this target group and contribute educational and related promotional material to secondary school level students. As a direct follow-up, the Secretariat in collaboration with Roots&Shoots prepared presentation materials for this particular level of students but is also producing a generic biodiversity presentation for the younger students including some simplified material on specific thematic topics (fresh water, forests). Enhanced versions of these presentations will be published on the education pages of the CBD Web site. In addition, CD-ROM versions will also be produced and more traditional publishing methods employed in order to make the range of promotional materials available to the widest audience. The CBD/ Roots&Shoots joint program for the 2003-2004 academic year will begin in mid-October 2003. A summary of the status of implementation of this programme will be incorporated in the COP-7 document on CEPA.

42. While the Secretariat and Roots&Shoots are jointly responsible for the development of professional presentations on biodiversity for the schools, the longer-term need for pedagogical guidelines has been recognised as a concern. The expert group is invited to recommend the commitment of funds for

the development of guidelines and a manual to support countries in the formulation and implementation of national education and public awareness strategies and action plans, and related online courses.

43. To this end with financial support from the Government of the Netherlands, the Secretariat will be seeking to initiate a process to produce a manual that will guide the Parties in the development and implementation of the national CEPA strategies and action plan. This production process will draw heavily on inputs and expert advice from some of the key partners as well as individuals registered with the roster of experts.

Partnership with the World Heritage Centre of UNESCO

44. The Secretariat has held a series of consultations with the World Heritage Centre of UNESCO focusing on development of a partnership agreement related to institutional strengthening. Among other things, the agreement is intended to enable the development of joint activities in direct response to decision VI/19 on Communication, Education and Public Awareness and its Annex on the Programme of Work for CEPA. Specifically, the areas of cooperation covered under the partnership agreement include:

1. Collaborate in the development of an electronic portal and an alternative information dissemination mechanism towards the establishment of a global network on communication, education and public awareness, building on, where possible, existing initiatives. In particular, contribute to:
 - a) The efforts of the Secretariat to make visible the expertise in biodiversity communication and education including communication, education and public awareness training databases;
 - b) The establishment of links to the portal with other networks and Websites on communication and education;
 - c) The efforts of the Secretariat in the creation of a registry of education and communications experts;
2. Collaborate with the Secretariat in the identification of national needs for communication, education and public awareness, exchange of knowledge and results of case studies, projects and criteria for best practices on communication, education and public awareness.
3. Contribute to the efforts of the Secretariat in collaboration with other organizations in the development of capacity building tools and kits for mainstreaming biodiversity into school curricula, creation and delivery of appropriate training programmes including distance learning programmes, on-line training courses, manuals, twinning programmes and courses for trainers and educators.

45. The partnership agreement between the CBD Secretariat and the World Heritage Centre is in line with the provisions of Article 13 of the Convention on Biological Diversity that provides for the promotion of the importance and inclusion of measures required for biodiversity conservation in educational programmes as well as establishment of cooperative efforts with international organisations in developing educational and public awareness programmes, with respect to conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

Cooperation with the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS)

46. In fulfilment of some of the key objectives of programme element 3, the Secretariat initiated consultations with the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS) to explore opportunities for

joint efforts to develop professional capacity of biodiversity educators and communicators. As a direct follow-up to these consultations, the Secretariat will prepare a comprehensive discussion paper articulating the role of research, training and education in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the safe application of biotechnology. The paper will be presented at the 28th IUBS General Assembly and International Conference on Biological Sciences, which will be held in Cairo in Egypt from 18 to 23 January 2004. The paper will also be the subject of more detailed review and discussion in a facilitated workshop side event to be held during the IUBS Conference.

47. The focus of the discussion paper will be on articulating the strategic role of academic and research communities in supporting biodiversity education and training, including through the establishment of appropriate networks to deliver the required training and education initiatives. The workshop side event discussions will use the content of the discussion paper to articulate practical suggestions to guide the development and implementation of joint efforts in biodiversity education and training and focused on the following major outputs:

1. Identification of priority areas of focus for the development of joint efforts in biodiversity education and training;
2. Review of the proposed content, formats and delivery of education and training initiatives/programmes in the identified priority areas of focus;
3. Review of the proposed partnerships and related institutional arrangements to support the development and generation of the identified initiatives/programmes;
4. Review and articulation of a realistic short-to-medium timeframe, perhaps with a phased approach for the identified initiatives/programmes; and
5. Identification of priority action items to initiate immediate follow-up activities and also to maintain the momentum of discussions and related outcomes.

48. Further details on cooperation with IUBS are contained in document UNEP/CBD/GEEPA/4/2/Add.4. In addition, the report and the recommendations of the IUBS workshop will be submitted as an information document for the consideration of COP-7

Partnerships with journalists

49. The Secretariat established a comprehensive database of media organizations and specialized journalists, publications, information offices of IGOs, NGOs and other organizations, and Internet based news services specialised in communicating biodiversity related issues. The database currently contains about 700 records. This is also part of programme element 3 (activity 8) calling for the establishment of partnerships with journalists and broadcasters engaged in communicating biodiversity related issues through the mass media.

50. As direct follow-up and to make this database active, the Secretariat developed a special CBD *Press Room* on the existing CBD website specifically to develop it as the focal point of reference and resource center for journalists and others in the media who are interested in biodiversity topics and thus help disseminate biodiversity messages on a range of topics to the general public worldwide.

IV. LESSONS LEARNED

Overall process of implementation of the Global Initiative on CEPA.

51. In general, the implementation process of the global initiative on CEPA has been characterized by limited resources that clearly do not match the approved scope and level of implementation of the range of CEPA activities, considerable delays in carrying out the identified activities, and consequently a slow delivery and generation of the expected outputs. Under the circumstance, the impacts of the global initiative on CEPA are only likely to begin to be realized after the CEPA programme has become fully operational at various levels.

52. In particular, the establishment of collaborative partnerships with key organizations and institutions specifically to provide substantive technical inputs in the implementation process has been less than effective in achieving the desired results. Although an early start was made to develop partnerships with some of the key agencies that are particularly active in CEPA-related activities, the desired response from these agencies has been, at best, very limited. Consequently, the interactive consultative forum established by the Secretariat specifically to foster communication, share experiences and expertise and engage in discussions of relevance to CEPA remains unutilized.

53. In addition, the scope of the partnership process has also been restricted to purely those institutions and organizations that are specifically mentioned in the relevant paragraphs of decision VI/19 and the CEPA Programme of Work. There are a number of global initiatives that are particularly relevant to the work of CEPA and the development of cooperative partnerships with these initiatives is crucial to the success of CEPA, especially in terms of linking into the current thinking in sustainable development processes. Some of these initiatives include, *inter alia*, the global 2010 biodiversity target, the Millennium Development Goals, the decade for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) initiative and some of the key outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Clearly, CEPA has a role to play in these initiatives and the scope of its “outreach” efforts should therefore be expanded to include linkages to these initiatives if it is to remain relevant and up-to-date with the current perspectives and inter-linkages between these initiatives in the context of meeting the evolving demands of sustainable development.

54. The slow progress noted above notwithstanding, the current status of implementation has resulted in some positive achievements that merit special mention. The development of valuable partnerships particularly in some of the schools and universities within Montreal, the seat of the CBD Secretariat, has served to establish a strong foundation for CEPA’s linkages to biodiversity education and training and thus guide this process as it evolves from a pilot phase into a full-fledged activity. The enhancement of the web page, the CEPA portal, the roster of experts, the collection of case studies, the establishment of a media database, the establishment of permanent links with universities and other centres of excellence around the world, the corporate communication strategy are also clear signs that, in spite of a slow start, the projects are moving forward.

55. Funding has been and still remains one of the major impediments to the implementation of the global initiative on CEPA. The budget approved for CEPA at the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties remains woefully inadequate to support some of the basic CEPA activities. Efforts by the Secretariat to secure additional financial support to carry out the budgeted activities have not been successful with the result that the outputs generated to date have come out of innovative approaches adopted by the Secretariat. Effective communication is a continuously evolving process and requires long-term investment. It therefore comes with costs and the approaches pursued by the Secretariat however innovative, tend to be short-term and consequently of limited impacts. It will be necessary therefore for the Secretariat to seek new approaches that will leverage the necessary political commitment and funding support commensurate with the scope of work and the potential impacts envisaged under the global initiative on CEPA. The development of a comprehensive funding proposal jointly with the other Rio conventions for the consideration of GEF may serve to set this process in motion and thus help support the Parties and the Secretariat to deliver on the various provisions of the global initiative on CEPA.

56. The general perception amongst some of the Parties as well as some of the key partners who comprise the group of experts on CEPA is that there is not much to show in terms of the kinds of impacts expected of a programme with the potential and global reach of CEPA. The activities currently underway, the outputs they have generated to date and the overall direction of the evolution of the CEPA programme of work remain largely unknown outside the Secretariat thereby further strengthening the perception about lack of delivery of the global initiative on CEPA. However, in view of the limited financial support to the CEPA programme of work and the lack of political commitment to secure appropriate funding to match the scope of work, the impacts of CEPA are likely to remain restricted to the pilot efforts initiated by the Secretariat, which by their very nature, are of short duration and thus cannot contribute much to long-term sustainability efforts.

Substantive output generation and delivery of the global initiative on CEPA

57. As indicated in the paragraphs above, full-fledged implementation of the CEPA programme is progressively taking root with the initiation of some start-up programme activities and pilot projects. It is envisaged that the outputs to be generated from these activities will serve as a basis for the expansion and adoption of the CEPA programmes at the national level. However, whilst the CEPA programme of work appears to contain all the key elements required to address the two strategic priorities (a) institutional arrangements and b) programmatic priority areas, there is an absence of a comprehensive operational strategy to guide the implementation of the 3 programme elements in a coherent and consistent manner. There is a need therefore to articulate better focus for the implementation of the 3 programme elements in terms of:

1. Intended audiences,
2. Activities,
3. Means and resources to undertake the identified activities,
4. Distribution of tasks among Parties, the Secretariat and partners,
5. Deadlines,
6. Outputs to be generated,
7. The intended use and impacts of the outputs,
8. As well as some form of monitoring and assessment of the activities and their results.

58. In addition, the CEPA programme of work provides a fairly long list of activities to be undertaken in order to achieve the stated objectives of the three programme elements. This in itself places a burden on the implementation process both at the Secretariat and at the national level and may very well limit the effectiveness and impacts of the overall programme. It would seem appropriate therefore to identify priority activities within the 3 programme elements and incorporate these into the process for articulating an operational strategy for the CEPA programme of work. It will be necessary for this process to build on the start-up activities and pilot projects that are currently underway.

59. There is a general perception amongst the CEPA partners, that the CEPA programme of work does not make a clear distinction of what constitutes the key components of CEPA – *communication, education, training* and *public awareness* – the interlinkages between these components and their respective individual contributions to the achievement of the overall global initiative on CEPA. The lack of clarification of these components poses a challenge for the Secretariat from the standpoint of articulating a balanced operational strategy for the CEPA programme of work as well as promoting and facilitating its implementation amongst the Parties.

60. Although the formulation and adoption of the global initiative in CEPA was the culmination of a series of consultations and expert inputs from a wide range of stakeholders, there is some concern that the CEPA programme of work is still very broad in scope and may not be particularly useful in terms of adapting it to meet the unique needs of some of the Parties. Given the vast differences between the needs of the individual Parties, it is unrealistic to expect to articulate a global programme that meets all the

expressed needs of all the individual Parties. However, and to the extent possible, the formulation of an operational strategy for the CEPA programme of work could incorporate elements that address a bottom-up-approach in the assessment of needs that would then determine the appropriate level of intervention in the adoption of the CEPA programme of work at the national level.

61. Related to the above is the lack of guidance on how the Secretariat should facilitate and promote the implementation of the global initiative on CEPA at the national level especially those provisions of decision VI/19 that are addressed specifically to the Parties but not to the Executive Secretary of the Convention. The formulation of the operational strategy should incorporate appropriate provisions and guidelines to enable the Secretariat discharge the promotional and facilitation functions envisaged under the decision.

62. There are various organizations and institutions that have registered significant achievements in implementing effective CEPA related programmes that address biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. Although the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties provides a specific mandate to the Secretariat to deliver specific outputs as part of the implementation of the CEPA programme of work, the Secretariat would do well to borrow from the experiences of those organizations that have well established CEPA-type of programmes. The cooperative partnerships between the Secretariat and other relevant organizations mentioned in paragraph 49 and 50 above should focus on achieving better harmonization of efforts and making optimal use of the individual strengths and resources of the respective partners in order to generate the range of outputs that meet the collective and specific needs of the partners.

Overall concerns, gaps and issues for further consideration

63. In view of the foregoing, the perception that the global initiative in CEPA has not kept pace with the implementation of other programmes of work of the Convention and the fact that progress is likely to remain slow given the limited financial resources for the initiative is very much a concern for the Secretariat, the Parties and other key partners.

64. The range of activities under the CEPA programme of work does not provide a coherent approach in terms of achievements envisaged in the short-term and how these will feed into and help strengthen the implementation of the proposed long-term activities. Consequently, the investments required to address long-term issues such as mainstreaming biodiversity into other sectoral programmes at the national level have not been well articulated in the programme of work and may thus prove difficult to address adequately in the formulation of the proposed operational strategy for the CEPA initiative.

65. Regular inputs in the form of expert advice, feedback, exchange of experiences and knowledge are particularly crucial for the success of the CEPA initiative. The present interactive forum specifically set up to facilitate the work of the expert group has not been productive and yet it has the potential to provide the most appropriate and cost effective means for cooperation among experts.

66. Biodiversity as a concept is largely unknown outside the scientific and research communities. Similarly, knowledge about the Convention and the work of the Secretariat is limited to the national focal institutions and related organisations at the national level. The formulation of the proposed operational strategy for the global initiative on CEPA should incorporate some key elements specifically to address these shortcomings by adopting a more aggressive and effective “marketing” approach that will help carry the message to a wide audience and especially to the general public.

V. SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

67. The expert group is requested to review the above report and provide practical suggestions and proposals to enhance the implementation of the global initiative on CEPA. In particular, the group is

requested to articulate a set of recommendations for further consideration by the Executive Secretary in the preparation of the document on CEPA activities during the intersessional period to be submitted to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The recommendations should address, *inter alia*:

- a) Key elements required to develop an operational strategy to guide the implementation of the 3 programme elements in a coherent and consistent manner (including prioritization, clarification of intended audience, activities, means and resources to undertake the identified activities, institutional arrangements, outputs to be generated, as well as the intended use and impacts of the outputs).
- b) Institutional alignments and partnerships to provide additional inputs and expert advice to the Secretariat and to the Parties focusing on the on-going programme activities and proposed outputs/products.
- c) Reorientation of the on-going CEPA programme activities in light of the 2010 target, Millennium Development Goals, WSSD Plan of Implementation and other relevant initiatives.
- d) Proposals for wider promotional initiatives including the organisation of side events in the margins of COP-7 and other relevant global meetings (COPs of other conventions, governing councils and/or general assemblies of other organisations, etc.).
- e) Policy and operational aspects of the corporate communication strategy.
- f) Financial arrangements for CEPA including approaches to innovative resource mobilization.
- g) Overall approach to reporting to COP-7 and subsequent COPs.

68. To the extent possible, the group is requested to make clear the recommendations that are specific to the Executive Secretary and those that are intended for follow-up by the Parties and other partners. A report of the meeting will serve as a basis for finalising the CEPA document to be submitted for in-depth consideration by COP-7.
