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STRATEGIC ACTIONS TO ENHANCE MAINSTREAMING OF BIODIVERSITY: CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Note by the Executive Secretary

Addendum

INTRODUCTION

1. Under agenda item 4, the Subsidiary Body on Implementation will discuss strategic actions to enhance implementation of the Convention and its Protocols, with a focus on mainstreaming of biodiversity. This will include a focus on mainstreaming of biodiversity in specific sectors, as well as on cross-sectoral policy issues.

2. The Subsidiary Body will have for its consideration document UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/5 which provides an overview of mainstreaming in the context of strategic actions for enhancing implementation, along with draft recommendations. Document UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/5/Add.1 (also prepared for SBSTTA-20 as UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/15) provides information on the issue of mainstreaming biodiversity within three key sectors: agriculture, forestry and fisheries. The present document provides information with respect to cross-sectoral mainstreaming, along with areas for potential action for consideration by the Subsidiary Body. The present document also provides information related to specific requests from the Conference of the Parties related to the integration of biodiversity, into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including role of biodiversity in poverty eradication (decisions XII/4, para. 3 and XII/5, para. 17), the contribution of subnational and local governments to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, (decision XII/9, para. 6(b)), the engagement of business, including through the Global Partnership for Business and Biodiversity and its associated national and regional initiatives (decision XII/10) and the development of a global communication strategy for biodiversity and messaging approaches (decision XII/2 C, paras. 2(a) and 2(c)). Information on a guidance document on mainstreaming gender is also included in the present document.

I. CROSS-SECTORAL MAINSTREAMING

A. Cross-sectoral mainstreaming under the Convention and the Strategic Plan

3. The concept of “mainstreaming” biodiversity includes the integration of biodiversity considerations into “cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies” (Article 6(b)). Cross-sectoral mainstreaming covers a wide-range of policies and tools, at different levels. National planning and development processes, financial policies and budgetary processes, land-use planning, and marine spatial planning are all examples of cross-sectoral mainstreaming. It also may involve actions by a variety of actors, including subnational governments, as well as businesses.

4. The need to address cross-cutting policies is also embedded in Article 10(a) of the Convention, which further calls on Parties to “integrate consideration of the conservation and sustainable use of

biological resources into national decision-making” Article 10(a). National decision-making can be understood to encompass all major national policies, such as transport, energy, infrastructure and budgets, that could impact biodiversity and ecosystems. National-level planning processes will determine where trillions of dollars are invested for infrastructure and other investments for decades to come.

5. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets include a strong focus on mainstreaming biodiversity. Goal A of the Strategic Plan focuses on cross-cutting policies, including development processes and planning and national accounting, incentive measures, and sustainable consumption and production, as well as the important role of raising awareness of the value of biodiversity. As the fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* concluded, achieving Strategic Goal A is critical to all other parts of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity. The fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* further found that achieving this goal is critical to all other parts of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity. It identified important progress towards some of the targets included in this goal, but found that overall more action is needed if the targets under this goal are to be met by 2020.

6. Goal A is comprised of the following four targets:

(a) **Target 1:** By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably;

(b) **Target 2:** By 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems;

(c) **Target 3:** By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national socioeconomic conditions;

(d) **Target 4:** By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

B. Policies and tools for cross-sectoral mainstreaming

7. There are many types of policies and tools that support cross-sectoral mainstreaming. Below are some of those that are particularly relevant. The Subsidiary Body may wish to propose actions related to these or other approaches to enhance implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

1. Development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes

8. One of the most important areas for the mainstreaming of biodiversity is development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes. Target 2 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 recognizes the importance of such actions, and calls on Parties to ensure that “By 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategic and planning processes.” At its twelfth meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopted extensive policy guidance on actions that could be taken in this regard, known as the *Chennai Guidance for the Integration of Biodiversity and Poverty Eradication*, and a decision urging its implementation. The guidance includes the need to link efforts on poverty eradication and development in NBSAPs, as well as the role of biodiversity in national development plans. Target 2 also recognizes the need to engage subnational and local governments in contributing to the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan, discussed in section II below.

9. The importance of biodiversity to development and poverty reduction has been further

recognized in the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Virtually all of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets are included in the Sustainable Development Goals. Goals 14 and 15 address marine and coastal ecosystems, and terrestrial ecosystems, respectively. Importantly, the text of Aichi Biodiversity Target 2 is included as target 15.9, thus directly linking biodiversity to Goal 1 of the Sustainable Development Goals — poverty eradication. Biodiversity is also included in many other Goals, including Goal 2 (food security), Goal 6 (water resources), and Goal 12 (sustainable consumption and production).

10. As efforts at the international and national levels turn to implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, it will be critically important to ensure that the role of biodiversity is not omitted. In particular, there is a risk that implementation could revert to a more “siloed” approach, with biodiversity relegated to Goals 14 and 15 alone. Such a result would undermine the very essence of the outcome adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015. At the national level, leadership on SDG implementation may reside in a different ministry from the CBD focal point responsible for NBSAP coordination and implementation. Thus, linkages between efforts to implement NBSAPs and SDG strategies and plans will be important.

11. The Conference of the Parties, at its twelfth meeting, called on the Executive Secretary to remain actively involved in the process that resulted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (decision XII/4). The Secretariat contributed technical expertise to the process, disseminated a number of targeted fact sheets and other outreach materials, and organized special events to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity for sustainable development. The Secretariat is currently contributing to the process to identify indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals, which is being led by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG SDG) under the coordination of the United Nations Statistics Division. The Secretariat has also been collaborating with the United Nations Development Programme and others to discuss how best to support countries in their efforts to ensure that implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals integrate biodiversity considerations.

12. Decision XII/5 also called on the Executive Secretary to support Party efforts to implement the Chennai Guidance. Actions by the Secretariat include a gap analysis to identify other existing initiatives in support of country-level efforts to address biodiversity, poverty and development, with a view to identify the scope, geographical focus, policy entry points and approaches being carried out by other ongoing projects. The Secretariat has also participated in a number of relevant forums, including a workshop of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on “Biodiversity and Development: Mainstreaming and managing for results” in Paris, on 18 February 2015, and a roundtable discussion on biodiversity for poverty eradication and sustainable development in Brussels on 28 October 2015, organized in cooperation with the European Commission and the Government of France. It further organized a side-event on the margins of the nineteenth session of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to share and gain views on the development of a draft initiative for work on biodiversity for poverty eradication and development. These efforts will serve as an input to further developing and refining the future work of the Secretariat in this area.

2. Environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments

13. Environmental impact assessments are one of the foundational elements of many countries’ national and subnational environmental laws. Article 14 of the text of the Convention on Biological Diversity calls on Parties, as far as possible and as appropriate, to introduce procedures requiring environmental impact assessments of proposed projects that are likely to have significant adverse effects on biological diversity with a view to avoiding or minimizing such effects and, where appropriate, allow for public participation in such procedures as well as introducing arrangements to ensure that the environmental consequences of its programmes and policies that are likely to have significant adverse impacts on biological diversity are duly taken into account. Numerous countries also utilize strategic

environmental assessments, most often at the national level, which focus on assessing the impacts of programme-level decisions (as contrasted with environmental impact assessments, which are project-level reviews or for the cumulative impacts of multiple projects. However, there is an important opportunity to use a more widely strategic environmental assessment for policy-level decisions).

14. At its eighth meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopted voluntary guidelines on biodiversity-inclusive impact assessments. The guidelines addressed the use of both strategic environmental assessments and environmental impact assessments. In the context of its work on resource mobilization, the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting (decision XII/3, annex III) also addressed the potentially negative impacts some financing mechanisms might have on different elements of biodiversity and the livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities. Voluntary guidelines on safeguards in biodiversity financing mechanisms were adopted as part of that decision.

15. Further, updated environmental assessment policies have been adopted by the International Finance Corporation (IFC). The IFC standard, Performance Standard 6 (PS6), explicitly includes the need to consider the value of ecosystem services. The World Bank is now in the process of modifying its own standards, and other multi-lateral development banks may follow suit. Moreover, multinational development banks have agreed to apply a new approach for measuring biodiversity impacts, using existing databases, to address the lack of national data. Such an approach is a useful model for countries to apply through their national laws, as the use of existing tools and databases can reduce costs and data gaps.

3. Incentive measures

16. Incentive measures are among the main drivers of decisions and actions that impact biodiversity and are action on those, pursuant to Article 11 of the Convention, is captured by Aichi Biodiversity Target 3. According to the fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*, and based on an assessment on fifth national reports, the progress being made towards this target has tended to focus on positive incentives, but little to no overall progress can be detected on removing or phasing out harmful incentives (see also the analysis provided in document UNDP/CBD/SBI/1/7/Add.2, corroborating this assessment). The Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting adopted milestones for the full implementation of this target, in the context of its work on resource mobilization (decision XII/3, annex I), and identified further concrete actions including on addressing obstacles encountered in addressing harmful incentives (decision XII/3, annex IV, paragraph 34). Recent work by partners further explores how to address obstacles, in particular the ongoing work of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), under its Working Party on Biodiversity, Water, and Ecosystem Services (WPBWE), to prepare a study on how to address barriers to policy reform. OECD also proposed an indicator for Aichi Biodiversity Target 3 to the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership.

4. Legislative and regulatory approaches

17. A key tool for achieving effective mainstreaming of biodiversity across sectors is legislation at the national, subnational and local levels. Such legislation may be specific to biodiversity, such as a biodiversity law, or relate to national planning and budget processes, finance, accounting and similar matters. Legislation may also address institutional arrangements, such as the need for decision-making in other ministries or sectors to consider impacts on biodiversity, or for local land-use planning to include consideration of biodiversity. It can also focus on specific policies, such as incentives. Further, laws related to transparency of decision-making and access to information are also important elements for achieving effective mainstreaming of biodiversity.

5. Ecosystem accounting and valuation

18. Another key policy area relevant to mainstreaming biodiversity is the development and use of methodologies to assess the manifold values of biodiversity and their incorporation into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems, as per Aichi Biodiversity Target 2. Important recent

work at the international level to support implementation of these elements of Aichi Target 2 includes the preparation of methodological guidance to implement experimental ecosystem accounting (which is part of the revised United Nations System of Environment-Economic Accounting) and of feasibility studies in seven pilot countries, undertaken by the United Nations Statistics Division, in cooperation with United Nations Environment Programme and the Convention Secretariat, and with financial support of the Government of Norway, complementing the progress made under the World-Bank-coordinated Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES) partnership.¹ Upon the invitation of the chair of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting, the Convention Secretariat also became a formal member of this body in time for its 2015 meeting. Furthermore, there is ongoing work of the international initiative on the Economics of Ecosystems and biodiversity (TEEB), coordinated by the United Nations Environment Programme, to support the preparation of national TEEB studies, and to prepare major thematic studies, such as the TEEB Study on Agriculture and Food, currently under preparation.²

19. Another initiative of note is the development of the Natural Capital Protocol (NCP), which is being led by the Natural Capital Coalition of which the Secretariat of CBD is a member. The overall vision of the NCP is to transform the way business' operate by increasing their understanding of their impacts on biodiversity and incorporating these in their business practices. The intent is not to invent new methods, but to build on those that already exist, and to enable their use in different sectors. This will enable lessons to be learnt and gaps to be better understood. It is anticipated that the resulting framework would be the starting point to inform future standards for businesses.

6. Sustainable consumption and production

20. Aichi Biodiversity Target 4 focuses on sustainable production and consumption. Efforts taken in the public sector, such as a shift to sustainable procurement, are important to reduce biodiversity loss. Government procurement is of considerable economic significance at both the domestic and international levels. Through their purchasing choices, Governments have the potential to significantly influence consumption of environmentally friendly products. Sustainable procurement can provide a boost to sustainable entrepreneurship and send a strong signal to the business sector. The Secretariat has been engaging with the United Nations 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) with respect to sustainable public procurement and other initiatives, to ensure that biodiversity is considered in discussions on sustainable consumption and production at the international level. The role of the business sector in achieving this and other Aichi Biodiversity Targets is covered in section II below.

7. Resource mobilization

21. The importance of mainstreaming has been recognized in the work of the Convention on resource mobilization. One of the resource mobilization targets that were adopted by the COP at its twelfth meeting endeavours for 100 per cent, but at least 75 per cent, of Parties to have included biodiversity in their national priorities or development plans by 2015, and to have therefore made appropriate domestic financial provisions (decision XII/3, para. 1 (b)). In annex IV of the same decision, the Conference of the Parties pointed to the regional assessments conducted by the High-level Panel on Global Assessment of Resources for Implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, as a means to identify the linkages between biodiversity investments and solutions to wider problems and challenges of sustainable development, such as food security, water management, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and poverty reduction. It also pointed to the Chennai guidance for the integration of biodiversity and poverty eradication and the CBD good practice guide on ecosystem goods and services in development planning, as possible guidance to be used as appropriate and in accordance with national

¹ See http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/eea_project/default.asp and <https://www.wavespartnership.org/>

² <http://www.teebweb.org/>

circumstances. Document UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/7/Add.1 includes an assessment of progress made against the resource mobilization targets, including target 1 (b) above, based on the financial reporting frameworks submitted by Parties.

8. Communication and outreach on the values of biodiversity and steps to conserve it and use it sustainably

22. Target 1 of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets is essential for achieving implementation of all of the other Targets. Effective communication and outreach is required for raising awareness of the value of biodiversity, including among decision makers in government, in all ministries and at all levels, in the business sector, from producers to major global corporations, in the news media, and among the general public. While the fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* found that progress has been made on this target, a great deal remains to be done.

23. As noted in UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/5, at its twelfth meeting, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to undertake the development of a global communication strategy, to be implemented over the second half of the United Nations Decade, incorporating messaging approaches to be used as a flexible framework for Parties and relevant organizations. The strategy will draw upon the results of a workshop to develop messaging approaches for specific target groups in the context of the different Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The workshop results will be made available to the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth meeting, as per the request made by COP-12, as well as an update on progress in developing the strategy, with possible actions for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth meeting. The Secretariat will also align its own corporate communications strategy with the global strategy.

24. The Secretariat is also updating existing tool kits for communication, education and public awareness, to ensure that the tools and approaches listed therein are relevant for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and taking into account new research on communication, marketing and social marketing perspectives.

25. As noted above, there are many tools and approaches available for cross-sectoral mainstreaming in support of implementation at the national level. A review of the fifth national reports reveals many cases of mainstreaming at the project or case-study level, but not widespread use of many of the approaches mentioned above.

26. However, the recognition of the value of biodiversity for human well-being, and of the need for mainstreaming of biodiversity into cross-sectoral plans and policies, is clearly growing. The inclusion of biodiversity in the Sustainable Development Goals is one cause for optimism, as well as the scaling up of efforts to support countries at the national level. For example, the GEF-6 Biodiversity Strategy recognizes that support to biodiversity mainstreaming actions by the Global Environment Facility is paramount, and provides entry points for cross-sectoral work through its programme 10, on the integration of biodiversity and ecosystem services into development and finance planning. The work of the Secretariat and other entities in this regard provides important support to Parties in utilizing cross-cutting tools and policies. This includes the Secretariat's work with respect to capacity-building and technical and scientific cooperation. Documents UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/6 and UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/6/Add.1 include recommendations on these areas.

9. Possible actions by the Subsidiary Body on Implementation

27. In the light of the above, the Subsidiary Body may wish to consider additional actions that could be taken to support more effective cross-sectoral mainstreaming with respect to the above types of policies and tools. These might include:

(a) Continuing to engage in the processes of the United Nations related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related processes, and taking steps to ensure that biodiversity is

included in national implementation plans, and that an integrated approach is utilized in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level;

- (b) Strengthening efforts to implement the Chennai guidance, in the light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- (c) Reviewing the implementation and the effectiveness of, cross-sectoral measures related to mainstreaming, with a view towards enhancing such measures, as appropriate;
- (d) Scaling up the use of cross-sectoral mainstreaming tools, such as incentives, the use of valuation, and environmental and strategic impact assessments;
- (e) Reviewing national legislation to identify provisions that may create challenges to or undermine implementation of the Convention and Strategic Plan;
- (f) Strengthening efforts to raise awareness among all relevant actors on the value of biodiversity.

D. Institutional arrangements

28. An important element for mainstreaming of biodiversity into cross-sectoral policies are the use of effective institutional arrangements, such as inter-ministerial processes for developing government-wide policies that consider biodiversity in government-wide or sector-specific priorities. Such mechanisms can also be used effectively to ensure that there is “buy in” across government agencies for NBSAPS, the key framework for implementing the Convention at the national level.

29. There are a variety of different approaches to effective institutional arrangements on biodiversity. For example, in Denmark, the national Government has set up a special committee for environment, with members comprised of ministries, agencies and interest groups. The Committee meets four times a year to discuss and approve new laws and policies. Japan established a Committee for the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, which includes work on mainstreaming, with broad stakeholder participation and collaboration, including representatives of the national Government, local governments, NGOs, business, NGOs, academics and various production sectors.

30. Another example is the use of inter-ministerial entities that focus on the scientific aspects of biodiversity. For example, in 1992, Mexico created CONABIO, an inter-ministerial commission. It promotes and coordinates actions towards the knowledge and sustainable use of Mexico’s biological richness; it also obtains, organizes and makes accessible biodiversity information to all components of society, and acts as a bridging institution between academia, the government and civil society.

31. Institutional arrangements will also be important as countries move to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. A high-level inter-ministerial committee might be useful as a mechanism for aligning such efforts with those under the Convention.

Possible actions by the Subsidiary Body

32. A number of different actions might be taken to enhance institutional arrangements at the national level which would support more effective implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan. These include the following:

- (a) A comparative review of the variety of different mechanisms in place at the national level, and make it available through the clearing-house mechanism;
- (b) Review the use and effectiveness of such mechanisms that are in place, and identify gaps, with a view to strengthening such approaches, as needed;
- (c) Considering additional institutional mechanisms that may be needed to ensure an integrated approach to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and NBSAPs.

33. Including information about the use and effectiveness of such mechanisms in future national reports.

II. CONTRIBUTION OF KEY ACTORS TO CROSS-SECTORAL MAINSTREAMING

34. As noted above, the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting adopted a number of decisions related to key actors that are relevant to mainstreaming – women, the business sector, and subnational and local governments. This section provides an update of progress in these areas.

A. Gender mainstreaming

35. Gender equality and empowerment of women are increasingly understood as essential elements of sustainable development, as evidenced most recently in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Goals and Targets, which prioritize these as cross-cutting themes. The adoption in decision XII/7 of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action under the Convention on Biological Diversity reflects the importance and commitment to the integration of gender in the implementation of the Convention and the associated work of the Parties and the Secretariat. The mainstreaming of a gender perspective, as pursued through the Gender Plan of Action, is meant to promote gender equality, demonstrate the benefits of gender mainstreaming and to increase the effectiveness of all work under the Convention.

36. Under decision XII/7, Parties requested the Executive Secretary to undertake a number of actions including: to finalize and report on the implementation of a guidance document on gender mainstreaming; to collect case studies and best practices on monitoring, evaluation and indicators on gender mainstreaming regarding biodiversity; and to support the implementation of the Gender Plan of Action, including at the national level and for the purposes of better integrating biodiversity in national gender policies and action plans. The Secretariat has responded to these requests by carrying out a peer review of the guidance document and issuing a notification to Parties and partners to request submission of relevant case studies and best practice examples. The Secretariat is further advancing the implementation of the Gender Plan of Action through a project funded by the Japan Biodiversity Fund (JBF), which is supporting the integration of gender into national biodiversity strategies and action plans in select developing countries, and engaging country agencies responsible for gender and women's issues to be involved in biodiversity policy development and planning. This project was initiated in early 2016 in collaboration with the Global Gender Office of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which is serving as the implementing agency.

37. The Secretariat has further been engaged in advancing gender mainstreaming efforts both with partners and internally, in line with the Gender Plan of Action. The Secretariat has been active in engaging UN and international partners, organizing a day of discussions on gender equality and environmental sustainability in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, at the Rio Conventions Pavilion at the twenty-first meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP-21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Secretariat has also established an internal Gender Integration Group with representatives from units across the Secretariat, to build capacity and support gender mainstreaming efforts. More details on these and other initiatives are provided in the progress report on implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action (UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/14).

38. Decision XII/7 also calls on the United Nations and relevant international organizations to play a role in mainstreaming gender considerations in work under the Convention, including providing or facilitating the provision of training on gender mainstreaming to Secretariat staff and, as appropriate, national focal points of the Convention. The United Nations Environment Programme provided training to Secretariat staff on gender mainstreaming in April 2014, and through the project funded by JBF, the International Union for Conservation of Nature is providing gender training to key gender and biodiversity stakeholders, including national focal points of the Convention, in pilot project countries.

B. Role of the business sector

39. A key element to mainstreaming is the effective engagement of the business sector. Actions by the business sector will clearly facilitate the attainment of a number of Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The business sector is also a critical player for implementation of the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols.

40. The Conference of the Parties has taken a number of decisions relevant to business engagement.³ For example the decision on business engagement (decision XII/10) called on Parties and businesses to undertake increased actions, and gave the Secretariat significant additional responsibilities related to this issue. Key among these are supporting Parties in their efforts to promote the integration of biodiversity considerations into the business sector, reviewing and developing reports on the progress of biodiversity mainstreaming by businesses through corporate reporting, supporting capacity-building for businesses with a view to mainstreaming biodiversity into business decisions, enhancing the contribution of the business sector to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, promoting cooperation and synergies with other forums regarding issues such as commodity indicators and sustainable production and consumption, and analysing and disseminating best practices, standards and research about biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, and valuation of those services.

41. One of the primary vehicles for better engaging with the business sector, the Secretariat has been undertaking a large number of projects and activities to help to create the conditions for enhanced business understanding and mainstreaming of biodiversity across a number of key sectors. In terms of mainstreaming biodiversity considerations and aiding with capacity-building in the business sector in this area, one of the primary vehicles of delivery in this area has been the Global Partnership for Business and Biodiversity. The Partnership has undergone significant growth since the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. It currently has 21 members with a number of other countries and regions undertaking preparations to join. In addition, the governance structure of the Partnership has been strengthened and many of the national and regional initiatives are undertaking significant outreach activities and developing relevant product (i.e. tools and guidance). Further information on the Partnership is available in information document UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/13).

42. Related to this, there have been a number of important meetings supported by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological diversity which have helped business to better understand the importance and practicalities of mainstreaming biodiversity into their operations. These included relevant events at the IUCN World Parks Congress, the Pan African Forum on Business and Biodiversity; the ASEAN Business and Biodiversity Workshop and the World Forum on Natural. In addition, the Secretariat, in cooperation with the government of Finland, held the 2015 Business and Biodiversity Forum in Helsinki. Some of the key outcome messages included the need to strengthen the business case for biodiversity, improve transparency of data and partnerships, and the importance of linking biodiversity to other international processes.

43. While businesses continue to make progress in terms of addressing issues of sustainability, there is still a great deal that needs to be done, particularly with respect to ensuring that supply chains and basic producers are mainstreaming biodiversity concerns into their own operations. This needs to be driven through a combination of policy and regulatory efforts (strengthening legislation and encouraging a positive enabling environment), market pressures (ensuring that governments and major companies are insisting on sustainable products and processes), and the dissemination of knowledge (the natural capital protocols are one example of this). Ensuring that major corporations are also made more accountable for the activities of their supply chains, and ensuring the link between biodiversity and other major sustainability issues (such as climate change) will also affect the calculations of risk and opportunity by business, and encourage more biodiversity friendly processes and activities.

³ For example see COP decisions VIII/17, IX/26, X/21 and XI/7.

44. With respect to the request for business reporting (decision XII/10), the document prepared by the Secretariat “Business reporting on biodiversity: Review of current reporting schemes and research” (UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/12) examines several business reporting schemes, requirements and research that currently exists with relevance to this area, including consideration of some of the gaps and challenges that are faced when looking at the data. Stemming from this review, a typology, in the form of a series of recommendations, has been developed.

45. The difficulty in comparing data between business reporting schemes, as well as between different businesses and sectors, makes the available information increasingly challenging for Parties to interpret and assess in a meaningful fashion. This is compounded by the fact that data is often gathered and used for different purposes, which makes comparisons even more problematic. This can distort the understanding of how business impacts upon biodiversity, which can make it difficult for governments and other stakeholders to accurately track the progress being made by business in this area. Due to the lack of a consistency among guidelines and information requirements on corporate reporting for biodiversity, national reports from Parties often contain only very fragmented, if any, information with regard to business activities and impacts.

46. Having coherent and consistent data regarding the impacts of business activities on biodiversity would facilitate the consideration of this information in decision making processes.

47. In order to address these issues, the Conference of the Parties, at its twelfth meeting, requested the development of a typology that could help businesses to gather the information necessary to accurately and concisely report on their impacts on biodiversity. The typology, contained in document UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/12, is presented as a framework of recommendations that will highlight some of the broad categories in which corporate data in this area can be sorted. The typology is only meant as an initial guide for businesses, governments and other stakeholders to aid them in identifying how data might be collected and grouped. The typology can also be used as a starting point for further discussions with governments, businesses and other relevant actors. However, there remain a number of issues that need to be addressed if business reporting is to be made more effective for the purposes of the Convention, which will require a cooperative approach among Parties, partners and other stakeholders.

48. The Initiative for Biodiversity Impact Indicators for Commodity Production was launched in October 2014 during the twelfth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The purpose of the initiative is to compile the major cross-cutting impacts on biodiversity caused by agricultural commodity production and to develop a set of impact indicators, in order to help producers and those procuring products with information that could help to improve agricultural practices and inform business policies. The first phase of the work programme of the initiative includes the identification of common impacts, of gaps in existing approaches, and determination of the best approaches for measurement. For each major agricultural commodity, the main threats to biodiversity from cultivation and processing, and the indicators for monitoring the impacts of certification, have been summarized in the report in the form of generic lists of indicators for major impact categories. The generic lists of indicators identified were subject of a workshop held in 2015 in Helsinki. The workshop subsequently produced a list of core indicators for biodiversity impacts for agricultural commodity production. This core set represents the most important (in terms of impact) and cross-cutting impacts on biodiversity. Additional information can be found in an information document entitled “Biodiversity Impact Indicators for Commodity Production: A CBD Initiative to Mainstream Biodiversity into Agricultural Practices and Policies” (UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/11).

C. Role of subnational and local governments

49. Numerous studies have documented the potential that subnational governments⁴ have in the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity.⁵ Subnational governments often have significant authority with respect to decisions on natural resource use, as well as decisions related to infrastructure development, land use, zoning and other planning processes, and other decisions that can impact biodiversity. In aggregate, more money is invested on biodiversity at local and subnational levels than at the national level.

50. Cities and city-regions have a particularly important role to play in subnational implementation of the Convention. The modes and direction of global urban development will profoundly affect biodiversity. These effects are as a result of both the quantities in which, and methods by which, nature's goods and services are utilized in urban areas, and are further affected by global change, including climate change. Development in the future needs to take a more strategic and integrated course, cognisant of our reliance on ecosystems and their services, if society is to persist and thrive.

51. The past four meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention have featured decisions on subnational implementation of the Convention. The adoption of the Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (decision X/22) is particularly relevant.

52. At its eleventh meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopted a decision that, among other things, encouraged Parties to monitor and report on the contribution of their cities in achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, in particular in their fifth national reports. Many of the fifth national reports contain a reference to subnational implementation, a trend that is expected to increase. Lessons and effective practices shared by Parties, subnational and local governments and their partners showcase several successful approaches such as the provision of support and guidance to subnational governments; initiatives demonstrating cooperation across levels in government; cooperative policy interventions on specific issues; the development of subnational and local strategies and action plans and the establishment of multi-stakeholder councils to oversee their implementation; and strengthening achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Targets through networking with subnational and local governments.

53. More recently, decision XII/9 recognized the contribution of key initiatives such as the publication of *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) edition for Local and Regional Policy Makers*, the global assessment *Urbanization, Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services: Challenges and Opportunities*, and the Urban Biodiversity and Design group's research agenda on urban biodiversity priorities, calls on Parties to incorporate biodiversity considerations into their urban, peri-urban, land-use and infrastructure planning, such as "green infrastructure", and to strengthen capacities of subnational and local governments to incorporate biodiversity into urban and other spatial planning processes. It directly encourages subnational and local governments to contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 by integrating biodiversity considerations into plans for sustainable urbanization and land use including local transport, spatial planning, water and waste management; promoting nature-based solutions; monitoring and assessing the state of biodiversity and progress to preserve it. It also requests the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources, to mainstream biodiversity into the work of relevant agencies and key partners involved in work at the subnational and

⁴ "Subnational governments" refers, in this context, to any level of government that falls beneath national government.

⁵ SCBD and UN-Habitat published "Supporting Local Action for Biodiversity – the role of National Governments" (2010), and the SCBD, Stockholm Resilience Centre and ICLEI produced global reference publications on theme, the *Cities and Biodiversity Outlook* (in two complementary versions, Action and Policy, 2012 and Scientific Assessment 2013); there are numerous other relevant ICLEI, UNU and UN-Habitat publications.

local levels and assist Parties and subnational and local governments, and their partners, to more effectively integrate the contribution of subnational and local governments to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

54. The network of 1,000+ cities called Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), through its Cities' Biodiversity Center in South Africa and on behalf of its Global Secretariat and regional/specialized centres has been collaborating closely and productively with SCBD since 2007. This cooperation was consolidated, from 2011 to 2015, through the secondment of an expert to the Secretariat, and has resulted in project development and implementation to support Party and subnational government efforts to address biodiversity at the subnational level,⁶ the organization of four successful Summits for city and subnational governments, joint contributions to relevant United Nations processes such as the preparations of thematic papers for the Habitat III agenda, and the issuance of numerous publications.

55. While recognition of the importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services for the well-being of subnational and local governments is growing, there is an urgent need to scale up efforts. With global population expected to grow to over 10 billion by the year 2100, with most of that growth in urban areas, the manner in which such cities develop, and use biodiversity and natural resources, will have a profound impact on the future of the planet.

D. Possible actions with respect to the contribution of key actors to mainstreaming

56. There are numerous potential actions that Parties may wish to take with respect to engagement of the above key actors, and others. These include the following:

57. With respect to gender mainstreaming, work should continue on the implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action.

58. With respect to engagement of the business sector, Parties can undertake numerous additional steps to enhance the contribution of business to achievement of the Convention and the Strategic Plan 2011-2020. These include adopting national initiatives on business and biodiversity, as part of the Global Partnership on Business and Biodiversity, and adopting laws or initiatives to increase reporting by businesses on activities and operations that impact biodiversity; Businesses can take additional steps, including the use of valuation tools such as the Natural Capital Protocols; and take steps to integrate reporting on biodiversity into all relevant operational, siting, sourcing and other decisions. The use of common indicators and other tools to reduce the adverse impacts of agricultural production on biodiversity is also another action that would help reach a wide range of actors in the agriculture sector. Efforts could also be taken to harmonize the manner in which information from businesses on biodiversity-related issues are provided for use by Parties, and addressed under the various reporting schemes, so that reporting on biodiversity-related issues becomes more consistent between companies and across sectors.

59. With respect to engagement of subnational and local governments, numerous additional actions could be taken to enhance implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. Parties could take steps to mainstream the relevance of biodiversity for cities in relevant forums, such as UN Habitat III. Parties could also undertake a review of their governance structures with respect to the relationship of national, subnational and local governments with respect to decisions that impact biodiversity. In the light of the projections of a growing urban population, it would be helpful to analyse the projected growth against biodiversity hot spots, so as to identify priority areas for improved urban planning that addresses biodiversity.

⁶ Including the "Building Capacity for the Subnational Implementation of NBSAPs" project financed by the Japan Biodiversity Fund and the "Links in Biodiversity Planning: A global look at collaboration between different levels of government" project supported by Environment Canada.

III. CONCLUSIONS

60. Efforts to enhance implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 will require renewed attention to cross-sectoral mainstreaming policies and actions. This will require engagement in relevant international processes, such as the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, and efforts at the national level to ensure that biodiversity is integrated into relevant policies and decisions. It will also require continued and more effective engagement of key actors, including women, the business sector and subnational and local governments. The Conference of the Parties may wish to take a number of decisions to further work on these matters at its thirteenth meeting.
