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PROPOSAL ON THE DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC,
TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE:

A LONGER-TERM PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE PERIOD FROM THE FOURTH TO THE SEVENTH MEETING
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES.

Note by the Executive Secretary

INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraph 20 of decision IV/16, the Conference of the Parties (COP) requested the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) to prepare a proposal for its programme of work, based on the priorities set out in Annex II to that decision, with a view to streamlining and focusing the agendas of its meetings. In Annex I to the same decision, the COP also adopted the modus operandi of SBSTTA. Given that programmes of work for many thematic areas have been established through previous relevant COP decisions, this note reviews the overall programme of work of SBSTTA that has been adopted to date and proposes a longer-term programme of work for the period 1999 to 2004.

2. Part I of this note recalls the mandate of SBSTTA and its modus operandi before outlining the strategic framework that is proposed for the elaboration of a longer-term programme of work of SBSTTA. The scope of the programme is based on the tasks that SBSTTA has been requested to undertake, to date, in regard to the thematic and cross-cutting areas of the Convention, taking into account the

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ecosystem approach. Potential work to provide scientific and technical support to other mechanisms and bodies under the Convention is also noted.

3. Part II sets out the main functions and the expected products or outcomes of the work of SBSTTA, starting with the different types of assessments, its scientific work and technical guidance, based on research and analysis of specific issues that are brought to its attention, and its role in identifying innovative, efficient and state-of-the-art technologies and know-how relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

4. Part III looks at the programme cycle or process for consideration by SBSTTA of substantive issues, its analysis of information, development of advice and presentation of such advice and options to the Conference of the Parties. This section notes the collaborative arrangements with other scientific and technical bodies and outlines the various implementation mechanisms, including ad hoc subsidiary bodies, rosters of experts, peer reviews and focal points. Ways and means by which such processes and mechanisms can be used to enhance the effectiveness of the work of SBSTTA deserve continuous attention.

5. Part IV provides an overview of the ~~wide~~ overarching programme of work of SBSTTA and identifies a number of issues that may require attention in the further development of the longer-term work programme of SBSTTA. A recommendation is presented for the consideration of the fourth meeting of SBSTTA in regard to the longer-term programme of work for the period up to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

I. THE LONGER TERM PROGRAMME OF WORK OF SBSTTA

1.1 The Mandate and Modus operandi of SBSTTA

6. The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) was established under Article 25, paragraph 1, of the Convention on Biological Diversity, to provide the Conference of the Parties and, as appropriate, its other subsidiary bodies, with timely advice relating to the implementation of this Convention. The functions of SBSTTA, its terms of reference and organisation are set out in Article 25 and in Annex I of COP decision IV/16, which further outlines its modus operandi. The functions of SBSTTA are, under the authority of, and in accordance with guidelines laid down by the Conference of the Parties, and upon the request of COP:

- a) to provide scientific and technical assessments of the status of biological diversity;
- b) to prepare scientific and technical assessments of the effects of types of measures taken in accordance with the provisions of this Convention;
- c) to identify innovative, efficient and state-of-the-art technologies and know-how relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and advise on the ways and means of promoting development and/or transferring such technologies;

- d) to provide advice on scientific programmes and international cooperation in research and development related to conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity; and
- e) to respond to scientific, technical, technological and methodological questions that the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies may put to the body.

7. The modus operandi of SBSTTA outlines the rules of procedure of SBSTTA, the frequency and timing of its meetings and documentation for and organization of work during those meetings. It also details the operational means in regard to ad hoc technical expert group meetings, the contribution of non-governmental organizations, cooperation with other relevant bodies and rosters of experts. These different features are referred to, as appropriate, in the relevant sections of this document.

1.2 Strategic Programme of Work: Objectives, Activities, Ways and Means and Products

8. As from 1994, the work of the Convention has been organised on the basis of the medium-term programme of work that was adopted in decision I/9 and reviewed by the second and third meetings of the Conference of the Parties (decisions II/18 and III/22). The longer-term programme of work of SBSTTA, laid out in the current document, is developed in accordance with COP decision IV/16, which was adopted pursuant to consideration by COP of a detailed proposal for a rolling 10 year longer-term programme of work (UNEP/CBD/COP/4/14). In Annex II to this decision, the following programme of work was adopted, for the period from fourth meeting (May 1998) until the seventh meeting of the COP:

COP-V May 2000	Dryland, mediterranean, arid, semi arid, grassland and savannah ecosystems Sustainable use, including tourism Access to genetic resources
COP-VI	Forest ecosystems Alien species Benefit-sharing
COP-VII	Mountain ecosystems Protected areas Transfer of technology and technology cooperation

9. The longer-term programme of work of SBSTTA contained in the present document is proposed as a tool to help organise, co-ordinate and guide the work of SBSTTA and other subsidiary bodies, with a view to the effective fulfilment of their mandates. An attempt has been made to develop a strategic framework for the period up to COP-7, outlining the scientific, technical and technological support to be provided by SBSTTA to the three future meetings of COP (see Annex 1).

10. This work programme is based on the assumption that two meetings of SBSTTA will be held for every meeting of the COP and the latter will be convened every two years. Moreover, efforts will be maintained, as in the case of the third

meeting of SBSTTA, to enable a focused consideration on a limited number of topics at each of its meetings. As with the longer term programme of work of COP, each meeting of SBSTTA will focus on one ecosystem/ thematic area and two to three cross-cutting issues. However, in view of the number of issues that require consideration by SBSTTA, each meeting will also have to address a certain number of additional issues. Consideration by SBSTTA will comprise a review of the progress and achievements to date, an analysis of the scientific, technical and technological issues brought to its attention, and the development of recommendations and further advice to the COP.

11. The broad scope of the Convention and the urgency of dealing with the wide-reaching problems associated with the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity have meant that the agenda of SBSTTA has rapidly expanded. A major challenge, as the Convention moves into the implementation phase, while continuing to develop new programmes of work, is for SBSTTA to develop a strategy that will find a balance between pursuing an integrated ecosystem approach demanded by the Convention and being focused enough to maintain its scientific accuracy and be able to provide scientific, technical and technological advice specific to the different levels and components of biological diversity.

12. In order to develop an effective strategic plan for the period from COP-4 (May 1998) to COP7 (May 2004) (as with the strategic plan of the Convention on Wetlands for the period 1997-2002), it would be very useful for the Convention on Biological Diversity to move towards the elaboration of a target-oriented programme. This requires a clear prioritisation of work to a limited number of feasible objectives for specific time periods. The prioritisation process for the work of SBSTTA needs to take into account scientific, technical and technological knowledge, as well as geographic, temporal and socioeconomic implications. For example, the COP has already identified the need to address the most fragile and geographically-isolated ecosystems and the most threatened components of biological diversity, as well as those ecosystems exhibiting the greatest richness of biological diversity and those with the greatest actual and potential value. In addition, it should take into account the priorities and needs of individual Parties as identified in national reports, as well as ongoing and planned work in other fora, in particular the biodiversity-related environmental Conventions that address desertification and climate change, and the Commission on Sustainable Development.

13. Such a strategic planning process requires an incremental or rolling approach, based on continuous monitoring and evaluation, that will enable Parties to keep up with the process and to implement the Convention in an effective manner and, thereby, to reap the resulting benefits from improved conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and fair and equitable sharing of benefits. Furthermore, the longer-term programme of work of SBSTTA needs to be linked to the available resources by taking into account the capacities of SBSTTA and any subsidiary bodies that it establishes for this purpose, by prioritizing the use of limited resources and by ensuring the effective involvement of the diverse range of scientific and technical institutions, bodies and individuals which are able to contribute to achieving the aims of the Convention.

14. A summary of the proposed framework programme for SBSTTA is tabulated in Annex 1 below, indicating for its next five meetings, from SBSTTA8 to SBSTTA9, the selected ecosystem or thematic focus and the crosscutting issues that could be considered. It has been recognised that the agendas of the meetings of SBSTTA

should contain standing items and selected issues. This includes those issues requiring in-depth scientific and technical consideration with a view to the elaboration of substantive recommendations aiming at strategic decisions of COP. It also includes those issues for which progress made in ongoing programmes and activities will be reported for noting and eventual further guidance by SBSTTA.

1.3 The Scope of the Programme of Work of SBSTTA

15. The programme of work of SBSTTA emanates from Article 25 and the cumulative decisions of each meeting of COP which set out, *inter alia*, the topics on which advice is required for implementing the Convention. Its initial programme was based on the priorities set in the medium-term programme of work of the Conference of the Parties (ref. recommendation I/2). Through its three meetings, the first held in Paris in September 1995 and the other two in Montreal, September 1996 and 1997, respectively, SBSTTA has developed a total of 28 recommendations which were subsequently considered by COP in its deliberations. The increasing size of its programme of work in view of the range of subject areas and issues being addressed, as well as the need to review progress on items already considered in previous years, means that strategic planning, implementation mechanisms and cooperative arrangements are all essential to enable SBSTTA to effectively conduct its work.

16. To date, the COP has specifically requested advice from SBSTTA in its decisions on the following thematic and cross-cutting areas:

a) Thematic Areas

- marine and coastal biological diversity (dec. II/10 and IV/5);
- agricultural biological diversity (dec. III/11 and IV/6);
- forest biological diversity (dec. III/12 and IV/7);
- inland water biological diversity (dec. IV/4);

- terrestrial biological diversity: drylands, mountain and inland water ecosystems (dec. III/13) and dryland, arid, semi arid, mediterranean, grassland and savannah ecosystems (dec. IV/16).

b) Cross-cutting areas

- components of biological diversity under threat (dec. II/8) and national reports (dec. II/17);
- the clearing house mechanism (dec. II/3 and IV/2);
- technology transfer (dec. II/4 and III/16) to be considered within the thematic areas;
- identification, monitoring and assessment, including indicators (dec. III/10 and IV/1);
- incentive measures (dec. III/18 and IV/10) to be considered within the thematic areas;
- alien species (dec. IV/1);
- the ecosystem approach (dec. IV/1);
- the global taxonomy initiative (dec. IV/1);
- impact assessment and minimising adverse effects (dec. IV/10); and,
- implementation of Article 8(j) (dec. IV/9).

17. Those issues which are seen to have more policy-related implications have not been directed to SBSTTA but have been specifically mandated by COP through other inter-sessional mechanisms. These include consideration of:

- a) Article 8(j) and related provisions through an ad hoc open-ended Working Group, scheduled to meet in January 2000 back to back with SBSTTA-5;
- b) issues relating to access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing, through the Inter-sessional meeting on the Operations of the Convention which will meet in June 1999, immediately after the fourth meeting of SBSTTA, and an Expert Panel on Access and ~~Benefit~~ sharing, which will meet in October 1999; and,
- c) the elaboration of a Biosafety Protocol for the safe transboundary movement of genetically modified organisms through the ~~open-ended~~ ad hoc Working Group on Biosafety.

1.4 Development of Thematic Programmes of Work and the Ecosystem Approach

Thematic programmes

18. The execution of the medium-term plan of action for the period 1995-1997 has been oriented around the development of programmes of work for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity for specific thematic areas, in accordance with the ecosystem approach adopted by the Convention. Four thematic programmes of work have been adopted to date for the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal, agricultural, forest and inland waters biological diversity. These are being implemented by Parties and relevant organisations and bodies, with the support of SBSTTA and the Secretariat, and are being further developed as required.

19. The thematic programmes of work are at different stages of development: those on marine and coastal biological diversity (decision IV/5, Annex) and inland water biological diversity (decision IV/4 Annexes I and II) consist of concrete, focused work plans; the agricultural biological diversity work programme will be further developed by COP-V to reflect the priorities emanating from the assessment of ongoing activities; and the programme of work on forest biological diversity provides a research-based framework for further development by SBSTTA in the lead up to COP-VI.

20. The development of these thematic programmes of work has been largely based on preliminary assessments (enabling the process to move into the implementation phase reasonably rapidly and without excessive costs). On the basis of a background document prepared by the Executive Secretary, with the support of relevant scientific and research bodies, that presents an overview of the situation for the given thematic area, and through subsequent deliberations by SBSTTA, a number of priority areas have been identified and further elaborated upon as major programme elements. This process has been iterative and based on contributions by Parties which outline the situation and priorities at national level and preliminary analyses and inputs by competent organisations on relevant programmes, activities and experiences. The products or expected outputs for each programme element, the concerned bodies and organisations, and the mechanisms for conducting the work need to be spelt out in each case together with a time frame.

21. For the further development of the programmes of work, it has been recognised that there is a need for the development of rapid assessment methodologies and guidelines to improve the collection of relevant scientific and technical information and to improve understanding of the complex relationships between biological diversity and other environmental, socio-economic and institutional considerations. Moreover, this requires multi-disciplinary expertise and the use of integrated systems approaches to address the ecosystem level, as well as species and genetic levels, of biological diversity. In this regard, collaboration has been established with the DIVERSITAS network and other scientific and technical bodies to provide advice as appropriate.

22. In preparation for COPV, which will consider for the first time the biological diversity of dryland (including arid and semi-arid), as well as grassland, savannah, and Mediterranean ecosystems, the fourth and fifth meetings of SBSTTA will focus their substantive consideration on these same ecosystem/thematic areas. A background document on the status and trends of biological diversity in these different ecosystems (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/7) is being considered under agenda item 4.4 of the current meeting, and subsequently, SBSTTA will develop a programme of work to address priority issues identified, in collaboration, as appropriate, with the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. The main themes of SBSTTA-4 and SBSTTA-5 are presented in the table in Annex 1.

23. Forest ecosystems are to be addressed by the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (decision IV/16) alongside alien species and benefit-sharing. These are therefore key areas of attention for SBSTTA-6 and SBSTTA-7, with a view to further developing the programme of work on forest biological diversity and developing guidelines to minimise or mitigate negative impacts of alien species. In accordance with element 1 of the programme of work on forest biological diversity (decision IV/7), it is proposed that SBSTTA-6 further consider the development of the ecosystem approach in regard to forest biological diversity, taking into account further progress on the conceptualisation of the ecosystem approach by SBSTTA-5. To assist SBSTTA in furthering the forest work programme, an ad hoc technical expert group is being proposed, whose terms of reference are described in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/5. The lead role of the CBD Secretariat in regard to traditional forest-related knowledge in the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) process, should also be taken into account, for example through due focus on Article 8(j) and relevant benefit-sharing mechanisms. The precise focus of the consideration by SBSTTA of Article 8(j) and related provisions will depend on the outcome of the ad hoc open-ended inter-sessional Working Group which has been established for this purpose, and whether SBSTTA will be invited to provide any specific guidance. For that reason, this Working Group is scheduled to meet immediately before SBSTTA-V.

24. The sixth thematic area, that of mountain ecosystems, will be considered at the seventh meeting of COP alongside the cross-cutting issues of protected areas and technology transfer and cooperation (decision IV/16). These are therefore the main themes for SBSTTA-8 and SBSTTA-9, with a view to developing a programme of work on mountain ecosystems and guidelines for technology transfer and cooperation. SBSTTA-8 could also consider the ecosystem approach from the perspective of mountain ecosystems.

The Ecosystem Approach

25. The thematic programmes are being developed in response to the need to focus the work of the Convention. As they address different sectors or ecosystems, distinguished on the basis of different criteria, it will be paramount that SBSTTA provides effective guidance on how to ensure the application of the ecosystem approach¹ and the use of integrated, multidisciplinary approaches that address the inter-linking objectives of the Convention. This is a great challenge as, while maintaining the necessary focus, it will require greater attention to:

- a) Inter-linkages and relationships between forest, agricultural and aquatic ecosystems as well as ecosystem functioning and interactions, to ensure that the overlapping areas between different thematic programmes and the inter-linkages among and within ecosystems are adequately considered;
- b) Socio-economic, cultural and human management considerations and impacts on biological resources and diversity at different levels and scales, as elaborated in the preliminary principles of the ecosystem approach developed by the Malawi workshop (UNEP/CBD/COP/4/Inf.9).

26. DIVERSITAS identified the need to combine the ecosystem approach and species-based approach, using the best scientific and technical knowledge to enable biological diversity conservation, sustainable use and human welfare to be managed in an integrated way (UNEP/CBD/COP/4/Inf/18). The Executive Secretary is planning to organise a meeting of a liaison group of experts on the ecosystem approach during 1999. This could provide the scientific basis on which to elaborate guidance for the application of the ecosystem approach in the different thematic programmes.

1.5 Cross-cutting Issues and Related Programmes

27. In addition to its thematic focus, SBSTTA is also requested to provide guidance in regard to cross-cutting issues of relevance to the objectives of the Convention and its Articles. Consideration by SBSTTA of the different cross-cutting areas will, inter alia, contribute to their further incorporation into the thematic programmes of work and, thereby, to the development of more holistic and integrated approaches at global, regional, national and local levels.

28. Cross-cutting issues which are included in the ~~long-term~~ programme of work of COP up to its seventh meeting (see paragraph 8 above) and which have not yet been considered substantively by SBSTTA, have therefore been included as major issues for consideration by SBSTTA in its longer-term programme (see Annex 1). These include: alien species (of particular relevance to Articles 14 and 18), impact assessment (Article 14), and sustainable use, (Articles 6 and 10) which are all being addressed for the first time by the current meeting under agenda items 4.5, 4.7 and 4.8, respectively; access to genetic resources and benefit sharing (of particular relevance to Articles 15, 16 and 19), which are proposed for consideration by SBSTTA-6; as well as protected areas (Article 8) and transfer of technology (Article 16), which are proposed for consideration by SBSTTA-8.

¹ The ecosystem approach has been adopted as a framework for the analysis and implementation of the objectives of the Convention (decision II/8) and in its decision IV/1 the COP invited SBSTTA to develop principles and other guidance on the ecosystem approach, taking into account the report of the workshop on the ecosystem approach (Malawi, January 1998) (UNEP/CBD/COP /4/Inf.9), and to report back to its fifth meeting (May 2000).

29. Moreover, a number of cross-cutting issues that have already been subject to preliminary consideration by SBSTTA are proposed for further consideration in the longer-term programme of work. Indicators of biological diversity and monitoring and assessment (Article 7); the ecosystem approach; and linkages between in situ and ex situ conservation (Articles 8 and 9) are proposed to be addressed by SBSTTA alongside the thematic programmes of work that have been selected for each meeting of COP. In addition, scientific and technical issues regarding Article 8(j) and related provisions may be submitted from the ad hoc open ended working group for consideration by SBSTTA-6. The Global Taxonomy Initiative (Article 7) and impact assessment (Article 14) are being considered by the current meeting under agenda items 4.3 and 4.7, respectively.

30. The Conference of the Parties has already decided to consider some issues within the framework of other items, namely: data management for identification and monitoring (Article 7 (d)) within the clearinghouse mechanism; incentives (Article 11), public education and awareness (Article 13), and co-operation in technological issues (Article 16) within the relevant thematic and sectoral items. Nonetheless, in order to provide further guidance in regard to the mechanisms and approaches to be promoted in the different thematic programmes of work, it is proposed that these issues be included in the longer term programme of work of SBSTTA as follows: incentive measures to be considered alongside sustainable use by SBSTTA-5 and SBSTTA-8, technical and scientific co-operation (Article 18) alongside technology transfer by SBSTTA-8. Finally, the clearinghouse mechanism is being addressed at SBSTTA-5 and may require further consideration.

31. In order to interlink cross-cutting issues, consideration by SBSTTA could focus on incentives for sustainable use, as well as incentives for the maintenance of protected areas and the role of the private sector in such activities. If requested by the COP, public education and awareness could also eventually be addressed at SBSTTA-9.

Indicator Development, Identification, Monitoring and Assessment

32. It is recognised that indicators of all levels of biological diversity are vitally important in the implementation of the Convention, particularly with respect to Article 7 (identification and monitoring) and ~~Annex~~ of the Convention. During the medium term programme, SBSTTA considered the issue of indicators and developed a proposed work plan (recommendation III/5) that was endorsed by COP in its decision IV/1. National reports will be used for the ~~collective~~ ^{collective} analysis of data for the development and application of indicators and for monitoring the implementation of the Convention.

33. With a view to providing urgent, practical advice to Parties, through COP decision IV/1(A), and its endorsement of recommendation III/5, the Executive Secretary, with the assistance of a liaison group, has been requested to compile a set of principles for designing national-level monitoring programmes and indicators and to analyse case studies submitted by organisations and Parties in order to provide a menu of possible approaches and a synthesis of best practices and lessons, as guidance to Parties on ~~identif~~ ^{identification} and monitoring. SBSTTA has been requested to consider and provide guidance on this work, taking into account the development of the ecosystem approach. It is proposed that indicator development should be further considered alongside dryland, forest and mountain ecosystems at SBSTTA-5, SBSTTA-7 and SBSTTA-9, respectively.

34. Collaboration with DIVERSITAS has proven very useful in regard to identification, monitoring and assessment, and, in its decision IV/1 (A), the COP welcomed the contributions provided by the working group of experts, in its recommendations on scientific research that should be undertaken for the effective implementation of Articles 7, 8, 9, 10 and 14 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as contained in document UNEP/CBD/COP/4/Inf.18. SBSTTA is invited to consider those recommendations and to further cooperate with DIVERSITAS and other relevant international and regional organisations and institutions.

35. During the seventh meeting of SBSTTA, in accordance with element 3 of the programme on forest biological diversity, it is proposed that SBSTTA further considers methodologies to advance the elaboration and implementation of criteria and indicators for the conservation and sustainable use of forest biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits.

36. The need to alleviate the taxonomic impediment has been recognised as an important issue for the implementation of the CBD and, under agenda item 4.3 of the current meeting, SBSTTA is considering document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/6 with a view to providing advice on the further advancement of a Global Taxonomy Initiative, in accordance with the suggestions for action for its development and implementation outlined in Annex 1 of decision IV/1. In addition, impact assessment is being considered under agenda item 4.7 of the current meeting (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/10) and is proposed to be further considered by SBSTTA-6 alongside forest ecosystems.

Clearing-House mechanism

37. The Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) was established to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation (Art. 18.3). Through its decisions, COP has broadened the scope and roles of the CHM to enable it to become a key instrument to promote and facilitate the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention. In regard to the programme of work of SBSTTA, COP has requested the involvement of the CHM in the exchange of information and transfer of technology for the four thematic programmes of work (decisions III/11, IV/4, IV/5~~V/D~~) as well as in the implementation of its decisions that address the Global Taxonomy Initiative (decision IV/1), access and benefit-sharing (decision IV/8), traditional knowledge (decision IV/9), incentive measures and impact assessment (decision IV/10), and public awareness and education (decision IV/19). In addition, the CHM is to assist in promoting synergies with other Conventions (decision IV/15) and in the provision of information on rosters of experts (decision IV/16).

38. At its fifth meeting, SBSTTA will consider the review of the pilot phase of the CHM alongside the longer term programme of work of the CHM (decision IV/2). Several elements have been recommended for the evaluation of the pilot phase, including the number of operational focal points and thematic networks, sources of information and amount of information transferred, effectiveness of training events and guidelines, and effective use by Parties of the CHM and use of list servers.

39. The CHM is becoming increasingly important to the work of SBSTTA through facilitating and promoting the management and dissemination of scientific and technical information, best practices, technologies and know-how. Furthermore, the already established role of the CHM in the promotion and facilitation of

scientific and technical cooperation needs to be considered and adequately addressed in forthcoming meetings of SBSTTA.

In Situ and Ex Situ Conservation

40. Neither in situ conservation nor ex situ conservation have been addressed by SBSTTA as a holistic cross-cutting issue, although these are major considerations in the different thematic programmes of work. It is proposed in this longer-term programme of work that linkages between in situ and ex-situ conservation be initially discussed by SBSTTA-7 and that in situ conservation be substantively addressed by SBSTTA-8, alongside the issue of protected areas, since these are both cross-cutting issues of relevance to all ecosystems.

Alien Species that Threaten Ecosystems, Habitats or Species

41. The issue of alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species is another cross-cutting issue of great importance, in particular in regard to in situ conservation, in the implementation of the Convention. Notwithstanding specific consideration in the thematic programmes of work, this issue was addressed for the first time at the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. SBSTTA is requested in decision IV/1(C), to develop guiding principles for the prevention, introduction and mitigation of impacts of alien species, to identify the priority work pertinent to the issue of alien species in geographically and evolutionarily isolated ecosystems and to report to COP-V. SBSTTA is also requested to examine the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP), with a view to considering concerted action and developing proposals for further action under the Convention on this issue.

42. The current meeting of SBSTTA is addressing alien species (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/8). On the basis of its outcome and advice, in accordance with decision IV/1, a progress report will be prepared for COP-V, which will make recommendations on the basis of information collected on: the results of and cooperation with the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP) and other relevant activities; the implementation of the activities and provisions on alien species within the thematic and cross-cutting programmes of work of the Convention; and the identification of new tools, including legal aspects, to assess to which extent current relevant treaties and agreements meet the Convention's provisions on alien species and to identify economic, risk assessment, control and management, and educational measures, as well as early warning systems, to meet those provisions. As outlined in section 3.2 below, an ad hoc technical expert group is being proposed to further work in this area, the outcome of which is proposed to be considered by SBSTTA-6.

Sustainable Use

43. Sustainable use is being addressed for the first time at the fourth meeting of SBSTTA in response to decision IV/16, through its consideration of the development of approaches and practices for the sustainable use of biological resources, with a focus on tourism as one example of sustainable use. The document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/11, prepared by the Executive Secretary, provides a synthesis of existing information on this issue. The exchange of experiences, knowledge and best practices, in particular at national and regional levels, on sustainable tourism and biological diversity within the framework of the Convention, including protected areas and actions by the private sector, and local and indigenous

communities, is to be pursued under the guidance of SBST. At its fifth meeting, SBSTTA will broaden the scope of its consideration of sustainable use to cover other activities relevant to the thematic areas so far addressed under the Convention process. It is proposed that sustainable use will be further considered at SBSTTA-8 alongside mountain ecosystems, and with a focus on the role of the private sector and on incentive measures for sustainable use.

44. The outcome of this work will contribute to the work on sustainable tourism being conducted by the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) to develop an action-oriented international programme of work that is being developed in cooperation with other partners. It is hoped that the biological diversity considerations regarding tourism will be fully taken into account under the process of the CSD, which will address tourism at its seventh session, in April 1999. Equally, SBSTTA may wish to take into account the outcome of that session in its work. If the CBD should be subsequently requested to assume lead role responsibility, under the CSD process, on the development of sustainable tourism with regards to biological diversity, then an appropriate mechanism will be required to assist SBSTTA in its work.

Incentive Measures

45. Incentive measures is another area of major importance for the implementation of the Convention, and, following its preliminary consideration of this issue and resulting decision III/10, the COP adopted decision IV/10 (A). In decision III/18, SBSTTA was requested to consider the issue of incentive measures, with a view to providing scientific, technical and technological advice on the implementation of Article 11 in relevant thematic areas, and to reflect economic valuation of biological diversity and biological resources in their work in accordance with SBSTTA recommendation II/9. Also, in decision IV/4, SBSTTA is requested to consider incentive measures with regard to inland water ecosystems. This item has not yet been addressed as a cross-cutting issue by SBSTTA.

46. Decision IV/10 calls for the inclusion of information on the design and implementation of incentive measures in National Reports, and it is therefore proposed to be considered by SBSTTA-5 in developing guidelines for National Reports. Moreover, the Executive Secretary has been requested to compile and analyse information from Governments and organisations and to prepare, in collaboration with key partners, a background paper on the design and implementation of incentive measures for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, as it is related to the thematic focus of COP. The fifth meeting of COP will thus consider this item in relation to dryland, Mediterranean, grassland and savannah ecosystems. In its longer-term programme of work, SBSTTA may need to provide further guidance with a view to promoting the consideration of incentive measures as an integral part of the thematic programmes of work. In this regard, the issue of incentive measures is proposed for further consideration by SBSTTA-8.

Protected Areas

47. At its fourth meeting, in decision IV/16, the Conference of the Parties agreed that protected areas will be one of three main topics for the seventh meeting of COP. Accordingly, protected areas is proposed as a key area of focus for SBSTTA-8. This timing will enable the Convention to provide a substantive normative

contribution to the results of the next World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas, planned for 2002 in Africa. Experiences from throughout the world will be brought to the attention of COP with a view to enhancing the deliberations and leading to the development of practical actions that address priority issues.

48. The focus for the Convention's activities on protected areas for the foreseeable future is provided by paragraph 6 of decision IV/15, which calls upon the Executive Secretary to develop relationships with other processes with a view to fostering good management practices in areas such as: methods and approaches to deal with protected areas; ecosystem and bioregional approaches to protected areas management and sustainable use of biological diversity; mechanisms to enhance stakeholder involvement; methods for developing systems plans and integrating biological diversity considerations into sectoral strategies and plans; and transboundary protected areas. The ecosystem approach should be taken into consideration in this work.

1.6 Potential Role in Support of other CBD mechanisms and processes

Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-Sharing

49. As referred to above, the closely related issues of access to genetic resources and benefit sharing as well as ex situ collections, are being considered by the inter-sessional meeting on the operations of the Convention (28-30 June 1999) and the ad hoc Expert Panel on Access and Benefit Sharing (4-8 October 1999). These bodies will report directly to COP, which could eventually request SBSTTA to provide guidance and advice regarding specific scientific, technical and technological issues. Access and benefit-sharing are therefore proposed for consideration by SBSTTA-6.

Implementation of Article 8(j) and Related Provisions

50. Likewise, Article 8(j), regarding the knowledge, innovations and practices of local and indigenous communities embodying traditional lifestyles, is being further considered by the ad hoc open ended inter-sessional Working Group on Article 8(j), which is scheduled to convene for the first time in January 2000 to ~~work~~ ^{work} with SBSTTA-V. This Working Group may provide advice to SBSTTA on issues relevant to its agenda, in which case there may be a need for SBSTTA to consider how to take into consideration such issues and their scientific, technical and technological implications in the different thematic programmes of work and in regard to other cross-cutting issues. Issues pertaining to Article 8(j) are proposed for eventual consideration by SBSTTA-6.

Biosafety

51. The ad hoc open-ended Working Group on Biosafety is meeting in February 1999 for its sixth and final negotiating session in the elaboration of a Protocol on the safe transboundary movement of genetically modified organisms. The Protocol will subsequently be adopted by the extraordinary COP which will also decide on administrative and other arrangements for implementation of the Protocol, including any needs or mechanisms for the provision of scientific and technical advice, as and when required by the Meeting of the Parties. It is not yet known

whether there could be any implications from the Protocol on the work of SBSTTA; nonetheless, other biosafety issues will continue to be addressed under SBSTTA, as is the case with the assessment of the consequences of the ~~technology~~ technology to control plant gene expression (decision IV/6) that is being addressed under agenda item 4.6 of the current meeting.

52. The main elements and activities of the longer-term programme of work of SBSTTA have been outlined above and some suggestions made regarding their consideration. The next section analyses the main functions and products that comprise this programme.

II. MAIN FUNCTIONS AND PRODUCTS OF THE WORK OF SBSTTA

2.1 Types of Assessments in which SBSTTA is Involved

53. In accordance with Article 25 and, with reference to Article 14, there are three main types of assessments in which SBSTTA is involved:

- a) assessments of the status and trends of biological diversity;
- b) assessments of ongoing activities and instruments and the effects of measures undertaken; and
- c) impact assessments.

In this regard, SBSTTA is invited to provide scientific and technical advice, including the elaboration of guidelines for assessments and methodologies for rapid assessments.

Assessments of the status and trends of biological diversity

54. In the development of the thematic programmes of work, background documents have been considered by SBSTTA on the status and trends of biological diversity in each specific ecosystem or thematic area. Such documents are based on the review and synthesis of relevant information drawn, as appropriate, from national and international scientific and technical literature and specific requests for information from concerned bodies and institutions regarding relevant ongoing processes, programmes, activities and instruments. The initial background document is generally prepared by the Executive Secretary with the support and cooperation of competent scientific and technical bodies.

55. On the basis of such preliminary reviews, SBSTTA has provided advice to COP in the development and implementation of the thematic programmes of work for marine and coastal, agricultural, forest and inland water biological diversity. The latter contains a substantial work plan for SBSTTA, to be further developed in cooperation with relevant Governments and bodies, in particular the Convention on Wetlands and its Scientific and Technical Review Panel, taking into consideration the outcome of CSD-6 on strategic approaches to freshwater management (decision IV/4).

56. In addition, on the basis of the assessment of the status and trends of biological diversity in dryland areas contained in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/7, which is before this meeting, it is suggested that SBSTTA may wish to recommend the development of a programme of work on terrestrial ecosystems to cover biological diversity in dryland, Mediterranean, arid, semi-arid, grassland and savannah

ecosystems not currently covered by other programmes and processes under the biological diversity and climate change Conventions. The following aspects are identified for further consideration in existing work programmes: (i) the specific nature of maintaining agricultural biological diversity in dryland, Mediterranean, grassland and savannah ecosystems; (ii) the special circumstances of forests in dryland and Mediterranean ecosystems; (iii) the importance of inland waters in dryland areas which may be subject to intense human pressures; and (iv) the importance of many seasonally flooded areas that may consist of highly productive systems that are intermediary between grassland and inland water ecosystems.

57. In the further development of its thematic work programmes, SBSTTA has been requested to provide further advice to COP on the status and trends of forest biological diversity (decision IV/7) and of biological diversity in inland waters ecosystem (decisions III/13 and IV/4).

Assessments of activities, instruments and measures taken

58. Another type of assessment conducted by SBSTTA refers to assessments of ongoing activities and instruments and the effects of measures undertaken. Such assessments are based on the analysis of information compiled and synthesised from national reports and/or contributions by Parties and international and regional organisations and bodies in areas such as capacity-building and technology development and transfer. An example is given by the consideration by SBSTTA of the assessment of activities and instruments, the issues and priorities that need to be addressed and the priority setting process in the further development of the multi-year work programme on agricultural biological diversity (decision III/11), which constitutes an item on the agenda of SBSTTA-5.

59. Another example of more limited scope is given by the review by SBSTTA of the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP), as mentioned in paragraph 41 above, and addressed under agenda item 4.5 of the current meeting (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/8). Also in this category of assessment is consideration by SBSTTA of the assessment of the situation in regard to sustainable tourism, based on contributions by Parties and international and regional organisations (agenda item 4.8 of the current meeting, document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/11).

60. National reports are used as a means to monitor measures taken by Parties in implementing the Convention. In COP decision IV/14 on National Reports, SBSTTA is requested to consider a revised version of the synthesis report prepared by the Executive Secretary (decision II/17), on the basis of national reports received and other relevant information with a view to providing advice to COPV on the intervals and form of future national reports, including: the nature of information needed from Parties in order to assess the state of implementation of the Convention; recommendations on improving reporting through appropriate guidelines to ensure comparability between reports; and identification of ways and means to further facilitate national implementation of the Convention. It is expected that further indicator development will be considered with a view, *inter alia*, to enhance the effectiveness of national reporting and monitoring of implementation of the Convention. Moreover, it is suggested that National Reports should include incentive measures. At its fifth meeting, SBSTTA is expected to recommend guidelines for the second National Reports.

Impact Assessment and Minimising Adverse Effects

61. The Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting considered measures for the implementation of Article 14 (Impact assessment and minimising adverse effects) and, in its decision IV/10 (C), invited SBSTTA to consider a synthesis report on this issue, prepared by the Executive Secretary on the basis of information provided by Parties, Governments and organisations, including indigenous and local communities, with a view to incorporating biological diversity considerations into environmental impact assessment procedures.

62. In accordance with the above-mentioned decision, the Secretariat is compiling and synthesising inputs from Parties and organisations, as reported in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/10, which is being considered under agenda item 4.7 of the current meeting. Collaborative arrangements have been initiated with bodies with expertise in this area, namely the Convention on Wetlands, the Bonn Convention, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the International Association for Impact Assessment. It is intended that this work should be continued and a further progress report submitted for consideration at COP-VI on the results so far of national assessments of biological diversity and the extent to which biological diversity impact assessment is being incorporated into environmental impact assessment (EIA).

63. SBSTTA is also instructed to identify further actions that would promote the implementation of EIA requested by Article 14, including consideration of whether there is a need for additional work in order to develop guidelines on the incorporation of biological diversity considerations into EIA and to report to and advise the Conference of the Parties accordingly.

64. The findings of the different assessments conducted under the guidance of SBSTTA will allow SBSTTA to establish priorities for further work, and to establish targets for monitoring the performance of measures taken to address those priority issues and progress made in mitigating negative impacts and promoting activities having positive impacts on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Such targets have not yet been established. However, as in the case of the UN Convention on Climate Change which is further ahead in this regard, they will be essential for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Convention on Biological Diversity as a legally binding instrument.

2.2 Scientific Research and Technical Guidance in Enhancing Understanding and in Identifying Best Practices, State-of-the-art Technologies and Knowhow

65. SBSTTA also plays a role in the conduct of more specific scientific research with a view to the development of technical guidance on priority areas. In some cases, scientific and technical research is required to advise COP on emerging issues. An example of such is the request by COP-IV for SBSTTA to assess the consequences for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity from the development and use of new technology (in the agricultural seed sector) for the control of plant gene expression (decision IV/6). On the other hand, although it is noted that the programme of work on forest biological diversity is largely research-oriented, the role of SBSTTA has not been clearly indicated.

66. It is also expected that SBSTTA plays an advisory role in reviewing and providing scientific and technical guidance on techniques and practices and knowledge systems for the conservation and sustainable use biological diversity and thereby in identifying and promoting relevant innovative, efficient and

state-of-the-art technologies and knowhow. Pursuant to Article 25, this should include the elaboration of advice on the ways and means of promoting development and/or transferring such technologies.

67. Efforts are being made in the different thematic and cross-cutting programmes to identify and disseminate relevant technologies, best practices and know-how through, for example, the collection and dissemination of case studies and their analysis and further consideration by SBSTTA. An example is given by the work of SBSTTA in analysing and making available information on experiences, knowledge and best practices, in particular at regional and national levels, on sustainable tourism and biological diversity within the framework of the Convention.

68. Two main areas of research can be distinguished: those to assess the causes and effects of human activities and of natural phenomena on biological resources and their diversity, and those to improve understanding and knowhow, through the analysis of lessons learnt from case studies on specific topics and/or techniques. In this regard, the tasks that have been given to SBSTTA include:

a) Causes and effects of human activities and natural phenomena

- to assess the consequences of mariculture for marine and coastal biological diversity and to promote techniques which minimise adverse impacts (dec. IV/5);
- to better understand the causes of the introduction of alien species and genotypes and the impact of such introductions on biological diversity (dec. IV/5);
- to analyse the phenomenon of coral bleaching (dec. IV/5);
- to assess the consequences for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity from the development and use of new technology for the control of plant gene expression (decision IV/6);
- comprehensive analysis of the ways in which human activities, in particular forest management practices, influence biological diversity and assessment of ways to minimise or mitigate negative influences (element 2, dec. IV/7);
- analysing measures for minimising or mitigating underlying causes (including social, cultural and economic causes) of forest biological diversity loss (element 4, dec. IV/7). (It is noted building on dec. III/12 that the role of SBSTTA is not explicit but assumed in these last two points).

b) Lessons learnt from case study experiences on

- soil biota and pollinators in agriculture (dec. III/11);
- inland water biological diversity, its uses and threats, to develop an improved global picture and identify and focus assessments on areas lacking information (dec. IV/4);
- watershed, catchment and river basin management experiences and best practices that incorporate inland water biological diversity and ecosystem approaches (dec. IV/4);
- the introduction of alien species and genotypes and the impact of such introductions on inland water as well as marine and coastal biological diversity (decs. IV/4 and IV/5);

- sustainable forest management practices including arid and semi arid areas (dec. IV/7);
- indicators for coastal and marine, agricultural, forest and inland water biological diversity (dec. IV/1 and SBSTTA rec. III/5);
- issues of concern to Article 8(j) (para. 10, dec. IV/9); and
- case studies based in socio-economic and ecological analyses of different land use management options (dec. IV/6).

69. In addition, on the basis of scientific and technical knowledge and understanding, SBSTTA has been requested to undertake a number of tasks for the development of methodologies and techniques and the development of scientific and technical criteria, guiding principles and guidelines, including the identification of priorities:

a) Development of methodologies and techniques

b)

- methodologies to advance the elaboration and implementation of criteria and indicators for forest biological diversity (dec. III/12 and IV/7);
- methodologies for enhancing the integration of forest biological diversity conservation and sustainable use into an holistic approach to sustainable forest management, including the integration of traditional forest-related knowledge (dec. IV/7- the role of SBSTTA is assumed);
- methods and techniques for the valuation of goods and services of inland water ecosystems, incentives and policy reform, and the understanding of ecosystem function (dec. IV/4);
- the design and implementation of incentives measures (dec. III/18).

b) Development of criteria, guiding principles and guidelines and priority work

- to develop principles and other guidance on the ecosystem approach (dec. IV/1(B));
- to develop guiding principles for the prevention, introduction and mitigation of alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species and to identify the priority work pertinent to this issue in geographically and evolutionarily isolated ecosystems (dec. IV/1(C));
- to develop regional guidelines for rapid assessment of inland water biological diversity for Small Island States and States whose ecosystems suffer from ecological disaster (dec. IV/4);
- to develop criteria for the establishment of and for management aspects of marine and coastal protected areas (dec. IV/5)
- to compile a set of principles for designing national level monitoring programmes and indicators (dec. IV.1 and para. 7(d) of SBSTTA rec. III/5)).

III. PROCESS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND MECHANISMS FOR SBSTTA WORK

3.1 The Inter-sessional Process for Considering Substantive Issues and Developing Advice

Gathering and Analysing Information

70. The central function of SBSTTA is to translate scientific and technical knowledge into advice and options for COP and, on the basis of its review and assessment of available scientific, technical and technological information, to develop a series of recommendations to advise COP on appropriate action. As SBSTTA is the principal mechanism for channelling scientific information into the process, increasing the level of scientific input into SBSTTA would improve the effectiveness of the process. The opened meetings of SBSTTA should serve the function of filtering the outputs of expert and liaison groups to ensure that the advice coming from SBSTTA is practical and useful for the COP.

71. Progress on substantive issues also relies on the collection of accurate and reliable information from Parties. Articles 23 and 25 of the Convention and the programmes of work already initiated provide an indication of the types of information required with respect to the development of substantive issues. This includes:

- a) the definition of the ecosystem approach for the relevant thematic area, i.e., the scoping exercise;
- b) preliminary rapid assessments of biological, technical and institutional factors, on the basis of existing information and current activities;
- c) the development of indicators and criteria to identify critical elements of the thematic area in order to prioritise the activities of Parties and make assessments of the effectiveness of measures adopted;
- d) the identification of human impacts on the ecosystem; and
- e) the identification and assessment of the ways and means to minimize negative influences, in particular the identification of relevant low-cost technologies.

72. In general such information has been, in the first instance, provided by Parties and other relevant organisations. The experience gained to date shows that, in order to enhance the utility of this information, Parties need to be invited to submit their views within a common framework. Such a framework, as with the suggested guidelines for national reporting on the implementation of Article 6 (ref. decision II/17), should outline a suggested structure and form for the views as well as length and time frames. As an example of such work, the Secretariat has prepared outline frameworks for case studies which, together with the organisation of workshops by the Secretariat or through collaboration with other interested bodies, have been very useful in generating case study material. Calls for case studies have so far been made available to national focalpoints and more widely through the CHM for the issues of benefit sharing, incentive measures and agricultural biological diversity.

Presentation of Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and Options to COP

73. The Secretariat consolidates the contributions by Parties, countries, organisations, networks of experts and institutions, as well as ad hoc technical expert groups and liaison groups and, where appropriate, other workshops and relevant fora, with a view to facilitating the review and consideration by SBSTTA. As stated in the modus operandi of SBSTTA, the documentation to be prepared for meetings of SBSTTA will consist of concrete, focused draft technical reports and will include proposed conclusions and recommendations for consideration by SBSTTA. As such documents are limited in length to facilitate consideration by SBSTTA and

are prepared on the basis of a substantial volume of information from diverse sources, there is a need to make use, as appropriate, of peer reviews of draft documents and appropriate mechanisms to assist the Secretariat in analysing relevant information and in deciding on the best way to present the findings to SBSTTA. As outlined in section 3.2, additional liaison groups and technical expert groups are being established to assist in this regard.

74. SBSTTA may provide (i) advice in the identification of appropriate technologies and related knowledge, skills and management practices and techniques, and (ii) advice on ways and means to implement the different obligations under the Convention, drawing on social and economic sciences as appropriate, as well as (iii) guidance on policy issues related to scientific and technical programmes and international cooperation in research and development (but not other policy issues). Its advice is presented to COP in the form of draft decisions on scientific and technical issues and options for further work.

Cooperation and Collaboration with Scientific and Technical Bodies

75. As the work of SBSTTA essentially comprises the review of a synthesis of materials, assessments and analytical information from competent national and international bodies, the collaborative networking arrangements that are set up with relevant scientific and research organisations at regional and international levels are crucial.

76. In order to draw in all relevant scientific, technical and technological information, SBSTTA needs to call upon a range of sources including research bodies, other international organisations and conventions, the private sector and non-governmental organisations. In particular, in relation to technology, it is recognised that many bodies and networks need to be involved since much of the available expertise resides in the private sector and in non-governmental organisations, and SBSTTA also needs to develop broad partnerships in these areas. As the process moves further into the implementation phase and through increased use of inter-sessional bodies, this is expected to enhance opportunities for focused and functional cooperation, for example by drawing members of the research community and of other scientific bodies onto expert panels or liaison groups, as appropriate.

77. A report on cooperation with other bodies, for the period from the last meeting of SBSTTA in September 1997 until December 1998, is being considered under agenda item 3.1 of the current meeting (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/2). This issue is therefore not elaborated in detail in the present document. As reflected in that report, the Secretariat and SBSTTA have given particular emphasis inter alia, to cooperative activities that strengthen existing relationships with other scientific and technical bodies within the framework of the programme of work of SBSTTA. The activities of most relevance to this item are interactions with other scientific bodies of related Conventions such as the Scientific and Technical Review Panel of the Convention on Wetlands (STRP), the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice (SBSTA) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Scientific and Technical Advisory panel (STAP) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other scientific bodies, such as the International Council for Science (ICSU) and DIVERSITAS. The report also addresses emerging issues of importance such as the International Biodiversity Observation Year

(IBOY), the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP) and key assessments of relevance.

3.2 Mechanisms to Enhance the Effectiveness of the Work of SBSTTA

Liaison Groups and Ad Hoc Technical Expert Groups

78. Small, focused groups of experts and representatives of concerned organisations and bodies have proven to be effective in analysing information, data and knowledge from assessments, surveys and reviews and in drawing upon a range of expertise. In this regard, the modus operandi of SBSTTA envisages two types of inter-sessional mechanisms in addition to the work of the Secretariat to assist SBSTTA in elaborating advice and guidance on specific scientific and technical issues that have been identified.

79. Firstly, liaison groups may be established by the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Chair and other members of the SBSTTA Bureau, to assist in the preparation of documentation, and in order to coordinate with international and regional organizations, including non-governmental organizations and scientific unions and societies, qualified in fields relating to conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

80. Secondly, a limited number of ad hoc technical expert groups may be established, as required, for a limited duration, to address specific priority issues in the programme of work of SBSTTA. They should liaise with international, regional and national organizations, including non-governmental organizations and the scientific community, in order to draw upon the available knowledge and expertise. The expert groups will be encouraged to use innovative means of communication so as to minimize the need for face-to-face meetings, though, as appropriate, they may also convene meetings parallel to the meetings of SBSTTA.

81. In setting up such technical expert groups, the Executive Secretary is to use the relevant roster of experts to nominate, in consultation with the SBSTTA Bureau, no more than fifteen scientific and technical experts competent in the relevant field of expertise, with due regard to geographical representation and to the special conditions of least developed countries and small island developing States. It is noted that reports produced by the ad hoc technical expert groups should be submitted for peer review, as a general rule.

82. The first intersessional activities took place between the second and third meetings of SBSTTA and include the group of experts that met and elaborated the Jakarta Mandate on marine and coastal biological diversity (decision II/10), the liaison group meeting on indicators, and the liaison group meeting on forest biological diversity. The Jakarta Mandate group of experts was not a body reporting directly to SBSTTA, but in accordance with COP decision II/10, was convened to contribute to the development of a programme of work. On the other hand, it is recognised that an expert group reporting directly to SBSTTA (and thus an integral part of SBSTTA) might further the scientific and technical analysis sufficiently

to avoid a broad re-opening of the expert group's work at the opened SBSTTA meeting.

83. The liaison group on indicators (Wageningen, ~~Ma~~June 1997) was constituted through informal consultations by the Executive Secretary to assist in the preparation of the document for the third meeting of SBSTTA (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/9). The liaison group for forest biological diversity (Helsinki, May 1997) contributed to the draft programme of work on forest biological diversity which the ~~Execu~~ Executive Secretary put before the third meeting of SBSTTA for advice (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/5). It is envisaged that liaison groups may be organised in the lead up to COP to further work on indicators and the ecosystem approach, as well as to assist the Executive Secretary in the preparation of the draft programme of work on agricultural biological diversity based on the ongoing assessment.

84. The proposed work programme on marine and coastal biological diversity envisages two ad hoc technical expert groups to address the issues of mariculture and marine and coastal protected areas. In view of the programme of work of SBSTTA, four other specific priority issues have been identified for which ad hoc technical expert groups are required. As outlined in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/5, which presents the terms of reference, in addition to the marine and coastal ones, these expert groups are proposed to assist SBSTTA in its work on:

- a) the status and trends and options for the conservation and sustainable use of inland water biological diversity;
- b) the further development of the programme of work on the biological diversity of dryland, arid and semi-arid, Mediterranean, grassland and savannah ecosystems;
- c) the development of guiding principles for the prevention, introduction and mitigation of impacts of alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats and species;
- d) the status and trends of forest biological diversity and the identification of options for the conservation and sustainable use of forest biological diversity.

85. As SBSTTA begins to work increasingly through such ~~int~~ersessional bodies, in view of the need to make use of all available scientific, technical and technological expertise and knowledge, and in accordance with the modus operandi of SBSTTA, these bodies should incorporate and draw upon non-governmental and private sector expertise as readily as that of governments and ~~int~~governmental organisations.

Workshops and Other Inter-sessional work

86. A further intersessional mechanism has been the organisation of workshops with the financial and technical support of interested Governments and/or international organisations. Recent workshops that have been organised to contribute directly to the Convention process include, inter alia:

- a) the international workshop on the Ecosystem approach (Malawi, January 1998) UNEP/CBD/COP/4/Inf.9;

- b) the international workshop on removing the taxonomic impediment (Darwin, February 1998) UNEP/CBD/COP/4/Inf.28;
- c) the meeting of the DIVERSITAS working group of experts on scientific research that should be undertaken for the effective implementation of Articles 7, 8, 9, 10 and 14 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (Mexico, March 1998) UNEP/CBD/COP/4/Inf.19;
- d) the international workshop on pollinators in agriculture with an emphasis on bees (Sao Paulo, October 1998). (See CBD Internet page <http://www.biodiv.org/agro/agro1.htm>);
- e) the international workshop on incentive measures and impact assessment (implementation of decisions IV/10(a) and (c) of the Convention) (Gland, December 1998);
- f) the international technical workshop on opportunities, incentives and approaches for the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biological diversity in agricultural ecosystems and production systems (Rome, December 1998). (See CBD Internet page <http://www.biodiv.org/agro/agro1.htm>).

87. Where advice is more policy-relevant, a greater number of open-ended inter-governmental processes are being used, as in the case of access to genetic resources and Article 8(j), outlined in section 1.6 above. However, it is recognised that, at a certain stage, there may be a need for feedback on scientific and technical issues between SBSTTA and such processes.

88. SBSTTA has also begun to attempt to draw from international work carried out outside the auspices of the Convention, such as, inter alia:

- a) the meetings on inland waters held in Wageningen and in Norway prior to the third meeting of SBSTTA;
- b) the outputs of the meeting on alien species held in Trondheim, Norway, and the related work by SCOPE and the invasive species specialist group of IUCN (decision III/9);
- c) the 18th International meeting of the International Association for Impact Assessment (Christchurch, New Zealand, April 1998) (decision IV/10(c)).

89. In some cases, there appears to have been some reluctance to obtain the endorsement by SBSTTA and COP of the outputs of such activities, and there may be a need to clarify the appropriate mechanisms and processes to encourage and make better use of such activities in the work of SBSTTA.

Rosters of Experts, Peer Review and Focal Points

90. Rosters of experts have been established to assist the Executive Secretary in drawing upon the best expertise available from the different regions of the world. Rosters of experts have been set up for the four thematic areas and these are being currently introduced into an interlinking database. Further rosters have been initiated on indicators and access and benefit sharing and it is suggested

to also compile one for biological diversity impact assessment. To date they are being compiled in the relevant fields of the Convention on the basis of inputs from Parties. The modus operandi indicates that, as appropriate, they may also include experts from other countries and relevant bodies.

91. As outlined in the modus operandi, the Executive Secretary, as well as the ad hoc technical expert groups and liaison groups referred to above, are expected to make full use of such rosters of experts with a view to furthering scientific, technical and technological work. Greater use will be made of such rosters of experts, through requests to contribute, inter alia, to: peer reviews; questionnaires; clarifications or examinations of scientific, technological and technical issues; specific contributions to the compilation of documents; participation in global and regional workshops and assisting in connecting the Convention process to international, regional and national scientific, technical and technological processes.

92. The modus operandi of SBSTTA specifies that a list of focal points and focal persons to SBSTTA shall be established and regularly updated by the Executive Secretary, on the basis of information provided by Parties and other relevant regional, subregional and inter-governmental organisations. The potential uses of such focal points/persons should be clarified so as to solicit nominations in the required areas of expertise.

IV OVERVIEW OF THE WORK OF SBSTTA AND ISSUES REQUIRING CONSIDERATION

93. The thematic approach that has been adopted under the Convention can be somewhat confusing to those who have not been involved in its development, since the criteria or categories of themes vary. The resource base (water or land) distinguishes aquatic ecosystems (inland waters and marine and coastal ecosystems) from terrestrial ecosystems. In regard to the latter, certain thematic areas have been determined by vegetation or land-use type or economic sector, including agricultural, forest and grassland and savannah ecosystems. These may cut across other terrestrial ecosystems that are determined on the basis of ecological and physiographic criteria (climate, topography, resource-base and so forth), including dryland, semi-arid and arid ecosystems; mountain ecosystems and Mediterranean ecosystems. The thematic areas that are distinguished on the basis of vegetation or landuse type, topography or resource base may occur in more than one climatic zone, for example arid, temperate, tropical, and arctic zones. It is important to understand and take into account this overlapping of different ecosystems or thematic types in the development of the work programmes.

94. The ecosystem approach is being developed under the Convention as a holistic approach that takes into consideration the ecological factors (resource base, climate, soil, topography, altitude, biological resources and the ecological complexes, processes and interactions), as well as the social, economic and cultural factors that determine the use and management of components of biological diversity and their ecosystems. The term ecosystem as used above to define the thematic areas is thus distinct from its use in the concept of the "ecosystem approach", which emphasises human management considerations. The ecosystem approach is also different from the integrated approach which implies multi-disciplinarity, as it also takes into account interlinkages and synergies between components of biological diversity at genetic, species and ecosystem levels, as well as the ecological processes and interactions. SBSTTA may be able

to provide advice, as required, to avoid confusion and to ensure clarity in the use of terms and concepts.

95. One main thematic area or ecosystem type is being addressed at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Thus, from ~~WOPo~~ COPVII, the sequence adopted is: (i) dryland, Mediterranean, grassland and savannah ecosystems, (ii) forest ecosystems and (iii) mountain ecosystems. However, it is proposed that agricultural biological diversity will also be addressed by SBSTTA and by COPV to consider the further development of the work programme based on the assessment of activities and instruments. Likewise, in accordance with the workplan of SBSTTA and the time frame, as adopted in Annex II of decision IV/4, it is also proposed that inland waters should be considered by SBSTTA8 and SBSTTA-9 and by COP-VII in May 2004.

96. It is noted that, to date, little attention has focused on genetic diversity and that most attention is being placed on the ecosystem level during the first phase of implementation of the programmes of work under the Convention. In accordance with Annex I of the Convention, there may be a need for the identification of issues requiring attention in each of the thematic/ecosystem areas to ensure the identification and monitoring of described genomes and genes of social, scientific or economic importance. For example, work should be initiated on the conservation and sustainable use of microbial genetic resources, in particular those of greatest actual or potential value. The latest developments in molecular bioprospecting should deserve the attention of SBSTTA.

97. The present proposal on the draft programme of work of SBSTTA is only intended to provide the starting point for the consideration by SBSTTA of a longer term programme of work that sets out measurable goals and products and a time frame for their development. This issue is to be revisited and reviewed at every meeting of SBSTTA. Nevertheless, there is a need for more detail and precision in the recommendations of SBSTTA and decisions of COP regarding these features in the different programmes of work, in order to elaborate a more concrete rolling work programme of SBSTTA, that can be continuously reviewed, evaluated and adjusted, in a dynamic process.

Recommendation

98. In light of the above review and analysis and the proposals for the development of a strategic programme of work, SBSTTA is invited to :

- Review and endorse the proposed longer-term framework programme of work of SBSTTA for the period from the fourth to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (1992-2004) as outlined in annex 1, and provide appropriate advice in regard to its further development and implementation; and,
- Recommend that the proposed longer term framework programme of work of SBSTTA for the period from COP-IV to COP-VII (1999-2004) be approved by the COP at its fifth meeting.

**Annex 1: PROGRAMME AREAS TO BE CONSIDERED BY SBSTTA FROM
COP-4 TO COP-7 (1998-2004)**

SBSTTA MEETING	MAIN THEMATIC AREA	MAIN CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES	OTHER ISSUES
Fourth <u>June 1999</u>	Biological diversity of dryland, arid, semi-arid; Mediterranean; grassland and savannah ecosystems	Sustainable use, including tourism Alien species <u>Emerging Issue</u> : consequences of new technology for the control of plant gene expression	<u>Ad hoc</u> technical expert groups: TORs Global Taxonomy Initiative Biodiversity impact assessment
Fifth <u>Jan. 2000</u>	Ditto	Programme of work for dryland, arid, semi-arid, Mediterranean, grassland and savannah ecosystems. Sustainable use of biological diversity: sectoral activities for adoption of biodiversity-friendly practices and technologies Development of indicators of biological diversity	Assessment of activities and priorities for programme of work on agricultural biological diversity Ecosystem approach: further elaboration Guidelines for the second National Reports (including indicators and incentive measures) Review of phase I of the Clearing-house Mechanism and advice
COP-V (May 2000)			
Sixth (late 2000 or early 2001)	Biological Diversity of Forest Ecosystems	Alien species : guiding principles for the prevention, introduction and mitigation of impacts Access and Benefit-sharing	Article 8(j) Guidelines Guidelines for impact assessment Ecosystem approach and forest biological diversity
Seventh (2001)	Ditto	Guidelines to minimise or mitigate negative impacts of alien species Programme of work on forest biological diversity including traditional forest related knowledge and benefit sharing	Identification and monitoring including indicators Linkages between <u>in situ</u> and <u>ex-situ</u> conservation
COP-VI (May 2002)			
Eighth (2002)	Biological diversity of Mountain ecosystems	Protected areas Transfer of technology and technology cooperation	Sustainable use and role of the private sector and incentive measures <u>In situ</u> conservation: best practices and technologies including linkages with <u>ex situ</u> conservation Review of workplan on inland water biological diversity
Ninth (early 2003)	Ditto	Programme of work on mountain ecosystems Guidelines for technology transfer and cooperation Public education and awareness	Ecosystem approach for mountain areas and inland water ecosystems Identification and monitoring Review of programme of work on inland water biodiversity
COP-VII (May 2004)			