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**PROTECTED AREAS: LOOKING FOR SYNERGIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
SITE-BASED INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS AND PROGRAMMES**

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Executive Secretary is circulating herewith, for the information of participants in the ninth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), the present discussion paper prepared in collaboration with the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It provides a brief review of the role of various agreements which provide for nomination or recognition of specific sites, preliminary identification of areas that can lead to increased synergy and cooperation in the implementation of these agreements and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

2. Protected areas represent the most widely used tool for the conservation of the world's natural resources. There are many thousand protected areas around the world, and whether as reservoirs of biological diversity, sources of ecosystem services (such as provision of safe drinking water), barriers against natural disasters or places to reconnect people with nature, their long-term persistence is accepted as key to the future of human societies. Many of these sites are inevitably of international as well as national significance.

3. Given the importance of protected areas as a conservation tool, it is not surprising that they are actively promoted in a wide range of international conventions and programmes going back more than 70 years to the 1933 London Convention that called on Contracting Parties to establish "national parks" and "strict natural reserves" (the purpose of which was defined in the text of the Convention). Many of these international initiatives are listed in the annex to the present note.

4. Since then a range of international and regional agreements and programmes have come into effect which designate or recognize specific sites nominated by national governments or some other appropriate body at the national level. For example, the inscription of sites on the World Heritage List is given effect through the World Heritage Convention and Ramsar sites or wetlands of international importance are nominated under the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar 1971). Eleven such initiatives are listed in the table below. Although each initiative serves a different purpose, there is clearly opportunity

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for them to complement one another, provided implementation at both national and international levels is achieved in a coherent manner.

5. On the other hand, if these initiatives are applied and understood independently at national or international levels, rather than appropriately related, this may lead to confusion and duplication of effort, and to not taking advantage of potential synergies in implementation of the programmes. Lack of coordination can be a particular burden for those sites that are designation under several distinct agreements. For example:

- Doñana National Park, in Spain, has been designated under seven different initiatives. It is a Biosphere Reserve, a World Heritage site, and a Ramsar site, it has the European Diploma and is a Biogenetic Reserve, it is part of the Natura 2000 network and is a Special Area of Mediterranean Interest.
- The Camargue, in southern France, is recognized under five different agreements and programmes: the European Diploma, the UNESCO MAB programme, the Ramsar Convention, the Barcelona Convention, and the Council of Europe Biogenetic Reserves programme.
- As of 2003, 25 Ramsar sites are immediately adjacent to, or lie within, World Heritage sites; 72 Biosphere Reserves include World Heritage sites and 77 incorporate Ramsar sites; and a total of 17 areas incorporate Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage and Ramsar sites.

6. The value of achieving joint implementation of international instruments providing for *in situ* conservation has already been recognized by the secretariats and the technical and scientific advisory committees of treaties and programmes. This paper is intended to support ongoing efforts for achieving greater integration through:

(a) A brief review of the role of agreements which provide for nomination or recognition of specific sites of regional or global value for some defined reason.

(b) Preliminary identification of areas where an increased synergy and cooperation can be achieved in the short-term, and the means by which these might be achieved.

7. The timing of such a review is appropriate because the ninth meeting of SBSTTA, which will be held in Montreal from 10 to 14 November 2003 and the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to be held in Kuala Lumpur in February 2004 will address protected areas. Their outcomes will be influential at both national and international levels. It is therefore essential that the role of other international instruments concerned with protected areas is effectively considered within these discussions.

8. The Convention on Biological Diversity provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and for the equitable sharing of benefits resulting from that use. The Convention considers that an effective protected-area network is fundamental for achieving these goals. The key role of protected areas has repeatedly been emphasized in decisions of the Conference of the Parties, and they also form a central element of various thematic programmes of work. Provisions of the Convention and decisions of its Conference of the Parties promote a modern approach to *in situ* conservation. They embody a concept that is not dependent on setting aside resources found within the protected-area network, but one which promotes their integration into the national economy in a sustainable manner.

9. Section II of the present note sets out (i) the purpose and focus of the instrument, and its role concerning the creation of a network of identified sites; (ii) the availability of pre-determined lists of

conservation “objects” (key features, habitats or species) against which a systematic network of sites is constructed; and (iii) the existence of standardized guidelines and procedures for periodically assessing the effectiveness with which sites are managed, including the identification, characterization, resolution or mitigation of human-induced or other threats. Section III consists of a cross-check of bilateral and multilateral mechanisms leading to international cooperation in joint planning and implementation activities (e.g. memoranda of cooperation, joint work plans), paying special attention to (i) the evaluation of existing provisions for involvement in each others governance and scientific meetings; and (ii) the identification of common tools and procedures for integrating sites nominated under more than one agreement or programme. A few conclusions are drawn in section IV.

II. INTERNATIONAL DESIGNATIONS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO NATIONAL PROTECTED AREAS SYSTEMS

10. One of the most widely accepted definitions of a protected area is that developed by the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas: areas of land and/or sea specially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means (IUCN, 1994). It is further assumed by IUCN that for each protected area, a “management category” can be assigned based on the objectives of management of the area. This is both a means of comparing sites internationally, and demonstrating to countries that protected areas can serve a wide range of purposes.

11. The annex to the present note provides a relatively complete list of global and regional instruments that call for establishment of protected areas and protected area systems, including those that provide for the designation or recognition of specific individual sites of international value. Those initiatives that designate or recognize specific sites are also listed in table 1.

12. Under several of the agreements and programmes, the sites designated or recognized internationally are not necessarily protected areas as defined by IUCN. Even if they are protected areas, the international site may be larger than the national protected area it relates to, or it may include several nationally protected areas (potentially of a range of designations and categories). Alternatively, one national protected area may include several internationally recognized sites.

13. For example, all Ramsar sites are recognized as being wetlands of international importance, however this recognition does not automatically imply legal national protection of the biological diversity in these wetlands, although this would be expected. In fact, prior protection at the national level is not mandatory for the majority of treaties and programmes covered, although some specifically require the declaration of nominated sites as protected (e.g. the European Diploma), or the previous passage of legislation regulating the declaration and management of the protected area type proposed by the instrument concerned (e.g. the Barcelona Convention).

14. Whether there is previous protection or not, international recognition of specific sites raises their profile, frequently bringing some sort of financial and technical assistance with them, therefore making a substantial contribution to increasing the effectiveness of local conservation action. Accepting an international status for a specific area is an award that also incurs obligations to national authorities and site managers. Any lack of compliance with these obligations leading to the loss of baseline conditions and character of nominated sites, may finally result in the withdrawal of the designation or recognition with potentially serious effects on public opinion and political credibility.

15. The global and regional site-related agreements and programmes reviewed further in this paper comprise a subset of those listed in the annex to the present note, being: (i) instruments with a text establishing a defined protected area type specific to the convention or agreement; (ii) instruments with a text exhorting environmental protection, linked to protocols or other measures which require designation

of protected areas; (iii) instruments with a text specifying a list of sites. These initiatives are listed in table 1.

16. Table 2 depicts the situation of treaties and programmes regarding a number of approaches to implementation, which cover aspects such as the identification of potential sites for inclusion in priority lists, the existence of pre-defined lists of conservation “objects” and standardized mechanisms for the collection of information, among others. Each of these “approaches” is then assessed across the range of agreements and programmes.

Table 1: List of conventions, other treaties and programmes and related information considered in this review.

Instrument	Geographical coverage	Secretariat	Site "title" (network)	Number of sites	Sites in Danger	URL
<i>Developing objects-based networks</i>						
<i>Ramsar Convention</i>	Global	Ramsar Convention Bureau	Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites)	1,267	59	http://www.ramsar.org
<i>EU Birds Directive</i>	European Union	European Commission	Special Protection Areas (Natura 2000)	3,042	-	http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/nature
<i>EU Habitats Directive</i>	European Union	European Commission	Special Areas for Conservation (Natura 2000)	15,453	-	http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/nature
<i>Bern Convention</i>	Europe	Council of Europe	Areas of Special Conservation Interest (Emerald Network)	153	-	http://www.nature.coe.int
<i>Helsinki Convention</i>	Baltic	Helsinki Commission	Baltic Sea Protected Areas	62	-	http://www.helcom.fi
<i>Barcelona Convention and Protocol</i>	Mediterranean states & European Union	UNEP - MEDU	Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance	122	-	http://www.rac-spa.org.tn
<i>Cartagena Convention and SPAW Protocol</i>	Wider Caribbean	UNEP-CAR/RCU	Specially Protected Areas	?	-	http://www.cep.unep.org
<i>Recognising excellence</i>						
<i>World Heritage Convention</i>	Global	World Heritage Centre	World Heritage sites	167	17	http://www.unesco.org/whc
<i>European Diploma</i>	Europe	Council of Europe	Recipients of the European Diploma	61	-	http://www.nature.coe.int

Promoting research and education

<i>UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme</i>	Global	UNESCO MAB Secretariat	Biosphere Reserves	408	-	http://www.unesco.org/mab
<i>Biogenetic Reserves</i>	Europe	Council of Europe	Biogenetic Reserves	340	-	http://www.nature.coe.int

Table 2: Tools and mechanisms developed by reviewed agreements for the identification, characterization, management and monitoring of sites of special value for conservation.

Legend:

- ID – provides a reference classification system for the identification of potential sites
- CO – provides a pre-determined list of conservation objects
- SE – gives a set of criteria for selection
- NO – provides standardized instruments for nomination
- EA – sends expert missions to evaluate nominated sites
- MG – provides standardized instruments for guiding management
- AS – provides standardized instruments for periodic evaluation of performance
- TH – provides a system for the identification and characterization of threats
- SD – includes a record or list of sites in danger

Treaty or programme	ID	CO	SE	NO	EA	MG	EV	AS	TH	SD
<i>Ramsar Convention</i>	v	v	v	v	-	v	v	-	v	v
<i>Habitat Directive</i>	v	v	v	v	-	v	v	v	v	v
<i>Birds Directive</i>	v	v	v	v	-	v	v	v	v	v
<i>Bern Convention</i>	v	v	v	v	-	v	v	v	v	-
<i>Helsinki Convention</i>	v	v	v	v	-	v	v	-	v	-
<i>Barcelona Convention</i>	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	-
<i>Cartagena Convention</i>	v	v	v	v	-	-	-	-	v	-
<i>World Heritage Convention</i>	v	-	v	v	v	-	-	-	-	v
<i>European Diploma</i>	-	-	v	v	v	-	v	-	v	v
<i>UNESCO MAB</i>	v	-	v	v	v	v	v	-	-	-
<i>Biogenetic Reserves</i>	v	v	v	v	-	v	v	v	-	v

17. *Identification of sites:* Most treaties and programmes here reviewed use some type of biogeographical or habitat classification system as a reference in the identification of potential sites for inclusion in regional or global networks, or for assessment of coverage and the identification of major gaps in the network. The Ramsar Convention has developed a global classification (or typology) of wetland types. In evaluation of natural heritage nominations for World Heritage, IUCN uses the system of biogeographical provinces developed by Udvardy (1975), and reviews of coverage have taken several different habitat classifications and biogeographical systems into consideration. Only one instrument, the European Diploma, makes no use of such a system.

18. *Pre-defined lists of conservation “objects”*: Many of the instruments considered have defined some type of lists including “objects” that are of priority for conservation action (habitats, species or other key features). These lists may be included as annexes to the text of the treaty or programme (e.g. annexes I and II of the EU Habitat Directive). An interesting approach was implemented by the Council of Europe in relation to its programme on Biogenetic Reserves. As part of a systematic network development policy, the Council undertook studies for each biotope, identifying the most characteristic sites in each with the aim of having all these sites included in the network. Parties to the Cartagena Convention work together in the identification and selection of specially protected areas and protected species in accordance with Article 21 of the SPAW Protocol.

19. *Criteria for the selection of sites*: Quantitative criteria exist for almost all instruments, although some (notably the World Heritage Convention) do not provide clear numeric standards to aid in the selection process. Instruments in application across the Pan-European region (including global treaties, such as the Ramsar Convention) have made progress in the quantification of variates such as the population or habitat size to be considered as minimum protection targets. Parties to the SPAW Protocol of the Cartagena Convention are currently collaborating in the definition of common criteria for the selection of specially protected areas.

20. *Standardized mechanisms for nomination, management and evaluation*: Nomination is highly standardized in all instruments (i.e. they all require the filling of some sort of application form with basic details on the proposed site). Less typified instruments are in use for implementation of management, and the periodic evaluation of management effectiveness. The Ramsar Convention promotes best-practice in the management of Ramsar sites and the wise use concept is key to this purpose, and so it is encouraged by the treaty, which highlights the importance of designating new sites and provides tools to implement wise use at national level. Contracting Parties report on the degree of implementation of the treaty and give details on wetland strategies and action plans for further expanding the List. However, there is no significant effort to ensure a harmonized approach between the different initiatives, either in terms of formats and approaches, or reporting timetables.

21. *Harmonized data formats and definitions*: The European Environment Agency, which has a mandate to collect information from European countries on Natura 2000 sites amongst other things, has been concerned with opportunities for using harmonized definitions and classifications to reduce national work in providing information, and to facilitate international reporting and assessment. This includes compilation of information on national and international protected areas jointly with UNEP-WCMC and the Council of Europe, and development of common habitat or classification systems. Although this experience is limited to Natura 2000 and Emerald Network sites at present, it may be worth reviewing this experience to assess potential for application elsewhere.

22. *Expert missions*: These include basically two types: one for the verification of values declared in the nomination form (on-the-spot appraisals); and the other for assistance in the resolution of conflicts affecting the conditions or character of designated sites. The World Heritage Convention has set out a mechanism whereby IUCN experts visit natural sites and evaluate protection and management. They prepare a technical report and assess whether the site is of “outstanding universal value” in accordance with the Guidelines and Procedures for Implementation of the Convention. In cases of sites in danger, the World Heritage Committee may decide to send a mission of qualified observers to visit the property, evaluate the nature and extent of the threats and propose the measures to be taken. Ramsar Advisory Missions may also be sent to sites considered as in danger for assisting in finding solutions. The European Diploma

has also established this type of consultative mission in assessing whether the site meets the criteria for the award.

23. *Identification and characterization of threats:* A typified list of threats to the natural values of designated sites is available to the technical and scientific advisory bodies of most of the agreements considered in this review. Identification of threats is key to the implementation of those conventions that include provisions for the combat against pollution of the coastal and marine environment (Helsinki, Barcelona and Cartagena Conventions), and thus some degree of standardization is present in all of them. The World Heritage Convention uses the terms "ascertained" and "potential" danger to nominated properties and attempts an initial qualitative classification of these two categories. Less clarity generally exists in all instruments about the socio-economic factors causing threats.

24. *Sites in danger:* Several instruments have established a system to warn about possible major threat to sites, or to ascertained dangers affecting designated sites. These include, for example, the List of World Heritage in Danger, and the Montreux Record established by the Ramsar Convention. In both cases affected sites are incorporated until the situation improves, and active steps are taken to ascertain the threats and judge the actions that need to be taken. In the case of the Bern Convention there is a procedure which makes it possible to verify application of the convention's provisions. This includes response to "complaints" (for example by an NGO), and frequently involves on-the-spot appraisals and recommendations to the government concerned to carry out a number of precise actions. A danger to a Natura 2000 site can lead to the responsible authority taken to court.

III. MECHANISMS FOR INTER-AGREEMENT COOPERATION

25. Governing bodies and technical and scientific advisory committees of treaties and programmes here reviewed have recognized the convenience of achieving increased synergy and integration on areas such as the identification and designation of sites, site management planning; periodic assessment and monitoring; and communication, education and public awareness. However there is a large step between recognizing a need and acting on it effectively, and this needs active planning.

26. *Inter-initiative agreements:* Increasingly, convention and programme secretariats are defining areas of common interest by means of bilateral and multilateral agreements signed between treaties and programmes. A good example is the relationship between the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity. Relationship between these two agreements has progressed rapidly, with the third version of a quadrennial joint work plan just signed. The Ramsar Convention has actively been promoting joint planning and implementation with other international instruments. The Convention on Biological Diversity is also seeking integration with other regional and global initiatives, while various other agreements have commenced to interact among them too. Table 3 lists mechanisms of cooperation among the agreements reviewed in this paper.

Table 3: Situation of site-related treaties and programmes in relation to definition and implementation of activities of cooperation.

Legend:

MoC – Memorandum of Cooperation; signed or in preparation

MoU – Memorandum of Understanding; signed or in preparation

JWP – Joint work plan;

C – cooperation is mentioned but not in an specific way;

I – Full integration of conservation action.

A number as a superindex to the instrument indicates the number of the last version of documents guiding cooperation.

Agreement	<i>Ramsar Convention</i>	<i>Habitats Directive</i>	<i>Birds Directive</i>	<i>Bern Convention</i>	<i>Helsinki Convention</i>	<i>Barcelona Convention</i>	<i>Cartagena Convention</i>	<i>World Heritage</i>	<i>European Diploma</i>	<i>MAB Programme</i>	<i>Biogenetic Reserves</i>
<i>Ramsar Convention</i>											
<i>Habitat Directive</i>	C										
<i>Birds Directive</i>	C	I									
<i>Bern Convention</i>	C	I	I								
<i>Helsinki Convention</i>	-	-	-	-							
<i>Barcelona Convention</i>	MoC	-	-	C	C						
<i>Cartagena Convention</i>	MoC	-	-	-	-	C					
<i>World Heritage</i>	MoU	-	-	-	-	-	-				
<i>European Diploma</i>	C	C	C	C	-	-	-	C			
<i>MAB programme</i>	JWP	-	-	-	-	-	-	C	C		
<i>Biogenetic Reserves</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	C	-	
<i>CBD</i>	MoU JWP	-	-	-	-	C	C	MoC	-	MoC ²	-

² MoC with UNESCO

27. *Joint work programmes:* Joint planning is essential in the identification of areas of common interest between partner treaties and programmes. Full involvement in each others' governance and scientific meetings is a key first step in achieving this goal, and this has already been acknowledged to some extent in most, if not all, the mechanisms for cooperation identified in table 3. For example, action 10 of the joint programme of work between the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme and the Ramsar Convention provides for increased cooperation between secretariats and scientific and technical subsidiary bodies and working groups. This includes the participation of representatives from each initiative in the scientific and technical meetings of the other.

28. *Liaison meetings:* As part of the joint work plan 2002-2006 between Ramsar and the Convention on Biological Diversity, the two instruments agreed to jointly organize liaison group meetings to review and refine the programme of work on biological diversity of inland water ecosystems. Collaboration in developing programmes of work seems a highly effective means of increasing collaboration in conservation action. This collaboration continued in the scientific meetings of the Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity in March 2003, when the Ramsar Convention Bureau presented the programme to the meeting of the Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity.

29. *Parallel development:* Early identification of issues of common interest is of particular interest in the nomination and management of sites potentially eligible for multiple international designations. There are a number of examples of joint actions in nomination, classification, listing and management of internationally valuable sites. For example the ongoing efforts to integrate the *Emerald* and Natura 2000 networks across the Pan-European region present an excellent case-study. In order to designate an Area of Special Conservation Interest, governments must deposit a standard data form with the Secretariat of the Council of Europe. This form is based on the database designed for Natura 2000; it can be completed electronically and the software permits the transfer of data collected by other regional projects.

30. *Collaboration in identification and management of sites:* The Joint Programme of Work between the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme and the Ramsar Convention requires partner agreements to assess the status of those sites wholly or partially designated as Ramsar sites and Biosphere Reserves, and those joint sites also designated as World Heritage sites, and review their status, boundary relationships, and inclusion of the requirements of both instruments in management planning. The programme of work also requests the identification and review of the status of those areas that include wetland ecosystems designated only as Biosphere Reserves, and anticipates work with the relevant Ramsar authorities and MAB Committees to encourage the designation of those meeting Ramsar designation criteria as Ramsar sites, and vice versa.

31. *Sharing of information:* Each of the initiatives shares information to a greater or lesser extent, and makes information publicly available. However, the manner in which this is achieved varies very widely, and this is not necessarily done in a systematic manner. For example, while information on all Ramsar Sites is available online as lists, maps and descriptions, there is no similar easily accessible information on biogenetic reserves. Although there is easily accessible information on World Heritage, Biosphere Reserve and Ramsar sites, it is all made available in an unconnected manner and in different formats. Comparative and comparable information is difficult to find. It may be useful in this respect to review European experience on a collaborative project between the European Environment Agency, UNEP-WCMC and the Council of Europe to build a Common Database on Designated Areas (CDDA). This project under current development aims at streamlining information on protected sites from national to European level, within three components: sites designated under national systems, sites designated under

European Union regulations, sites under international designations. The CDDA will soon be accessible through the European Clearing House Mechanism.

32. *Common criteria:* The identification of common criteria for identification of sites is key to the implementation of a widely comprehensive agenda of cooperation. Instruments with a Pan-European focus already have a unified source (a list of common conservation “objects”) against which to apply treaty-specific criteria, regardless their specific purpose. Action 11.4 of the joint programme of work between the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme and the Ramsar Convention requires the review of the criteria and supporting guidance for selecting and designating Ramsar sites and Biosphere Reserves, the preparation of guidance on the joint application of the criteria for sites qualifying under both instruments, and their dissemination among Ramsar Contracting Parties and MAB participating countries so as to assist in further designations.

33. *Threats to sites:* Other key aspects include the joint revision of procedures under separate agreements for reporting and addressing change in the natural conditions and ecological character and the socio-economic factors causing threats to sites. Treaties and programmes are seeking ways for improving information sharing and harmonization of procedures, including the delivery of joint missions to sites in danger. For example, the World Heritage Centre and the Ramsar Convention Bureau have collaborated closely over concerns about the Ichkeul National Park in Tunisia, which is both a World Heritage and a Ramsar site, and over Srebana in Bulgaria.

34. *Demonstration of co-management:* Demonstration of the joint application of on-the-ground conservation action proposed by partner agreements is also a key issue. Action 12.5 of the Joint Programme of Work between the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme and the Ramsar Convention solicits the development of projects for the co-management of jointly-designated sites, exemplifying the delivery of requirements of both Ramsar and MAB. Action 12.6 requests the implementation in the Caribbean area of demonstration projects to illustrate the joint delivery of the requirements of Ramsar, MAB, and the SPAW Protocol of the Cartagena Convention.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

35. Reviewed treaties and programmes may be separated into the following three, non-mutually exclusive categories (table 1):

(a) *Developing an object-based network* – those initiatives that aim at systematically developing international networks for the protection of pre-determined habitats and species, and ensuring the protection of key features.

(b) *Recognizing excellence* – those initiatives that aim to recognize excellence without necessarily providing a systematic protection of species and ecosystems.

(c) *Promoting research and education* – those initiatives that are oriented towards representativeness in order to facilitate opportunities for research, education and training.

Many of the initiatives also pursue the integration of conservation objectives into the management of surrounding land, but this tends to cut across other objectives.

36. *Integration of initiatives:* Opportunities for enhanced cooperation are perhaps easiest to achieve between treaties and programmes belonging to the same category, and even more so

between those also sharing a geographical focus. The best example of integration is that between the Emerald and Natura 2000 networks. Both are being constructed using common selection criteria and against a unified list of conservation objects. Special Protection Areas declared under the EU Birds Directive are part of the Natura 2000 network, along with Special Areas for Conservation designated under the Habitats Directive. Sites of value existing in other Pan-European countries fall under the umbrella of the Bern Convention as Areas of Special Conservation Interest, and are incorporated into the Emerald Network. In effect, the EU Birds and Habitats Directives implement the Bern Convention within European Union countries.

37. Increased cooperation is possible among instruments of different categories and with distinct purposes too. However, areas and mechanisms for co-operation need to be more clearly established, including common quantifiable targets of bilateral and multilateral implementation. Some areas where work is being carried out include the following:

38. *Identifying opportunities for multiple designations:* All initiatives agree that there is opportunity for collaborative action leading to the addition of new sites and more area to international networks. This includes, for example, the "cross-designation" of sites already declared under one or more initiatives (e.g. a new Ramsar site within an existing World Heritage site or Biosphere Reserve), and the joint nomination of sites which qualify for multiple designations (e.g. a large wetland with outstanding natural values and economic importance for local communities). The purpose of this is to ensure effective networks of internationally significant sites, better integration between these networks on the ground, and improved understanding by those involved. A broader based systematic review of all these networks, with the support of national agencies in a number of countries could provide a valuable step forward.

39. *Bridging gaps in existing networks:* Regional and global networks are in active process of assemblage. None of them might be regarded as yet as complete, and the level of under-representation varies widely between treaties, with a number of assessments of relative coverage going on. For example, the current conformation of the Ramsar List reflects the cumulative result of decisions by individual Parties, rather than a globally coordinated targeted approach. Targets for improving representation can be developed if the distribution of less well represented types of wetlands is better known. Some agreements have made an outstanding progress in the identification of sites fulfilling criteria for inclusion in existing networks across the region of influence (e.g. Emerald Network and Natura 2000). For World Heritage, a number of thematic studies have been made as part of the Convention's "Global Strategy". In all cases there is scope for further review, and if this is done in a coordinated manner for all initiatives there are potential cost savings and synergies. This could be done on a thematic basis, starting for example with coastal wetlands (which would incorporate the interests of almost all the listed initiatives, and therefore be a good pilot).

40. *Defining conservation objects of common interest:* Identification of potential sites to be nominated under site-related treaties and programmes needs to be based as far as possible on objective criteria. Quantitative data about the extension and abundance of objects of conservation interest is essential, but even before this it is important to identify and list those objects that are of importance in a scientifically rigorous way. Experience gained by the European Union and the Council of Europe in the construction of priority lists of species and habitats of regional importance is illustrative, and can be used as a reference to build similar lists for other instruments. Some European countries are also well advanced in the determination of minimum size of natural habitats and wild populations, so decisions on whether to include sites in *Natura 2000* (or the *Emerald Network*) or not are much easier to take. Similarly, national priority lists of wetland ecosystems are well developed and so they are good aids to the decision-making process

concerning *Ramsar site* designation. In summary, experience in mechanisms for deciding on what are key sites might be exchanged and discussed, in order to identify potential mechanisms for making decisions on sites in a more rigorous manner.

41. *Threats to sites*: All of the initiatives are in one way or another concerned with threats to listed sites. Consolidated lists of human-induced or other threats affecting sites designated under single or more international instruments could be valuable in helping national authorities, site managers and advisory missions to find solutions, and ultimately avoid the declassification of sites or the withdrawal of the recognition or designation. Similarly the sharing of experience through case-studies and best-practice guidelines. There is already cooperation in this area, as was highlighted earlier between UNESCO MAB and the Ramsar Convention, and joint missions between the Ramsar Convention Bureau and the World Heritage Centre. Site managers have a key role to play in the identification of threat categories, their underlying causes and observed consequences upon natural habitats and native species. Their experience and opinion should be actively sought and shared, and the international initiatives could help coordinate this.

42. *Harmonising nomination and reporting*: There are currently substantial differences in reporting and nominations formats and procedures between the different initiatives, despite the fact that much of the information required is the same. This can be a particular problem for sites that are involved in a range of initiatives (such as the Camargue or Doñana mentioned earlier). For this reason, UNEP and WCMC are working on a review of reporting and nomination formats and procedures, with a view to working with secretariats to modify current practice.

43. *Developing mechanisms for improved sharing of information*: Information is widely available on each initiative, and for most (though not all) initiatives information is readily available on listed sites. However, the information and documentation is spread between a range of different websites, and there is no coordinated access to it. This is clearly something that can be achieved, and something that can be done with minimum effort to help countries participating in the different initiatives. Coupled with a more standardized approach to reporting and nomination of sites, this could lead to far better dissemination of information compiled on the sites by each of the different international initiatives - ensuring that there is more potential for information collected from countries to be used in an efficient manner.

44. *Improved understanding*: It seems likely that understanding of all the initiatives and how they relate is not good enough and that there would be value in developing some form of brochure or document that provide good comparative information. A first step has been taken on this with the recent issue of the journal PARKS, but this needs to be taken a step further. The aim should be that a site manager can look at the brochure and see how these initiatives relate, and how his site might relate to them.

45. *Sharing of experience of site managers*: As the sites in these international networks are by their nature of both national and international significance, they are inevitably the focus of much management attention. It therefore seems appropriate to ensure the sharing of experience across the networks in the form of case-studies and identification of best-practice.

46. *Integrating the Convention on Biological Diversity*: An enriched participation of the Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity in the identification of important sites from the perspective of biological diversity, and their designation as some sort of CBD-led protected area approach would result in: i) the development of a solid scientific basis for international coordination by Parties of the protected area network that is required to maintain globally and nationally optimum levels of natural habitats; ii) the facilitation of the elaboration and adoption of

management principles, tools and practices; and iii) the provision of an adequate framework for managing transboundary ecosystems. It could also lead to better access to financial support through the Global Environment Facility.

47. *Mechanisms for liaison and agreement:* In the context of these preliminary conclusions, each secretariat might review the mechanisms that it currently has in place for collaboration and cooperation with other agreements, and consider how these can be improved. This may include the development of trilateral or multilateral mechanisms, rather than the more usual bilateral ones.

48. These initial ideas have been prepared in order to promote discussion by the secretariats and scientific bodies of the different initiatives, with the aim of increasing collaboration at both national and international levels in the implementation of these initiatives in a coherent manner. Next steps might include the following:

(a) Brainstorming meeting of initiative secretariats to review these and other ideas for increasing collaboration, and to identify a way forward.

(b) Side-events and informal discussion at forthcoming convention scientific and governance meetings to promote the collaborative approach.

(c) Information papers to support discussion, including review of opportunities in specific areas of potential harmonizations (such as in reporting and information management).

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Convention on Biological Diversity

General information on the CBD and protected area issues and themes can be found at the following Web site: www.biodiv.org/programmes/cross-cutting/protected.

Annex

**List of conventions, treaties and agreements, together with relevant associated protocols,
which encourage the protection of areas of land or sea for the purpose of nature
conservation (based on work for UNEP-WCMC by Mark Spalding)**

Legend:

- 1 Text encourages states either directly or in equivalent language to establish protected areas
 - 2 Text establishes a defined form of protected area (specific to that convention or agreement)
 - 3 Encourages protection of areas but such areas not recognized by IUCN
 - 4 General text simply exhorts environmental protection, often linked to protocols or other measures which require designation of protected areas;
 - 5 Text specifies a list of sites
- Those initiatives in italics relate to the preceding item

Short Title	Title	Place of Adoption	Adopted	Notes
London Convention	Convention relative to the Preservation of Fauna and Flora in their Natural State	London	1933	1
Western Hemisphere Convention	Convention on Nature Protection and Wild Life Preservation in the Western Hemisphere	Washington	1940	1
Whaling Convention	International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling	Washington	1946	3
-	International Convention for the Protection of Birds	Paris	1950	1
-	European Diploma: Resolutions of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe*		1965	2
African Convention	African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources	Algiers	1968	1
-	Man and the Biosphere Programme*		1970	2
	<i>Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves</i>	<i>Seville</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>2</i>
Ramsar Convention	Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat	Ramsar	1971	2
World Heritage Convention	Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage	Paris	1972	2
Barcelona Convention	Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution	Barcelona	1976	
<i>SPA Protocol</i>	<i>Protocol concerning Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas</i>	<i>Geneva</i>	<i>1982</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>SPA and Biodiversity Protocol</i>	<i>Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean</i>	<i>Barcelona</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>2</i>
	Convention on Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific	Apia	1976	
	The European Network of Biogenetic Reserves : Resolutions of the Committee of Ministers Council of Europe*		1976	2

Short Title	Title	Place of Adoption	Adopted	Notes
MARPOL 73/78	International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto		1978	3
Kuwait Convention	Kuwait Regional Convention for Co-operation on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Pollution		1978	4
Bern Convention	Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats	Bern	1979	1
Wild Birds Directive	Council Directive on the conservation of wild birds (EU)		1979	2
Bonn Convention	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals	Bonn	1979	
	<i>Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds</i>	<i>The Hague</i>	1995	1
CCAMLR	Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources	Canberra	1980	1
	European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities	Madrid	1980	
Abidjan Convention	Convention for Co-operation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region		1981	4
Lima Convention	Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and Coastal Area of the South-East Pacific		1981	4
	<i>Protocol for the Conservation and Management of Protected Marine and Coastal Areas of the South-East Pacific</i>	<i>Paipa (Colombia)</i>	1989	2
	Benelux Convention on Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection	Bruxelles	1982	
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea	Montego Bay	1982	1
Jeddah Convention	Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment		1982	4
Cartegena Convention	Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region	Cartagena de Indias (Colombia)	1983	
<i>SPAW Protocol</i>	<i>Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region</i>	<i>Kingston</i>	1990	2
-	ASEAN Declaration on Heritage Parks and Reserves	Bangkok	1984	5
Nairobi Convention	Convention for the Protection , Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region	Nairobi	1985	
	<i>Protocol concerning Protected Areas and Wild Fauna and Flora in the Eastern African Region</i>	<i>Nairobi</i>	1985	2

-	ASEAN Agreement on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources	Kuala Lumpur	1985	1
Noumea Convention	Convention for the Protection of Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region		1986	4
The Antarctic Treaty	The Antarctic Treaty	Washington	1959	3
	<i>Agreed Measures for the Conservation of Antarctic Fauna and Flora</i>	Brussels	1964	3
	<i>Protocol to the Antarctic Treaty on Environmental Protection</i>	Madrid	1991	3
	Convention for the Conservation of the Biodiversity and the Protection of Wilderness Areas in Central America	Managua	1992	
Convention on Biological Diversity	Convention on Biological Diversity	Rio de Janeiro	1992	1
Habitats Directive	Council Directive on the conservation of natural habitats of wild fauna and flora (EU)		1992	2
Bucharest Convention	Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution		1992	4
OSPAR Convention	The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic - Oslo and Paris conventions	Paris	1992	4
Helsinki Convention	Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area	Helsinki	1992	4
	Agreement on the Preparation of a Tripartite Environmental Management Programme for Lake Victoria	Dar-es-Salaam	1994	
European Landscape Convention	European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe)	Florence	2000	1

* Regarded as a “non-treaty agreement”, or “soft law”, not legally binding under the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties.
