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Item 3.1 of the provisional agenda*

PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THEMATIC PROGRAMMES OF WORK*Note by the Executive Secretary***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The present note has been prepared by the Executive Secretary to briefly report on progress in the implementation of the work under the thematic programmes of the Convention since the last report submitted to the eighth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA). The thematic programmes considered are:

- (a) Biological diversity of inland water ecosystems;
- (b) Marine and coastal biological diversity;
- (c) Agricultural biodiversity;
- (d) Forest biological diversity;
- (e) Biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands;
- (f) Biological diversity of mountain ecosystems.

The present note has been prepared for reporting purposes only, as any substantive issues and recommendations relating to the thematic programmes of work concerned are presented in the other relevant working documents for the ninth meeting of the Subsidiary Body (see UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/1/Add.1, annex II).

* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/1.

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SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice may wish to take note of the progress report on the implementation of the thematic programmes of work.

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PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THEMATIC PROGRAMMES OF WORK

A. Biological diversity of inland water ecosystems

1. The structure of this progress report follows that of the programme of work in annex I to decision IV/4, by which it was adopted. Further, it responds to decision VI/2 of the Conference of the Parties requesting the Executive Secretary to: (a) strengthen collaboration with the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands on the implementation of the River Basin Initiative and the third joint work plan; (b) implement paragraph 5 of decision V/2, i.e., review the programme of work and include in its review advice on the further elaboration and refinement of the programme of work; and (c) report on the implementation of the Global Taxonomy Initiative's activities on inland waters.

1. Assessment of the status and trends of the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems and identification of options for conservation and sustainable use

(a) Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat

2. In its recommendation VIII/2, SBSTTA welcomed the synergy being developed between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention and noted the progress made in the implementation of the third joint work plan between the two conventions.

3. The Executive Secretary invited comments on the report on the status and trends of, and threats to, inland water biological diversity, which was prepared by the World Resources Institute, financed through support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (DGIS) under the "Conservation and Wise Use of Wetlands - Global Programme", managed by Wetlands International (WI) as part of a grant agreement between WI and the Bureau of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The document is being revised for possible publication in the Secretariat's Technical Publications Series.

4. The Ramsar Bureau participated in the eighth meeting of SBSTTA, held in Montreal from 10 to 14 March 2003. The Secretariat participated in the meeting of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) of the Ramsar Convention held in Gland from 8 to 11 April 2003, including ongoing involvement in primarily e-mail-based expert working groups, which have been set up by Ramsar's STRP in accordance with resolution VIII.28.

(b) The River Basin Initiative

5. The Executive Secretary organized, in collaboration with the Ramsar Bureau, a side-event during the eighth meeting of SBSTTA to provide delegates with detailed information about the River Basin Initiative (RBI). To pursue its objectives of networking, awareness creation and capacity-building on integrated water resources management, the RBI has set up a website (www.riverbasin.org), which is now fully operational. Through its Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) ToolBox it provides an interactive web-based platform for knowledge sharing. As a central feature of the ToolBox, members submit case studies, including critical analysis, lessons learned and positive experiences that might be considered for replication. Case-studies are peer-reviewed through the Global Water Partnership (GWP) network.

(c) International Association of Impact Assessment

6. A joint CBD/Ramsar/IAIA symposium was organized at the Annual Conference of the International Association of Impact Assessment (IAIA) held in Marrakech, from 17 to 20 June 2003. Based on the discussions and the analysis of case-studies, proposals for developing guidelines for impact assessments were made. The draft guidelines taking into account all stages of environmental impact assessment and

strategic environmental assessment processes and the ecosystem approach for inland water developments are included in the notes by the Executive Secretary in outcome oriented targets and deadlines for the implementation of the revised programme of work on inland biological diversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/14).

(d) ***Third World Water Forum***

7. The Third World Water Forum took place in Kyoto from 17 to 22 March 2003. The World Water Development Report, to which the Secretariat contributed, was launched during the World Water Forum. ^{1/}

(e) ***Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations***

8. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have explored areas for possible joint activities and are negotiating a memorandum of cooperation, which will include themes relevant to inland waters.

(f) ***Global Invasive Species Programme***

9. The Secretariat continued its collaboration with the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP), including on the assessment of the impacts of invasive alien species on inland water ecosystems. Further information can be found in paragraph 32 (b) of the progress report on the implementation of the work on cross-cutting issues (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/3).

(g) ***Millennium Ecosystem Assessment***

10. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) working group on the freshwater systems cross-cut met from 3 to 7 May 2003 in Cairns, Australia, to discuss the format for the MA report on fresh water systems.

(h) ***Wetlands International***

11. In the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding for the conservation and wise use of wetlands, the Secretariat continued to provide advice as a member of the Global Steering Group of the “Wise Use and Poverty Alleviation” section.

2. *Provision of scientific advice and further guidance to assist in the national elaboration of annex I of the Convention (as pertaining to inland water ecosystems)*

12. Paragraph 12 of the programme of work on biodiversity of inland water ecosystems strives to achieve convergence between approaches on criteria and classification of inland water ecosystems. SBSTTA recommended the adoption of the Ramsar classification of wetlands as an interim classification system and invited the Ramsar STRP, in collaboration with SBSTTA, to further elaborate the guidelines on the criteria (recommendation VIII/2, paragraph 7). STRP is addressing this issue through one of its working groups.

3. *Review of methodologies for assessment of biological diversity (as pertaining to inland water ecosystems)*

13. As part of the implementation of the third joint work plan (2002-2006) between the Secretariat and the Ramsar Convention, a joint expert meeting on methods and guidelines for the rapid assessment of

^{1/} <http://www.worldwaterforum.net>

biological diversity of inland water ecosystems was convened from 2 to 4 December 2002 in Montreal. The eighth meeting of SBSTTA welcomed the guidelines. Their publication, in collaboration with Conservation International and The Nature Conservancy, is planned.

14. The Executive Secretary convened an expert meeting on indicators of biological diversity, including indicators for rapid assessment of inland water ecosystems, from 10 to 12 February 2003 in Montreal. The draft report was circulated for peer-review. The Executive Secretary has prepared a note (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/10) based on this report.

15. Pursuant to paragraph 18 of decision VI/23, recommending the continuing cooperation between the Secretariat and GISP, GISP organized a workshop to design an assessment of the impacts of invasive alien species on inland water ecosystems held in Washington from 14 to 15 July 2003. A report on the biological and socio-economic impacts on invasive alien species on inland water ecosystems will be prepared and made available as soon as possible.

4. *The urgency of needed action on taxonomy*

16. Major progress on the accessibility of information on freshwater fish and invertebrates has been made through several web-based databases and identification guides. The FishBase, for example, holds information on more than 27,000 species of fish including pictures and description of their biology, ecology and geographic distribution. ^{2/} New Zealand has made available web-based identification resources on various inland water taxa including aquatic plants, fish and selected invertebrates. ^{3/}

5. *Elaboration and refinement of the programme of work on biological diversity of inland water ecosystems*

17. Through paragraph 4 (b) of recommendation VIII/2, SBSTTA recommended that the Conference of the Parties adopt the revised programme of work, which had been prepared by the liaison group on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems. At the same time, SBSTTA requested the Executive Secretary to prepare, for consideration by the national focal points and subsequently SBSTTA, prior to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, a schedule of short, medium and long-term outcome-oriented targets and deadlines for implementation of the programme of work.

18. In response to this request, the Executive Secretary is preparing, in consultation with a primarily e-mail-facilitated liaison group and national focal points, a document entitled "Outcome-oriented targets and deadlines for the implementation of the revised programme of work on inland water biological diversity" (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/14).

6. *Cooperation*

19. As part of its work programme, the Global Environment Facility Council (GEF) approved the following projects relating to inland water biodiversity, in addition to medium-sized projects and enabling-activities approved in the past six months: (a) *Africa* - Protection of the North West Sahara Aquifer System (NWSAS) and related humid zones and ecosystems (US\$ 0.6 million); (b) *Global - China, Indonesia, Russian Federation* - Integrated management of peatlands for biodiversity and climate change - the potential of managing peatlands for carbon accumulation while protecting biodiversity (US\$ 0.997 million); (c) *Lithuania* - Conservation of inland wetland biodiversity in Lithuania (US\$ 3.441 million); (d) *Mongolia* - Conservation of the Eg-Uur Watershed (US\$ 1 million); (e) *Slovakia* - Conservation, restoration and wise use of calcareous fens (US\$ 1 million); (f) *South Africa* - Cape Action for People and the Environment (CAPE) biodiversity and sustainable development project (see

^{2/} <http://www.fishbase.org/search.html?server=NRM-Stockholm>

^{3/} <http://www.niwa.cri.nz/rc/prog/freshbiodiversity/tools>

<http://www.gefonline.org/projectDetails.cfm?projID=1516>); (g) *Zambia* - Securing the environment for economic development (US\$ 4.24 million). ^{4/}

B. Marine and coastal biological diversity

20. The following section reviews progress made in each programme element of the programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity enabled by decision IV/5, as well as additional priorities identified in decisions V/3 and VI/3, and recommendation VIII/3 of SBSTTA.

1. Programme element 1 - Integrated marine and coastal area management (IMCAM)

21. At its fifth meeting, in decision V/3, the Conference of the Parties endorsed further work on developing guidelines for coastal areas, taking into account the ecosystem approach and encouraged SBSTTA to continue to work on ecosystem evaluation and assessment.

22. In this context, the Government of the Netherlands, together with the Ramsar Convention, the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Pollution from Land-based Activities (GPA) and international agencies such as Wetlands International, is continuing its work towards the development of biodiversity-relevant guidance on IMCAM. A progress report is under preparation.

23. The Secretariat participated in a one-day Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) workshop “Beyond Biodiversity – Sustainable Management and Conservation of the Oceans Using EBM”. The workshop was held in Cairns, Australia, on June 20, following the workshop on high seas biodiversity conservation, discussed in paragraph 39. EBM is consistent with the Convention ecosystem approach, and the workshop discussed lessons learned from case studies, as well as responses to challenges of an ecosystem-based approach to managing human activities in the oceans.

24. In response to operational objective 2.1 of decision IV/5, the Caribbean Environment Programme of the United Nations Environment Programme is coordinating a number of regional-level IMCAM initiatives. These include GEF projects on reducing pesticide run-off to the Caribbean Sea and on integrating management of watersheds and coastal areas in Small Island States in the Caribbean.

25. The Executive Secretary, together with a liaison group operating by e-mail, has finalized his work on the development of rapid assessment methods for marine and coastal biological diversity as requested by SBSTTA in its recommendation VI/5. The Executive Secretary prepared an information document on methods and guidance for rapid assessment of marine and coastal biodiversity, to be considered under agenda item 5.3 on monitoring and indicators.

26. The Secretariat participated in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment meeting on marine and coastal issues in held in Vancouver from 7 to 11 April 2003. The meeting established how marine and coastal ecosystems would be addressed throughout the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment reports.

27. The Executive Secretary continues to liaise with the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) with regard to two initiatives aimed at the development and application of indicators: (a) the Study Group on Coral Bleaching and Indicators of Related Effects; and (b) the ad hoc Study Group on Benthic Indicators.

^{4/} <http://www.gefonline.org/projectList.cfm>

2. *Programme element 2 - Marine and coastal living resources*

(a) **Coral reefs**

28. Decision VI/3 requested the Executive Secretary to continue facilitating the implementation of the specific work plans on coral bleaching and on physical degradation and destruction of coral reefs (SBSTTA recommendation VIII/3, annex II). This section reports a number of activities implementing these.

29. The Secretariat participated in the meeting of the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) Coordinating and Planning Committee (CPC) in Gland, Switzerland, from 8 to 9 May in order to foster a closer working partnership with ICRI, as requested in decision VI/3, paragraph 2. The Secretariat was officially accepted as a partner of ICRI.

30. As a member of the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) the Secretariat participated in the Management Group meeting on 7 May 2003, also in Gland. The Secretariat also continues to provide input to the next Status of Coral Reefs report, which will be published in 2004. The current and past status reports are available online at <http://www.gcrmn.org>.

31. The Government of Mexico hosted the ICRI Regional Workshop for Tropical Americas in Cancun, Mexico from 12 to 14 June 2002. The reports of the workshop are available at <http://www.icriforum.org>.

32. The Second International Tropical Marine Ecosystems Management Symposium (ITMEMS 2) took place in Manila from 24 to 27 March 2003. The outcome of the symposium included an Action Statement and case studies related to the management of tropical marine ecosystems and resources worldwide; ^{5/} an analysis of meeting outcomes will be available for the information of participants at the ninth meeting of SBSTTA.

33. The International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN) continues its work on exchange of experience in good management practices in over 30 demonstration and target sites in the Wider Caribbean, Eastern Africa, East Asian Seas and the South Pacific regions. Additional information is available at <http://www.icran.org>.

34. The Coral Reef Degradation in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO) project has presented its Status Report 2002 (<http://www.cordio.org>). The status report describes the condition of coral reefs throughout the central and western Indian Ocean and presents the results of targeted research projects conducted within the last 18 months.

35. The World Resources Institute has commenced work in the Caribbean, conducting “a Reefs at Risk” analysis of the Wider Caribbean Region, following the release of the Southeast Asia report in 2002. Additional information is available at <http://www.wri.org/marine/>.

36. The international Center for Living Aquatic Resources Management (ICLARM) has started to coordinate coral valuation activities, using information from ReefBase, Reefs at Risk and other ICRAN partners. ICLARM will also conduct coral-reef, fisheries and mariculture analysis, as well as policy analysis. ^{6/}

^{5/} <http://www.icriforum.org/itmems.html>

^{6/} <http://www.worldfishcenter.org/>

(b) ***Other living resources***

37. FishBase, a global information system on fish, has added to its database and decision making support toolbox a 'Length-Frequency Wizard' and the capacity for estimation of total mortality, annual reproductive rate, intrinsic rate of population increase and population doubling time. FishBase is available at <http://www.fishbase.org>.

38. The twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in November 2002 considered, *inter alia*, proposals to list toothfish, seahorses, humphead wrasses and certain sharks in the appendices. As a result, whale sharks and basking sharks were listed in Appendix II to the Convention, and all seahorses will be listed by May 2004.

(c) ***Analyses and advice on scientific, technical and technological matters related to marine and coastal genetic resources***

39. As follow-up to SBSTTA recommendation VIII/3, the Secretariat participated in the Workshop on the Governance of High Seas Biodiversity Conservation, held in Cairns, Australia, from 16 to 19 June 2003. This workshop discussed the status of high seas biodiversity, including genetic resources, governance arrangements, and options for conservation and sustainable use.^{7/} The outcomes of this meeting will contribute towards international collaborative efforts for the conservation of high seas biodiversity.

3. ***Programme element 3 - Marine and coastal protected areas***

40. Aspects of SBSTTA recommendation VIII/3 B on marine and coastal protected areas (MCPA) are being implemented through a number of ongoing activities, some of which are summarized below:

41. One such activity is the development of a scorecard to assess progress in achieving Management effectiveness goals for marine protected areas; the World Bank facilitates this project.

42. The national biodiversity management framework endorsed by SBSTTA in its recommendation VIII/3 is being put in practice by the Australian Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) through the implementation of its Representative Areas Program.^{8/}

43. The World Heritage Convention, the Man and Biosphere Convention and the Ramsar Convention have produced a publication called Coral Reef Protected Areas in International Instruments. The initiative provides a response to the information needs identified in recommendation VIII/3, with regards to coral reefs. Similar information needs on a regional level are addressed through the Directory of Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (<http://www.rac-spa.org.tn/>), maintained by the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC-SPA); and the Caribbean Protected Areas Management (CaMPAM) database.^{9/} The development of a comprehensive global database on marine and coastal protected areas (recommendation VIII/3 B, annex I, priority 2.2, project (a) will be undertaken by UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre in collaboration with WWF and the University of British Columbia.

44. The UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) is continuing its training of trainers programme on marine protected areas management through conducting a third regional training programme. A fourth course is scheduled for late 2003. The manual for the course is available online at <http://www.cep.unep.org/issues/MPA%20manual.htm>.

^{7/} <http://ea.gov.au/coasts/international/highseas/index.html#1>

^{8/} http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/key_issues/conservation/rep_areas/

^{9/} <http://www.cep.unep.org/pubs/databases/databases2.html>

4. *Programme element 4 – Mariculture*

45. FAO and the Secretariat continue their collaboration (recommendation VIII/3 C on mariculture). FAO has updated its Fishstat Plus fisheries software and datasets. ^{10/}

46. ICLARM has initiated the Biodiversity and Genetic Resources Research Program (BGRRP), to ensure that the benefits of biodiversity are available to the poor in the developing world. This project corresponds to research priorities identified in recommendation VIII/3 C.

5. *Programme element 5 - Alien species and genotypes*

47. The GEF/UNDP/IMO Global Ballast Water Management Programme (GloBallast) is assisting developing countries to reduce the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens in ships' ballast water, to implement relevant guidelines and to prepare for the new IMO ballast water Convention. The 49th meeting of the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) was held in London from 14 to 18 July 2003.

6. *Programme element 6 – General*

48. The Executive Secretary, with a liaison group, is in the process of elaborating the programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity based on the guidance provided in recommendations VIII/3 A-D for the consideration of the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Institutional cooperation

49. The Secretariat was unable to participate in the fourth meeting of the United Nations open-ended informal consultative process on oceans and the law of the sea, held in New York from 2 to 6 June 2003, but provided written input into the process. The Consultative Process noted the scientific and technical work under the Convention relating to marine and coastal biodiversity, reiterated its support to the programme of work, and welcomed the Secretariat's efforts towards the implementation of ecosystem-based management.

50. As part of its work programme, the GEF Council approved the following projects relating to marine and coastal biodiversity in addition to medium-sized projects and enabling activities approved in the past six months: (a) *Costa Rica* - Improved Management and Conservation Practices for the Cocos Island Marine Conservation Area (US\$ 1 million); (b) *Guinea Bissau* - Coastal and Biodiversity Management Project (US\$ 4.8 million); (c) *Seychelles* - Improving Management of Whole Island Ecosystems by Civil Society in Seychelles (US\$ 0.839 million); (d) *South Africa* – Cape Action for People and the Environment (CAPE) biodiversity and sustainable development project (see <http://www.gefonline.org/projectDetails.cfm?projID=1516>). ^{11/}

C. *Agricultural biological diversity*

51. In paragraph 2 of its decision VI/5, the Conference of the Parties adopted the steps for the further implementation of the programme of work on agricultural biological diversity. In line with that decision, the Executive Secretary is expected to prepare the following reports for consideration by SBSTTA prior to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties:

^{10/} <http://www.fao.org/fi/statist/FISOFT/FISHPLUS.asp>

^{11/} <http://www.gefonline.org/projectList.cfm>

(a) A preliminary assessment of the status and trends of agricultural biodiversity in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment; and

(b) An analysis of lessons learned from case-studies, in collaboration with FAO, the World Trade Organization (WTO), Parties and other relevant organizations.

52. In addition, the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting is to consider recommendations from SBSTTA on capacity building and policy (decision VI/5, annex I, table 2).

53. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, *inter alia*, to:

(a) Prepare a draft format for the thematic report on agrobiodiversity and report to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting (paragraph 5); and

(b) Study further the impacts of trade liberalization on agrobiodiversity in collaboration with UNEP, FAO, WTO and other relevant organizations (paragraph 17).

54. Additionally, the Conference of the Parties, *inter alia*:

(a) Invited Parties, other Governments, and relevant organizations to submit case-studies on their experiences with mainstreaming matters related to agricultural biodiversity in their plans, programmes and strategies, to be made available through the clearing-house mechanism (paragraph 3);

(b) Adopted and decided to periodically review, as appropriate, the Plan of Action for the International Initiative for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Pollinators (paragraph 8) and welcomed the leading role played by FAO (paragraph 9); welcomed efforts to establish the African Pollinators Initiative (paragraph 10); invited Parties, other Governments, and relevant organizations to contribute to the implementation of the International Pollinators Initiative (paragraph 11); and invited Parties, other Governments, the financial mechanism and funding organizations to provide adequate and timely support to the implementation of the Plan of Action (paragraph 12);

(c) Decided to establish an International Initiative for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Soil Biodiversity (paragraph 13);

(d) Established an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on the potential impacts of genetic use restriction technologies on smallholder farmers, indigenous and local communities and Farmer's Rights to report to both the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions and SBSTTA prior to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (paragraph 21); and

(e) Invited the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and other relevant organizations to examine, in the context of their work, the specific intellectual property implications of genetic use restriction technologies, particularly in respect of indigenous and local communities (paragraph 24).

55. In response to these decisions, the following activities were carried out.

1. Steps for the further implementation of the programme of work by the Executive Secretary and partner organizations

56. The Executive Secretary and main partner institutions (including FAO, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), the

Organisation for Economic Co-operation (OECD) and UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC)) initiated collaborative arrangements for the implementation of the programme of work. Preliminary discussions point to the need to review the deadlines and milestones set in light of: (a) the institutional capacities of the key partners, (b) the timing of the submission of the third national reports in time for the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and (c) the recommendations of the proposed multi-year programme of work until 2010, proposing the next in-depth review of the programme of work on agricultural biological diversity at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The following activities have been carried out by partner organizations.

(a) ***Programme element 1 – Assessments***

57. *Component of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) on Agricultural Biological Diversity.* Given the substantial work that FAO will be undertaking on the Comprehensive Assessment of the Status and Trends of Agricultural Biodiversity and the upcoming assessments on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources (second report) and the Animal Genetic Resources (first report), the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment focuses on 2 issues: (a) agricultural biodiversity in the context of the interlinkages and trade-offs associated with management for various ecosystem services, and (b) dissemination of findings from the other ongoing agricultural biodiversity assessment activities, complementing other ongoing work (e.g. by FAO). The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment has developed specific outlines for chapters of Millennium Assessment related to agriculture and biodiversity, in the framework of the broader cooperation between the Secretariat and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, as indicated in the progress report by the Executive Secretary on the implementation of the work on cross-cutting issues (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/3).

58. *State of the world's traditional knowledge on biodiversity (Article 8(j)).* A team of consultants was hired to carry out a study on the status and trends regarding the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities (annex I of decision VI/10), which includes, *inter alia*, information related to traditional knowledge and agricultural biological diversity. The final report from this study will be completed in August 2003 for submission to the third meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions.

(b) ***Programme element 2 – Adaptive management***

59. Case-studies are currently being gathered through ongoing initiatives such as those reported under assessments above.

(c) ***Programme element 3 – Capacity building***

60. The German Government through the German Technical Co-operation Agency (GTZ) is organizing, in collaboration with FAO, the Secretariats of UNCCD and the Convention, the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and a number of country partners, a subregional Workshop on Agricultural Biological Diversity in West Africa, scheduled to take place by the end of 2003 with the objective to develop a common vision on the role of agricultural biodiversity and poverty alleviation at national levels.

(d) ***Programme element 4 – Mainstreaming***

61. Information on mainstreaming is provided under paragraph 65 below.

2. *World's agrobiodiversity assessment and lessons learned from case-studies*

62. The Executive Secretary and partner institutions (e.g. FAO and Millennium Ecosystem Assessment) are exploring collaborative arrangements for the implementation of the World's Assessment on Agricultural Biological Diversity. On recommendation of the collaborating partners, it is proposed to postpone the preparation of the final report and related milestones by two years. The same proposal is being made for the compilation and analysis of existing data, information and case-studies related to the four programme elements (see decision VI/5 paragraph 2 and annex I), postponing the comprehensive analysis of lessons learned in line with the third national reporting in time for submission to the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

3. *Draft format for thematic report*

63. Pursuant to paragraph 5 of decision VI/5, the Executive Secretary is finalizing the format for the thematic report on agricultural biodiversity to be included in the third national report, taking into account review comments received from the Bureau of SBSTTA, SBSTTA focal points (including during a side-event in the course of the eighth meeting of SBSTTA), and by Parties and other Governments and organizations.

4. *Trade liberalization and agricultural biodiversity*

64. In response to paragraph 17 of decision VI/5, the Executive Secretary is revising the study entitled "Domestic Support Measures and their Incentive Effects for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity". An invitation for peer-review of the draft study was extended to all national focal points and to relevant international organizations. Additionally, the Executive Secretary initiated a study entitled "The Impact of Trade Liberalization on Agricultural Biological Diversity - A Synthesis of Assessment Methodologies". The report of the two studies will be finalized in time for its submission to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

5. *Case-studies on mainstreaming (paragraph 3, decision VI/5)*

65. To date, no case-study has been submitted on experiences with mainstreaming matters relating to agricultural biodiversity in their plans, programmes and strategies.

6. *International Pollinators Initiative (IPI)*

66. In support of the IPI (paragraphs 8 to 12, decision VI/5), FAO developed a project proposal on the conservation and sustainable use of pollinators, for consideration of the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Other initiatives exemplifying international, regional and national level activities contributing to the IPI are:

(a) The African Pollinator Initiative (API), collaboratively lead by the Environment Liaison Centre International (ELCI), the Plant Protection Research Institute of the Agricultural Research Council (ARC-PPRI) of South Africa and the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE). The initiative was inaugurated in February 2002. During the first trimester of 2003, API prepared a draft Plan of Action on its future key activities;

(b) An international workshop held from 27 to 29 May 2003 in South Africa, to develop a guide for policy makers on pollinator conservation and sustainable use;

(c) In support to the IPI, GEF recently approved a Project Preparation and Development Facility (PDF) block B proposal entitled "Conservation and management of pollinators for sustainable agriculture, through an ecosystem approach". UNEP is the implementing agency and FAO is the

executing agency for the project (full project costs US\$ 1.645 millions, GEF contribution US\$ 0.7 million). The duration of the project is estimated to be 24 months;

7. *International Soil Biodiversity Initiative (paragraph 13, decision VI/5)*

67. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) organized an Expert Meeting on Soil Erosion and Soil Biodiversity Indicators in Rome from 25 to 28 March 2003 (<http://www.oecd.org>).

8. *Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on genetic use restriction technologies (GURTS) and Smallholder Farmers, Local and Indigenous Communities and Farmers' Rights (paragraph 21, decision VI/5)*

68. The Executive Secretary convened an AHTEG meeting on the potential impact of genetic use restriction technologies on smallholder farmers, local and indigenous communities and Farmers' Rights, in Montreal from 19 to 21 February 200. By notification 2002-113, dated 19 December 2002, the Executive Secretary invited international organizations, smallholder farmers, and indigenous and local communities to submit their views on the subject of the meeting. The views were tabled and considered by the AHTEG. The final report of the meeting is available as an information document (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/INF/6).

9. *Intellectual property implications of GURTs in respect of indigenous and local communities (paragraph 24, decision VI/5)*

69. On 11 April 2003, the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) submitted to the Executive Secretary a memorandum, adopted by the Council of UPOV, on the position of UPOV concerning decision VI/5 of the Conference of the Parties on potential impacts of GURTs. The document was distributed to the AHTEG for inclusion in their work.

10. *Cooperation*

70. The GEF Council approved the draft Operational Program on Sustainable Land Management as a framework to operationalize the land degradation focal area, which identified sustainable agriculture and sustainable rangeland/pasture management as part of areas for financial support. As part of its work programme, the Council approved the following projects relating to agrobiodiversity in addition to medium-sized projects and enabling activities approved in the past six months: (a) *China* - Gansu and Xinjiang pastoral development project (US\$ 10.720 million); (b) *Kazakhstan* – *In situ* conservation of Kazakhstan's mountain agro-biodiversity (US\$ 3.023 million). ^{12/}

11. *The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*

71. In its decision VI/6, the Conference of the Parties:

(a) Appealed to Parties and other Governments to give priority consideration to the signature and ratification of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (paragraph 3); and requested the Executive Secretary to develop cooperation with the Secretariat of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture acting as the Interim Committee for the Treaty (paragraph 5);

(b) As of 15 June 2003, 77 States and the European Community had signed the International Treaty and twenty-one States had ratified or acceded to it;

^{12/} <http://www.gefonline.org/projectList.cfm>

72. In response to the requests from the Conference of the Parties to the Secretariat, the Executive Secretary is discussing a draft memorandum of cooperation with the secretariat of the Commission acting as the Interim Committee for the Treaty.

D. Forest biological diversity

73. In decision VI/22, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Initiate, in collaboration with the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), actions on the following areas identified as important first steps towards the implementation of the expanded work programme: ecosystem approach, collaboration with other bodies, cross-sectoral integration, protected areas, forest law enforcement and related trade, sustainable use/benefit sharing and servicing capacity-building (paragraph 19 (a) to (g));

(b) Develop, in consultation with other partners, a format to report on implementation of the expanded programme of work (paragraph 22) and develop a format for voluntary thematic national reports (paragraph 27);

(c) Continue its active support for and participation in the work of the UNFF and the CPF (paragraph 36).

(d) Invite the CPF to support the implementation of the expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity (paragraph 38) and urge the CPF to consider the Convention on Biological Diversity to be the focal point for forest biological diversity within the CPF (paragraph 39);

(e) Invite the AHTEG on Biological Diversity and Climate Change to consider issues related to interlinkages between biological diversity and climate change (paragraph 41);

(f) Establish a liaison group on non-timber forest resources, including members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), The World Conservation Union (IUCN), and other relevant organizations (paragraph 42). The objectives of the liaison group are to facilitate the development of a joint work plan to bring harvesting of non-timber forest products, with a particular focus on bushmeat, to sustainable levels (annex I to decision, programme element 1, goal 4, objective 2, activity (a));

(g) Transmit the report of the AHTEG on Forest Biological Diversity to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and their bodies, to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and to ensure follow up through the liaison group between the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and United Nations Convention on Climate Change (paragraph 45).

74. In response to these decisions, the following activities were carried out.

1. Ecosystem approach: (paragraph 19 (a))

75. The Executive Secretary convened a AHTEG meeting on the ecosystem approach, which took place in Montreal from 7 to 11 July 2003. One purpose of the meeting is to clarify the conceptual basis of the ecosystem approach in relation to the concept of sustainable forest management. The report will be presented in a report of the Expert Meeting on the ecosystem approach (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/INF/3). The results and recommendations of the meeting will serve as inputs for the preparation by the Executive Secretary of the note on further elaboration and guidelines for implementation in ecosystem approach, (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/8).

2. *Collaboration with other bodies (paragraph 19 (b))*

76. A comparative analysis of common elements between the Convention expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity and the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF)/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) proposals for action has been prepared and is being reviewed by the UNFF secretariat.

3. *Sustainable use/benefit sharing (paragraph 19 (f))*

77. The Executive Secretary prepared a report based on a questionnaire circulated to Parties and relevant organizations on "Management of forest biodiversity, sustainable use to derive products and services, and benefit-sharing". The report was used in preparation of the note on lessons learned and recommendations on management of forest biodiversity, sustainable use to derive products and services, and benefit-sharing (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/9/Add.1).

4. *Servicing capacity-building (paragraph 19(g))*

78. The Executive Secretary completed the first version of a web-based portal, through the Secretariat clearing-house mechanism, aimed at facilitating the implementation of the expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity through the exchange of information on technological and financial aspects. ^{13/}

5. *Reporting formats (paragraphs 22 and 27)*

79. The draft format for a voluntary report on implementation of the expanded programme of work on forest biodiversity has been prepared by the Executive Secretary. Consultations were undertaken with all national focal points, the Bureau of SBSTTA, and the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties. The Secretariat participated in two meetings of the CPF Task Force (including representatives of FAO, ITTO, UNFCCC, UNCCD, and UNFF) on Streamlining Forest-related reporting in November 2002 and in February 2003. During these two meetings, members of the Task Force carried out a comparative analysis of their reporting formats, and highlighted the current opportunities and constraints facing the harmonization and streamlining process regarding forest-related reporting. The final outputs of the meetings were reported on during the third UNFF session held in Geneva from 26 May to 6 June 2003. The Task Force also launched, during the CPF meeting in Rome on 9 March 2003, a web-based "portal" that provides easy access to national reports submitted to the CPF Task Force member organizations, the corresponding reporting formats, key information on related efforts regarding reporting, as well as information on the work of the Task Force. A CPF flyer on initial efforts at streamlining forest-related reporting was also produced. A section has been included in the format for third national reports for soliciting information to assess the implementation of related objectives and activities in the expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity. During the second meeting of the CPF Task Force on Streamlining Forest-related reporting, specific recommendations were made regarding the national report format of the Secretariat on forest biological diversity in order to facilitate data collection by Parties.

6. *Support and participation in the work of the UNFF and CPF (paragraph 36)*

80. On 10 January 2003, a meeting was held in Montreal between the Head of the Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests and the Executive Secretary. The meeting concentrated on identifying ways and means of increasing coordination between the Secretariat of the Convention and UNFF secretariat, as well as ways and means for the Secretariat of the Convention to support the work of the UNFF secretariat. Also, and at the request of UNFF secretariat, the Secretariat of the Convention provided input into pre-session documents related to (a) economic aspects of forests; (b) forest health and

^{13/} <http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/areas/forest/links.asp>

productivity; and (c) maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs, all of which were discussed as main items on the third UNFF session, held in Geneva, from 26 May 2003 to 6 June 2003.

7. *CPF support for the implementation of the expanded programme of work on forest biodiversity (paragraph 39)*

81. At the CPF meeting held in Rome on 9 March 2003, the members of the CPF discussed the specific role of the Secretariat as the focal point within the CPF on forest biodiversity. It was further clarified that its role was similar to that of any of the focal agencies within the UNFF.

8. *Interlinkages between biological diversity and climate change (paragraph 41)*

82. The AHTEG held its third and final meeting in Helsinki, from 13 to 16 May 2003, to finalize the report on interlinkages between biological diversity and climate change and advice on the integration of biodiversity considerations into the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol. Previous versions of the report went through a series of review cycles by experts, governments, and relevant organizations, between November 2002 and April 2003. The assessment report served as inputs for the preparation by the Executive Secretary of the review of interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/11).

9. *Liaison group on non-timber forest resources (paragraph 42, and annex I to decision, programme element 1, goal 4, objective 2, activity (a))*

83. The Executive Secretary started the preparation of a background document on salient features of bushmeat harvesting issues, impacts of harvesting on animal populations, approaches to measuring sustainability, and approaches at developing game management programmes. The document will serve as a basis for discussions at the liaison group meeting, tentatively scheduled to take place before the end of 2003.

10. *Report of the AHTEG on forest biological diversity (paragraph 45)*

84. The report was referenced in the fifth report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on Biodiversity. In addition, the report served as source material for the preparation of the paper on interlinkages between biological diversity and climate change and advice on the integration of biodiversity considerations into the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol, related to paragraph 41 of the decision and as mentioned in paragraph 85 above.

11. *Progress under each programme element*

85. In addition to the above, the following section reviews progresses made under each programme element of the expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity, enabled by decision VI/22, annex I.

(a) **Programme element 1 – Conservation, sustainable use and benefit-sharing**

86. The Government of Germany organized the International Workshop on the “Further Development of the Ecosystem Approach” in October 2002 (<http://www.bfn.de/09/090203.htm>). The Institute for World Forestry through the University of Hamburg, Germany, also produced a working report entitled “*Ecosystem Approach versus Sustainable Forest Management—Attempt at a Comparison*” in April 2003.

87. The Secretariat co-sponsored the publication “*Using the Ecosystem Approach to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity*”, along with partners IUCN, Ramsar Convention, UNESCO-MAB, WWF, and Royal Holloway, University of London.

88. Fauna and Flora International, the Natural Resources Institute (University of Greenwich), and the United Kingdom Overseas Development Institute (ODI) produced in 2002 the report *Assessment of the Solution-Orientated Research Needed to Promote a more Sustainable Bushmeat Trade in Central and West Africa*. The World Bank produced a related report *Hunting of Wildlife in Tropical Forests: Implications for Biodiversity and Forest Peoples*.

(b) **Programme element 2 – Institutional and socio-economic enabling environment**

89. As a member of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, the Secretariat is co-sponsoring the CPF Sourcebook on Funding Sustainable Forest Management. ^{14/}

(c) **Programme element 3 – Knowledge, assessment, and monitoring**

90. The Government of Austria, through the Institute of Forest Sector Policy and Economics, carried out an analysis on *Implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action in relation to the work programme of the Secretariat*. The results of the study were presented at a side event during the third session of the United Nations Forum on Forests held in Geneva on 3 June 2003.

12. Cooperation

91. As part of its work programme, the GEF Council approved the following projects relating to forest biodiversity in addition to medium-sized projects and enabling activities approved in the past six months: (a) *Bhutan* - Linking and enhancing protected areas in the temperate broadleaf forest ecoregion of Bhutan (LINKPA) (US\$ 0.792 million); (b) *Colombia* - Naya biological corridor in the Munchique-Pinche sector (US\$ 0.75 million); (c) *Lebanon* - Integrated management of cedar forests in Lebanon in cooperation with other Mediterranean countries (US\$ 0.556 million); (d) *Madagascar* - Participatory community-based conservation in the Anjozorobe forest corridor (US\$ 0.975 million); (e) *Peru* - Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the Amarakaeri communal reserve and adjoining indigenous lands (US\$ 0.989 million); (f) *Peru* - Poison dart frog ranching to protect rainforest and alleviate poverty (US\$ 0.813 million); (g) *Viet Nam* - Integrated watershed and biodiversity management in Chu Yang Sin National Park (US\$ 0.998 million); (h) *Viet Nam* - The Green Corridor (US\$ 0.998 million); (i) *Zambia* - Securing the environment for economic development (World Bank). ^{15/}

E. Biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands

92. In decision VI/4, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to prepare, in collaboration with the secretariats of relevant conventions, proposals to develop a mechanism to coordinate activities in biodiversity, desertification/land degradation and climate change, and enhance synergies in the implementation of this programme of work and other thematic programmes of work of the Convention. Proposals made by the Executive Secretary for the coordination mechanism were further elaborated and adopted by the eighth meeting of SBSTTA for consideration by the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (recommendation VIII/4).

93. The following sections review progress made under each activity of the programme of work on dry and sub-humid lands enabled by decision V/23 and SBSTTA recommendation VIII/4.

^{14/} <http://www.fao.org/forestry/cpf-sourcebook>

^{15/} <http://www.gefonline.org/projectList.cfm>

I. Progress in the implementation of the programme of work

(a) Activity 1: Assessment of status and trends

94. Following SBSTTA recommendation VIII/4, the Global Land Degradation Assessment (LADA) of FAO and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) have been invited to prepare proposals of how the needs of the dry and sub-humid lands programme of work could be integrated and addressed through their ongoing activities. In response to the request, LADA has commissioned a study, which identifies how biodiversity issues could be integrated into the LADA methodology for application at local, agro-ecological zones and national levels. LADA country teams in Senegal, Argentina and China are testing the suggested methodologies. Additionally, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment is exploring how the: (a) framework and (b) methods/tools, and (c) sub-global assessment lessons that the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment will be providing in 2003 and 2005 could contribute to national level assessments, i.e. in the context of dry and sub-humid lands biodiversity.

95. The World Resources Institute (WRI) devoted an Earth Trends special issue on drylands. ^{16/} Complementing the WRI's Pilot Analysis of Global Ecosystems (PAGE) reports, a web-based report *Drylands, people, and ecosystem goods and services: web-based geospatial analysis* is available. ^{17/}

(b) Activity 2: Areas of particular value and/or under threat

96. The UNEP-WCMC, together with the UNDP Drylands Development Centre and other potential collaborators, in consultation with the Executive Secretary are currently preparing a proposal for developing an "alternative" hotspot map, which would identify areas in which biodiversity is under the threat of land degradation/desertification as priority areas for action, amongst other. The work will be guided by a liaison group, which should convene prior to or during the ninth meeting of SBSTTA.

(c) Activity 3: Indicators

97. The AHTEG on Indicators which met in Montreal from 10 to 12 February 2003, addressed aspects relevant to dry and sub-humid lands.

98. The Land Use Cover Change (LUCC) project of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP), at the third IGBP congress in Banff, Canada, 19 to 24 June 2003, addressed desertification and biodiversity indicators during two workshop sessions. ^{18/} Discussions on future collaboration, linking science and policy levels are taking place with the Secretariat.

99. A UNCCD workshop on benchmarks and indicators in the Caribbean subregion took place in Saint Lucia from 24 to 27 February 2003.

(d) Activity 4: Knowledge on processes that affect biodiversity

100. The AHTEG on Biodiversity and Climate Change, which met in Helsinki from 13 to 16 May 2003, discussed issues pertaining to biological diversity and climate change, which are also relevant dry and sub-humid lands. The item will be addressed under agenda item 5.4 of the ninth meeting of SBSTTA.

101. Collaboration with scientific institutions was strengthened. In particular, DIVERSITAS agreed to consider the "Synthesis table of expected outcomes and timeframes, potential actors, and indicators of progress in the implementation of the programme of work on dry and sub-humid lands"

^{16/} http://ideas.wri.org/pubs_content_c.cfm?ContentID=734

^{17/} http://pubs.wri.org/pubs_description.cfm?PubID=3813

^{18/} <http://www.igbp.kva.se/congress/downloads.html>

(UNEP/CBD/COP/7/3, recommendation VIII/4, annex I) in its review meeting in March 2003 on core project area III entitled “Developing the science of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity”.

(e) **Activity 5: Benefits derived from biological diversity**

102. The WWF's Macroeconomics for Sustainable Development Programme Office (MPO) and its Economic Change, Poverty, and the Environment project have released a new publication, *Paying for Environmental Stewardship*.^{19/} In this report, the authors identify key issues and international experiences in using markets and common-pool property to reduce rural poverty and enhance resource conservation, amongst other in dry and sub-humid lands.

(f) **Activity 6: Best management practices**

103. The Third World Network of Scientific Organizations (TWNISO) - UNEP/GEF project “Promoting best-practices for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity of global significance in arid and semi-arid zones” will convey a workshop on 27 to 30 August 2003, in Rabat, Morocco (<http://www.twiso.org/>).

(g) **Activities 7 to 9: Measures for conservation and sustainable use - promotion of responsible resource management - support for sustainable livelihoods**

104. The following meetings relevant to the programme of work on dry and sub-humid lands took place during the reporting interval, amongst others: the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group meetings on Protected Areas held in Tjarno, Sweden from 10 to 14 June 2003 and Sustainable Use held in Addis Ababa from 6 to 8 May 2003, the expert meeting on the ecosystem approach, held in Montreal from 7 to 11 July 2003, and the Trondheim meeting on Technology Transfer, Cooperation and Capacity Building held in Norway from 23 to 27 June 2003. The reports of these meetings will be submitted to SBSTTA as information documents.

105. The Executive Secretary, together with the Secretariat of the UNCCD, the UNDP Drylands Development Centre (DDC), IUCN, the GTZ/UNCCD project, the Government of the Netherlands and the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) are planning to prepare a “practising synergy” platform/modules to facilitate the sharing of relevant experiences made by national focal points of various conventions and other relevant stakeholders in the synergistic implementation of the national biodiversity strategies and action plans of the Convention (NBSAP), national action programmes of the UNCCD (NAP) and the National Action Programmes of the UNFCCC (NAPA), and other relevant programmes. A series of teleconferences was held and initial steps in the implementation of the proposal are being taken. The first workshop is planned for the first half of 2004.

106. Through IUCN's Ecosystem Management Programme's arid lands initiative.^{20/} the existing Memorandum of Understanding with the Secretariat is currently being amended to include specific activities addressing the needs of the programme of work on dry and sub-humid lands. Amongst these are, for example, work together with the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management, on developing a rationale and framework for addressing ecosystem restoration with an arid lands component.^{21/} and on integrated water and arid lands management.^{22/}

107. The Global Biodiversity Forum will meet in Havana, from 22 to 24 August 2003, prior to the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD. The meeting is co-organized by IUCN,

^{19/} <http://www.panda.org/downloads/policy/shilling.pdf>

^{20/} <http://www.iucn.org/themes/cem/initiatives/arid/index.htm>

^{21/} <http://www.iucn.org/themes/cem/work/restoration/rest.htm>

^{22/} <http://www.iucn.org/themes/wetlands/>

WRI, UNEP, the GEF, and the secretariats of the UNCCD, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention. The meeting is a first “interregional” session focusing on linkages between arid ecosystems, including biodiversity, and livelihoods. ^{23/}

108. The GEF draft Operational Program on Sustainable Land Management, mentioned in paragraph 94 above, identifies capacity-building, on-the-ground investments (sustainable agriculture, sustainable rangeland/pasture management, forest and woodland management) as well as targets research as areas for financial support. It recognizes that under the Convention, the programme priorities highlight the role that land degradation and deforestation prevention and control can play in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. As part of its work programme, the Council approved the following projects relating to biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands in addition to medium-sized projects and enabling activities approved in the past six months: (a) *Africa* - Building scientific and technical capacity for effective management and sustainable use of dryland biodiversity in West African Biosphere Reserves (US\$ 2.4 million); (b) *Asia* - Prevention and control of dust and sandstorms in northeast Asia (US\$ 0.5 million); (c) *Chad* - Participatory conservation in the Manda National Park, Moyen Chari Region in south-eastern Chad (US\$ 1.66 million); (d) *Mongolia* - Developing a model conservation programme - conservation of the Gobi Desert using wild Bactrian Camels as an “umbrella species” (US\$ 0.979 million); (e) *Pakistan* - Conservation of habitats and species of global significance in arid and semi-arid ecosystems in Balochistan (US\$ 0.788 million); (f) *South Africa* - Cape Action for People and the Environment (CAPE) biodiversity and sustainable development project (see <http://www.gefonline.org/projectDetails.cfm?projID=1516>); South Africa: CAPE Agulhas biodiversity initiative (US\$ 3.226 million); (g) *Syrian Arab Republic* - Biodiversity conservation and protect area management (US\$ 3.485 million). ^{24/}

109. A project facilitated by UNEP, UNDP and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), assisting nomads and communities in three African countries conserve and boost the prospects for native vegetation is being implemented. The project is targeting dry and semi-arid lands in Kenya, Botswana and Mali. It aims to strengthen the capacity of local people, students and scientists up to postgraduate level, pertaining to issues relating to land management and indigenous species conservation. ^{25/} Additionally, UNEP and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) launched a new phase of the five year-old Desert Margins Programme on 11 November 2002, which involves nine sub-Saharan African countries (Botswana, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Senegal, South Africa and Zimbabwe). The project aims to conserve the rich and unique plant life that has evolved to survive in the dry and arid lands of these countries. Developing alternative livelihoods will be a key part of the project.

2. *Joint work programme with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification*

110. The UNCCD facilitated a training course of GEF proposal development for Asian country Parties in collaboration with the Instituto Agronomico per l'Oltremare (IAO), in Florence, Italy, from 19 to 30 May 2003. Other UNCCD meetings particularly relevant to the joint work programme between the two conventions were facilitated during the reporting period. These include, for example, the Thematic Programme Network (TPN) meeting on water resources management in agriculture in arid, semi-arid and dry sub humid areas, held in Bonn, from 5 to 7 March 2003 and the fourth Asia-Africa Forum to Combat Desertification on Agroforestry as an incentive measure for soil conservation and ecosystem restoration, held in Cotonou, Benin, from 23 to 27 June 2003.

111. The joint work programme between the two conventions will be presented during a side-event at sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the UNCCD, to be held in Havana.

^{23/} http://www.gbf.ch/present_session.asp?no=35&lg=EN

^{24/} <http://www.gefonline.org/projectList.cfm>

^{25/} <http://www.unep.org/Documents/Default.asp?DocumentID=271&ArticleID=3178>.

3. *Dissemination of relevant information*

112. A draft, web-based “synergy portal”, as planned for through the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Secretariats of UNCCD and the Convention was initiated and aspects will be presented during a side-event at the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the UNCCD.

113. A paper on land degradation/desertification was prepared for publication in the “Land degradation/desertification” issue of the journal “Review of European Community and International Law”.

114. Contributions were made to the development of an educational CD-Rom on land degradation assessment and management, which is currently being developed by LADA/FAO.

4. *Cooperation*

115. The UNDP Drylands Development Centre and the Secretariat have developed elements for a Memorandum of Understanding and a joint work plan in support of the implementation of the programme of work on dry and sub-humid lands. The Secretariat participated in the ninth GTZ/UNCCD network meeting, and other related events, held in Bonn, from 30 March to 4 April 2003.

116. In the margins of the eighth meeting of SBSTTA, discussions took place to further explore areas for collaboration with The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and its related agreements in particular the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) and the Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe (EUROBATS). The secretariats of the two conventions are currently exploring the possibilities of conducting a case-study on synergistic implementation of the two conventions in dry and sub-humid land ecosystems.

117. The established working groups of the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), which met in Gland, Switzerland from 8 to 11 April 2003, agreed to address relevant components of the programme of work of the Convention on dry and sub-humid lands and the joint work plan between the Convention Secretariat and The Ramsar Bureau.

118. The Secretariat participated in the observance of World Desertification Day on 17 June 2003, organized by the Secretariat of the NGO Network under the UNCCD “RIOD - Réseau internationale des ONG sur la désertification”, Solidarité Canada Sahel, which is situated in Montréal.

F. *Biological diversity of mountain ecosystems*

119. Pursuant to SBSTTA recommendation VIII/1, an AHTEG on Mountain Biological Diversity met in Rome, from 1 to 4 July 2003. The full report of the AHTEG will be available as an information document (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/INF/11). Relevant inputs will be used to prepare the note from the Executive Secretary on mountain biodiversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/12), under agenda item 5.5.

120. As part of its work programme, the GEF Council approved the following projects relating to mountain biodiversity in addition to medium-sized projects and enabling activities approved in the past six months: (a) *Bulgaria* - Conservation of globally significant biodiversity in the landscape of Bulgaria’s Rhodope Mountains (US\$ 3.809 million); (b) *Guinea* - Conservation of the biodiversity of the Nimba Mountains through integrated and participatory management (US\$ 3.99 million); (c) *South Africa – CAPE biodiversity and sustainable development project* (see

<http://www.gefonline.org/projectDetails.cfm?projID=1516>); (d) *Swaziland* - Biodiversity conservation and participatory development (US\$ 5.5 million). 26/
