UNEP

CBD

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/INF/1
14 June 2007

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE
Twelfth meeting
UNESCO, Paris, 2-6 July 2007
Item 3.1 of the provisional agenda*

IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF THE APPLICATION OF THE ECOSYSTEM APPROACH

Review of information in the third national reports

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In decision VII/11, paragraph 12, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with Parties and relevant international and regional organizations, to assess the implementation of the ecosystem approach, in the light of experiences gained, for the consideration of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice prior to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

2. In decision VIII/11, the Conference of the Parties, in the refined multi-year programme of work (annex II), decided to undertake the in-depth review of the ecosystem approach at its ninth meeting and in decision VIII/15 (annex III) provided guidelines for the review of the programmes of work of the Convention which include consideration of relevant information available through national reports.

3. A summary and analysis of the in-depth review of the application of the ecosystem approach is provided in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/2. The current document has been prepared by the Executive Secretary to provide further details of relevant information available in the third national reports. Section II provides details of information available from the third national reports arranged by report section and Section III provides a summary and conclusions.

II. INFORMATION ON THE APPLICATION OF THE ECOSYSTEM APPROACH IN THE THIRD NATIONAL REPORTS

4. This review of the application of the ecosystem approach (EA) is based on 101 National Reports submitted to the Secretariat as of 31 December 2006, unless otherwise stated. Among the 101 Parties analysed, 8 had incorrect report formats omitting questions 7 and 8. Some Parties also did not respond to some questions in some sections or sub-sections. Therefore, there are occasionally minor discrepancies between the total responses received to each question and the total number of Parties analysed.

* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/1.

/…

5. The third national reports contain a section (section B) devoted specifically to the ecosystem approach. In addition, other sections contain information relevant to the ecosystem approach as listed below.

(i) Section B (sub-section Ecosystem Approach)

6. This section contains 6 questions (numbered 3 to 8). Quantitative responses to these questions are provided in the annex.

Question 3. Is your country applying the EA, taking into account the principles and guidance contained in the annex to decision V/6?

7. Seventy-three Parties respond that some aspects are being applied, whilst 10 indicate that applications are under consideration. Only 12 indicate that the Ecosystem approach is being substantially applied. Four Parties responded that the ecosystem approach was not being applied.

Question 4. Is your country developing practical expressions of the ecosystem approach for national policies and legislation and for implementation activities, with adaptation to local, national, and regional conditions? (V/6)

8. Many Parties (59) have developed practical expressions of the ecosystem approach whereas a further 23 note that this is under consideration. Only 12 Parties have developed practical expressions for applying most principles of the ecosystem approach. Five Parties have not developed any practical expressions.

Question 5. Is your country strengthening capacities for the application of the EA, and providing technical and financial support for capacity-building to apply EA? (V/6)

9. Some (29) Parties have not strengthened capacity. Sixty-one report that they have strengthened capacity within their own country whilst only 8 Parties have strengthened their own capacity and provided technical and financial support to other Parties.

Question 6. Has your country promoted regional cooperation in applying the ecosystem approach across national borders? (V/6)

10. Many (57) Parties reported that they have formal cooperation in applying the ecosystem approach across national borders. A further 24 have informal co-operative agreements. Twenty Parties have none.

11. Amongst these 57 Parties, 40 Parties promoted regional cooperation in applying the ecosystem approach through the management of trans-frontier terrestrial areas, whether it protected areas (official IUCN protected areas, Man and the Biosphere reserves or others) or regions where sustainable development programmes are implemented. Most of the time, the area is considered an ecoregion where the sharing countries work for both the protection of biodiversity and economic development.

12. The co-management between Parties is also often done to develop wildlife corridors between countries. For instance the governments of the Region of the Bío-Bío of Chile and the Province of Neuquén in Argentina work to make a corridor between both territories for the "Huemul" (red deer common to both countries) and tourism development of the zone. Sometimes collaboration occurs through organizations such as the "Commission en charge des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale" (COMIFAC). Under the framework of the COMIFAC, the management of the protected area "La Tri Nationale de la Sangha" is shared between Cameroon, Central African Republic and the Congo. In Europe, the network of protected areas called the "Natura 2000 Network" promotes the ecosystem approach.

13. Regional cooperation in applying ecosystem approach through the management of trans-frontier wetland is reported by 31 Parties. This cooperation between Parties is often articulated around river basins, for example, the Nile Basin Initiative or the basins of the Amnok and Tuman between China and Russia. Out of the 31 Parties, 3 collaborate regarding the management of Lake Victoria (Kenya, Uganda, and United Republic of Tanzania). Canada launched the Ecosystem Initiatives which is a co-operative

effort between the United States and Canada to address pollution in the (north American) Great Lakes. Finally, 9 parties report cooperation in which ecosystem approach is promoted through wetland management (floodplains, mangroves…etc.). Nicaragua specifically mentions this in the context of Ramsar sites. The Water Framework Directive is mentioned as a regional application of the ecosystem approach by the European Community.

14. Nineteen Parties illustrated cooperation in applying the ecosystem approach in marine areas/programmes/projects, among which 4 Parties mentioned that the cooperation in question is in progress. The project "Grand Ecosystèmes Marin du Golfe de Guinée" is mentioned by the Ivory Coast, Ghana and Cameroon. The Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) and the Ospar Commission are also two important governing bodies which promote regional cooperation and apply the ecosystem approach.

15. However, only 2, Parties, Armenia and Côte d'Ivoire, mentioned public participation. Armenia conducted public hearings on the topic "Environmental problems of the river Debed" to increase public awareness and Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso have a project to promote participative management of their faunal natural resources.

16. Cooperation was mentioned but not linked to a particular area by 38 Parties, which could be through non-governmental organizations, funding agencies, scientific institutes or governmental bodies. These co-operations included the writing of research study or status report (e.g. Regional Environmental Center-Caucasus aimed at the analysis of water resources management system in country; evaluation of existing monitoring system, water quality and state of biodiversity) or the creation of a framework for actions directed towards certain ecosystems, or to a policy approach. Also, such co-operations related to programmes, plans/strategies or joint activities. For instance, cooperation related to forests takes place within the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) as well as with the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS).

17. Some of the problems identified in relation to cooperation included the lack of mutual trust between countries and conflict of interests in trans-boundary issues with neighbouring countries. One Party also reported that the technical will to apply the ecosystem approach is constrained by politico-administrative challenges, methodological shortcomings and financial deficits. Lebanon and Poland mentioned that the EA is only partly developed and to a very limited extent.

Question 7. Is your country facilitating the exchange of experiences, capacity building, technology transfer and awareness raising to assist with the implementation of the EA? (VI/12 and VII/11)

18. Just over half (56) Parties reported that some capacity building, technology transfer and awareness raising activities have been undertaken. Programmes are being developed by 12 Parties, whilst 20 report they had no programmes. Only two Parties reported that they are implementing comprehensive programmes.

19. Awareness raising activities were reported by 10 Parties, among which 5 directed awareness toward the general public and communities (Ghana with coastal communities, and Algeria, Jordan, Estonia and the Republic of Moldova with the general public).

20. The organization of regional or sub-regional workshops is reported by 11 Parties. These were generally attended by experts, managers, NGOs, governments, where knowledge and experience were shared.

21. Eighteen Parties facilitated the exchange of information through networks, forums or training. For instance, St Lucia used the Caribbean Forum (Cariforum) to facilitate information exchange and Mexico has given diverse courses focused on the conservation and management of ecosystems through the Program for Qualification and Collaborative Learning.

22. Thirteen Parties reported specific partnership with regional programmes, international cooperation programmes, or institutes that helped the exchange of information/experience and capacity

building. Examples are Australia's partnership with the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), to further strengthen the application of the ecosystem approach as a policy approach and framework for action across national terrestrial and marine borders in the Pacific, and the partnership between universities and local communities with the Humboldt Institute in Columbia.

23. Ten Parties developed information material/documents to facilitate exchanges related to the ecosystem approach, such as handbooks (Canada), reports, case studies (Nepal, Viet Nam, Uzbekistan) or a newsletter (Morocco). France mentioned its Forestry Charter, the "Charte Forestière de Territoire", as a planning tool to frame consultations. Tunisia used master and Ph.D. researchers working through its main library to facilitate exchange of information on ecosystem approach.

24. Projects/programmes were mentioned by 23 Parties, including park management and support to international organizations (UNEP, CBD, IUCN etc.), as a means to facilitated exchange of experience and capacity-building.

25. Three Parties mentioned working groups and 4 Parties have established monitoring/research projects to facilitated exchange regarding the ecosystem approach. For example, the European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS) convened a working group in 2003 to identify European research priorities concerning the implementation of the ecosystem approach.

26. Obstacles identified by Parties included financial resource availability. Cameroon mentioned insufficient funds. Likewise, Latvia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo did not allocate funds or effort to exchange of information related to ecosystem approach and there its application is still in its infancy. India has done some research but not transferred the findings to field/extension workers.

Question 8. Is your country creating an enabling environment for the implementation of the EA, including through development of appropriate institutional frameworks? (VII/11)

27. Over half (52) of the Parties reported that some policies and programmes are in place, whereas 6 report comprehensive policies and programmes are in place. Relevant policies and programmes were under development by 20 of Parties whilst 10 had no policies and programmes in place.

28. Nineteen Parties mentioned governmental bodies, structures or initiatives as contributing to the creation of an enabling environment for the implementation of the ecosystem approach. For example, the "Ministère de l'Aménagement du Territoire et de l'Environnement" in Algeria is in charge of the implementation of the ecosystem approach and is doing this with the establishment of structures related to different ecosystems such as the structure in charge of littoral and wetland areas or the structure in charge of the mountains, steppes and Sahara ecosystems. In Cuba, the National Counsel of Hydrographic Basins which uses basins as the basic unit of environmental management was created by means of the Agreement 31/39 of the executive board of the Cabinet of Cuba. Government initiatives included conferences (e.g., The 4th Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe) and workshops (e.g., a training workshop on introduction and application of the ecosystem approach in biodiversity management in Viet Nam was held by the Viet Nam Environment Protection Agency in November, 2004).

29. Nineteen Parties referred to specific legislation to enable the application of the ecosystem approach. Australia's major piece of environmental legislation, the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, in which the ecosystem approach is used as the foundation for existing natural resource management programmes, wetland management for the promotion of the wise use of wetlands and native forest management. Five Parties mentioned legislation related to forest management, such as Slovenia (Slovenia's Forest Act).

30. Eleven Parties mentioned policies to enable the implementation of the ecosystem approach. For example, the National Environmental Policy of Malawi has provisions for the Ecosystems Approach to natural resource management, particularly in water management.

31. Enabling environments for the implementation of the EA through projects or management plans or programmes were created by 23 Parties. Thirteen Parties referred to the management plans of protected areas or national parks, 3 to a forestry management programme and 2 to fisheries. China and Columbia have pilot projects aiming at the management of biodiversity oriented towards the welfare of the population living in pilot project areas. Latvia, Lebanon and Lithuania mentioned that the principles of the ecosystem approach have been implemented in the environmental impact assessments.

32. Eight Parties mentioned associations or NGOs that are enabling the implementation of the ecosystem approach. In Jordan for example, Friends of the Earth Middle East has prepared a concept document and organized an international workshop on "Crossing the Jordan", to map out a strategy to rehabilitate the Jordan River. Namibia mentioned the establishment of catchment/basin management committees and Land Boards. A noteworthy example in which local communities are well represented is found in Nepal where the production forests in the Terai and along the foothill of Siwaliks are now being managed under Collaborative Forest Management, where the local communities are taken as one of the key partners in forest management.

33. Three Parties mentioned conventions or treaties: the Aarhus Convention in Germany; the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources in Australia; and intergovernmental agreements and treaties on environmental protection and biodiversity in Kazakhstan.

34. Six Parties have promoted an enabling environment for the implementation of the ecosystem approach through other initiatives that could not be classified in the above (forest certification, Belarus); NBSAP (Japan, Philippines); and support to the IUCN and CBD (Netherlands).

35. Obstacles include financial and human resources. Cameroon and Saint Lucia mentioned insufficient funds whereas Ethiopia noted the shortage of skilled human resources in the ecosystem approach.

36. Kazakhstan acknowledged that the ecosystems are considered in isolation from each other, which leads to an uncoordinated policy in relation to natural complexes resulting in their inadequate conservation and exploitation. Forest, mountain and desert ecosystems receive the major consideration whereas the basic landscape of the Republic of Kazakhstan is the steppes.

(ii) Challenges & obstacles (question 2)

37. The review of the challenges and obstacles section of the National Reports is based on 93 reports analyzed. Question 2 reads: Please use the scale indicated below to reflect the level of challenges faced by your country in implementing the provisions of the Articles of the Convention.

38. The challenges to implementation of the Articles of the Convention analyzed in relation to the ecosystem approach were:

(a) Challenge e) Inadequate capacity to act, caused by institutional weakness;
(b) Challenge q) Lack of horizontal cooperation among stakeholders;
(c) Challenge r) Lack of effective partnerships; and
(d) Challenge y) Lack of knowledge and practice of ecosystem-based approaches to management.

39. Outlined below are the 4 challenges with the three or four (in case of a tie) Articles of the Convention where the challenge was found to be greatest. Presented in brackets is the total score the challenge was rated across countries for each Article:

(a) Institutional weakness (challenge e) was reported as the biggest challenge in the implementation of these three Articles:

(i) Article 11: Incentive Measures
(ii) Article 8h: *In-situ* Conservation

(iii) Article 15: Access to Genetic Resources.

(b) A lack of horizontal cooperation among stakeholders (challenge q) was reported as the biggest challenge in the implementation of these three Articles:

(i) Article 10: Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity;
(ii) Article 11: Incentive Measures; and
(iii) Article 15: Access to Genetic Resources.

(c) A lack of effective partnerships (challenge r) was reported as the biggest challenge in the implementation of these four Articles:

(i) Article 11: Incentive Measures;
(ii) Article 16. Access to and Transfer of technology; and
(iii and iv) Article 10: Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity; and Article 19: Handling of Biotechnology and Distribution of its Benefits.

(d) A lack of knowledge and practice of ecosystem-based approaches to management (challenge y) was reported as the biggest challenge in the implementation of these three Articles:

(i) Article 10: Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity (178);
(ii) Article 14. Impact Assessment and Minimizing Adverse Impacts (173); and
(iii) Article 11: Incentive Measures (167).

(e) A lack of knowledge and practice of ecosystem-based approaches to management was reported to be less of a challenge in the implementation of these three lowest-rated Articles:

(i) Article 5: Cooperation (122);
(ii) Article 20: Financial Resources (125); and
(iii) Article 17. Exchange of Information (132)

(iii) Agricultural biodiversity

40. A more detailed analysis of the third national reports related to agricultural biodiversity will be presented for the consideration of the thirteenth meeting of SBSTTA in relation to the in-depth review of that programme of work.

41. No questions of the agriculture section of the third national report addressed specifically the ecosystem approach. However, some activities of the programme of work could be linked to principles of ecosystem approach. Tentative links are provided in text below.

(a) Activity 1.4 (Assessments of the interactions between agricultural practices and the conservation and sustainable use of the components of biodiversity (e.g. ecosystems and habitats; species and communities; genomes and genes of social, scientific or economic importance).

42. This activity reflects implementation of Principle 3 of the ecosystem approach (ecosystem managers should consider the effects, actual or potential, of their activities on adjacent and other ecosystems).

43. Question 164 seeks to acquire information from Parties on the implementation of Activity 1.4 of the agricultural biodiversity programme of work, which requests Parties to undertake assessments of the interactions between agricultural practices and the conservation and sustainable use of the components of biodiversity.

44. Many Parties (67) had undertaken assessments of the interactions between agricultural practices and the conservation and sustainable use of the components of biodiversity. Assessments were underway by 41 of Parties, partially completed by 22, and comprehensively completed by 4.

45. Some Parties (29) reported on assessments on interactions between agricultural practices and conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems and habitats of importance, including protected areas, forests, hills, river meadows, peat land, wetlands, bush lands and semi-natural grassland. For example, the reduction in the surface of wetlands was reported to be partly due to grazing pressure.

46. Some Parties (26) reported assessments on interactions between agricultural practices and conservation and sustainable use of important flora and fauna species and communities, including birds, mammals, reptiles, invertebrate groups, herbal plants and other plants. In Austria, associated plant species, such as herbal plants, significantly increased in number in organic plots of winter crop compared to their cultivation employing conventional practices.

47. A small number of Parties (11) reported on assessments on interactions between agricultural practices and conservation and sustainable use of genomes and genes of social, scientific or economic importance. Information was provided on the genetic characteristics of Bambara groundnut, coriander, date palm, okra, sesame, lupin, roselle, tamarind, watermelon, corn, cotton, soy, landrace animal breed and cattle breeds. These genetic studies were undertaken to assess the potential economic value of these species, as well as the potential to increase the quality of life of farmers through, for example, increases in protein content in certain crops.

48. Some progress is observed in the assessment of interactions between agricultural practices and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. However, most Parties did not provide examples and comments on these interactions, indicating certain information gaps in this area.

49. Opportunities for successful assessment of interactions between agricultural practices and conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity were provided for a few Parties through the cooperation and financial support of the CGIAR (ICRAF, IPGRI), Wetlands International, Birdlife International, the UNDP, the World Bank and the GEF.

50. A small number of Parties cited the following as obstacles to implementation:

(a) Lack of technical, methodological and financial resources;

(b) Lack of good and widely used agro-environmental indicators;

(c) Lack of economic assessments of the goods and services of agricultural biodiversity; and

(d) Lack of national programme for assessment.

(b) Program element 2: Adaptive management practices, technologies and policies that promote the positive, and mitigate the negative, impacts of agriculture on biodiversity, and enhance productivity and the capacity to sustain livelihoods

51. This programme element reflects Principle 4 (recognizing potential gains from management, there is usually a need to understand and manage the ecosystem in an economic context) and Principle 9 (management must recognise that change is inevitable).

52. Question 167 requests information from Parties on the implementation of programme element 2 (adaptive management) of the agricultural biodiversity programme of work, which seeks to identify management practices, technologies and policies that promote the positive and mitigate the negative impacts of agriculture on biodiversity, and enhance productivity and the capacity to sustain livelihoods, by expanding knowledge, understanding and awareness of the multiple goods and services provided by the different levels and functions of agricultural biodiversity.

53. Most Parties (74) identified management practices, technologies and policies that promote the positive and mitigate the negative impacts of agriculture on biodiversity and enhance productivity and the capacity to sustain livelihoods. Of this number, 67 identified some practices. However only 9 identified

comprehensive practices, 24 did not identify any management practices, technologies and policies and 14 identified potential practices, technologies and policies.

54. Some Parties (27) reported identifying policies that promote the positive and mitigate the negative impacts of agriculture. These policies related to the conservation of biodiversity, such as plant and animal genetic resources, good professional agricultural practices, use of agrochemicals and manure, irrigation and the distribution and use of genetically modified organisms. A few Parties (7) of the European Union had implemented the EU regulation on agro-environmental measures.

55. In the second national report, this activity was pointed out as an area for improvement (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/7/9). Good progress (74 Parties reporting) is observed on the identification of management practices, technologies and policies that promote the positive and mitigate the negative impacts of agriculture on biodiversity. However only a few Parties (9) identified comprehensive practices. Few activities were also carried out to:

(a) Identify key goods and services provided by agricultural biodiversity; and

(b) Monitor and assess the actual and potential impacts of existing and new agricultural technologies.

56. Moreover, few Parties reported on the dissemination of information on cost-effective practices and technologies, indicating a gap in this area.

57. A few Parties reported the following as obstacles to implementation:

(a) Lack of adequate resources;

(b) Lack of diffusion programmes;

(c) Slow progress in implementation of policies; and

(d) Presence of random factors such as climatic change which restrained identification of management practices, technologies and policies.

(c) Program element 3: Capacity-building. Activity 3.2 Increasing the capacities of farmers, indigenous and local communities, and their organizations and other stakeholders, to manage sustainable agricultural biodiversity and to develop strategies and methodologies for In-situ conservation, sustainable use and management of agricultural biological diversity

58. Activity 3.2 can be related to Principle 12 (the ecosystem approach should involve all relevant sectors of society) and Principle 11 (the ecosystem approach should consider all forms of relevant information, including indigenous and local knowledge).

59. Question 168 seeks to acquire information from Parties on the implementation of Activity 3.2 of the agricultural biodiversity programme of work on the enhancement of capacity of indigenous and local communities to develop strategies and methodologies for *in situ* conservation, sustainable use and management of agricultural biodiversity, building on indigenous knowledge systems.

60. A clear majority of Parties (75) reported that the capacity of indigenous and local communities to develop strategies and methodologies for *in-situ* conservation, sustainable use and management of agricultural biological diversity had been enhanced. Many Parties (50) specified agricultural biodiversity management (animal and plant genetic resources, water, land, vegetation), conversion to organic farming, public awareness, desertification, agro-forestry and traditional practices, as examples of areas or components with increased capacity. Moreover, 54 Parties indicated that the capacities of target groups, such as crop and livestock farmers, indigenous and local communities, farmers' organizations, rural women, farming technicians, stakeholders and food industries had been strengthened.

(d) Activity 3.4 Improvement of the policy environment, including benefit-sharing arrangements and incentive measures, to support local-level management of agricultural biodiversity

61. This activity can be related to Principle 2 (management should be decentralised), Principle 4 (economic context - align incentives to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use) and Principle7 (the ecosystem approach should be undertaken at the appropriate scales).

62. Question 170 requests information from Parties on Activity 3.4 of the agricultural biodiversity programme of work, which calls upon Parties to identify and promote possible improvements in the policy environment, including benefit-sharing arrangements and incentive measures, to support local-level management of agricultural biodiversity.

63. Thirty-one Parties reported they have improved the policy environment, including benefit-sharing arrangements and incentive measures, to support local-level management of agricultural biodiversity.

64. A small number of Parties established access to benefit-sharing activities (4 Parties) and provided economic incentives (12 Parties) to farmers to support local-level management of agricultural biodiversity.

65. While only 31 Parties reported an improvement in the policy environment, 41 Parties reported either having measures and arrangements under development (15 of the 41) or having identified measures and arrangements (26 of the 41).

66. The major obstacle to improving the policy environment was the difficulty surrounding implementation of benefit-sharing arrangements.

67. Other obstacles reported included:

(a) Lack of an effective national regime on access and benefit-sharing in conservation with potential for food and agriculture;

(b) Slow progress in implementing policies;

(c) Difficulties in integrating policies across different agricultural sectors;

(d) Inadequacies in policy, legal and regulatory frameworks; and

(e) Illegal cropping.

(e) Programme element 4. Mainstreaming. Mainstreaming or integration of national plans or strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity in sectoral and cross-sectoral plans and programmes

68. Programme element 4 represents an important aspect of the application of the ecosystem approach to agriculture that centres on the need for improved cross-sectoral integration. Decision VII/11, Annex 1, para. 19, notes "It is important to ensure inter-sectoral cooperation" and the lack of this is identified as a major obstacle to implementation of the ecosystem approach in general (see UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/2).

69. Question 171 requests information on the operational objective of programme element 4 (mainstreaming) of the agricultural biodiversity programme of work, which aims to support the development of national plans or strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity, and to promote their mainstreaming and integration in sectoral and cross-sectoral plans and programmes.

70. Several Parties (57) reported having mainstreamed or integrated national plans or strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity in sectoral and cross-sectoral plans and programmes. Progress was observed in the mainstreaming or integration of national plans or strategies

for the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity in sectoral and cross-sectoral plans and programmes with more than half Parties reporting on this topic.

71. Opportunities for successful mainstreaming or integration of national plans or strategies in sectoral and cross-sectoral plans and programmes were provided for a few Parties through the implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and through cooperation and financial support of the UNDP.

72. Obstacles reported included:

(a) Lack of coordination amongst responsible agencies;

(b) Lack of synergy between legislation on plant protection products, seeds legislation and legislation on genetically modified organisms; and

(c) Lack of a long-term vision within government agencies.

(iv) Forest biological diversity

73. Programme Element 1 of the programme of work on forest biodiversity (Conservation, sustainable use and benefit-sharing) includes goal 1: To apply the ecosystem approach to the management of all types of forests.

74. Of the 101 Parties reporting, over half of the Parties applied the ecosystem approach to the programme of work and 47 reported that they had failed to apply the approach. The degree of application differed. Roughly half of the Parties (48 Parties out of 95) reported that they are implementing or in the process of applying the ecosystem approach to the management of all types of forests in the third national reports of the CBD. Of the 48 Parties applying the ecosystem approach to all types of forests, 30 Parties made substantial additional comments on the topic. They raised issues ranging from experiences in implementing the community level approach, to integrating the approach into the national policy plan for natural resources, to relevant scientific findings on impacts on habitats. The rate of successful implementation was one of the lowest among all the goals. Some (24) Parties responded that potential measures to apply the ecosystem approach were identified but were not yet implemented. Few Parties (6 in total) reported that applying the ecosystem approach was conditional under the framework of obtaining forest certificates, such as those issued by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Pan European Forest Council (PEFC).

75. Overall, this goal of the programme of work on forest biological diversity promoted comments on the compatibility of the ecosystem approach and sustainable forest management. Five Parties mentioned the compatibility of the two concepts especially for long-term management. Two Parties referred to the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) with regards to the compatibility of the two concepts.

76. Another area of progress was the mainstreaming of the ecosystem approach at both the national and international levels through the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. More specifically, three Parties expressed the promotion of the ecosystem approach in their National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan.

(v) Global Taxonomy Initiative

77. Question 32 of the third national report inquires “Has your country developed taxonomic support for the implementation of the cross-cutting issues under the Convention as called upon in Decision VI/8?”.

78. Of the 101 Parties that submitted National Reports, 59 Parties have not developed taxonomic support for the cross-cutting issues of the Convention (2 Parties did not answer this question). Nineteen Parties report having taxonomic support for projects/research under the ecosystem approach amongst the cross-cutting issues.

79. Responses to question 32 analysed by economic development groupings. A large proportion of the support to the GTI from industrialized Parties appears in invasive alien species issues and to a lesser extent in the ecosystem approach and impact assessment. Economies in transition have the most taxonomic support for the ecosystem approach, but are surpassed by industrialized Parties. By region, the percentages of Parties responding that they have developed support for the GTI relating to the ecosystem approach are as follows: Africa (24%), Asia-Pacific (26%), Central and Eastern Europe (29%), Latin America and Caribbean (15%) and Western Europe and Others Group (38%).

(vi) Invasive alien species

80. Question 49 of the third national report inquires "Is your country using the ecosystem approach and precautionary and bio-geographical approaches as appropriate in its work on invasive alien species? (decision V/8).

81. Just over 50% (53 Parties) responded affirmatively, whilst 44 Parties replied no. Comments received on this question were varied and are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. Comments received in response to question 49 summarised by area of activity to which the ecosystem approach was applied.

Control Measures	Number of Parties
Legislation	14
Regulations on the import of aliens at points of entry	9
Control programmes	6
Phyto-sanitary measures	6
Quarantine	5
Risk analysis	4
Thematic Issues	
Forests	7
Aquatic/watershed	13
Protected areas	5
Arid and semi-arid lands	2
Agro-ecosystem	2
Mountain	2
Marine and coastal	1
Taxa/groups	
Insects	1
Plants	12
Ballast Water	3
Other	
National progammes/projects	7
Collaboration with other Parties	4
Research	2

(vii) Biological diversity of inland water ecosystems

82. Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) is a concept closely aligned to the ecosystem approach. Most Parties (82) have integrated objectives and relevant activities of the Inland Water PoW into IWRM and water efficiency plans. Many Parties (67) have done so partially and a few (15) fully. However, in the 3rd National Reports, only a few Parties (8) (Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Lebanon, Malawi, Chile, France and Portugal) explicitly mention their IWRM strategy/plans or refer to application of IWRM in projects. It is noteworthy to mention Canada, which has been involved in IWRM for many years and which mentioned the implementation of IWRM at several levels (provincial board, river basin

level) and in many projects (e.g. Great Lakes Action Plan 2001-2006, Georgia Basin Action Plan, St. Lawrence Action Plan and Vision 2000, Lake Erie Lakewide Management Plan, Fraser Basin Council, Integrated Watershed Modelling of the South Saskatchewan River Basin).

83. Throughout the comments received there is limited mention of the ecosystem approach - although a number of activities reported (such as integrated water resources management, water framework directives etc.) represent application of the approach using different terminology. Because inland waters are impacted by most activities on land, trends in inland waters reflect the effectiveness of land-based practices. To a large extent, the extent of achievement of the objectives of the programme of work on inland water biodiversity reflect the extent of application of the ecosystem approach. A clearer understanding of the relationship between land and water, coupled with better understanding of ecosystem services and how they can be managed to achieve human development targets, would help to promote improved policies and management across all programmes of work. This goal is reflected best through what is happening to water, the biodiversity it supports and the services it provides.

84. Amongst the main challenges identified by many Parties for implementing this work programme, the following are those more specifically related to the ecosystem approach: (i) lack of mainstreaming inland waters ecosystem management into broader relevant policy frameworks; (ii) limited capacities for inland waters ecosystem management; and (iii) lack of inter-sectoral coordination or synergies.

(viii) Marine and coastal biodiversity

85. Integrated Marine and Coastal Area Management (IMCAM), and ecosystem based management, are also concepts closely aligned to the ecosystem approach. A wide range of responses was made with regard to establishment and/or strengthening of institutional, administrative, and legislative arrangements for the development of IMCAM. About 50 Parties reported that they are developing appropriate institutional arrangements, to a different extent of development, while 26 Parties reported that necessary institutional arrangements are in place. Noteworthy examples include: Australia's National Ocean Office coordinating the implementation of Australia's Oceans Policy and the development of regional marine plans across the relevant agencies and jurisdictions; Bangladesh's multi-ministerial and multi-sectoral program development office and the approval of coastal zone policy (2005); Belgium's coordination center for integrated coastal zone management; Brazil's national coastal management program; Canada's Oceans Act (1997), Canadian Oceans Strategy, and integrated coastal management initiatives on three coasts; China's national zoning of ocean functions; Lebanon's coastal area management program; and Philippines's Sustainable Philippines Archipelagic Development Framework.

86. Compared to the progress on institutional arrangements for IMCAM, an early stage of progress is observed on the implementation of ecosystem-based management. Only 11 Parties reported that necessary arrangements are in place for the ecosystem-based management of marine and coastal resources, while 60 Parties reported that developments of institutional arrangements for the ecosystem-based management were underway, at different levels. Some Parties pointed out that policies and enforcement measures for ecosystem-based management are yet to be developed due to lack of sufficient study and understanding. Successful pilot initiatives were reported by Canada (partnership among forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, government and academic sectors to manage bay and watershed in New Brunswick), Philippines (Biodiversity Conservation and Management of the Bohol Island Marine Triangle) and Thailand (Ao Phang Nga Bay Conservation and Restoration Project: 2004-2007).

III. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

87. Information available from the third national reports suggests that the ecosystem approach is being applied relatively broadly. Although a high proportion of Parties (usually around 20%) reported little progress, this is offset by a relatively high proportion of Parties (usually, depending upon the specific sub-question, around 50%) that have some programmes implemented, and usually around 20%

having relevant programmes under development. Only a small proportion of Parties (5-12%, depending upon the specific sub-question) reported a more full application of the approach.

88. A high proportion of Parties (+80%) reported formal or informal regional cooperation in applying the ecosystem approach. Not surprisingly, these cooperative arrangements largely involve trans-boundary protected/managed areas and in particular trans-boundary water resources issues. However, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which such cooperation reflects the ecosystem approach since the approach is not defined by the existence of cooperation alone.

89. This reflects major problems with the analysis of the third national reports when attempting to obtain a more detailed picture. The ecosystem approach can be applied at many different levels (site-specific/local scale, through to national/regional planning level). The questions asked in the third national report do not allow distinction between Parties that have applied the approach only at the local/site/project level, and the extent of application at that level, from those that have applied it more comprehensively across the nation at large. The questions also do not enable determination of whether the approach, case-by-case, is still applied only for particular biomes or sectors (e.g., to forest management or wetlands) or is being applied as a policy development tool across biomes/sectors.

90. Unless there is a specific reference to the ecosystem approach, or a related concept, within reports for the thematic programmes of work and cross-cutting issues of the Convention, analysis of its application to these is difficult to ascertain. Practically any activity promoting the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, in any area, would be compatible with aspects of the operational guidance for the ecosystem approach (decision VII/11, annex 1). The questions in the third national reports do not reveal whether the ecosystem approach was used to determine those actions.

91. Analysis is also compounded by the fact that there are many and varied interpretations of what the "ecosystem approach" actually is and why and how it should be used. National reports, for example, did not ask for information, in each case, on the extent to which each of the 12 principles have been applied – nor what they were applied to. In addition, there are many other integrative tools and approaches in use and although these may not be called the "ecosystem approach" many represent application of its principles.

92. A significant difficulty in assessing reports relates to the extent of application of the approach in an economic context (e.g., principle 4 of the ecosystem approach). Reports need to inquire specifically whether Parties are incorporating the ecosystem approach into national economic planning. For example, are they using the approach to guide trade-off decision making regarding managing the delivery of goods and services from ecosystems from the local to national/regional scales? From the details that are reported it is possible that, largely, the ecosystem approach is still too widely regarded more as a "conservation" tool rather than a tool for sustainable development. Hence, where details are provided, the ecosystem approach is largely being promoted and "administered" by environment ministries or agencies. The report framework does not clearly inquire whether application of the approach is driven by economic interests; - for example, it is led by departments responsible for finance and planning.

93. However, it is encouraging to note the high proportion of Parties (+75%) that have created, or have plans to create, a better enabling environment including through the development of appropriate institutional frameworks. Considering the importance of enabling environments and institutional arrangements to the effective application of the ecosystem approach – this effort is encouraging.

94. The constraints to application of the ecosystem approach identified in the third national report largely repeat those previously identified (e.g., under processes to refine and elaborate the ecosystem approach, based on assessment of experiences of Parties in implementation, as adopted in Annex I to decision VII/11; and as addressed further in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/2). No new barriers to the application of the ecosystem approach are identified in the third national reports. Unfortunately, the reporting framework does not facilitate an analysis of trends in importance of barriers in this context.

95. Considering the complexities and difficulties of applying the ecosystem approach the national reports clearly show three important things: (i) that Parties are overall making efforts to apply the ecosystem approach, (ii) there is experience in its application – and at varying scales, and (iii) there is considerable room for improvement. Taken together, these conclusions represent a significant opportunity to build upon the existing experiences and progress. Capitalising upon this opportunity requires an analysis of the strategic needs for a more expanded application of the ecosystem approach coupled in particular with a close look at the incentives for doing so. This subject is expanded further in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/2.

Annex

Quantitative responses in the third national reports

(section B, sub-section ecosystem approach)

3. Is your country applying the EA, taking into account the principles and guidance contained in the annex to decision V/6?

No	4
No, but applications is under consideration	10
Yes, some aspects are being applied	73
Yes, substantially implemented	12
No answer	7

4. Is your country developing practical expressions of the ecosystem approach for national policies and legislation and for implementation activities, with adaptation to local, national, and regional conditions? (V/6)

No	5
No, but development is under consideration	23
Yes, practical expression for applying some principles of the EA	59
Yes, practical expression for applying most principles of the EA	12
No answer	7

5. Is your country strengthening capacities for the application of the EA, and providing technical and financial support for capacity-building to apply EA? (V/6)

No	29
Yes, within country	61
Yes, including providing support to other Parties	8
No answer	6

6. Has your country promoted regional cooperation in applying the ecosystem approach across national borders? (V/6)

No	20
Yes, informal cooperation	24
Yes, formal cooperation	57
No answer	7

7. Is your country facilitating the exchange of experiences, capacity building, technology transfer and awareness raising to assist with the implementation of the EA? (VI/12 and VII/11)

No	20
No, some programmes under development	12
Yes, some programmes being implemented	56
Yes, comprehensive programmes being implemented	2
No answer	12

8. Is your country creating an enabling environment for the implementation of the EA, including through development of appropriate institutional frameworks? (VII/11)

No	10
No, but relevant policies and programmes under development	20
Yes, some policies and programmes in place	52
Yes, comprehensive policies and programmes in place	6
No answer	13
