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Seventeenth meeting

Montreal, 14-18 October 2013

Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

REPORT OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY OUTLOOK 4 ADVISORY GROUP

Note by the Executive Secretary

INTRODUCTION

1. In decision X/2 the Conference of the Parties decided that the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-4) would be prepared to provide a mid-term review of progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, including an analysis of how the implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan has contributed to the 2015 targets of the Millennium Development Goals. In the same decision the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to prepare a plan for the preparation of GBO-4 for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA). Subsequently this plan was prepared and made available for the consideration of the sixteenth meeting of the SBSTTA as document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/3.

2. In recommendation XVI/2, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice took note of the plan for the preparation of the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook and requested the Executive Secretary to prepare GBO-4 on the basis of this plan. In the same recommendation the SBSTTA also requested the Executive Secretary to establish, at the earliest possible time, an advisory group for the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook to provide guidance on the preparation process of GBO-4 and to review and provide advice on data and methodology standards, development plans, outputs, quality assurance and the inclusion of case-studies. In this request, SBSTTA specified that the advisory group should be established in accordance with the guidance on the composition of expert groups contained in the consolidated *modus operandi* of SBSTTA (decision VIII/10, annex III).

* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/1.

3. The first meeting of the Global Biodiversity Outlook 4 Advisory Group took place on 6 October 2012 in Hyderabad, India. The report of that meeting was made available as UNEP/CBD/COP/11/INF/58. Further information on the preparation of the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook is available as document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/5.

I. OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

4. The Advisory Group meeting was opened by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Mr. Bráulio Ferreira de Souza Dias. In his remarks he noted the importance of GBO-4 for the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea. He emphasized that GBO-4 should identify those areas where progress had been made and where additional efforts were needed as well as provide elements for a roadmap on the way forward. He also observed that good progress was being made in the preparation of national reports and national biodiversity strategies and action plans and that these should be a major source of information in preparing GBO-4. He also commented that the work on the High Level Panel on Resource Mobilization constituted an additional source of information. The development of a pilot online reporting tool, enabling a periodic self-assessment of progress made towards national biodiversity targets by Parties, might become an additional source of information. In concluding he thanked the members of the GBO-4 Advisory Group for helping in the GBO-4 preparation process and wished them a good meeting.

5. The group elected Mr. Jan Plesnik to chair the meeting and tasked him with reporting back to the seventh meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. Following a brief round of introductions, the group considered the different items on its agenda.

6. The meeting noted that the Advisory Group members from Burkina Faso, Canada, China, Cuba, Egypt, Iran, the Convention on International Trade in endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and one member of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity had been unable join the meeting due to other commitments. A number of observers participated in the meeting, including representatives from the Republic of Korea, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, DIVERSITAS and the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL). The list of Advisory Group members is contained in annex II to this report.

II. PROGRESS TO DATE IN PREPARING GBO-4

7. Robert Höft provided an update on the progress made in preparing the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook. He began by providing a brief background of GBO-4 and highlighted decision X/2 and recommendation XVI/2. He noted that, to date, financial resources for the preparation of GBO-4 had been received from Canada, the European Union, Germany, Japan and Switzerland and that in kind support had been received from the Netherlands. The Republic of Korea had pledged financial support. These funds had allowed the preparation of GBO-4 to proceed as planned. He also noted that a science writer had been contracted to prepare the main GBO-4 manuscript and that background information had been collected for most of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. He noted that the Secretariat had prepared guidance on the types of information that would be useful for GBO-4 and made this available through the GBO-4 webpage. In addition he noted that progress had also been made in updating the GBO-4 webpage, in developing an online reporting tool and that a document discussion options for linking future editions of

the Global Biodiversity Outlook to the IPBES process had also been prepared (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/4/Rev.1). The timeline for the preparation of GBO-4 was also presented.

III. INFORMATION SOURCES

8. Under this agenda item Robert Höft provided an overview of the ongoing work related to national reports. He noted that the deadline for the submission of the fifth national reports was the 31 March 2014 and that the CBD had held a series of regional workshops to support Parties in preparing their reports by this deadline. Information from these workshops suggested that a significant number of national reports would be available for use in GBO-4. It was also noted that these workshops were used as opportunities to raise awareness about the preparation of GBO-4 and to solicit information from Parties for use in the report.

9. Matt Walpole provided an update on the work of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP) in bringing together indicator information for use in GBO-4. He noted that the work of the BIP was building on what had been done previously for GBO-3 but that this time efforts would be made to link past trends with future trajectories. Work had also been undertaken to examine how the indicators brought together by the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership addressed the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and filled the gaps that existed. In seeking new indicators, a pragmatic approach would be taken. Where possible, the information provided by indicators would also be linked to the work being undertaken for scenarios.

10. A number of the Advisory Group members noted the need to rely on multiple lines of evidence in preparing GBO-4 and that it would be important to look at what the suite of indicators could tell them. Further it was noted that messages related to indicators needed to be carefully crafted to ensure that they were telling accurate and nuanced stories.

11. Paul Leadley provided an update on the progress that had been made in preparing the scenarios assessment for GBO-4. He provided background to the project and noted that a number of groups were involved in the assessment. He noted that there had traditionally been a “divorce” between scenarios and indicators and that the assessment being done for GBO-4 aimed to change this. He also observed that scenarios tended to have a long time horizon (such as to 2050 or 2100) which was not particularly relevant to policymakers and that in this assessment a shorter time frame (such as 2020) would be used where possible. The scenarios assessment would also rely on a wide range of models as well as draw on information from the High Level Panel on Resource Mobilization to the extent possible. Different examples of the types of scenario work that would be undertaken were also presented. In concluding a time line for completing the assessment was presented.

12. In discussing the scenarios assessment a number of issues were raised. The need to consider the different trade-offs between the different targets was noted. Actions towards some targets may hinder progress towards others. Similarly action towards some targets may help to achieve others. While this complexity may be difficult to assess in a quantitative manner it may be possible to discuss these trade-offs in a qualitative manner. The need to consider messages relevant to different sectors was also noted. The possibility of involving representatives from different sectors in subsequent scenario assessments was also noted. The need to try and link scenarios to issues related to human well-being was also observed.

IV. CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSED DRAFT OUTLINE AND CONTENT OF GBO-4

13. Kieran Mooney introduced the draft preliminary outline for GBO-4 and noted that it was also contained in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/5. He noted that the proposed outline responded to the main issues identified in recommendation XVI/2. He further noted that GBO-4 would have three main sections: a section detailing progress towards each of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, a section related to progress towards the Mission and Vision of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and a stock taking section which would contain information on the way forward.

14. A number of issues related to the content of GBO-4 were raised. It was suggested that information related to progress in national target setting as well as national and regional level actions should be included in GBO-4 and that the main messages should provide information on possible actions and next steps without being prescriptive. In this respect it was observed that GBO-4 could provide a “road map” for the way forward.

15. Other issues raised by the group in relation to the content of GBO-4 were the need to include information on Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs), the role of indicators in decision making and background information to the Convention on Biological Diversity and its different elements.

V. COMMUNICATION, OUTREACH AND LAUNCH EVENTS

16. David Ainsworth provided an overview of the considerations related to the launch of GBO-4 as well as other related communication events. He noted that the main GBO-4 report would be launched on the opening day of the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea. Options for regional launches were also being explored, including the possibility of having launches in Brazil, Canada, China, India, Kenya, New York, and the United Kingdom. It was also suggested that additional products related to GBO-4 could be prepared and other events, such as the 7th World Water Forum (Daegu, Gyeongbuk, Korea, March 2015), and the 14th World Forestry Congress (Durban, South Africa, September 2015) could be used to help ensure the widespread use of key messages of the report targeted to specific groups of stakeholders. Other possible events, such as the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, where messages from GBO-4 could be also used were identified by the group. It was suggested that the Secretariat should develop a calendar of key events which could be used to launch GBO-4 related products.

17. With regards to media channels it was noted that arrangements are being made to communicate the launch through the Division of Communication and Public Information (DCPI) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Division of Public Information (DPI) of the United Nations Secretariat. Further it was noted that a video news release, in all United Nations languages, that will include the main messages of the report, as well as secondary footage that includes interviews and diagrams from the report, was also being prepared. Preparation of an information kit for media that included information sheets on the main findings of Global Biodiversity Outlook, and other supporting information was also planned.

18. With regards to communication, the group noted that finding a way to integrate the information from GBO-4 into a high impact science journal could be one way to ensure that the report received publicity and had a large impact.

19. Some Advisory Group members noted the need to think about ways in which GBO-4 could be presented. While printed publications were good, there were a variety of different media types that could be explored. The importance of positive messaging was also noted.

ITEM 4. OTHER MATTERS

20. Given the establishment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), it was observed that future editions of the Global Biodiversity Outlook may not be required or that changes in its format may be needed. It was suggested that future editions of the GBO could focus on national implementation while the scientific aspects could be addressed by IPBES.

21. With regards to biodiversity issues related to food and agriculture, it was noted that FAO is currently preparing the first report of the State of the World's on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture. As the report will be produced in 2016 or 2017 it will not be possible to make use of the information it contains for the preparation of GBO-4, however it could be useful for follow up activities.

ITEM 6. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

22. Following closing remarks by the chair and the Secretariat the meeting was closed at 1 p.m..

Annex I

**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE ADVISORY GROUP FOR THE FOURTH EDITION OF
THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY OUTLOOK (RECOMMENDATION XVI/2)**

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Establish, in accordance with the guidance on the composition of expert groups contained in the consolidated *modus operandi* of SBSTTA (decision VIII/10, annex III), an advisory group for the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, in order to provide guidance of the preparation process of GBO-4 at the earliest possible time, and to review and provide advice on data and methodology standards, development plans and outputs, quality assurance and the inclusion of case-studies;

(b) Ensure that the advisory group and the SBSTTA Bureau, in overseeing and guiding the preparation of GBO-4, make the best use of available resources, including by consultations through electronic means and meetings at the margins of other relevant events;

(c) Explore, in collaboration with the advisory group and the SBSTTA Bureau, ways in which the activities of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services could build on and contribute to the fourth edition of Global Biodiversity Outlook, as well as other future assessments of the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, with a view to minimizing duplication of effort and information and maximizing complementarity between the two processes, as appropriate and in accordance with the mandates of SBSTTA and IPBES;

Annex II

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*Annex III***DOCUMENTATION FOR THE SECOND MEETING OF ADVISORY GROUP FOR THE
FOURTH EDITION OF THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY OUTLOOK**

| <i>Symbol</i> | <i>Title</i> |
|----------------------|---|
| UNEP/CBD/GB04AG/2 | Provision Agenda |
| UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/5 | Progress Report on the Preparation of the Fourth Edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook |
