



CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/CBD/MSP/2
17 September 2001

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

OPEN-ENDED INTER-SESSIONAL MEETING ON THE STRATEGIC PLAN, NATIONAL REPORTS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Montreal, 19-21 November 2001
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. By decision V/20 the Conference of the Parties initiated an inter-sessional process to develop a Strategic Plan for the Convention with a view to preparing a full draft Plan in time for consideration and adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting. This open-ended meeting on the Strategic Plan, national reports and the implementation of the convention (MSP) is one of the last and most important steps in the process for developing a full draft of the Strategic Plan.

2. The Executive Secretary has prepared the present note to assist the meeting in this task. In part II, the note describes the process for developing the Strategic Plan, part III explains the rationale for determining the elements of the initial draft of the Plan; part IV contains the initial draft of the plan prepared by the Executive Secretary; part V concludes by inviting the MSP to consider the initial draft prepared by the Executive Secretary, with a view to developing a draft Strategic Plan for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting.

II. THE PROCESS TO DEVELOP THE STRATEGIC PLAN

3. Paragraph 16 of decision V/20 sets out procedural requirements for the development of the Strategic Plan. It requests the Executive Secretary to develop an initial draft of the Strategic Plan and to engage in a participatory process that ensures:

- (a) Incorporation of the views of Parties and the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties;
- (b) Consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and its Bureau, and other relevant subsidiary bodies of the Convention on matters relevant to their mandates; and
- (c) Input from other interested countries and organizations
- (d) with a view to preparing a full draft Strategic Plan in time for consideration and adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting, to be held in April 2002.

* UNEP/CBD/MSP/1.

4. The Executive Secretary has made a number of requests for views and organized a series of workshops with a view to developing the Strategic Plan in a way that is as transparent as possible, involves the greatest possible number of stakeholders, familiarizes all stakeholders with the logical framework (i.e. target-orientated planning) and arrives at the widest possible consensus.
5. Immediately after the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties all available national biodiversity strategies and action plans and plans of other relevant organizations, such as the convention on international trade in endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) or Ramsar Convention, were reviewed by the Secretariat.
6. In October 2000, Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations were invited to submit their views on the Strategic Plan. The deadline for submissions was 31 December 2000 (see Notifications 2000-10-11/01, 2000-10-12/01 and 2000-10-13/01).
7. Presentations on the process for preparing a Strategic Plan and draft elements of such a Plan were made by the Secretariat on the margins of the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (ICCP), in December 2000, and at the sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), in March 2001.
8. On the basis of submissions received and the review of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, the Executive Secretary distributed a note of 13 March 2001, entitled "Strategic Plan for the Convention on Biological Diversity", which provided an outline of the overall process for developing the Strategic Plan, an initial review of the Convention's process and some draft elements of the Plan. In that note, the Executive Secretary also called for further submissions by 30 April 2001.
9. The Executive Secretary convened a Workshop on the Strategic Plan in the Seychelles from 28 to 30 May 2001. Parties and other stakeholders were advised of the meeting by Notification 2001-05-01/01. The Workshop considered the note of 13 March 2001, provided guidance on follow-up steps and the overall process to develop a Strategic Plan up to the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and proposed a structure and draft elements of a Plan. The Conclusions of the Seychelles Workshop were distributed to Parties in document UNEP/CBD/WS-StratPlan/5 and have been made available at meetings since 31 May 2001, such as the Open-ended meeting of Experts on Capacity-Building for the Implementation of the Biosafety Protocol. They have also been made available on the website of the Secretariat (www.biodiv.org).
10. The present note will also be distributed to the following bodies for their consideration:
 1. ICCP at its second meeting (1-5 October 2001)
 2. Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing at its first meeting (22 - 26 October 2001)
 3. SBSTTA at its seventh meeting (12-16 November 2001); and
 4. Other meetings, as appropriate (i.e. third meeting of the CBD-UNESCO Consultative Working Group of Experts on Biodiversity Education and Public Awareness).
11. The report of MSP is expected to be the basis for the consideration of the Plan by the Conference of the Parties.
12. The report of MSP will also be presented to relevant meetings held prior to the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to provide a basis for their consideration of the matter (i.e. regional preparatory meetings for the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the meeting of the Ad hoc Inter-sessional Working Group on Article 8(j)).

III. RATIONALE FOR DRAFT ELEMENTS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

13. Decision V/20 provides the following guidance with respects to the Strategic Plan:

/...

“11. *Decides* that the Strategic Plan shall be based on the longer-term programmes of work of the Conference of the Parties and of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, and that the Strategic Plan shall provide strategic and operational guidance for the implementation of these programmes of work;

“12. *Decides* that the Strategic Plan will initially cover the period 2002-2010;

“13. *Decides* that the Strategic Plan shall contain a set of operational goals that the Conference of the Parties has decided that it wishes to be achieved in the period covered by the Strategic Plan, and that these operational goals shall relate to the following three main areas of work:

- (a) The thematic programmes;
- (b) Cross-cutting issues and initiatives; and
- (c) The implementation of the provisions of the Convention;

“14. *Decides* that these operational goals shall reflect levels of elaboration, progress of development, stages of implementation, state of knowledge and capacities, and degrees of cooperation, with respect to the three main areas of work;

“15. *Decides* that within each of these goals, the Strategic Plan shall identify, as far as possible, the following parameters:

- (a) Planned activities;
- (b) The expected products;
- (c) The timing of each of these activities and products;
- (d) The actors carrying out these activities and cooperation with relevant organizations;
- (e) The mechanisms used to realize and/or support the goals and activities, or to generate the expected products; and
- (f) Financial, human-resource and other capacity requirements;”

14. Strategic planning is about making choices among limitless possibilities: what objectives to pursue, what outputs to attain? The choices need to be based on stated rationales that explain why specific priorities and activities have been chosen and others have not. A crucial element of the Strategic Plan will therefore be the overall objectives and how to reach them: what is the Convention’s vision for 2010 and what route(s) should be taken to implement and achieve this vision? what is to be achieved in ten years time, especially in relation to biodiversity and how will this be assessed?

15. The Conclusions of the Seychelles Workshop re-emphasized that the fundamental rationale for the Plan should be to achieve the objectives of the Convention as outlined in Article 1, namely, the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of its benefits. In other words, all elements of the Plan should relate to achieving these objectives. Identifying priorities and activities to achieve these objectives requires a review of the status of biodiversity, the institutional and political context in which the Convention operates and the effectiveness of the Convention to date. Indeed, this is required by paragraph 14 of decision V/20. The Executive Secretary prepared a preliminary assessment of those issues and distributed this to Parties and other stakeholders in his Note of 13 March 2001. In light of developments since then and the comments made on the assessment, a revised assessment is contained in the annex to the present note. How the issues raised in this assessment relate to the elements of the draft Strategic Plan is indicated in the annex in boldface type.

16. The Conclusions of the Seychelles Workshop agreed upon a basic structure of the Plan that was along the following lines:

(a) *A mission statement.* This should state an eternal truth, a goal towards which all stakeholders will be working at all times. It should be based on the objectives of the Convention as provided in Article 1;

(b) *A vision.* This should be composed of three elements (one for each objective of the Convention) that represent a visionary but realistic level of achievement by 2010;

(c) *Operational goals.* A series of operational goals should be developed for each element of the vision;

(d) *Action plans to achieve the operational goals.* Each operational goal should contain a number of action plans, which are activities undertaken to achieve the relevant operational goal. These plans will contain the detailed elements required by decision V/20 (ie, the expected products). The action plans should not simply be “programmes of work” analogous to existing thematic and cross-cutting programmes of work under the Convention on Biological Diversity. In order to add value to the existing initiatives, it is important that they contain outcome-orientated targets (these differ from the “output” targets or “process” targets used so far under the Convention); and

(e) *Monitoring, reporting, assessment and review, and communication.* The plan needs to provide a process for ensuring implementation and this will be structured around the above basic elements.

17. The Conclusions of the Workshop contain suggestions with respects to the each of the above elements (i.e. specific operational goals and action plans). The suggested action plans were, however, not considered in a collective way at the Workshop and were intended to be illustrative and provide an indication as to what might be meant by the operational goals.

IV. DRAFT ELEMENTS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

18. In accordance with decision V/20 (which, in its paragraph 16, requests the Executive Secretary to prepare an initial draft of the Strategic Plan) and based on the process described above, the following draft elements are proposed by the Executive Secretary for the consideration of the MSP. The proposed structure and elements are largely based on the conclusions of the Workshop in the Seychelles, but have been adjusted to eliminate overlaps and develop the coherence of the Plan. The suggested action plans have not been incorporated into the present document but are available in document UNEP/CBD/WS-StratPlan/5.

A. Mission statement

To ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

B. Vision

By 2010:

- Current trends in the loss of biodiversity are effectively reversed at the global and national level
- The incidence and impacts of unsustainable use are considerably reduced
- The benefits arising from the use of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge are shared equitably

C. Operational goals

1. Current trends in the loss of biodiversity are effectively reversed at the global and national level

- 1.1 Species, ecosystems and genetic diversity that are at imminent risk of irreversible loss are subject to appropriate actions to prevent that loss
- 1.2 Representative species populations and ecosystems are more effectively managed to maintain their integrity
- 1.3 Significant and emerging threats to biodiversity are prevented or minimized.
2. The incidence and impacts of unsustainable use are considerably reduced:
 - 2.1 National biodiversity strategy and action plan (NBSAP) and biosafety frameworks identify the uses of biodiversity at the national level, in a regional context
 - 2.2 Economic instruments that support sustainable use are developed and readily available
 - 2.3 Awareness of the impacts of unsustainable patterns of consumption and production is raised
 - 2.4 Capacity to sustainably manage wildlife resources is developed
 - 2.5 Tools, appropriate technologies and management systems that facilitate sustainable production and use of biological resources are developed and promoted
3. The benefits arising from the use of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge are shared equitably
 - 3.1 International and regional mechanisms and measures to facilitate access to genetic resources for environmentally sound uses by other Parties, and benefit-sharing, including financial, human, and technological resources, are developed and implemented
 - 3.2 National mechanisms and measures (e.g. legislation and agreements) on access and benefit-sharing, including financial, human, and technological resources, are developed and implemented
 - 3.3 The role of intellectual property in promoting conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing of benefits of genetic resources is promoted
 - 3.4 Traditional knowledge, innovations and practices are assessed, inventoried and recognized
 - 3.5 Information exchange on sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources is enhanced, considering the special needs of developing countries
 - 3.6 The role of biodiversity in reducing poverty, through the promotion of food security, for example, is promoted.
4. Cross-cutting operational goals:
 - 4.1 All countries have an NBSAP in place and under implementation
 - 4.2 Adequate financial, human and technical resources are provided to implement this Strategic Plan, in particular capacity-building support for implementation of priority actions in NBSAPs
 - 4.3 Consideration of biodiversity is integrated both nationally and internationally into relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies

4.4 Key actors effecting implementation of the Convention have increased awareness and are actively supporting and involved in implementation

4.5 The Convention is playing a leadership role in the international arena, and other international processes are actively supporting its implementation

4.6 Mechanisms are enhanced and implemented to develop increased understanding of biodiversity, in particular the Global Taxonomy Initiative, and to develop and transfer improved biodiversity management techniques, and decisions are made on the basis of the best available science

4.7 The Convention and Parties have better methods to evaluate the degree of implementation of the Convention, to enable Parties, the Conference of the Parties and other bodies to assess the effectiveness of actions and measures taken to achieve the objectives of Convention.

D. Action plans to achieve the operational goals

The action plans should include a detailed list of activities to be undertaken to achieve the relevant operational goal (i.e. planned activities; the expected products; the timing of each of these activities and products; the actors carrying out these activities and cooperation with relevant organizations; the mechanisms used to realize and/or support the goals and activities, or to generate the expected products; and financial, human-resource and other capacity requirements).

Many of the above operation goals and action plans proposed in document UNEP/CBD/WS-StratPlan/5, overlap with existing activities, programmes and initiatives of the Convention. At this stage in the development of the Plan, it is neither feasible nor desirable that the Plan be used as a top-down means to impose discipline or order on these existing activities. Parties have noted that the Plan should bring about coordination through harmony and gradually over time bring about convergence of actions around agreed goals and collective objectives. In order to bring this about and to add value to the existing initiatives, the Plan in general and the action plans in particular, should contain outcome-orientated targets (to be distinguished from “output” targets or “process” targets used so far under the Convention). Moreover, such an approach would respond to the call in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, whereby “world leaders committed themselves to achieving ... a broad range of time-bound international development objectives for which sustainable development provides a unifying framework”.

Development of the necessary elements and targets to achieve the operational goals should build upon existing or planned activities. Thus, the Strategic Plan should provide a framework for:

1. Activities within national biodiversity strategies and action plans and relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies;
2. Relevant activities under the programmes of work under the Convention on Biological Diversity, including those relating to the Protocol on Biosafety, forest biological diversity, inland water biological diversity, marine and coastal biological diversity, and dry and sub-humid lands, as well as with cross-cutting issues such as access and benefit-sharing, sustainable use, indicators, alien species, the Global Taxonomy Initiative, and issues related to Article 8(j);
3. Promoting complementarity, synergy and coordination, and avoiding duplication, between relevant programmes of various international organizations and between programmes at the national and regional levels established under the auspices of international organizations, while respecting the mandates and existing programmes of work of each organization.

Development and implementation of the action plans should involve a range of actors, including:

1. Governments (central, regional, local authorities); and
2. International initiatives (eg Intergovernmental organizations, United Nations Agencies, multilateral aid agencies, etc);
3. Conservation and research organizations (including protected area management boards, botanic gardens, genebanks, universities, research institutes and networks of non-governmental organizations);
4. Communities (including local and indigenous communities, farmers); and
5. The private sector.

Due to the wide range of actors that will need to be involved it will not be possible to develop action plans along these lines at this meeting of the MSP. Indeed, it may not be possible to complete such an exercise by the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. At a minimum the various actors outlined above will need to be consulted on the basis of an initial proposal. The various preparatory meetings for the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties will provide an opportunity to undertake some of this work. Nevertheless, it is most likely that a further workshop may be necessary in order to develop the necessary action plans. Even then it is likely that more action plans may need to be added later. It is therefore proposed that the MSP request the Executive Secretary to undertake the necessary preparatory work, review and consultations in order to provide detailed action plans in time for the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, whilst recognising that further work may be necessary to finalise this section of the Strategic Plan.

E. Monitoring and reporting

A set format for reporting on targets that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) should be included, in order to ensure that implementation of the plan can be measured effectively. Important criteria for the reporting process are:

1. Linked to national reporting;
2. Biennial reporting;
3. Simple and concise format;
4. Tailored to the operational goals;
5. Applicable to intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations; and
6. Reports compiled by the Secretariat for the Conference of the Parties.

A detailed proposal in this regard is contained in document UNEP/CBD/MSP/3 on national reports.

F. Periodic assessment and review

Assess and evaluate progress every four years in a way linked to the national-reporting cycle. A detailed proposal in this regard is contained in document UNEP/CBD/MSP/3 on national reports.

G. Communication

The Strategic Plan and its operational goals and actions need to be effectively communicated to all relevant sectors of society, agencies and conventions and other interested parties. A detailed proposal in this regard should be considered within the context of the communication and outreach strategy of the Convention, in particular, the strategy and action plan being developed by CBD-UNESCO Consultative Working Group of Experts on Biodiversity Education and Public Awareness.

V. CONCLUSIONS

19. The MSP is the most important preparatory step in the process to develop a Strategic Plan for the Convention. The proposed draft elements contained in the present note are the result of extensive,

/...

comprehensive and wide ranging consultations. They have been developed in a way that is as transparent as possible, involves the greatest possible number of stakeholders, familiarizes all stakeholders with the logical framework (i.e. target-orientated planning) and arrives at the widest possible consensus. If the Conference of the Parties is to adopt a plan at its next meeting, then it is important that the MSP provide a clear, focused and developed recommendation. The Executive Secretary hopes that the draft elements provided in the previous section provide a sound basis on which to develop such a recommendation.

20. In order to be effective and minimize the burden on Parties, the process for monitoring, reporting, assessing, reviewing and communicating the plan (those elements contained in sections E, F and G) needs to be integrated into the existing national reporting process and the future communication strategy of the Convention. The reason for this and the mechanics of this integration are explained in detail in the note by the Executive Secretary on national reports (UNEP/CBD/MSP/3).

21. Consequently, the MSP is invited to consider the draft elements of the Plan contained in sections A to D of part IV of the present note, in particular the mission statement (section A), the vision (section B) and the operational goals (section C) and request the Executive Secretary to prepare detailed action plans, in consultation with the relevant actors for the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

22. Draft elements of a recommendation that the MSP might wish to consider submitting to the Conference of the Parties are:

The Open-ended Inter-Sessional Meeting on the Strategic Plan, National Reports and Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity

1. *Recommends* that the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting consider the following elements of a draft decision with a view to their adoption:

“The Conference of the Parties,

1. *Welcomes* the conclusions of the Seychelles Workshop on the Strategic Plan,

2. *Takes note* of the review of the status of biodiversity, the institutional context and the effectiveness of the Convention contained in the annex to the note by the Executive Secretary on the Strategic Plan for the Convention on Biological Diversity (UNEP/CBD/MSP/2) and decides that this review provides a sound basis for the Strategic Plan;

3. *Adopts* the mission statement, vision, operational goals and action plans contained in the Annex to this decision as the Strategic Plan for the Convention on Biological Diversity;

4. *Urges* Parties, States, intergovernmental organizations and other organizations to review their activities in light of this Plan.”

2. *Notes* the outline of the action plans contained in the note by the Executive Secretary on the Strategic Plan (UNEP/CBD/MSP/2);

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to prepare, in consultation with relevant actors, detailed action plans for as many of the operational goals of the Strategic Plan for the Convention as possible in time for the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

4. *Invites* Parties, States, intergovernmental organizations and other organizations to review their activities in light of this draft Plan and provide input to the development of actions plans in time for the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Annex

THE STATUS OF BIODIVERSITY

1. Since the Convention entered into force, there have been many assessments of biodiversity or aspects of biodiversity. Notable assessments or sources of information include: the Global Biodiversity Assessment, the FAO State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food Agriculture, the Forest Assessment 2000, the preliminary work of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, UNEP's Global Environment Outlook 2000, Pilot Analysis of Global Ecosystems, Living Planet Index, Interlinkages Report of UNEP, World Bank and NASA; World Resources 2001-2002; Global Biodiversity: Earth's Living Resources in the 21st Century, UNEP/WCMC databases, and satellite information from the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).
2. These assessments and the general understanding of the science of biodiversity highlight a number of important points for the purposes of the present note.
3. The most important point is that the rate of biodiversity loss is increasing at an unprecedented rate. Moreover, this rate of loss is threatening the very existence of life as it is currently understood (**see first element of the vision and operational goal 1.1**).
4. There is an increasing understanding and recognition of the interconnected nature of the biodiversity and the importance of global biological cycles and systems. This has a number of key consequences for the Convention. One is that it is becoming increasingly evident that all biodiversity is important. Therefore, when it comes to managing biodiversity, focusing on one biome, ecosystem or thematic area alone will not achieve the aims of the Convention. In other words, an important ecosystem that the Convention must take into consideration is the global biosphere. It also reinforces the importance of implementing the existing thematic programmes of work without further delay, even where other processes are addressing aspects of these biomes. This also means that universal membership of the Convention is not only an important political requirement, but a scientific requirement as well. It also points to the need to consider those biomes that have not been considered so far (i.e. polar ecosystems). Finally, it re-emphasizes the importance of the attempts to consider the links between the biomes (i.e. development of the ecosystem approach) (**see operational goals 1.2 and 4.1**).
5. More needs to be known about biodiversity in order to make rational decisions about its management. This has a number of particular consequences for the Strategic Plan: some well known, others less so. With probably less than 10 percent of species identified, not enough is known about biodiversity itself for the purposes of the Convention. There is, therefore, a need to provide better access to existing taxonomic information and skills and more taxonomists need to be trained in developing country Parties. Such a state of affairs underlines the continuing importance of the Global Taxonomy Initiative. Another critical need is the development of a better understanding of global systems or cycles of importance to biodiversity (i.e. baselines, what causes biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems). As a result, it is difficult to predict thresholds for biodiversity and, in turn, the magnitude of the threat to any particular ecosystem. Recent technological developments, however, hold the promise of enormous improvements in this knowledge base: remote-sensing, bio-informatics, geographic information systems and modelling tools are rapidly developing. These developments mean that, for the first time, it is possible to envisage the development of proper global, regional and national baselines to provide a sound basis for rational science-based global policies. These technological developments are, by and large, taking place outside the Convention. Taking advantage of their potential will therefore require resources and a strong political commitment to their use and application. However, with this commitment it is feasible to begin to consider identifying priority components of biological diversity that are important for its conservation and sustainable use at regional and global levels and addressing the threats to these components. This, in turn, could provide a basis for supporting the implementation of Article 7 and scientifically identified priorities for thematic programmes of work (**see operational goal 4.6**).

A. Institutional and social context: the impacts of globalization

6. Addressing the major threats to biodiversity such as habitat loss, alien invasive species, over-harvesting or over-use, poverty, climate change and pollution, will require fundamental changes in the way resources are used and the benefits of this use is distributed. Achieving this adjustment will require broad-based action among a wide range of actors, well beyond the immediate scope of the Convention process.

7. Cooperating with biodiversity-related conventions has been the focus of attempts to broaden the scope of actors involved in implementing the Convention. These partnerships will remain central to enlisting the involvement of other actors. A partnership within this rubric that contains many synergies is the relationship with the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme. The programme emphasis on the ecosystem approach and sustainable use of the landscape fits well the aims of the Convention. The programme also provides an opportunity for the Convention to have a structured series of practical case studies with real impacts on the ground. Finally, developing stronger links with this programme is timely in light of the fact that protected areas are a priority issue for the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (see operational goals 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5).

8. The increasing realization of the values of biodiversity, as well as the added impetus of the adoption of the Protocol on Biosafety have given a significant boost to the international prominence of the Convention. This increased recognition provides new opportunities for partnerships. Globalization, growing disparities in wealth and its distribution, increasingly powerful technology, and changing financial and political support for international institutions are developments shaping the political, institutional and social landscape confronting the Convention. These developments pose new challenges and opportunities with respect to developing partnerships to implement the Convention.

9. The rapidly evolving biotechnology sector provides many opportunities for the Convention. The way this technology is applied and the type of regulatory measures placed on its use are already a major policy issue and will remain so for the foreseeable future. Moreover, the biotechnology sector, being a knowledge-intensive as opposed to a capital-intensive industry, provides excellent opportunities for a developing country to rapidly establish an internationally competitive industry and gain a market share in this expanding business. Accordingly, in the coming decade the issue will receive increasing levels of attention, resources and political will for change. As an important vehicle for developing policy on this issue, the Convention has an opportunity to use this widespread interest to promote implementation of its policy through cooperation with the many other organizations active in this sector (see operational goals 3.2, 4.4 and 4.5).

10. Two other issues that offer important opportunities for the Convention to promote implementation through partnership are: (a) the international efforts to address climate change, in particular the process under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climatic Change (UNFCCC), and (b) the revision of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Agriculture. In both of these areas, important developments are expected during the period of the Strategic Plan with respect to important threats to biodiversity. As far as the work of UNFCCC is concerned, there may be an important role for the Convention to assist with the elaboration of criteria for the definition of forests within the UNFCCC process. With respect to the renegotiation of the Agreement on Agriculture, there may be an opportunity for the Convention to contribute to clarifying the “green box” exceptions. Effective interaction and cooperation with these processes will therefore present opportunities for the Convention to amplify the impact of its resources through complementary activities (see operational goals 1.3, 3.6, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5).

11. In preparation for the tenth anniversary of UNCED in 2002, ways and means of improving international governance are receiving wide spread attention. Streamlining of national obligations, especially reporting mechanisms, streamlining administrative procedures and expenses, improving cooperation in decision-making at international and national levels, especially with respect to topics being considered in multiple forums such as forests, will be considered by the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Participating in those deliberations and considering the Summit’s conclusions on those

issues will be an important goal of the plan. One of the most important dimensions of this discussion is the possibility of clustering conventions around some key issues, one of which is biodiversity. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) illustrates what an umbrella type of Convention can and cannot do effectively. Umbrella conventions aim to provide a unifying structure that helps to avoid duplication, provides a forum for priority setting and ensures that important issues are dealt with. The essential feature of this is that they provide a forum for agenda setting. A challenge facing the Convention in becoming this type of instrument is achieving the political status that would make it the international agenda setter on biodiversity (**see operational goals 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5**).

B. The effectiveness of the Convention

12. The experience and achievements of the Convention, as well as the constraints on its implementation, need to be considered in order to identify gaps, core competencies and provide a context for the purpose, role and overall objectives of a plan.

13. The Convention process has been engaged in a detailed and comprehensive system of self-evaluation since the text of the Convention was adopted in May 1992.

C. Achievements

14. As a result of this constant evaluation, it has been widely acknowledged that the Convention has already brought about a number of important achievements. Building on these achievements provides an important reference point for the future of the process and hence important elements for the Strategic Plan.

15. More than 100 Parties have begun to implement their obligation to develop a national biodiversity strategy and action plan (NBSAP). The significance of this step cannot be overestimated, especially given that it is the first time that such a comprehensive and wide-ranging planning initiative has been undertaken with respect to management of natural resources. An important consequence of this significant achievement is that there is now the basis in terms of information and policy to properly consider underlying trends and to identify priorities with respect to biodiversity. Nevertheless, this is only the beginning of the planning process. Transforming these documents into action and deeds is the critical step that must now be taken. The Convention's role in this will need to focus on providing support. Mobilizing the necessary international financial support to implement these NBSAPs will be an important task of the financial mechanism. Periodic reviews and feedback, through the reporting process of the Convention and some review mechanism, will also assist implementation (**see operational goals 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.7**).

16. The financial mechanism has been able to mobilize an unprecedented level of resources for the implementation of the Convention. The Convention and the relationship it has with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) are the leading example of effective cooperation at the international level. Even so, there remain important challenges with the relationship. These can be addressed in the periodic review process established pursuant to Article 21.3. Mobilizing resources from other sources remains a key challenge. An important step in this regard will be promoting the aims of the Convention in the operations of the official development assistance (ODA) community through the reporting system with the Developed Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC), currently under discussion. An important area for mobilizing resources not yet thoroughly explored is the private sector (**see operational goals 3.2 and 4.2**).

17. The current longer-term programme of work (LTPW) adopted in decision IV/16 has proven to be an effective mechanism for internal planning and coordination. Its clarity has also promoted cooperation with other organizations. Paragraph 11 of decision V/20 provides that the Plan should be based on the current LTPW. The means incorporating the products of the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties into the Plan, as well as anticipating likely outcomes of the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Given the success of the LTPW, it may be worth considering retaining this mechanism in order to provide a clear outline of the agenda of the Conference of the Parties. In any event, the experience of the LTPW indicates that the plan need not contain explicit guidance regarding the role of

subsidiary bodies, but can concentrate on the agenda for meetings of the Conference of the Parties and thereby allow the subsidiary bodies the flexibility to organize their own programmes of work.

18. A notably important achievement is the adoption of the Protocol on Biosafety. This instrument represents a significant achievement of the international community in many respects. Its procedures, for example, represent one of the most detailed elaborations of the precautionary principle in international law. The Protocol will also establish a series of mechanisms that have the potential to make a significant contribution to technology transfer, in particular biotechnology. In short, the Protocol provides an opportunity for many developing countries to gain access to information and technology for one of the most important industries for the coming century. This opportunity will, however, only materialize if the Protocol enters into force and its institutions are effectively established and operated.

D. Constraints/challenges

19. The previously mentioned NBSAPs and evaluations have identified a number of areas that require further attention.

20. Although the Convention has established many of the necessary institutions, many Parties still lack the capacity to fully or, in some cases, even adequately participate in the process. For example, many Parties have not nominated various focal points or experts for the rosters, nor established national commissions to consider policy at the national level. In some cases these limitations affect whole regions. Ensuring that all Parties have established the basic institutional structure to participate in the Convention process is vitally important for the legitimacy of the Convention (**see operational goal 4.4**).

21. The Convention has significantly contributed to making the public aware of biological diversity and the goods and services it provides, as well as threats that human activities pose to its long-term viability. Even so, it is widely recognized that much more needs to be done in this regard if the aims of the Convention are to be realized (**see operational goals 2.1, 2.3 and 3.6**). A key need in this regard is increasing stakeholder involvement in the implementation of the activities of the Convention at the international and national levels. In particular, more attention needs to be paid to the extent that women and the poor are included in developing and implementing the NBSAPs (**see operational goal 4.4**).

22. Another aspect of this need to promote public involvement is the need to promote greater clarity regarding the overall aims of the Convention, which remain unclear, inchoate or incomprehensible to many stakeholders. As a result, an important goal of the Strategic Plan should be to clearly identify the purpose and basic goals of the Convention. To this end, it may be useful to consider adopting a clear mission statement and key targets which are readily understandable and achievable in order to convey the basic purpose of the Convention (**see mission statement and vision**).

23. Another important challenge in raising public awareness is to convey to the public the urgency and consequences of the increasing rate of biodiversity loss. Unfortunately, it is often the case that natural disasters provide the impetus for action. The development of many pollution regimes is a case in point. The scale and frequency of crop failures, forest fires, floods and impacts of alien species are all predicted to increase. Such events highlight the significance and consequences of the loss of biodiversity in an immediate and tangible manner for all sectors of society. They demonstrate that the biosphere is not impervious and limitless. Often, loss of biodiversity is a significant causal factor in these events and this also serves to hamper efforts to recover from them. However, such events are often explained solely in terms of climate change. Correcting this will be important for creating the momentum for change and advancing implementation of the Convention (**see operational goals 1.3, 3.6 and 4.4**).

24. The Convention is explicit that its objectives will be impossible to meet until consideration of biodiversity is fully integrated into other sectors. While many countries have made some start in this, notably in those sectors most immediately associated with biodiversity, such as forestry, fisheries, and agriculture, much more needs to be done, particularly in areas that traditionally are economically and politically dominant, such as industry, trade and transport. Mainstreaming can be promoted through several other mechanisms. One such tool is environmental impact assessment (EIA), which ultimately ensures that projects or policies take biodiversity factors into consideration. To a significant extent,

developing effective EIAs is a procedural matter, which focuses on making sure that decisions are taken in a transparent manner and on the basis of all relevant facts. Development of procedures for effective EIAs is dependent upon the application of reliable and credible indicators and, consequently, this is a key link between the scientific work of the SBSTTA and the implementation work of the process. The core principles for developing the ecosystem approach also have many similarities to the EIAs, which also points to another critical link between the scientific work and the implementation work (**see operational goals 4.3 and 4.4**). Many economic tools also support integration through ensuring that activities incorporate the costs to biodiversity. Two important mechanisms for this are certification schemes and developing methods for valuing biodiversity in national accounting systems (**see operational goals 2.2 and 2.5**).

25. Implementing the third objective of the Convention has proven to be difficult. For example, the clearing-house mechanism has not yet achieved its potential to provide a platform for scientific and technical cooperation. Developing policy or guidelines to implement access and benefit-sharing arrangements and the provisions on traditional knowledge have proven to be challenging as well. Finally, the Convention has achieved little of practical benefit with respect to transfer of technology. The Conference of the Parties has established initiatives to address many of these points. For example, it has established working groups for access and benefit-sharing and Article 8(j). Also, the review of the clearing-house mechanism by the Conference of the Parties produced a Strategic Plan that is intended to promote technical and scientific cooperation. Implementing the results of this work will be an important activity for the period of the Plan. An important provision in implementing the third objective that has not been specifically considered by the Conference of the Parties is Article 12, on research and development. As noted before, as a knowledge-intensive industry, biotechnology offers significant opportunities for developing countries. This will only materialize if both developing and developed country Parties work together. Developing country Parties need to provide the necessary political commitment to research and development, particularly to education. Developed country parties need to provide the necessary support to education. In this regard there are many interesting and innovative mechanism that the Convention could use to promote the transfer of technology for research and development (**see third element of the vision and operational goals 2.4 and 2.5**).

26. Most Parties have emphasized the importance of protected areas in maintaining biodiversity. Most countries now have, on paper at least, protected area networks that hold a significant proportion of the country's biodiversity. However, each country will need to evaluate whether its protected area network is representative of the full range of its biological diversity. There are still major gaps in the protected area network in many parts of the world and filling these gaps is important. In many countries, the effectiveness of protected area networks in maintaining biodiversity is often seriously compromised by a chronic shortage of human and financial resources. Remedying this situation is undoubtedly one of the most immediate priorities in many countries, and requires technical and financial cooperation. However protected areas should not be seen as biodiversity sanctuaries removed from the wider economic and social context. Within national biodiversity strategies, protected areas should form an integral part of coordinated measures for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, with attention given to socially and environmentally appropriate activities within protected areas and in buffer zones, to the establishment of biological corridors, and to eco-regional planning. Protected areas should be part of broader land-use planning systems that are based on the ecosystem approach, and that maintain and enhance landscape diversity (**see operational goals 1.1 and 1.2**).

27. Regional preparatory meetings have provided an important opportunity for Parties to prepare for meetings of the Conference of the Parties. Their contribution and the role they play could, however, be improved. Other conventions use regional initiatives primarily for the implementation of the instruments and decisions of the governing bodies. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Basel Convention on Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal and the UNCCD rely heavily on regional networks for implementation. Regional networks, based on centres of excellence or regional partners, could play an important role for the Convention on Biological Diversity (**see operational goal 4.4**).

28. A challenge that affects all areas of the Convention is that the decisions of the Conference of the Parties tend to be process-orientated, rather than output- or results-orientated. As a result, the Conference of the Parties has now adopted over 500 pages of decisions, much of which has not been implemented and some of which cannot be implemented. As a body of policy it lacks focus and coherence, which in turn affects its normative strength and undermines the standing of the Conference of the Parties itself. One of the main reasons for the Conference of the Parties wishing to develop a Strategic Plan was to try and address this issue. At this stage in the development of the Plan, it is neither feasible nor desirable that the Plan be used as a top-down means to impose discipline or focus on the existing initiatives. Parties have noted that the Plan should bring about coordination through harmony and gradually, over time, bring about convergence of actions around agreed goals and collective objectives. The Plan could begin to bring focus to these initiatives through the development of outcome-orientated targets (these differ from the “output” targets or “process” targets used so far under the Convention). By adopting such targets, the Plan could then add value to the existing initiatives (see **operational goal 4.7**).
