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**REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR AFRICA ON SYNERGY
AMONG THE RIO CONVENTIONS AND OTHER
BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS IN
IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAMMES OF WORK
ON DRY AND SUB-HUMID LANDS AND
AGRICULTURAL BIODIVERSITY**

Gaborone, 13-17 September 2004
Item 3.1 of the provisional agenda*

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SYNERGY IN IMPLEMENTING THE THREE RIO CONVENTIONS

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraphs 5 and 6 of decision VII/2 on the biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the secretariats of the other Rio conventions and other biodiversity-related conventions, *inter alia*:

(a) To further develop mechanisms for facilitating the synergistic implementation of these conventions, especially at the national level, including through organization and follow-up of national and regional synergy workshops (para 5 (c) iv); and

(b) To facilitate at the national level the review of the national biodiversity strategies and action plans under the Convention on Biological Diversity, in order to harmonize them with the national action programmes under the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) and the national adaptation plans of action under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), with a focus on poverty alleviation and intersectoral integration (para 6).

2. In response to this decision, and in collaboration with the secretariats of the Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), a regional workshop for Africa on synergy among the Rio conventions and other biodiversity-related conventions in implementing the programmes of work on dry and sub-humid lands and on agricultural biodiversity is organized.

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3. The identification of synergy in implementing the Rio conventions, and action thereon is considered as increasingly important by Parties. Synergy is “the *combined* power of a group of things when they are working together which is *greater* than the total power achieved by each working *separately*. ^{1/} In the context of the Rio conventions, the benefits of synergies have been identified, among others, as the opportunity (i) to utilize and share relevant services and information provided through the "sister" processes, (ii) to coordinate relevant actions to maximize their impacts, and (iii) to optimize the impacts of both human and financial resources used in the implementation of the instruments.

4. A number of decisions of the conferences of the parties of Rio conventions, as well as recommendations of their subsidiary bodies, call for action to realise and utilize existing synergy between the multilateral environmental agreements at all levels. This note reviews the convention texts, and relevant decisions adopted by the conference of the parties of the Rio conventions with the intention of guiding synergy implementation.

5. The programmes of work on biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands and on agro-biodiversity provide the topical framework for the workshop. The ecosystem types under consideration include dryland, Mediterranean, arid, semi-arid, grassland and savannah ecosystems, which are vulnerable to the combined effects of biodiversity loss, desertification and climate change. These areas are usually dominated by agricultural activities and, therefore, there are significant linkages to the programme of work on agro- biodiversity.

6. Dryland inhabitants are often directly dependent on their ecosystems for their daily livelihoods. Relevant considerations concern, *inter alia*, sustainable agricultural production systems, preventing or mitigating land degradation, maintenance of resilience of ecosystems and generation of income from natural resources. Therefore, it is important to explore and develop opportunities for synergistic initiatives between the objectives of the three Rio conventions and broader national development goals such as poverty alleviation.

II. COMPLEMENTARITIES BETWEEN THE RIO CONVENTIONS

A. Legislative complementarities

7. The articles of the three Rio Conventions ^{2/} set out the legal and operational framework of these multi-lateral environmental agreements. Looking at synergy opportunities for their implementation, a number of commonalities in the commitments made by parties to the Rio conventions are apparent (see Table 1). For example, all three agreements contain provisions on research, exchange of information, training, public education, capacity building, participation and awareness. Other requirements shared by the three conventions include national and regional plans and action programmes, legislation and reporting. Although theme-specific inputs will be required under each Convention, certain similarities of structural, institutional and supportive nature are evident.

Table 1. Indicative list of complementary provisions in the Rio Agreements. ^{3/}

^{1/} Definition in the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English*.

^{2/} See the full Convention texts: for UNCCD <http://www.unccd.int/Convention/text/Convention.php>, CBD <http://www.biodiv.org/Convention/articles.asp>, and UNFCCC <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf>)

^{3/} From: UNDP, 1997. Synergies in national implementation - the Rio Agreements. Based on the outcomes of an expert meeting on synergies among the Conventions on Climate Change, Biological Diversity, Desertification and Forest Principles, Sede Boquer, Israel, 17-20 March 1997

	UNFCCC	CBD	UNCCD
National Inventories/Identification and Monitoring	Article 4.1(a)	Article 7	Article 16
National & Regional Plans	Article 4.1(b)	Article 6(a)(b)	Article 9,10
Legislation	Preamble	Article 8(k)	Article 5(e)
Research	Article 5	Article 12(b)	Article 17,19 (b)
Public Education	Article 6	Article 13	Article 5(d),19,6
Environmental Impact Assessment	Article 4.2(d)	Article 14	
Clearinghouse for exchange of technical information	Article 7	Article 17, 18	Article 16
Public Participation	Article 6 (a)(iii)	Article 14.1 (a)	Article 19(3)
COP/ assess implementation	Article 7	Article 23	Article 22
Training	Article 6	Article 12(a)	Article 19
Reporting	Article 12	Article 26	Article 26
Examine obligations-assess implementation	Article 7 (e)	Article 23	
Financial resources and financial mechanism	Article 11	Article 20, 21	Article 20
Technology transfer and cooperation	Article 4	Article 16, 18	Article 12, 18

8. To implement these provisions, Parties have established specific mechanisms for each of the conventions. It is now widely recognized that identifying and developing opportunities for synergy among the various instruments, and finding ways to coordinate and harmonize complementary or overlapping activities can ensure success in the implementation of the agreements and maximize outcomes, especially at the national level.

B. Decisions of the conferences of parties of the Rio conventions, with an emphasis on actions to be taken on the national level

I. UNCCD

9. Several decisions of the Conference of the Parties on synergy were adopted by subsequent meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD. The first meeting of the Committee for the Review of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) (CRIC) held in Rome, Italy, in 2001 reviewed in-depth the synergies and linkages between the Rio conventions realized at the national level. Based on country experiences, ^{4/} concrete suggestions for action to enhance synergistic implementation of the conventions on national and local levels were made. It was suggested that:

(a) The search for synergies at country level should be supported by appropriate incentive systems, institutional arrangements for coordination and responsiveness by the respective conference of the parties of the conventions and their secretariats;

(b) Technical and financial strategic alliances should be built to foster and strengthen effective regional and international cooperation and partnership, including the South-South dimension;

(c) The number of national synergy workshops should be increased to enhance the capacity of decision-makers at country level to implement the conventions in a synergistic manner.

^{4/} See document ICCD/CRIC (1)/9, <http://www.unccd.int/>

10. Consequently, the UNCCD Secretariat facilitated an additional number of national and local level synergy workshops. 5/ The sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to UNCCD held in Havana, Cuba, in September 2003 welcomed these activities in its decision 12 of the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, 6/ and called for further activities that would promote and strengthen the relationship between UNCCD and other conventions. Of special interest in the context of this meeting is the agreement between UNCCD and the Convention on Biological Diversity to establish a Joint Work Programme, which was tabled 7/ and welcomed by the sixth meeting of the Parties to UNCCD and later by the seventh meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (see below) together with the request to hold a synergy meeting on forests. 8/ A number of decisions from the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification are relevant to the Convention on Biological Diversity in general, including those relating to the work programme of the Committee of Science and Technology.

2. UNFCCC

11. In 2003, UNFCCC held two workshops on synergies and cooperation with other conventions. 9/ The workshop of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) was convened in response to a request made to the SBI by the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties (decision 5/CP.7 (para 36)). The workshop of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) was convened in response to a request made to the UNFCCC Secretariat by the seventeenth meeting of SBSTA, held in October-November 2002. In the same session, SBSTA also requested the Secretariat, in cooperation with other members of the Joint Liaison Group (JLG), to organize a workshop as a first step in the process of enhancing collaboration between the conventions.

12. The objective of the SBI workshop was to address possible synergies and joint action with the other multilateral environmental conventions and agreements. Workshop participants discussed, *inter alia*, guiding principles for achieving synergies, practical ways of achieving synergies at national level, the international community's role in providing impetus to achieving synergies, and ways in which the international community can enhance synergies at the convention level.

13. The SBSTA workshop aimed to prepare guidance to the national focal points of each Convention and to contribute to enhancing coordination and communication between them; and to identify options to increase cooperation and capture synergies among the conventions using existing channels, particularly the exchange of information, in areas such as technology transfer, education and outreach, research and systematic observation, capacity-building, reporting, and impacts and adaptation.

14. Decision 13/CP.8 held in New Delhi, India, in 2002 affirmed that there is a need for enhanced cooperation between the Rio conventions and a need to promote synergies. Furthermore, the nineteenth session of SBSTA held in Milan, Italy, in 2003 reiterated the importance of promoting synergy at the national and local levels where the conventions are implemented (SBSTA conclusion on cooperation with relevant international organizations (FCCC/SBSTA/2003/15).

5/ Lessons learned from some of these are reviewed in document UNEP/CBD/WS-Syn.Afr/1/3.

6/ See report of the Conference of the Parties on its sixth session, held in Havana from 25 August to 5 September 2003: Addendum part two: Action taken by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth session [http://www.unccd.int/php/document.php?ref=ICCD/COP\(6\)/11/Add.1](http://www.unccd.int/php/document.php?ref=ICCD/COP(6)/11/Add.1)

7/ See document ICCD/COP(6)/4 Review of activities for the promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant Conventions and relevant international organizations, institutions and agencies, in accordance with article 8 and article 22, paragraph 2(i) of the Convention, [http://www.unccd.int/php/document.php?ref=ICCD/COP\(6\)/4](http://www.unccd.int/php/document.php?ref=ICCD/COP(6)/4)

8/ UNCCD/CBD workshop on "Forests and Forest Ecosystems: Promoting Synergy in the Implementation of the three Rio Conventions", Viterbo, Italy from 5 -7 April 2004; see <http://www.unccd.int/workshop/menu.php>

9/ See FCCC/SB/2003/1 and summary coverage in Earth Negotiations Bulletin, Vol. 12 No. 220.

3. *Convention on Biological Diversity*

15. The Convention on Biological Diversity seeks collaboration between the Rio conventions and other environmental agreements through a number of its provisions and decisions of the Conference of the Parties, some of which are bilateral (those only addressing the Convention on Biological Diversity and one other Rio convention) while others are trilateral.

16. At its seventh meeting, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2004, the Convention on Biological Diversity for example, adopted decision VII/15 on biodiversity and climate change, which followed the intensive work of an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change. ^{10/}

17. Decision VII/2 ^{11/} on dry and sub-humid lands contains several paragraphs on synergy between the Rio conventions and other biodiversity-related conventions, which are of particular relevance to this workshop. In paragraph 5, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the Secretariats of the other Rio conventions and other biodiversity-related conventions, to further develop mechanisms for facilitating the synergistic implementation of the conventions, especially at the national level. ^{12/} A set of proposed mechanisms was included in the decision, including, amongst others (i) the development of criteria for projects promoting synergy and the creation of “good practice” examples; and (ii) sound preparation, formulation of objectives, organization and follow-up of national and regional synergy workshops.

18. In paragraph 6 of decision VII/2 the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the other Rio and other biodiversity-related conventions, to facilitate the review of the national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), in order to harmonize them with the national action programmes (NAPs) under UNCCD, with a focus on poverty alleviation and intersectoral integration. While doing so, it would also be useful to consider the national adaptation programme of action (NAPAs) under the UNFCCC, specifically focusing on areas of synergy.

19. The Joint Work Programme between UNCCD and the Convention on Biological Diversity, which was welcomed by the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to UNCCD and by the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, ^{13/} contains a number of provisions on synergistic action by national focal points of both conventions, including on the country level.

20. Decision VII/26 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity further strengthened requests to improve cooperation with other conventions and international organizations and initiatives.

C. *Thematic complementarities*

21. A number of thematic complementarities exist between the Rio conventions including technology transfer, education and outreach, renewable energies, water management, poverty alleviation, reforestation, and food security. Table 2 highlights some explicit references made to these topics under the three instruments.

^{10/} See the report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change at <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-09/information/sbstta-09-inf-12-en.doc> (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/INF/12)

^{11/} <http://www.biodiv.org/decisions/default.aspx?m=COP-07&id=7739&lg=0>

^{12/} In document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/10 some explicit proposals in this regard were made, in response to a request voiced in decision VI/4.

^{13/} Joint work programme on the biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, at <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/cop/cop-07/information/cop-07-inf-28-en.doc>. (UNEP/CBD/COP/7/INF/28)

Table 2. Indicative list of thematic complementarities among the Rio conventions. ^{14/}

	CBD	UNCCD	UNFCCC
Conservation, Sustainable Use and Sharing of Benefits of Biodiversity	Article 1	Annex I - Regional Implementation Annex for Africa Article 8.3 b(i) NAPs must ensure integrated and sustainable management of natural resources including biodiversity	Article 4.1 (d) Promote sustainable management, and promote and cooperate in the conservation and enhancement of sinks and reservoirs [...]
Land degradation	Decision VII/2 Par 1 PoW Activities 1,2 and 3	Article 2	Decision IX/13 Good Practice Guidance and Other Information on Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry
Adaptation to and Mitigation of Climate Change	Decision VII/4 PoW Activity 4 Decision VII/15	Decision V/3 Annex E par 16	Article 2
Food Security/(incl. Agro-biodiversity)	Decision VII/3	Thematic Programme Network 6: Promotion of sustainable agricultural farming systems	Art 2
Water management	Decision V/23 Decision VII/2 PoW Activity 7(e)	Decision VI/1 Art 8	IPCC Report: Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability Hydrology and Water Resources
Renewable energy	AHTEG Report on Interlinkages Between Biological Diversity and Climate Change CBD Technical Series # 10 (4.10) Identifies the potential benefits of renewable energy for biodiversity	Decision VI/1 Art 8 Thematic Programme Network 5	Decision VIII/1(k)
Sustainable Forest Management	Decision VI/22	Decision VI/12 Art 5	Article 4.1 (d) Decision IX/19: Modalities and Procedures for Afforestation and Reforestation Project Activities under the CDM
Technology Transfer	Article 16 Decision VII/2 PoW Act 7(b) Decision VII/29	Article 18 Decision VI/9 par 1(d)	Art 4 par 1(c), par 5 and par 9 Decision VIII/10
Poverty Alleviation	Decision VII/2 Par 6 and PoW Activity 4,5 and 9	Decision VI/2 Art 5 Decision VI/4 Art 3	Prologue Par. 21 Decision VIII/1 par 7 Decision IX/5.1 (b)
Traditional Knowledge	Article 8(j)	Decision VI/16	Decision IX/11 on traditional knowledge as supplement for climate monitoring
	Joint Programme of Work between UNCCD and CBD Elements A1.2 and B.3		
Education and Public Awareness	Decision V/17 par 5 PoW Activity 7(i)	Decision VI/1 par 30-35	Article 6 Dec IX/4 2(a) - request to GEF

^{14/} Based on (1) IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin Vol. 12, No. 220; UNFCCC workshops on synergies and cooperation with other Conventions, 2-4 July 2003, Espoo, Finland, (2) CBD Technical Series No. 10, Interlinkages between biological diversity and climate change: Advice on the integration of biodiversity considerations into the implementation of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol (2003); (3) final report from the UNCCD/CBD workshop on "Forests and Forest Ecosystems: Promoting Synergy in the Implementation of the three Rio Conventions", Viterbo, Italy from 5 -7 April 2004, (4) draft report from L'atelier sous regional sur la biodiversite agricole en Afrique de L'ouest (Ministere de L'Environnement du Mali en collaboration avec la GTZ, LA FAO Le CRDI et le CTA, 15-19 December 2003, Bamako, Mali)

	CBD	UNCCD	UNFCCC
Ecosystem approach	Decision V/6	Decision VI/12	SBI and SBSTA Espoo Workshops Recognized ecosystem approach as an instrument to achieve synergy between MEAs.
Link to MDGs	Decision VII/11 (Ecosystem approach) Decision VII/12 (Sustainable use) Decision VII/19 (Access and benefit sharing) Decision VII/27 (Mountain biodiversity)	Decision VI/2	Decision IX/5 (Special climate change Fund) Decision IX/6 (Least Developed Countries Fund)
Restoration and rehabilitation	Decision VII/2 par 5 PoW Activity 7(b)	Decision VI/1 (Para 8-12)	Art 4.1(e) Kyoto Protocol Art 2.1 (a) (ii)
Targets	Decision VI/7 Annex Para 7 Decision VII/10	Decision V/17	Kyoto Protocol: Art 3 (Annex B)
Soil conservation	Decision VI/5 (Soil Biodiversity)	Article 4.1 (f and g)	Decision IX/13
Assessing trends/indicators	Decision VII/6 Decision VII/8 Decision VI/7	Decision VI/17 Decision VI/19	Decision IX/11

III. OPPORTUNITIES FOR SYNERGY AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

22. The strategies adopted by the Executive Secretaries of the Rio conventions towards the promotion and strengthening of synergies with the other conventions vary. One instrument used in support of developing common policies and strategies at the secretariat level is a Joint Liaison Group (JLG). The first meeting of the Joint Liaison Group of the three Rio conventions took place in 2001. Since then at least one Joint Liaison Group has taken place each year, usually in the margins other meetings. The Joint Liaison Group aims to foster synergies both at the managerial level of the conventions and the implementation level (including the local level). So far the Joint Liaison Group meetings are being held between the Secretariats of the Rio conventions and representatives of their subsidiary bodies.

23. Para 2 of decision VII/26 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, requests the Executive Secretary to invite the secretariats of the other four biodiversity conventions (CITES, Ramsar, CMS, and World Heritage Convention) to form a liaison group to enhance coherence and co-operation in their implementation. This process presents an opportunity to review how that liaison group might coordinate with the aforementioned joint-liaison group and hence provide further linkages with the other two Rio conventions (UNFCCC, UNCCD).

24. The formation of a joint liaison group has greatly improved dialogue between the Rio conventions. The creation of a virtual “synergy portal” (list server for relevant staff and joint web pages) has been suggested as a potential tool for further strengthening communication and information exchange.

25. On a bi-lateral level Memoranda of Cooperation (MoC) exist, *inter alia*, between the secretariats of UNCCD and the Convention on Biological Diversity with the aim to strengthen institutional linkages. The status report on activities promoting synergies and cooperation between multilateral environmental agreements, in particular biodiversity-related conventions, and related mechanisms (UNEP/CBD/WS-Syn.Afr/1/INF/1) provides an overview of existing MoC between biodiversity-related conventions.

26. Signed in 1998, the MoC between UNCCD and the Convention on Biological Diversity specifies areas of mutual interest and cooperation. It contains seven articles on: (i) institutional cooperation; (ii) exchange of information and experience; (iii) coordination of programmes of work; (iv) joint actions; (v) liaison arrangements; (vi) consultation, reporting and further guidance; and (vii) review and termination.

27. Most aspects of this MoC are operationalized through a Joint Work Programme (JWP). An additional aspect pertains to liaison arrangements made at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, where a professional staff represents both conventions.

28. The Joint Work Programme between UNCCD and the Convention on Biological Diversity addresses priority areas of common interest with a focus on the programme of work of the Convention on Biological Diversity on dry and sub-humid lands. A liaison group between UNCCD and the Convention on Biological Diversity convened in April/May 2001 and identified these priority areas and elements that should constitute the Joint Work Programme. The Joint Work Programme for the period between 2001 and 2005 was agreed to between the Executive Secretaries of UNCCD and the Convention on Biological Diversity in February 2003 and subsequently welcomed by the conference of the parties of both conventions. It follows the rationale and structure of the programme of work on dry and sub-humid lands and highlights areas of collaboration and joint action between Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and UNCCD, the secretariats of the two conventions, and other collaborating partners. It consists of three elements:

(a) Element A focuses on establishing a first assessment based on the review of work already undertaken by the two conventions and the development of assessment tools;

(b) Element B elaborates on targeted actions, as specified in Part B of the Programme of Work. Activities formulated for the Joint Work Programme aim at informing focal points of both conventions and relevant stakeholders about the programme of work on dry and sub-humid lands and the Joint Work

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Programme itself. Element B suggests actions that would assist national focal points in realizing synergies at the local and national levels such as through the preparation of guidelines on how to integrate the programme of work into the processes of the national biodiversity strategies and action plans under the Convention on Biological Diversity (NBSAP) and national action programmes under UNCCD (NAP).

(c) Element C of the Joint Work Programme aims to harmonize the reporting formats of the two conventions, especially under the Joint Work Programme.

29. The Convention on Biological Diversity and UNCCD have taken a different approach to collaboration. In response to paragraphs 11 and 18 of decision V/4 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) established an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) to investigate the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change. It collaborated with UNFCCC and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to provide technical and scientific advice as a basis for future work. See annex I for a condensed summary of the AHTEG technical findings and conclusions, providing an example of how, on the international level, technical advice and guidance for action on the national and local levels can be provided.

Financing the implementation of the conventions

30. UNCCD has established a Global Mechanism to promote actions leading to the “mobilization and channelling of substantial financial resources, including for the transfer of technology, on a grant basis, and/or on concessional or other terms, to affected developing country Parties”.

31. GEF has been mandated by the conventions it serves to develop and promote synergistic initiatives. Through its decision VII/20/ (para. 6 (c)), the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity requested GEF to assist in developing synergy-oriented programmes to conserve and sustainably manage all ecosystems that also contribute to poverty eradication.

32. The Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) under UNCCD, called for UNCCD and GEF national focal points to liaise more closely with the focal points of the other Rio conventions and biodiversity related conventions for a more integrated management of programmes and projects and preparation of project proposals for various donor organizations.

33. GEF has recognized interlinkages between environmental issues and has created a multifocal programme on Integrated Ecosystem Management, which provides funds for cross-sectoral projects addressing at least two focal areas of sustainable development. GEF also offers opportunity for synergy in capacity building through the National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment (see document UNEP/CBD/WS-Syn.Afr/1/INF/2 on synergy in GEF strategy).

IV. OPPORTUNITIES FOR SYNERGY IN IMPLEMENTING THE THREE RIO CONVENTIONS AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

34. There is scope for cooperative action among countries to take advantage of synergistic opportunities at the regional and sub-regional levels. Countries which share similar ecosystems, environmental priorities or socio-economic situations can benefit from exchange of information, including scientific data, best practices and pilot projects, amongst others. Coordination among countries' policies and initiatives can also maximize results of activities undertaken. Cooperation among countries can also lead to increased access to funding. For example, a transborder project involving Mauritania and Senegal funded by GEF, and implemented by UNDP/UNEP addresses root causes of biodiversity loss from land degradation, while also enhancing carbon sinks and developing resource-based income and economic incentives for sustainable management. However, it is important for regional initiatives to avoid duplication of international initiatives while also avoiding additional administrative burden on countries. ^{15/}

^{15/} <http://www.gefonline.org/projectDetails.cfm?projID=457>.

V. OPPORTUNITIES FOR SYNERGY IN IMPLEMENTING THE THREE RIO CONVENTIONS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

35. Key approaches of the conventions in support of implementing synergies at the national level have, so far, included:

(a) Implementing a Joint Work Programme (see above) between UNCCD and the Convention on Biological Diversity; it highlights explicit areas of possible collaboration and joint action suggested between the secretariats, national focal points, and other collaborating partners of the Convention on Biological Diversity and UNCCD. It is important that country parties act on its provisions;

(b) Encouraging and facilitating the integration of the principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity into relevant sectoral policies through supporting inter-ministerial/sectoral coordination/steering committees through the NBSAPs, pursuant to Article 6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Further, decision VII/2 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity on dry and sub-humid lands requests the facilitation, at the national level, of the review of the national biodiversity strategies and action plans under the Convention on Biological Diversity, in order to harmonize them with the NAPs under UNCCD and the NAPAs under UNFCCC, with a focus on poverty alleviation and intersectoral integration (para 6; see above). In addition, the Programme of Work on Agricultural Biodiversity (decision III/11, annex A.3) of the Convention on Biological Diversity promotes the integration of national strategies, programmes and action plans concerning agricultural biodiversity in sectoral and cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies;

(c) Joint implementation of synergy workshops on all levels including national and local levels, as well as joint projects. UNCCD has been spearheading the organization and support to these initiatives, and in Africa at least eleven such workshops have taken place to date (see the note by the Executive Secretary on lessons learned from international initiatives on synergy in implementation of the three Rio conventions (UNEP/CBD/WS-Syn.Afr/1/3), including lessons learned from such workshops) ^{16/}

36. Furthermore, decision VII/2 of the Convention on Biological Diversity identified a number of possible mechanisms to support synergy at that level (see annex II).

^{16/}

See document ICCD/CRIC (1)/9, <http://www.unccd.int/>; and document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA//8/10.

*Annex I***SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS OF THE AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP ON BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

1. Topical guidance on synergy themes - an international approach: the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change. ^{17/}

2. A summary of the AHTEG's technical findings and conclusions is provided below as an example of how, at the international level, technical information and advice can be generated. Document UNEP/CBD/WS-Syn.Afr/1/3 includes a summary of some of the guidance provided by the AHTEG on implementation mechanisms.

A. Biodiversity and linkages to climate change

3. Past changes in the global climate resulted in major shifts in species ranges and marked reorganization of biological communities, landscapes, and biomes.

4. The current levels of human impact on biodiversity are unprecedented, affecting the planet as a whole, and causing large-scale loss of biodiversity.

5. For a given ecosystem, functionally diverse communities are more likely to adapt to climate change and climate variability than impoverished ones.

B. Climate change and biodiversity: observed and projected impacts

6. Changes in climate over the last few decades of the 20th century have already affected biodiversity.

a) The climatic range of many species will move poleward or upward in elevation from their current locations.

b) Many species that are already vulnerable are likely to become extinct.

c) Changes in the frequency, intensity, extent, and locations of climatically and non-climatically induced disturbances will affect how and how and at what rate the existing ecosystems will be replaced by new plant and animal assemblages.

d) Some ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to climate change.

7. Net primary productivity of many species (including crop species) will increase due to the elevated concentrations of atmospheric carbon dioxide, however, there may be losses in net ecosystem and biome productivity.

8. The livelihood of many indigenous and local communities, in particular, will be adversely affected if climate and land-use change lead to losses in biodiversity.

9. Changes in biodiversity at ecosystem and landscape scale, in response to climate change and other pressures (e.g., deforestation and changes in forest fires, introduction of invasive species), would further affect global and regional climate.

C. Climate change mitigation and adaptation options: links to, and impacts on, biodiversity

10. Terrestrial and oceanic ecosystems play a significant role in the global carbon cycle and their proper management can make a significant contribution to reducing the build up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

11. There are significant opportunities for mitigating climate change, and for adapting to climate change, while enhancing the conservation of biodiversity.

^{17/} <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/publications/cbd-ts-10.pdf>

12. The potential ecological and social effects of different activities were examined, including both detrimental and beneficial implementation procedures. Activities assessed include reforestation and afforestation, avoiding peatlands and mires degradation, short versus long plantation, native species versus exotic species plantations, agricultural management, forest management, grassland management, agroforestry revegetation, renewable energy sources, bio-energy plantations and hydropower.

13. Marine ecosystems have potential to sequester carbon and offer mitigation opportunities, although the latter's implications on biodiversity remain poorly understood.

14. Adaptation is necessary not only for the projected changes in climate but also because climate change is already affecting many ecosystems.

15. Reduction of other pressures on biodiversity arising from habitat conversion, over-harvesting, pollution, and alien species invasions, constitute important climate change adaptation measures.

16. The protection, restoration or establishment of biologically diverse ecosystems that provide important goods and services may constitute important adaptation measures to supplement existing goods and services, in anticipation of increased pressures or demand, or to compensate for likely losses.

Annex II

**EXCERPTS FROM DECISION VII/2 OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES ON THE
BIODIVERSITY OF DRY AND SUB-HUMID LANDS, PARA 5, EXEMPLIFYING
OPPORTUNITIES FOR SYNERGY ACTION INCLUDING AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL**

1. Joint work programmes at the national level as appropriate;
2. The activities of the joint liaison group of the three Rio conventions and potential additional members, and
3. Joint activities with a focus on several elements:
 - (a) Integration of activities related to national biodiversity strategies and action plans with national action programmes for the Convention to Combat Desertification, national adaptation programmes of action under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Ramsar wetland policies and other relevant programmes, including national strategies for sustainable development and poverty reduction;
 - (a) Capacity-building, information systems, institutional arrangements and joint planning activities between the coordinating bodies and focal points of the conventions;
 - (c) Development of criteria for synergy projects and development and application of "good practice" synergy projects at the national level;
 - (d) Sound preparation, formulation of objectives, organization and follow-up of national and regional synergy workshops;
 - (e) Training courses and awareness-raising among relevant stakeholders;
 - (f) Consultation, decision-making and implementation processes with the full participation of relevant stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and local communities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.
