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CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE  
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY  
Fifth meeting  
Nairobi, 15-26 May 2000  
Item 18 of the provisional agenda\*

## PROGRESS REPORT ON THE MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

### Note by the Executive Secretary

#### INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with the guidance given to the Executive Secretary by the Bureau, item 18 of the provisional agenda forms part of the third section of the agenda ("Review of the implementation of the programme of work"). The items in this section are intended to provide the Conference of the Parties with an opportunity to review the implementation of the Convention and the programme of work, including implementation of existing decisions and the programme of work approved in decision IV/16.
2. Under this item, the Conference of the Parties is invited to consider matters relating to the mechanisms for implementation of the Convention. The present note provides information on issues to be considered by the Conference of the Parties under six sub-items of item 18.
3. In most cases, the matters to be considered under these sub-items are the subject of advice prepared by subsidiary bodies that have met during the inter-sessional period.
4. The table below identifies those matters to be considered under item 18 of the provisional agenda that are the subject of this note, and indicates the relevant documentation for the remaining sub-items. The table also identifies those sub-items for which there are recommendations from the fourth or fifth meetings of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice or the meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions.

\* UNEP/CBD/COP/5/1.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Document</u>	<u>Cross-refer to advice from:</u>
18.1	Further guidance to the financial mechanism	UNEP/CBD/COP/5/13/Add.1	
	Review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism	This note	
	Additional financial resources	UNEP/CBD/COP/5/14	
18.2	Scientific and technical cooperation and the clearing-house mechanism	This note	Fifth meeting of SBSTTA (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/3)
18.3	Incentive measures	UNEP/CBD/COP/5/15	
18.4	Article 8(j) and related provisions	This note	Ad Hoc Working Group on Article 8(j) (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/5)
18.5	Education and public awareness	This note	
18.6	Impact assessment	This note	Fourth meeting of SBSTTA (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/2)
	Liability and redress	UNEP/CBD/COP/5/16	
18.7	National reporting	This note	Fifth meeting of SBSTTA (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/3)

I. FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND MECHANISM (ARTICLES 20 AND 21)  
(ITEM 18.1)

5. The Conference of the Parties completed its first review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism at its fourth meeting and decided to determine, at its fifth meeting, terms of reference for the second review (decision IV/11, paragraph 3).

6. The first review was conducted in accordance with the objectives and criteria for the first review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism annexed to decision III/7. In its second review, the Conference of the Parties may wish to take into account the guidance to the financial mechanism provided by the Conference of the Parties since its third meeting, as well as the experience gained from, and the conclusions of, the first review. The review could thus cover the activities of the financial mechanism in the period from the third to the fifth meetings of the Conference of the Parties (November 1996 to June 2000).

7. The objectives and criteria for the first review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism contained four elements: objectives, methodology, criteria and procedures. The Conference of the Parties may wish to adopt a similar structure for the second review. The objectives and methodology would remain largely unchanged. The suggested criteria are based on actions requested by the Conference of the Parties in its decision IV/11. In light of the experience of the first review, a simpler, more straightforward procedure is proposed.

8. The Conference of the Parties is invited to consider the following draft terms of reference for the second review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism:

#### A. Objectives

1. In accordance with Article 21, paragraph 3, the Conference of the Parties will review the effectiveness of the mechanism, including the criteria and guidelines referred to in Article 21, paragraph 2, with a view to taking appropriate action to improve the effectiveness of the mechanism if necessary. For this purpose, effectiveness will include:

(a) The effectiveness of the financial mechanism in providing financial resources

(b) The conformity of the activities of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as the institutional structure operating the financial mechanism, with the guidance of the Conference of the Parties; and

(c) The effectiveness of the GEF-funded activities on the implementation of the Convention.

#### B. Methodology

2. The review will cover the activities of the financial mechanism for the period from November 1996 to June 2000.

3. The review shall draw upon, inter alia, the following sources of information:

(a) Information provided by the Parties on their experiences gained through requesting funding from, and implementing activities funded by, the financial mechanism;

(b) Reports prepared by the Global Environment Facility, including its reports to the Conference of the Parties, programme status reports, annual project implementation reviews, reports of the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Programme, operational reports on GEF programmes, and the GEF pipeline report;

(c) Information provided by other relevant stakeholders in GEF-financed biodiversity activities.

#### C. Criteria

4. The effectiveness of the financial mechanism shall be assessed taking into account, inter alia:

(a) *The steps and actions taken by the financial mechanism in response to the following actions requested by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting to improve the effectiveness of the financial mechanism, as set out in the annex to its decision IV/11:*

- (i) *Further streamlining its project cycle with a view to making project preparation simpler, more transparent and more country-driven;*
- (ii) *Further simplifying and expediting procedures for approval and implementation, including disbursement, for GEF-funded projects;*
- (iii) *Developing policies and procedures that fully comply with the guidance from the Conference of the Parties in a straightforward and timely manner;*
- (iv) *Increasing support to priority actions identified in national plans and strategies of developing countries;*
- (v) *Applying in a more flexible, pragmatic and transparent manner the incremental cost principle;*
- (vi) *Promoting genuine country ownership through greater involvement of participant countries in GEF-funded activities;*
- (vii) *Increasing its flexibility to respond to the thematic longer-term programme of work of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in accordance with the guidance of the Conference of the Parties;*
- (viii) *Promoting the catalytic role of GEF in mobilizing funding from other sources for GEF-funded activities;*
- (ix) *Including in its monitoring and evaluation activities the assessment of the compliance under its operational programmes with the policy, strategy, programme priorities and eligibility criteria established by the Conference of the Parties;*
- (x) *Promoting efforts to ensure that the implementing agencies fully comply with the policy, strategy, programme priorities and eligibility criteria of the Conference of the Parties in their support for country-driven activities funded by GEF; and*
- (xi) *Undertaking efforts to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of the process of cooperation and coordination between the implementing agencies with a view to improving the processing and delivery systems of GEF, and to avoid duplication and parallel processes; and*

(b) *Any other significant issue raised by the Parties in their response to the questionnaire.*

D. Procedures

5. Under the authority and with the support of the Conference of the Parties, the Secretariat shall prepare background documentation for review by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting.

6. The Parties and stakeholders, including relevant organizations, are invited to communicate to the Secretariat [, by 30 June 2001,] their detailed views on the effectiveness of the financial mechanism on the basis of experience during the period under review.

7. The communications referred to above shall be structured along the lines of a questionnaire provided by the Secretariat using the criteria adopted in the present terms of reference, to be sent to the Parties as soon as practicable after the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

8. The Secretariat shall prepare a compilation and synthesis of the information received to assist the Conference of the Parties in its review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism at its sixth meeting. The compilation shall be submitted to the Bureau for review and comments prior to its circulation to Parties.

9. The draft compilation/synthesis will also be made available to GEF (the GEF secretariat and implementing agencies) for its review and comments. Such comments shall be included in the compilation/synthesis and identified by source.

10. The Secretariat shall submit the document to Parties at least three months prior to the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

II. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM (ARTICLE 18) (ITEM 18.2)\*

9. In its decision IV/2, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to undertake an independent review of the pilot phase of the clearing-house mechanism, starting at the end of 1998, to be presented to SBSTTA for its consideration together with a longer-term programme of work.

10. The report of the independent review and the proposed longer-term programme of work for the clearing-house mechanism will be considered by SBSTTA at its fifth meeting and its recommendation will be contained in the report of that meeting (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/3). Under this item, the Conference of the Parties is invited to consider and adopt the recommendation of SBSTTA on the clearing-house mechanism strategic plan and its longer-term programme of

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\* To assist consideration of this sub-item, the Conference of the Parties will have before it the following information notes: report of the independent review of the pilot phase of the clearing-house mechanism (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/2); clearing-house mechanism strategic plan (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/3); and clearing-house mechanism longer-term programme of work (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/4). Also available at the meeting will be the note by the Executive Secretary on the pilot phase of the clearing-house mechanism (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/5/3), prepared for the fifth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice.

work. It is also invited to consider the specific role of the clearing-house mechanism in scientific and technical cooperation.

#### A. Background

11. The clearing-house mechanism was created pursuant to Article 18, paragraph 3, of the Convention to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation between Parties. It is a network of Parties and partners working together to facilitate implementation of the Convention. The Conference of the Parties requested the Secretariat to take a leadership role in facilitating the implementation of the clearing-house mechanism, and also created an Informal Advisory Committee (IAC) to provide the Secretariat with feedback and advice throughout the clearing-house mechanism development process. The original mandate of the clearing-house mechanism has been widened to include matters pertaining to information exchange (Article 17 of the Convention).

12. The pilot phase of the clearing-house mechanism resulted in a number of achievements: 137 Contracting Parties have designated clearing-house mechanism focal points with staff and resources dedicated to obtaining and sharing information on biological diversity; 104 of these focal points have e-mail and 41 have websites.

#### B. Vision

13. The clearing-house mechanism is envisaged as the primary global cooperation and information network for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. It should promote and support at the local, national, subregional, regional and international levels:

- (a) Better, more cost-effective decision-making;
- (b) International cooperation and sharing of related technology, training, education, research, information and expertise;
- (c) Reduced duplication of related efforts; and therefore
- (d) Quicker, better and more cost-effective implementation of biodiversity-related initiatives, and of the Convention overall.

14. Working in collaboration with related global and regional initiatives, the clearing-house mechanism can link and synergize their contributions, and help consolidate and influence the development of the biodiversity component of an emerging global information infrastructure.

#### C. Scientific and technical cooperation

15. Both the report of the independent review (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/2) and the strategic plan (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/3) identify the promotion and facilitation of scientific and technical cooperation within and between countries, for the effective implementation of the Convention, as one of the three main goals of the clearing-house mechanism (in addition to exchange of information and network development). Scientific and technical cooperation involves the use of the clearing-house mechanism for identifying, developing and promoting opportunities for collaboration. It focuses on six key areas:

- (a) Decision-making tools and processes;
- (b) Training and capacity-building;

- (c) Research;
- (d) Funding;
- (e) Access to and transfer of technology; and
- (f) Repatriation of information.

16. The use of the clearing-house mechanism can lower the barriers to transboundary work in these areas, and lead to more cost-effective decision-making. It will also facilitate interdisciplinary integration (e.g. of taxonomic, ecological, and information-science initiatives) and the corresponding development of new knowledge and solutions.

#### D. Strategies to build capacity locally

17. In its decisions III/4 and IV/2, the Conference of the Parties noted that capacity-building is essential to implementation of the clearing-house mechanism. Participants in the survey for the independent review identified a number of opportunities at local and regional levels for building this capacity. Highlights of local opportunities are provided below, with the focus on the "Top 4" strategies identified.

##### 1. Training

18. The most common need identified for local capacity-building was training. Training is required in particular in the area of information technology, including skills required for computer set-up and maintenance, use of hardware, software, Internet, and information-exchange mechanisms. Needs were also identified for training in the use of the clearing-house mechanism, as well as on biodiversity and how to manage it. In particular, a need to "train trainers" was identified, by such means as workshops at national, subregional and regional levels, and the development of training materials, such as CD-ROM tool kits or a clearing-house mechanism user guide.

##### 2. Improved information management systems, strategies and standards

19. In the same way that strategies for handling information are an important component of the global clearing-house mechanism network, they are also essential for strengthening the ability of local clearing-house mechanism partners to implement the Convention. Thirty per cent of survey respondents identified a need for improved information-management systems, strategies and standards.

##### 3. Improved partnerships and information-sharing

20. Improving partnerships and information-sharing is essential in order to build the cooperative relationships that form the foundation of national clearing-house mechanisms. Twenty-five per cent of survey respondents replied that these are necessary locally in order to develop capacity to implement the clearing-house mechanism, and they highlighted a number of opportunities to meet this need.

##### 4. Increased financial support

21. Increased financial support is needed to build the capacity of local partners to implement and participate in the clearing-house mechanism. Activities in need of financial support include: clearing-house mechanism

operations, transfer of existing biodiversity information into electronic formats, establishment of national nodes and network development, hiring of staff, ongoing training activities, acquisition of equipment and technology, in-country surveys, field assessments, and data analysis, and participating in clearing-house mechanism workshops.

#### E. Funding issues

22. Ongoing support is required to develop and sustain the operations of the clearing-house mechanism's nodes at all levels. Biodiversity initiatives world-wide require the services provided by the clearing-house mechanism. This helps to avoid duplication of efforts and promotes cost-effectiveness. The proponents of these initiatives, who are potential "users" of the clearing-house mechanism, and who may regard it as a critical tool for their own initiatives, should be considered as potential clearing-house mechanism funders as well.

23. The following approaches may be used to obtain the necessary funding for clearing-house mechanism nodes:

(a) The Conference of the Parties could request each Party to implement its clearing-house mechanism node, with an ongoing staffing level equivalent to at least one full-time person per year. Where possible, this commitment should be accompanied by an adequate budget to cover technical and other expenses (guidelines to be determined);

(b) Ensure that start-up incentives are provided for developing countries, through GEF and other sources;

(c) Ensure that funding is provided for enabling activities such as the exploration, formulation, and development of funding proposals that match clearing-house mechanism priorities;

(d) Require all clearing-house mechanism nodes to produce long-term funding strategies for supporting their activities. A range of funding sources, in addition to national Governments and GEF, should be considered, including investigation of the potential role of business in helping to fund the clearing-house mechanism. Possible mechanisms could include: sponsorship of specific clearing-house mechanism projects of interest; fees for listing large businesses in the collaboration-promotion mechanism for institutions and experts, and service and technology providers; and fees for advertising on clearing-house mechanism web sites. The way in which private sector support is used will be critical to the future of the Convention;

(e) Involve potential funders more closely in clearing-house mechanism planning processes and workshops;

(f) Provide capacity-building and ongoing support on how to promote the clearing-house mechanism to key decision makers. This should involve:

- (i) Workshops and guidelines;
- (ii) The compilation of testimonials on benefits of using the clearing-house mechanism, and
- (iii) The compilation of funding success-stories and lessons learned.

24. Parties may wish to consider developing country-driven pilot projects in accordance with decisions III/4 and IV/2 on areas related to capacity

building, development of thematic, regional and sub-regional focal points, and network development.

#### F. Support by the financial mechanism

25. The Conference of the Parties requested GEF to support the activities referred to in decisions III/4 and IV/2 as critical components of implementation of the clearing-house mechanism at the national, subregional and regional levels, including in the pilot phase.

26. GEF has also been requested to provide support, under its revised operational criteria for biodiversity enabling activities, to the national, subregional and regional implementation of the clearing-house mechanism. This should address both scientific and technical cooperation needs, as well as support for country-driven pilot projects.

27. To date, GEF has funded 69 clearing-house mechanism projects under the add-on modules of the enabling activities (with a maximum allocation of US\$ 14,000 per module). A total of US\$ 804,580 has been disbursed, with countries receiving an average of US\$ 11,661 to establish their national clearing-house mechanism.

#### G. Next steps

28. The implementation of the Convention has a solid foundation in collaboration - countries and partners working together, learning together, and sharing their expertise, knowledge and experiences. Mechanisms are required to support this collaboration. Priorities include:

(a) A set of standards and guidelines for information management and exchange that addresses issues of standardization and interoperability;

(b) An operational model for implementation of clearing-house mechanism national, regional, subregional and thematic focal points;

(c) The development of procedures for linking the clearing-house mechanism more closely with related cooperation and information networks and, more broadly, with other relevant conventions and international initiatives;

(d) Development of criteria and procedures for the full involvement of other stakeholders in the Convention on Biological Diversity (such as international businesses and non-profit organizations and thematic focal points);

(e) Expansion and enhancements of the clearing-house mechanism that address those issues and capabilities required to support the upcoming work schedule of the Conference of the Parties;

(f) Mechanisms for identifying additional needs and priorities of countries and partners working to implement the Convention;

(g) Mechanisms for identifying resources available to meet those needs, and for sharing expertise, experiences and success-stories; and

(h) Additional mechanisms for building local/national/regional capacity to implement the clearing-house mechanism and the Convention in response to user needs. Recently expressed training priorities include: required information technologies (for example, computer hardware support), use of the clearing-house mechanism, and how to manage biodiversity.

29. The global clearing-house mechanism network needs to plan for its long-term sustainability, which requires access to adequate resources - financial, technical, human and information. Relationships between the clearing-house mechanism and international financing initiatives need to be fostered and strengthened, and creative partnership opportunities need to be explored.

30. Eligible Parties may wish to consider the following elements in the submission of their project proposals in the area of recently articulated priorities for pilot projects. The following descriptions have been derived from the guidance received from regional and expert workshops on the clearing-house mechanism, the independent review, the strategic plan as well as from the Informal Advisory Committee:

(a) Decision-making. Progressive projects dealing with: threats to biological diversity; economic valuation of biodiversity and incentives for its sustainable use; and environmental impact assessment; scientific assessments; indicators; Article 8(j) issues; and issues relating to access and benefit-sharing;

(b) Training and capacity-building. Pilot projects towards establishing standard directories of qualified trainers, experts and workshops, training modules, at the country, subregional or regional levels (designed to be easily searched by BioSeek, the search engine available on the clearing-house mechanism website);

(c) Research. Pilot projects towards establishing standard directories of institutions and experts, biological collections, maps, geographic information system (GIS) applications and satellite images, at the country, subregional or regional levels; progressive projects on biodiversity information and practices, including those that help link and synthesize existing knowledge in priority areas, to be identified via regional and international workshops and consultations;

(d) Funding. Pilot projects towards establishing standard directories of relevant funding sources at the country, subregional, regional and international levels (designed to be easily searched by BioSeek), searchable by keyword, region, and area of cooperation; pilot projects on the collection and synthesis of data on markets and the trade of goods and services related to biodiversity;

(e) Access to and transfer of technology. Pilot projects on technologies that, inter alia: (i) avoid or minimize adverse effects on biological diversity; (ii) support local populations in developing remedial action in degraded areas where biological diversity has been reduced; or (iii) encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements;

(f) Repatriation of information. Projects to demonstrate cost-effective and replicable methods for repatriating information, and for establishing linkages to the patent offices in each country for up-to-date information on, inter alia, new patent registrations and patents in the public domain.

#### H. New clearing-house mechanism programmatic areas

31. At the brainstorming meeting on scientific assessments held in Oslo in November 1999 (see UNEP/CBD/COP/5/17/Add.1 and UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/1), participants considered the clearing-house mechanism to be an important

mechanism to facilitate a network for the promotion of scientific and technical cooperation, information exchange and peer-review processes. The clearing-house mechanism was requested, *inter alia*, to help identify experts that could participate in the assessments and to facilitate exchange of relevant information, peer-review of documents and dissemination of results.

32. Article 17, paragraph 1, of the draft text of the biosafety protocol (UNEP/CBD/ExCOP/1/L.2/Rev.1) provides that a biosafety clearing-house will be established as part of the clearing-house mechanism under Article 18, paragraph 3, of the Convention. This implies a significant increase in responsibilities. There will be a need to allocate resources to the Clearing-house Mechanism Unit in the Secretariat consistent with the additional workload.

33. In its decision IV/9, the Conference of the Parties identified the clearing-house mechanism as a means for dissemination of case-studies and other information on the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. In light of the recommendations contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Implementation of Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention on its first meeting, to be held in March 2000 (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/5), the Conference of the Parties may wish to consider how the clearing-house mechanism can contribute to the implementation of any decision that the Conference of the parties may adopt following its consideration of these matters (see also paras. 35-40 below).

33. In order to achieve the goals of promoting and facilitating scientific and technical cooperation, the Secretariat is planning, *inter alia*, to develop a global electronic platform for scientific and technical cooperation in biodiversity on the Internet to match the demands and needs of Parties with respect to Article 18 of the Convention, as a transparent, open and publicly accessible forum.

34. The Informal Advisory Committee (IAC) has been fully involved in the development of the clearing-house mechanism. It also played a leading role in the independent review of the pilot phase of the clearing-house mechanism as well as in the formulation of its strategic plan and longer-term programme of work. Consultations with the members of the Committee using electronic means have been actively pursued. In order to seek advice from IAC on the development of the scientific and technical cooperation programme, a continued consultative process is needed, including IAC meetings and the use of electronic means.

### III. ARTICLE 8(J) AND RELATED PROVISIONS (ITEM 18.4)

35. In decision IV/9, the Conference of the Parties established an ad hoc open-ended inter-sessional working group to address the implementation of Article 8(j) and related provisions of the Convention. The decision also identified a number of other activities to promote the implementation of Article 8(j) and related provisions, in particular further case-studies and further development of the links between the Secretariat and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

36. The mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention is contained in paragraph 1 of decision IV/9.

The meeting of the Working Group will be held in Seville, Spain from 27 to 31 March 2000 and the report of the meeting (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/6) will be before the Conference of the Parties for its consideration.

37. The report is expected to contain, *inter alia*, a proposed programme of work and advice on the application and development of legal and appropriate forms of protection.

38. Also in decision IV/9, the Conference of the Parties reiterated its calls for further case-studies and for the Executive Secretary to further develop links with WIPO. Case-studies and other relevant information were received from a number of Parties and from the Biotrade Initiative of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). A synthesis of the information contained in these submissions will be before the Ad Hoc Working Group at its first meeting. When compiling this document, the Secretariat will also consider relevant information contained in case-studies relating to other aspects of the Convention.

39. A memorandum of cooperation is being prepared between the Secretariat and WIPO. The Executive Secretary expects to be able to report further progress by the time of the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

40. The Conference of the Parties is invited to consider the substantive elements of the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group and adopt a decision covering the elements identified in decision IV/9 for consideration by the Working Group, namely:

- (a) A programme of work;
- (b) Objectives and activities that fall within the scope of the Convention;
- (c) Priorities, taking into account the programme of work of the Conference of the Parties;
- (d) Advice needed from the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice;
- (e) Objectives and activities of the programme of work that should be referred to other international bodies or processes;
- (f) Opportunities for collaboration and coordination with other international bodies or processes;
- (g) Measures to strengthen cooperation at the international level amongst communities referred to in Article 8(j) and proposals for strengthening mechanisms that support such cooperation.

#### IV. EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS (ARTICLE 13) (ITEM 18.5)

41. In its decision IV/10 B, the Conference of the Parties invited the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to consider launching a global initiative on biological diversity education, training and public awareness. It requested the Executive Secretary to explore the feasibility of such an initiative and to report on progress to the Conference of the Parties at its fifth meeting. It also invited the United Nations Environment Programme, in cooperation with other bodies, to further develop its information-dissemination and public-awareness activities in support of the work of the Convention.

42. Following consultations between the Secretariat and UNESCO, the latter has developed a proposal for a global initiative, which is contained in document UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/5. The proposed initiative would be a joint undertaking by the Convention and UNESCO, and would also involve other relevant international organizations as partners.
43. It is proposed to establish a consultative working group of experts from United Nations and other organizations to further develop the initiative and to provide advice and support in its implementation. The first meeting of this consultative group will be held at UNESCO headquarters as soon as practicable after the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
44. The United Nations Environment Programme, through its Information Unit for Conventions, has provided support for media coverage of meetings held under the auspices of the Convention and with the preparation of the guide to the Convention referred to in paragraph 48 below. The first issue of the newsletter Synergies, which deals with the promotion of collaboration among environmental conventions, has also been produced (and can be seen at [www.unep.ch/conventions](http://www.unep.ch/conventions))
45. In its decision IV/16, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to prepare a handbook relating the decisions of the Convention, and other material relevant to the operation of the Convention, to the text of the Convention. A draft Handbook on the Operations of the Convention has been prepared and will be available to participants at the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
46. The draft Handbook contains all relevant decisions and other material up to and including the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. It is planned to incorporate decisions adopted at the fifth meeting into the draft and to publish the Handbook as soon as feasible after the meeting.
47. In its decision II/1, the Conference of the Parties endorsed the recommendation of SBSTTA concerning preparation of a periodic report on biological diversity, the Global Biodiversity Outlook. In order to ensure that the Global Biodiversity Outlook is based on the best available scientific expertise and that it can become an authoritative report on global biological diversity, the Executive Secretary has established an Advisory Group to assist with review of the draft and its finalization for publication. The Secretariat will make available to participants a pre-publication draft for comment and will publish the report after the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
48. The Secretariat is also preparing a guide to the Convention on Biological Diversity aimed at the general reader. It is expected that this guide will have been published by the time of the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and copies will be available. A brochure on the Convention and a poster to mark the International Day for Biological Diversity have also been prepared.
49. The Inter-Sessional Meeting on the Operations of the Convention has recommended that the Executive Secretary be requested to designate a theme each year for the International Day for Biological Diversity (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/4, annex, recommendation 1, para. 24).

50. Also relevant to consideration of this item is the recommendation of the fourth meeting of SBSTTA (recommendation IV/1, paragraph 7) that education and public awareness be included in the discussions on the work programmes on thematic issues (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/2, annex I).

51. The Conference of the Parties is invited to:

(a) Take note of the information provided by the Executive Secretary, invite UNESCO to launch the process envisaged in document UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/5, and request the Executive Secretary to report on progress made in its implementation to the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting;

(b) Endorse the recommendation of the Inter-Sessional Meeting on the Operations of the Convention and request the Executive Secretary to designate a theme each year for the International Day for Biological Diversity; and

(c) Endorse the recommendation of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice that education and public awareness be included in the discussions on the work programmes on thematic issues.

#### V. IMPACT ASSESSMENT (ARTICLE 14) (ITEM 18.6)

52. In its decision IV/10 C, the Conference of the Parties invited Governments and organizations to transmit to the Executive Secretary reports and case-studies relating to environmental impact assessment. It also requested that a synthesis report based on the information submitted and other relevant information be prepared for the consideration of SBSTTA.

53. Five Parties and three organizations have transmitted information to the Executive Secretary. Both in number and in the level of detail, these submissions did not constitute a sufficient sample to reach any definitive conclusions about the present status of incorporation of biological-diversity considerations into environmental impact assessment procedures.

54. SBSTTA considered the matter at its fourth meeting on the basis of the synthesis report prepared by the Executive Secretary (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/10) and adopted recommendation IV/6, which contains the elements of a decision by the Conference of the Parties. The recommendation is contained in the report of the fourth meeting of SBSTTA (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/2).

55. The recommendation outlines a number of activities which the Conference of the Parties may wish to invite Parties, Governments and other organizations to undertake. It also recommends that SBSTTA be requested to further develop guidelines on environmental impact assessments in time for the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and that the Executive Secretary continue efforts to generate and disseminate case-studies.

56. Also in its decision IV/10 C, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to make information on biodiversity impact assessment available through the clearing-house mechanism and other appropriate means. To this end, a web page has been created and information has been made available through the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity at the following address:

<http://www.biodiv.org/impactAssess/index.html>

57. The Conference of the Parties also encouraged the Executive Secretary to collaborate with other international bodies with expertise in this field with a view to drawing on their networks of professional expertise and sources of information and advice. It particularly encouraged collaboration with the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat and the Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, IUCN -the World Conservation Union, and the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA).

58. Collaboration between the Convention and these organizations was discussed at a meeting held at IUCN in Gland, Switzerland, in December 1998. This meeting formed the basis for subsequent discussions on coordination and collaboration.

59. At its seventh meeting, the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands adopted resolution VII.16 entitled "The Ramsar Convention and impact assessment", and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel under the Convention has established an Expert Working Group to further develop and diversify the Internet-based resource kit on impact assessment maintained by IUCN. Impact assessment is also one of the items of the 2000-2001 joint work programme to be undertaken by Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on Wetlands.

60. The Executive Secretary delivered a statement to the nineteenth annual conference of IAIA, held in Glasgow, Scotland, in June 1999. The results of the IAIA conference were reported to a workshop organized by IUCN during the fourth meeting of SBSTTA. The Secretariat also briefed members of IAIA on activities in implementation of the Convention at a meeting of the Association in Montreal in November 1999.

61. The Conference of the Parties is invited to consider recommendation IV/6 of SBSTTA and take appropriate action.

#### VI. NATIONAL REPORTING (ARTICLE 26) (ITEM 18.7)

62. In its decision IV/14, the Conference of the Parties requested SBSTTA to provide it with advice on the intervals and forms of future national reports, taking into account the elements contained in the annex to the decision. It requested that this advice cover the nature of the information needed from Parties in order to assess the state of implementation of the Convention; recommendations on improving the reporting process, through guidelines on format, style, length and treatment with a view to ensuring comparability between national reports; and identification of ways and means to further facilitate national implementation of the Convention.

63. At its fifth meeting, SBSTTA will consider the establishment of guidelines for national reports. The note prepared by the Executive Secretary (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/5/14) considers the lessons learned from the first round of reporting and from a pilot project on ways to assess implementation of the Convention, and proposes a methodology for reporting that could address the requirements identified in decision IV/14.

64. The Executive Secretary was also requested to prepare a revised synthesis of the information contained in the first national reports and other relevant information. This synthesis (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/5/INF/6) notes that very few additional reports have been received since the fourth meeting of the

Conference of the Parties and that analysis of those reports not included in the synthesis report prepared for that meeting (UNEP/CBD/COP/4/11/Rev.1) reveals that, whilst the reports contain important information about the implementation of Article 6 in the countries concerned, the general conclusions to be drawn are the same as those contained in the previous synthesis report.

65. The assessment of biodiversity enabling activities carried out by the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of the Global Environment Facility is being made available to SBSTTA at its fifth meeting as document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/5/INF/9 and will also be available to the Conference of the Parties at its current meeting. The Conference of the Parties may wish to take into account the conclusions of this assessment in providing any further guidance to the financial mechanism as necessary.

66. The Conference of the Parties is invited to consider and endorse the recommendations on national reporting contained in the report of the fifth meeting of SBSTTA (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/3), together with any specific activities proposed by the Executive Secretary in light of the recommendation of SBSTTA and other relevant information.

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