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CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Eleventh meeting

Hyderabad, India, 8-19 October 2012

Item 3.3 of the provisional agenda*

DRAFT REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY OUTLOOK 4 ADVISORY GROUP¹

Note by the Executive Secretary

INTRODUCTION

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

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

3. The first meeting of the Global Biodiversity Outlook 4 Advisory Group took place on 6 October 2012 in Hyderabad, India.

* UNEP/CBD/COP/11/1.

¹ This draft report is being issued for information of participants in the eleventh meeting for the Conference of the Parties. It has not yet been reviewed by participants in the Advisory Group meeting. The final report will be made available under www.cbd.int/gbo4.

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ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

4. The Advisory Group meeting was opened by David Cooper on behalf of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday 6 October 2012. In his statement, he welcomed the participants and noted the importance of this Advisory Group meeting in providing guidance to the Secretariat on the preparation of the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook in accordance with recommendation XVI/2.

5. Following the introduction by the Secretariat participants introduced themselves, highlighting their specific interests in the meeting.

6. The meeting noted that the Advisory Group members from the Czech Republic, European Commission, Iran, Peru, Convention on International Trade in endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Tebtebba Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research & Education (Tebtebba), and Métis National Council had been unable to join the meeting due to other commitments. The list of participants is contained in annex II to this report.

7. On his arrival the Executive Secretary noted the importance of GBO-4 in providing a review of progress in implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 at a point where course corrections can still be made. He emphasized the important role that the Advisory Group will play in the preparation of GBO-4 and in the promotion of its messages. He noted that GBO-4 should be seen as a tool to promote the mainstreaming of biodiversity and that in order to be effective the report must reach beyond the biodiversity community and reach other sectors.

ITEM 2. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

8. The Group worked on the basis of the agenda contained UNEP/CBD/GBO4AG/1. Ms. Teresita Borges Hernandez (Cuba) acted as co-chair for the meeting.

9. The Advisory Group had before it *Considerations for the preparation of the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook* (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/3), the *Draft Communication Strategy for the Fourth Edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook* (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/2) and the *Evaluation of the Third Edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook* (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/1). The list of documents is contained in Annex II to this report.

3.1 *Scope of the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook*

10. The mandate for GBO-4 as well as the scope of the report was provided by Kieran Noonan-Mooney. In his presentation he reviewed the relevant COP decisions and SBSTTA recommendations related to the preparation of GBO-4. In particular he noted that GBO-4 should provide a mid-term review of progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The report should also be easy to understand, be accessible to variety of audiences, consist of several products and draw on a range of information sources, including information provided by Parties through the fifth national reports and other means, indicator information, scenario assessments as well as scientific literature. It was also noted that the GBO-4 would consider 4 main questions:

- (a) What actions need to be taken to achieve the Aichi Targets?
- (b) Are we on track to reach the Aichi Targets by 2020?
- (c) How do the Aichi Targets and progress towards them position us to realize the 2050 Vision of the Strategic Plan?
- (d) How does implementation of the Strategic Plan and progress towards the Aichi Targets contribute to the MDGs?

11. With regards to the timing of the report it was noted that, assuming that the Conference of the Parties will meet in 2014 and then again in 2016, the report would need to be available in 2014 in order for the COP to take meaningful action based on its conclusions. This deadline creates some challenges as the fifth national reports are due on 31 March 2014. Given this challenge it was noted that it is planned to prepare several different products related to GBO-4 some of which could be released after COP-12.

12. In response to the issues raised the Advisory Group identified as an overarching challenge how GBO-4 can reach beyond the traditional biodiversity audience. GBO-3 had been well received by the biodiversity community but it did not have a large impact on other sectors. This should be improved for GBO-4. One way this challenge could be addressed could be by developing different messages for different audiences. Alternatively the same information could be presented in different ways so that it is more appealing to other audiences. Similarly different types of products could be prepared, including by considering innovative way of messaging and communication. In this sense GBO-4 could be thought of a series of nested reports or documents which draw on same underlying information but which are tailored to interests of specific audiences.

13. Another challenge for GBO will be to find the right balance between positive and negative messaging. It was noted that “doom and gloom” type reports are not very effective in promoting action but at the same time there is a need to be realistic about the challenges confronting biodiversity. One of the roles of the Advisory Group will be to help find this balance.

14. Careful consideration should also be given to adequate inclusion of indigenous and traditional knowledge in the report. Similarly the issue of the importance of biodiversity to cultures and religions could be drawn upon. In this context reference was made to the Joint Programme of Work on Biological and Cultural Diversity of the Convention on Biological Diversity and UNESCO.

15. Information related to the costs of taking action should also be included in the report. In particular it will be important to convey the point that actions taken at an early time have been shown to be more cost-effective than action taken after waiting many years.

3.2 Progress in the preparation of the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook to date

16. Robert Höft provided an update on the progress made in preparing the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, noting that a web page for GBO-4 had been prepared (www.cbd.int/gbo4) which was available in three languages so far (English, French, Spanish) and which would be updated as the preparation proceeded. Progress was then presented in particular with regard to the preparation of fifth national reports, the work on indicators, and work on scenarios.

National reports

17. National reports are a key source of information for GBO-4, alongside other information from countries, published literature, case study information, as well as information on indicators and on scenarios. The meeting noted that in accordance with decision X/10 Parties should submit their fifth national report by 31 March 2014. The report would be in narrative format and includes three parts:

(a) Part I - An update on biodiversity status, trends, and threats and implications for human well-being;

(b) Part II - The national biodiversity strategy and action plan (NBSAP), its implementation, and the mainstreaming of biodiversity; and

(c) Part III - Progress towards the 2015 and 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets and contributions to the relevant 2015 Targets of the Millennium Development Goals.

18. In accordance with the draft decisions in front of COP-11 Parties are urged to consider using the indicative list of indicators contained in SBSTTA recommendation XV/1, including in their fifth national report. Parties are further urged to make available data, information and case-studies, for possible

inclusion in GBO-4 by providing such information in their fifth national reports or through earlier submissions. To facilitate this, the Executive Secretary should provide guidance on the type of information that Parties might wish to provide for possible inclusion in GBO-4 and encourage Parties to submit this key information early.

19. In this context, the challenging time table was noted with only half a year between the deadline for submission of fifth national reports and the due date for the release of GBO-4 at COP-12 expected to take place in fall 2014. In its discussion on the preparation of GBO-4, SBSTTA-16 concluded that GBO-4 should consist of several products, including products to be released after COP-12, to be able to fully draw on the information provided through the fifth national reports.

20. The meeting further noted that a range of supporting measures were put in place to enable Parties to prepare and submit their national reports at an early date including:

(a) Financial support through the GEF for eligible countries to prepare update their NBSAPs in accordance with decision X/2, which included funding for the preparation of the fifth national report;

(b) The series of sub-regional workshops on updating NBSAPs led by the CBD Secretariat in collaboration with a range of partners and with the financial support of the Japan Biodiversity Fund;

(c) Technical workshops on indicators in the context of NBSAP updating and national reporting, led by UNEP-WCMC;

(d) A series of regional workshops on fifth national reports, their links to GBO-4, and the potential of scenarios to support policy analysis, to be organized by the CBD Secretariat in early 2013, of which two workshops for Africa and one for Asia were already in advanced planning stages;

(e) The development of a pilot online reporting tool focused on a national self-assessment of progress made towards national biodiversity targets;

(f) Additional guidance material including:

(i) The web portal on the Convention website: <http://www.cbd.int/nr5/>;

(ii) The resource manual for the fifth national report (first edition) in all UN languages: <http://www.cbd.int/nr5/>;

(iii) A training module on national reporting with focus on the fifth national report: <http://www.cbd.int/nr5/>;

(iv) NBSAP training modules: <http://www.cbd.int/nbsap/training/>; and

(v) Quick Guides for the Strategic Plan: <https://www.cbd.int/nbsap/training/quick-guides/>.

21. In its discussion the Advisory Group emphasized the value of case studies as a means of providing context to global trends information and as a way of engaging stakeholders. Another possible area where the Advisory Group could assist with the preparation of the report is to help in the identification of case studies from within the regions or organizations that they work. It was noted that in order to facilitate this process some guidelines on the type of cases case studies required and the information they should contain should be prepared. It was also noted that case studies do not necessarily need to be all positive and that in fact case studies which highlight challenges can often be very effective in communicating.

Indicators

22. In his report on progress in the development and use of indicators for Global Biodiversity Outlook, Matt Walpole (UNEP-WCMC) provided background on the history of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership, which had formed in response to the framework of targets and indicators contained in decision VII/30 in the context of the 2010 Biodiversity Target.

23. A key product of the GEF project, which supported the work of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership between 2007 and 2010 had been the indicators section reflected in GBO-3 with additional details provided in the CBD Technical Series No. 50 and a number of high level scientific papers, including one published in Science on trends in pressure, state, response and benefit indicators.² This had led to the main conclusion of GBO-3 that despite an increase in national response we continue to lose biodiversity because we have not sufficiently addressed the pressures on biodiversity and in particular the underlying causes (indirect drivers) of biodiversity loss.
24. The meeting noted that the indicators developed for 2010 remain relevant in the context of the Aichi Biodiversity Target, providing information particularly for targets 4 through 14. Additional indicators are however required for most of these targets and new indicators need to be identified or developed to address the remaining targets in Strategic Goals A, D and E.
25. To do this, the Secretariat of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership at UNEP-WCMC had put out a call to draw in potential partners with information relevant to the targets for which no or limited indicator information was available. As a consequence, additional indicators were currently being considered that would fill some, though not all, the gaps. One of the difficulties in this context was that with the end of the GEF project no funding was currently available for indicator development.
26. Meanwhile, partners remained committed and, with their own resources, pursued their work on indicators. One of the new avenues being explored was the use of indicators, not just for past trends but also for future trajectories of the trendline. It would be interesting to attempt, where possible, to compare these with information obtained from the modelling and scenarios work.
27. To provide an update on the status of indicators information for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership was launching the Aichi Passport as a proof of concept for more continuous reporting. This was being made available as a passport-size booklet as well as an application for both iPhones and android phones.
28. In addition to the work on global indicators, UNEP-WCMC, in collaboration with partners and the CBD Secretariat, was organizing a series of sub-regional workshops on national indicator development in the context of national target-setting and updating NBSAPs. Funding was available for two workshops each being held in eastern Africa, southeast Asia, southern Asia and Latin America.
29. Some participants noted that the messaging from applying the pressure-state-response-benefits framework (i.e. responses to biodiversity loss were not effective) was not necessarily helpful in generating political support for biodiversity.

Scenarios

30. Paul Leadley (DIVERSITAS) and Marcel Kok (Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency) introduced the scenarios assessment which had been commissioned by the Secretariat as a contribution to GBO-4. In their presentation they noted that the scenarios assessment prepared for the third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, and published as a comprehensive assessment in CBD Technical Series No. 50, was well received and contributed to the further understanding of modelling and scenarios assessments. They reviewed the process that was followed in preparing the report for GBO-3 noting that the assessment focused on comparison of a large number of studies rather than conducting new research. The further understanding of key processes driving species movements as well as the occurrence of tipping points, where ecosystems are pushed from one relatively stable condition to another typically more degraded one, were highlighted as a main conclusions from the work. Following this review they introduced the work on modelling which is being done for GBO-4.

² Butchart et al. (2010). Global Biodiversity: Indicators of Recent Decline. Science 328, 1164.

31. The GBO-4 assessment will be carried out by a consortium composed of DIVERSITAS, PBL-Netherlands, UNEP-WCMC and the British Columbia Fisheries Centre. The GBO-4 scenarios assessment will consist of three activities:

(a) Short term (ca. 2020-2030) analyses of policy relevant scenarios with a focus on the Aichi Targets;

(b) Mid- to long-term (ca. 2050-2100) analyses of scenarios for biodiversity and ecosystem services with a focus on the CBD 2050 vision; and

(c) An expert panel analysis of the relationships between the Aichi Targets and the Millennium Development Goals/Sustainable Development Goals based on insights provided by scenarios.

The work will consist of a combination of model assessments as well as extrapolations based on indicators.

32. It was suggested that the members of the consortium working on the scenarios assessment could be made known on the CBD website along with their contact details in order to ensure the transparency of the process and to allow those stakeholders that are interested to engage with the organizations working on these issues.

33. It was also noted that the Trondheim Biodiversity Conference held in February 2010 had been extremely helpful in broadening the understanding amongst the biodiversity community of the use and limitations of scenarios for policy analysis. At the same time, it had enabled the scientific community to better understand the concerns of policy makers.

34. The Advisory Group also noted that GBO-3 had revealed a need for scenarios at smaller than global spatial scale. In that context, the component on scenarios planned as part of the regional workshops on national reports and GBO were seen as an opportunity to provide further understanding, although they would not serve to develop regional scenarios as such. Their role was more exploratory and it would remain to be seen to what extent the information could feed into the scenarios work of GBO-4.

35. The potential link of this work – as well as the work on indicators – to the future work of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services was also noted.

3.3 Consideration of the role of the Advisory Group

36. The mandate and terms of reference for the Advisory Group were described by Kieran Noonan-Mooney. In his presentation he noted that SBSTTA, in recommendation XVI/2, requested that an advisory group be established in order to provide guidance on the preparation of the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook. In particular he noted that the Advisory Group will advise on all aspects of the preparation of GBO-4 and its related products, help to ensure the scientific soundness of the report, keep the work plan and communication strategy under review, review outline and draft chapters of GBO-4, draw attention to relevant data and material, and case-studies, provide oversight of the peer-review process, promote the participation of relevant partners and networks and recommend possible partnerships.

3.4 Next steps

37. It was agreed that a teleconference would be held in early November in order to review the implications of the decisions adopted at COP11 for the preparation of the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook. It was also decided that this teleconference would be used to have a preliminary discussion on the process for the preparation of the draft outline of GBO-4. Following this teleconference, a second teleconference would be held in order to discuss the draft outline for GBO-4. In addition the Advisory Group would continue to interact through email.

ITEM 4. OTHER MATTERS

38. Tim Hirsch (GBIF) provided an overview of the outcomes of the Global Biodiversity Informatics Conference and plans for the preparation of the Global Biodiversity Informatics Outlook.

39. The issue of funding for GBO-4 was discussed. The preliminary budget for the preparation of GBO-4 is included in recommendation XVI/2. This budget does not include costs for the workshops related to the preparation of national reports, modelling and GBO-4. To date the Secretariat has received funds from the European Union and Switzerland. It was noted that one of the challenges in preparing GBO-3 was the uncertainty related to the amount and timing of funds that would be received.

40. Tom Hammond indicated that the GEF Scientific Advisory Panel would be interested to contribute to the work of GBO-4, including by dedicating staff time and potentially contributing some financial resources to work that would be of relevance to the GEF.

ITEM 5. ADOPTION OF REPORT

41. The Advisory Group agreed that the SBSTTA Bureau would be informed of the discussions of the Advisory Group. It also agreed that a draft report of the meeting would be prepared and made available for review by the Advisory Group members.

ITEM 6. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

42. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the Advisory Group meeting was closed at 5 p.m. on Saturday 6 October 2012.

Annex I

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

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to:

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

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

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

Annex II

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Annex III

**DOCUMENTATION FOR THE MEETING OF THE AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP
MEETING ON INDICATORS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR BIODIVERSITY 2011-2020**

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
UNEP/CBD/GBO4AG/1	Provision Agenda
UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/3	Global Biodiversity Outlook - Considerations for the preparation of the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook
<i>UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/2</i>	<i>Draft Communication Strategy for the Fourth Edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook</i>
<i>UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/1</i>	<i>Evaluation of the Third Edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-3)</i>
