



**CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL
DIVERSITY**

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/2/INF/6
11 May 2007

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON
REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
CONVENTION

Second meeting
UNESCO, Paris, 9-13 July 2007

INPUT TO THE PROCESS OF REVISING THE STRATEGIC PLAN BEYOND 2010

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In Decision VIII/15 (paragraph 2) the Conference of the Parties decided to consider at its ninth meeting the process for revising and updating the Strategic Plan with a view to adopting a revised Strategic Plan at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
2. According to Decision VIII/8 (paragraph 2) the results of the in-depth review of goals 2 and 3 of the strategic plan will be used, *inter alia*, to provide inputs to the process of revising the Strategic Plan beyond 2010.
3. Accordingly, under this agenda item, the Working Group is invited to consider possible inputs to the process of revising the Strategic Plan, beyond 2010, that arise from the in-depth review. In doing so, the Working Group may wish to draw upon its conclusions under preceding agenda items.
4. To assist the Working Group in its work the Executive Secretary has prepared this information note. Background information on the existing Strategic Plan and related issues is provided in Section II. Issues arising from the in-depth review of goals 2 and 3 of the Strategic Plan and other relevant issues are surveyed in Section III. Finally, options for the inter-sessional process of revising and updating the Strategic Plan are considered in Section IV.

II. BACKGROUND

5. In decision VI/26, the Conference of the Parties adopted the Strategic Plan. Through the Plan, Parties committed themselves to more effective and coherent implementation of the three objectives of

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the Convention in order to achieve, by 2010, a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional, and national levels.

6. The Plan comprises introductory paragraphs and four parts:
 - Introductory paragraphs (the Plan is “to guide further implementation [of the Convention] at the national, regional and global levels”; its purpose is “to effectively halt the loss of biodiversity so as to secure the continuity of its beneficial uses”;
 - A – The issue (background information noting: biodiversity loss is accelerating; the threats; the Convention as an essential instrument; achievements; and challenges);
 - B – Mission (“Parties commit themselves to a more effective and coherent implementation of the three objectives of the Convention, to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth”. This has come to be known as the 2010 Biodiversity Target);
 - C – Strategic Goals and objectives (Four goals, each with four to six objectives);
 - D – Review (indicating that the Plan will be implemented through the programmes of work; NBSAPs, and other activities, and that better methods should be developed to evaluate progress).
 - An appendix (listing obstacles to the implementation of the Convention)
7. In decision VII/30, the Conference of the Parties adopted a framework for the evaluation of progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan, establishing a set of outcome-oriented goals and targets, and related indicators. These were refined in the light of experience and the advice of SBSTTA and adopted in decision VIII/15 “Framework for monitoring implementation of the achievement of the 2010 target and integration of targets into the thematic programmes of work”.
8. In decision VIII/15, the Conference of the Parties noted that that the framework for monitoring implementation of the Convention and achievement of the 2010 target is comprised of the following five components (paragraph 1):
 - (a) The four goals and 19 objectives of the Strategic Plan adopted by the Conference of the Parties in decision VI/26;
 - (b) A limited number of indicators to measure progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan, to be developed on the basis of the proposed indicators in annex I to the decision*;
 - (c) The provisional framework for goals and targets, consisting of seven focal areas, 11 goals and 21 targets, adopted in decision VII/30;
 - (d) Outcome-oriented indicators to measure progress towards the 2010 target (as adopted by decision VII/30 with amendments recommended by SBSTTA in recommendation X/5, as summarized in annex II to the decision); and

* A list of possible indicators was included in document UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/1/2, Table 1. This was reviewed by WGRI-1 and a revised list was annexed to decision VIII/15 (Annex I). Through this decision the Secretariat was requested, in consultation with the members of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators for Assessing Progress Towards the 2010 Target, and other partners to elaborate, on the basis of the annexed list, a limited number of relevant, robust and measurable indicators to measure progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Accordingly, the secretariat organized a discussion forum and invited the AHTEG members to participate. This has been an insufficient basis on which to further refine the indicators. Given that only very limited time is available before 2010, and the major exercise in reviewing the implementation of the Strategic Plan is already underway, it is proposed that further refinement of the set of indicators be coordinated with the revision of the Strategic Plan itself.

- (e) Reporting mechanisms, including the Global Biodiversity Outlook and national reports.

9. The Conference of the Parties decided to consider at its ninth meeting the process for revising and updating the Strategic Plan with a view to adopting a revised Strategic Plan at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and emphasized that the global framework for goals and targets is provisional and will be used until 2010 and decides to carry out, as part of the process for revising and updating the Strategic Plan (...) an in-depth review of the goals and targets, together with associated indicators, for use after 2010 (paragraphs 2 and 3).

10. In considering the implications of the findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment at its eighth meeting, the Conference of the Parties, in decision VIII/9 “Mindful that the loss of biodiversity is continuing, and recognizing the inertia in ecological systems and in the drivers of biodiversity loss and therefore the need for longer-term targets, decides to consider, at its ninth meeting, the need to review and update targets as part of the process of revising the Strategic Plan beyond 2010 (paragraph 10)”.

11. Parallel to the process for revising and updating the Strategic Plan, the Conference of the Parties may wish to consider the related issue of the multi-year programme of work (MYPOW) beyond 2010. The present MYPOW covers the work of the Conference of the Parties up to 2010 (2006-2010; Decision VII/31, refined in VIII/10 (paragraph 6, annex II)) It was developed in line with decision VI/28 and the recommendations of the ad hoc open-ended Working Group on the MYPOW. The Conference had previously established medium-term programmes of work for 1995-97 (decision I/9, revised in II/18) and 1998 – 2004 (decision IV/16).

III. CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE REVISION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Matters arising from the review of goals 2 and 3 of the Strategic Plan

12. Some of the main conclusions of the review of the status of implementation of goals 2 and 3 of the Strategic Plan are (for a full analysis, see UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/2/2):

- (a) Most countries have prepared national biodiversity strategies and action plans, but few have yet revised them;

- (b) Few countries have developed targets aligned with the 2010 Biodiversity Target, and few have established quantitative targets;

- (c) The ecosystem approach is not being widely applied by most Parties and is often absent from NBSAPs

- (d) While most Parties report some efforts to integrate biodiversity into other sectoral and cross-sectoral policies, mainstreaming in national development and poverty reduction strategies and broader planning processes appears to be generally weak

- (e) There is poor information on the state of implementation of NBSAPs

- (f) Parties report that the most widespread constraints to implementation of the Convention are “lack of financial, human and technical resources” and “lack of economic incentive measures”.

13. According to the Third National Reports, the most widespread constraints to the implementation of the Convention are “lack of financial, human and technical resources” and “lack of economic incentive measures”.

14. Based on the review, overall progress towards the implementation of the Goals 2 and 3 of the Strategic Plan may be considered as follows:

- Satisfactory, but incomplete for strategic objectives 2.5 (scientific and technical cooperation) and 3.1 (NBSAP development);
- Unsatisfactory for strategic objectives 2.1 & 2.2 (resources) and 3.3 (mainstreaming);
- Data concerning strategic objective 3.4 (NBSAP implementation) is insufficient to assess progress reliably.

15. Additional to this analysis, the Global Biodiversity Outlook 2 provides an overall “Strategic Plan Scorecard” (see www.biodiv.org/gbo2 Table 3.1) and “Prospects for achieving the targets of the framework for assessing progress towards the 2010 Biodiversity Target (Table 3.1). These show that none of the goals, objectives and targets have been fully met and therefore they are likely to remain relevant post-2010.

16. The foregoing analysis highlights two inter-related strategic thrusts that should be pursued with priority: awareness raising and mainstreaming (see UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/2/2). These two thrusts are mutually supportive: on the one hand greater awareness among all sectors of society on the role that biodiversity and ecosystem services play in supporting human well-being is necessary to stimulate action across the sectors; on the other hand integration of biodiversity into these sectors will provide opportunities for the broader relevance of biodiversity to be demonstrated and understood. Awareness raising and mainstreaming will also help to secure the necessary financial, human and technical resources that are observed by Parties to be lacking. Mainstreaming will also require that economic incentives be developed. Awareness raising and mainstreaming can only be achieved through effective engagement of stakeholders from all relevant sectors of society and the economy in the process of developing, updating and implementing national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs).

17. Within this broad strategic approach, the following eight priority actions at the national level can be identified.

(a) Prioritize activities in the Action Plan, focussing on strategic actions to reduce biodiversity loss and contribute to sustainable use, and develop a plan to mobilize financial resources in support of priority activities;

(b) Establish national targets, including as appropriate quantified and time bound targets, consistent with the flexible framework established in decisions VII/30 and VIII/15;

(c) Establish or strengthen national institutional arrangements for the promotion, coordination and monitoring of NBSAP implementation, including as appropriate inter-ministerial coordination committees and stakeholder consultative bodies;

(d) Develop a communication strategy for NBSAP implementation;

(e) Engage with existing planning processes in order to mainstream biodiversity concerns in other national strategies, including, in particular, poverty reduction strategies, national MDG strategies,

sustainable development strategies, and strategies to adapt to climate change and combat desertification, as well as sectoral strategies;

(f) Promote local action for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, by integrating biodiversity considerations into sub-national and local level assessments and planning processes, and, as and where appropriate, the development of sub-national and local biodiversity strategies and/or action plans; and

(g) Monitor implementation of NBSAPs and progress towards national targets, to allow for adaptive management, and provide regular reports on progress to the CBD; and

(h) Keep national biodiversity strategies and/or action plans under review and revise them as necessary.

18. These national level priorities should be supported by appropriate action at the Convention level: by the Conference of the Parties and by the secretariat and partner organizations. The Strategic Plan should clearly articulate strategies at each level.

19. The Strategic Plan includes, in an appendix, a list of obstacles to the implementation of the Convention. This list has been used in the format for the Third National Reports and in the analysis/synthesis presented in UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/2/Add.1. However, there are some shortcomings to the list that could be improved in a revision – some of the obstacles listed being dependent on others, for example.

Other considerations

20. In revising and updating the Strategic Plan, consideration should be given to:

(a) Outputs of the in-depth review of the implementation of goals 2 and 3 of the Strategic Plan (See UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/2/2 and UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/2/2/Add.1)

(b) The analysis in Global Biodiversity Outlook 2

(c) Implications of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

(d) Experience in the use of the 2002 Strategic Plan and its associated framework

(e) Experience in the use of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation and its 16 outcome-oriented targets

(f) Relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties

21. The time since the development of the Strategic Plan (2002) is relatively short (five years to date; eight years by 2010), and the time since the refinement of the framework of goals, targets and indicators (Decision VIII/15, 2006) shorter still. Few countries have established national targets within this framework, and even fewer have had time to implement them.

22. The Goals and objectives of the Plan itself (Decision VI/26) refer predominantly to aspects of the process of implementation of the Convention at national, regional and global levels (international cooperation, resources for implementation, NBSAPs and the mainstreaming of biodiversity, CEPA and

the engagement of actors and stakeholders). On the other hand the goals and targets of the framework for evaluating progress (Decision VII/30, VIII/15) refer to outcomes – to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the sharing of benefits.[‡]

23. Most of the existing goals/objectives/targets are expected to remain relevant post-2010. Indeed the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment noted that although the goals and targets of the framework were developed to clarify the 2010 target, they are sufficiently general to be used as a guide to the longer term objectives of the Convention, with the former addressing “means” and the latter “ends”.[‡]

24. The 2002 Strategic Plan includes objectives related to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety as an integral part of the overall Plan. However, the Conference of Parties and its subsidiary bodies have generally opted not to include the Protocol when evaluating progress. Thus, in the revised and updated Plan, Parties may wish to consider developing a distinct plan – or distinct section of the Plan – for the Protocol.

25. The 2002 Strategic Plan is a short document (five pages, including the appendix), and the framework for assessing progress adds only a few more pages. This relative brevity has been a strong point of the Plan. Arguably, this is especially important given the extensive length of many of the Convention’s programmes of work and other decisions. Thus the Conference of the parties may wish to aim for a short document for the post-2010 plan (eg: eight to twelve pages including annexes).

26. The short-time period of the 2010 target has already been noted above. The agreement on a short-term target reflected the urgency with which Parties considered the crisis of biodiversity loss. Biodiversity continues to be lost and therefore, Parties may again wish to establish a short-term target. At the same time however, the Conference of the Parties has recognized “the inertia in ecological systems and in the drivers of biodiversity loss and therefore the need for longer-term targets”. The Conference of the Parties may therefore wish to consider establishing both shorter-term and longer-term targets in the next Strategic Plan, for example, for 2020 and 2050 respectively.

27. Given the multi-faceted nature of biodiversity, and the three objectives of the Convention, any overall target is likely to be broad. So a framework of goals and sub-targets is again likely to be needed to clarify the overall target and provide the necessary precision. Where possible such goals or sub-targets should be quantitative. It proved difficult to determine quantified goals and targets in the framework. However, quantitative targets were developed in the context of the GSPC – focusing on a particular – and relatively well documented – subset of biodiversity allowed for such precision. Similarly it has been possible for some countries to develop quantitative national targets. It may be necessary to develop quantitative targets through a step-by-step process: to first establish the framework, and then to “populate” the framework with specific quantitative targets for particular subsets of biodiversity.

28. Given that implementation of the Convention occurs primarily at national level, the establishment of targets at national level in line with the Framework provided by the Plan is perhaps the most important functions of the Plan. National targets can be focused on national priorities and important aspects of biodiversity. Being more focused, they can also be quantitative. In fact, it is probably better to focus on a few quantitative targets than to have multiple general ones. The framework should provide a benchmark and guidance as to what needs to be achieved collectively.

[‡] However, there is some overlap between objective 2.2 (decision VI/26) and Goal 11 (Decision VII/30, VIII/15).

[‡] MA Volume 2, Chapter 14, section 14.2.2.2.

29. In considering the implications of the Millennium Assessment (decision VIII/9), the Conference of the Parties has identified the need to address the threats to biodiversity (drivers of biodiversity loss). The Conference of the Parties noted “in particular the urgent need to address the issues which the Assessment finds most significant at the global level in terms of their impacts on biodiversity and consequences for human well-being, such as:

- (a) Land use change and other habitat transformation;
- (b) The consequences of over-fishing;
- (c) Desertification and degradation in dry and sub-humid lands;
- (d) The multiple drivers of change to inland water ecosystems;
- (e) Increasing nutrient loading in ecosystems;
- (f) The introduction of invasive alien species; and
- (g) The rapidly increasing impacts of climate change;

30. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties urged Parties and other Governments to promote dialogue among different sectors to mainstream biodiversity and to address linkages between sectors and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, in order to contribute to the more effective implementation of the Convention, in particular its Article 6. The Conference of the Parties noted the need to link with the following sectors among others: international trade, finance, agriculture, forestry, tourism, mining, energy and fisheries.

31. Ongoing discussions concerning international environmental governance suggest a need for further close collaboration among multilateral environmental agreements and with other international institutions. For the Convention to play its full role in this future institutional framework, universal membership will be critical.

32. Examination of the agendas of meetings of the Conference of the Parties to date shows that most articles of the Convention have been addressed (in their own right, and/or within the context of the thematic programmes of work). Exceptions include

- Some aspects of Article 7 (Identification and Monitoring). While much work on developing indicators, there has been little on the identification of threats
- Some paragraphs of Article 8: 8(f) – ecosystem restoration and species recovery; 8 (g) – living modified organisms (at national level, i.e. outside the scope of the Biosafety Protocol); 8 (k) – protection of threatened species and populations; and 8 (l) regulation or management of threats;
- Article 9 (ex-situ conservation).
- Some aspects of Article 10 (sustainable use), in particular provisions (c), (d) and (e).
- Some aspects of article 19 (biotechnology)

33. In particular, the Conference of the Parties has not provided comprehensive guidance on the identification of processes and activities that are likely to have significant adverse effects on biodiversity (article 7 (c)) and on regulating or managing such processes and activities (article 8 (l)). In the light of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and its consideration by the Conference of the Parties (Decision VIII/9), these articles may warrant greater attention in future. Given the integration of the

2010 Biodiversity Target into the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Framework, the Conference of the Parties may also wish to focus more work on biodiversity and its contribution to human well-being, including poverty elimination. Finally, in light of the finding that Parties identify “lack of economic incentives” as a major obstacle, further attention to Article 11 may be warranted, perhaps together with those aspects of Article 10 that have not been adequately addressed.

Conclusions

34. From the forgoing discussion, the following tentative conclusions emerge:

(a) Given the necessary time for Parties to put in place measures to implement the Plan, and the inertia in biological as well as institutional systems, longer term targets should be considered alongside shorter-term ones.

(b) The Strategic Plan and framework for assessing progress, post-2010 should build upon the existing Plan and Framework, to allow for continuity with appropriate adjustments to improve clarity and focus.

(c) Greater attention should be given to addressing the indirect and direct drivers of loss of biodiversity (the threats to biodiversity), and reflecting these in the goals and targets. This would involve the full operationalization of Article 7(c) and 8(l) of the Convention: identifying threats to biodiversity, and managing or regulating them.

(d) A corollary of this is that major strategic thrusts of the new Plan should be to promote the integration of biodiversity considerations into sectoral and cross-sectoral policies, plans and programmes (mainstreaming) and to promoting greater awareness among all sectors of society on the role that biodiversity and ecosystem services play in supporting human well-being. In turn this means more effective engagement of all stakeholders. More effective use should be made of the ecosystem approach in planning processes. Development of appropriate economic incentive measures and of methods for accounting for the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services in national accounts is needed.

(e) The revised Plan should provide for Parties to develop national outcome-oriented targets, making use of the revised associated Framework, and for Parties to report on progress towards these targets, which, as far as possible, should be quantitative.

35. The foregoing analysis would also suggest the following issues be considered for inclusion in the MYPOW post 2010:

- Identification and management of threats to biodiversity (Articles 7(c) and 8(l))
- Biodiversity and its contribution to human well-being, including poverty elimination
- Ecosystem restoration and species recovery (Article 8(k,g) and 9)
- Handling of benefits and risks of biotechnology (Article 15 and 8(g))
- Further consideration of sustainable use and incentive measures (Articles 10 and 11) including engagement of local communities (10(c)) and the private sector (10(e))

IV. PROPOSALS FOR THE PROCESS OF REVISING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

36. Given that the Conference of the Parties has decided to consider at its ninth meeting the process for revising and updating the Strategic Plan with a view to adopting a revised Strategic Plan at its tenth meeting (Decision VIII/15 (2)), the revised and updated Plan will need to be developed through an inter-sessional process between the ninth and tenth meetings of the Conference of the Parties. Such a process could comprise:

- (a) Submissions from Parties and observers; and/or
- (b) A synthesis/analysis of issues prepared by the Secretariat; and/or
- (c) A meeting of an expert group, with members drawn predominately from Parties; and/or
- (d) A third meeting of the Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention (WGRI-3);
- (e) Examination of the outcome-oriented goals and targets, and associated indicators by SBSTTA, possibly with the support of the AHTEG on Indicators; and
- (f) Consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its tenth session

37. In establishing the process, the Conference of the Parties may wish to give attention to the following considerations:

- (a) The revision and updating of the Strategic Plan should be informed by relevant issues, including those arising from the in-depth review of goals 2 and 3 of the Strategic Plan, such as those identified in section III of this document;
- (b) The process should solicit inputs from interested stakeholders, including the biodiversity related conventions, other relevant organizations;
- (c) Process that allows parties to ensure “buy-in” from all relevant ministries and national constituencies;
- (d) The revision and updating of the Strategic Plan should be informed by the latest science and scientific assessments.