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AND FINANCE IN SUPPORT OF THE
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Agenda item 5

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION TO SUPPORT BIODIVERSITY ACTIVITIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL IN THE ARAB REGION

Note by the Executive Secretary

1. National financial support is part of the provisions of Article 20 of the Convention. It is important in terms of co-financing externally supported biodiversity projects. National resource mobilization is linked with national prioritization and awareness and recognition of economic values of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Budgetary resources of relevant sectoral ministries can be important, given the relative newness of national environmental agencies.

2. This short note describes global experiences in national resource mobilization. Participants of the Workshop are invited to explore the following:

(i) Consider national budgetary scenarios for biodiversity financing for the period 2011-2020;

(ii) Mainstream environment into national development policies, plans and budgets and adopt an integrated approach for policy development and implementation, with a full understanding and consideration of the relationship and feedback loops between the three pillars of sustainable development: environmental, social, and economic;

(iii) Encourage sectoral line ministries, through inter-ministerial coordination, to integrate environmental and social considerations into their policies and programmes, and thus reduce the financial burden on ministries of environment;

(iv) Consider biodiversity and ecosystem services as a necessary prerequisite for sustainable development and as an opportunity rather than as a constraint for development, and develop steps to undertake assessments of economic values of biodiversity and ecosystem services at national and regional levels;

(v) Strengthen capacities of environmental authorities to provide technical assistance on environmental issues to line and sectoral ministries, and to increase their ability to address environmental priorities

(vi) Introduce a system of integrated environmental and economic accounting to provide a true indicator for sustainable development that treats natural assets and capitals in the same way that

human-made capital is treated.

A. Economics of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

3. World Bank estimates show that the annual cost of environmental degradation ranges from 4 to 9 percent of gross domestic products for assessed Arab countries (Algeria, 9.6 percent; Morocco, 8 percent; Syria, 7 percent; Lebanon, 6 percent; and Egypt, 5.4 percent). These ratios are higher than those for Eastern Europe (5 percent) and substantially higher than those for OECD countries (2-3 percent). Considering that the combined gross domestic products of the Arab League were around US$1,624 billion, the total cost of environment degradation can be in the range between US$65 billion and US$146 billion. The Arab region is thus affected by the substantial economic cost of the unsustainable use of natural resources and environmental degradation, which negatively influences efforts for socioeconomic development and poverty reduction.

B. National expenditure

4. When the Convention entered into force in 1993, almost no country had a separate national budgetary line for biodiversity. Now most countries have certain biodiversity elements in national budgetary allocations. In a sample of 93 national reports, only less than 10 percent of countries indicated that they did not provide any financial support or incentives to national activities that are intended to achieve the objectives of the Convention. The large majority of countries have provided financial support or incentives or both to support national biodiversity activities. This funding is largely a result of a central government funding package for its national biodiversity strategy and action plan.

5. Budgets for biodiversity and ecosystem services are generally classified under the heading of environmental protection, and cover activities relating to the protection of fauna and flora species (including the reintroduction of extinct species and the recovery of species menaced by extinction), the protection of habitats (including the management of natural parks and reserves) and the protection of landscapes for their aesthetic values (including the reshaping of damaged landscapes for the purpose of strengthening their aesthetic value and the rehabilitation of abandoned mines and quarry sites); administration, supervision, inspection, operation or support of activities relating to the protection of biodiversity and landscape; and grants, loans or subsidies to support activities relating to the protection of biodiversity and landscape. Table 1 depicts the status concerning and trends in environmental protection expenditure worldwide.

Table 1 Percentage of environmental protection in national governmental expenditure

Country	General Government (year)		Central Government (year)
Africa			
Congo, Republic of			0.3 (2003)
Ethiopia			0.02p (2002)
Egypt		0.35p (2007)	0.35p (2007)
Lesotho		0.75 (2007)	0.75 (2007)
Madagascar			0.14 (2007)
Mauritius	4.34 (2002)	0.98 (2008)	0.45 (2008)
Tunisia			1.15 (2007)
Asia			
Bahrain		0.69 (2005)	0.69 (2005)
Bangladesh			0.08 (2008)
China		1.07p (2007)	0.07 (2007)
Iran	1.09 (2003)	1.68 (2007)	1.54 (2007)
Kuwait	0.1 (2003)	0.05 (2009)	0.05 (2007)

Maldives	0.74 (2006)	1.54p (2008)	1.54 (2008)
Pakistan			0.01 (2008)
Thailand		0.13p (2008)	0.14p (2008)
Latin America and the Caribbean			
Argentina	0.19p (2004)		0.29 (2004)
Bolivia	2.22 (2002)	1.74 (2007)	0.56 (2007)
Chile		0.32 (2008)	0.34 (2008)
Costa Rica		0.51 (2007)	0.53 (2007)
Dominican Republic			0.66 (2002)
El Salvador	0.19 (2003)	0.16 (2007)	0.17 (2007)
Jamaica	0.2 (2002)		
Trinidad and Tobago			1.46 (2007)
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	1.42 (2003)	1.22 (2004)	
Central and Eastern Europe			
Belarus	1.38p (2004)	0.85 (2008)	1.17 (2008)
Bulgaria		3.07 (2008)	0.94 (2008)
Croatia		0.67 (2008)	0.26 (2008)
Czech Republic	2.24 (2002)	2.59p (2008)	1.33p (2008)
Georgia		1.57 (2007)	0.66 (2007)
Hungary	1.84 (2002)	1.42 (2007)	0.98 (2007)
Kazakhstan	0.4 (2002)	0.59 (2007)	0.44 (2007)
Kyrgyz Republic	0.01 (2006)		
Latvia		2.67 (2008)	2.81 (2008)
Lithuania	0.28 (2002)	2.55p (2008)	0.55p (2008)
Moldova	0.41 (2003)	0.36 (2008)	0.41 (2008)
Poland	1.85 (2003)	1.43 (2008)	0.24 (2008)
Romania	0.36p (2002)	1.11 (2005)	0.62 (2005)
Russian Federation	0.41 (2002)	0.14 (2008)	0.08 (2008)
Slovak Republic	1.82p (2003)	2.2p (2008)	1.16p (2008)
Slovenia	1.61 (2002)	1.48 (2008)	0.93 (2008)
Ukraine	0.63p (2004)	0.55 (2008)	0.48 (2008)
Developed countries			
Australia	1.36 (2002)	1.43 (2008)	0.43 (2008)
Austria	0.66 (2002)	0.95p (2007)	0.35p (2007)
Belgium	1.54 (2001)		0.05 (2001)
Canada	1.56 (2003)	1.65 (2006)	0.65 (2006)
Denmark	0.96p (2004)	0.97p (2008)	0.69p (2008)
Finland	0.67p (2001)		
France	1.52 (2005)	1.64p (2008)	
Germany	1.23 (2002)	1.1 (2008)	0.06 (2006)
Iceland	1.57 (2006)	1.15(2008)	0.78 (2008)
Israel	1.55 (2002)	1.49 (2008)	0.42 (2008)
Italy	1.67 (2000)	1.72 (2003)	0.39 (2003)
Japan	3.76 (2003)	3.56 (2006)	
Luxemburg	2.79 (2002)	2.81 (2008)	1.21 (2008)

Malta	1.27 (2001)		1.27 (2001)
Netherlands	1.57 (2002)	1.84p (2008)	0.46p (2008)
New Zealand	1.73 (2004)	1.18p (2007)	0.06p (2005)
Norway	1.67 (2003)	1.45p (2008)	0.36p (2008)
Portugal	1.53 (2000)		0.33 (2002)
San Marino	3.23 (2002)		3.23 (2002)
Spain	1.85 (2000)		0.19 (2000)
Sweden	0.59 (2002)	0.68 (2008)	0.46 (2008)
Switzerland	1.74 (2002)	1.66 (2007)	0.06 (2007)
United Kingdom	1.32 (2003)	2.15 (2005)	

Source: International Monetary Fund (2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2009)

6. In general, environmental protection expenses are insignificant or very marginal elements in the national budgeting process, in both developed and developing countries. No major biodiversity countries have ever allocated more than one percent of their central government expenditure to environmental protection. Government finance information on biodiversity is even more incompletely available at the global level. There is also a mixed picture about the percentage of environmental protection in national governmental expenditure over the time. Although a number of countries, both developed and developing, increased the percentage of environmental protection in national governmental expenditure in the past decade, there were also an equal number of countries, both developed and developing, where the percentage of environmental protection decreased.

7. There is a general trend of decentralization in environmental spending with central governments allocating less percentage of overall expenditure to environmental protection than general governments that include local government expenditure. This may be explained by the inclusion of waste management, waste water management, and pollution abatement, which in most countries are taken care of by local government. The extent to which local governments address biodiversity objectives remains a subject for further examination.

8. In terms of central government expenditure, developed countries and countries with economies in transition have on average higher percentage for environmental protection than developing countries, signifying that developing countries in general have lower fiscal capacity and also perhaps lower awareness and less political space in dealing with environmental problems. This concentration of budgetary resources in developed countries and countries with economies in transition is in stark contrast with the distributional pattern of biodiversity globally.

9. Many ministries of environment have been relatively newly created and poorly endowed with financial resources. The new structures are made up of new and former departments transferred from other ministries. For example in El Salvador, the Protected Areas Department has been moved to the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARN) from the Ministry of Agriculture, but the CITES office stayed at the latter. Due to limited resources, the activities of these ministries are often project-driven as they are looking for externally funded projects to cope with their task.

10. Even important regional and subregional organizations also face the shortage of funding. Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD) suffers from lack of own personnel (most of the work is done by the regional technical committee representatives and project personal), lack of own resources (mainly the Executive Secretary and its physical infrastructure is supported by the budget of Central American Integration System (SICA), and absence of political will to have a common position from/for all countries (conflicts of interests occur often and lack of consensus limits the scope of work).

11. Since biodiversity is a portion of environmental spending, national budgetary allocations to biodiversity can be substantially smaller. However, if environmental affairs, in particular biodiversity objectives, are only partially covered by environmental ministries, the measurement of budgets of environmental ministries may considerably underestimate the actual budgetary allocations to the environment including biodiversity.

12. The time lag between political commitment and strategy development can be significant, not accounting for the delay between preparing action strategies and actual implementation. While by 1993 over fifty countries ratified the Convention, it was only until 1998 that there were fifty countries with national biodiversity strategies and action plans. The number of Parties well passed 150 in 1995, but it was until 2005, ten years later, that the number of national biodiversity strategies and action plans reached the mark of 150. The slow progression from global commitment on biodiversity to concrete action requires doubled efforts to maintain financial momentum that may arise out of global events.

13. The fact that biodiversity and ecosystem services tend to fall within the exclusive jurisdiction of environmental ministries points to the need for additional efforts to mobilize sectoral budgets for biodiversity objectives. The majority of national focal points are hosted by ministries for environment, and less than one tenth of the Convention's national focal points are housed in other ministries. The disparity among sectoral interests is widely observed: biodiversity strategies and plans try to extend into sectoral plans, programmes and policies, but sectoral and broad national policy frameworks do not demonstrate equal interest in biodiversity objectives.

14. Different national budgeting approaches demands different ways of securing budgetary allocations for biodiversity objectives. Under line item budgeting, one time inclusion of biodiversity in national budget will automatically lead to future financing, while under zero-based budgeting, the momentum of justifying biodiversity funding must be sustained over time. Under program, performance and results-based budgeting, biodiversity needs must be integrated in national budgetary objectives. Medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF) also requires biodiversity to be part of national priority system. National budgetary cut can have disproportionate impact on biodiversity funding.

15. Several national biodiversity strategies and action plans provide a measurement of funding gaps. In Tajikstan, the state budget share will be 35% of the total amount of expenses needed for its national biodiversity strategy and action plan (NBSAP). Funds from environmental foundations will make 10%. Some funds (20%) will be provided by other nature managers and economic institutions (land-users, forestry, NGOs, etc.) while implementing programs on sustainable development of particular economic branches supported by international investments and grants. The support of international financial structures and foreign donors (nearly 30-35%) will also be required. In Moldova, the budget share for NBSAP activities will be kept at the level of 12–14% focusing mainly on local budgets. The weight of resources of the State Forest Service and landowners will constitute 48–50%. The support of international financial institutions and foreign donors will be approximately 30–32%, and the rest (6–8%) will be completed by the ecological funds. The Estonian NBSAP covers such main sectors as forestry, fishery, agriculture, transport, industry, tourism, nature protection, education, biological resources and biotechnology, and landscapes, hunting, national defence, border control. The actions are grouped by preferences: very important, important, comparatively important and less important. Finances exist or are presumed to exist for only 40% of the actions.

16. The status of funding gaps in protected areas management also can give some insight to the overall funding shortage in biodiversity financing. UNDP and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) conducted a survey using the Financial Sustainability Scorecard for National Systems of Protected Areas in 18 Latin American and Caribbean countries, and found that one third of funding needs for basic management implementation are not met, which prevents those areas from functioning fully to ensure the provision of ecosystem services such as water regulation and supply, carbon capture and adaptation and resilience to climate change.

B. National revenues

17. Tax revenues directly from exploiting biodiversity resources are generally not significant. Some countries have natural resources tax on use of natural resources such as water, air, packaging material and other biological resources exploitations, or provincial taxes on sensitive natural spaces. Finland developed taxation system so that the emphasis in taxation could gradually be shifted from taxation of labour to taxation of the use of natural resources and of activities polluting the environment.

18. Charges on biodiversity use, which involve less legislative procedures, are more common than tax measures. Many countries charge fees for issuing authorisation documents such as licenses or permits of nature utilization, for instance, forestry concession/ grazing permits in forest reserves/ licenses for commercial use of forest resources; fishing permits/ angling license/ registration for boats/ fishing concession; CITES export permits; trophy hunting fees; national park entry fees; environmental impact assessment certification; wetland and water permits; and permit for emissions, drainage, discharge of polluting substances and waste according to scientifically justified standards. In some countries, these revenues are fed into national coffer and returned to biodiversity as annual budget allocation. Certain countries return a percentage of these revenues for direct use to nature management. Other countries treat the revenues as revenues of State national fund, and thus they are not used for purposes of biological diversity.

19. International knowledge on biodiversity-related tax and charge issues has not been well developed, such as optimal level of charges, legislation, enforcement capacity, information base, administration of resultant revenues, and how to redirect revenues towards biodiversity conservation. In Zimbabwe, for example, the annual permit cost for a luxury cruise boat was Z$50,000, yet one boat could generate at lest Z$500,000 per annum. With canoeing in Victoria Falls, the annual permit cost to an operator was Z$25,000 while the industry generated about Z$50 to Z$60 million per annum. A question is whether these tax or charge measures effectively achieve their stated objectives. In some cases, the license and permit costs can not cover government costs of relevant monitoring and enforcement,

20. Certain countries also collect revenues from other sectors for purposes of biodiversity. Trinidad and Tobago's green fund receives 0.1% tax on revenues of private enterprises. In Egypt, an additional tax is levied on aeroplane tickets issued locally, from which the income is used to finance programmes for developing tourism and environmental protection. In Mauritius, coastal hotels and boarding houses (with more than 4 bedrooms) are required to pay an environment protection fee of 0.75% of their annual turnover.

21. Tax exemption measures in national taxation systems can facilitate resource flows to biodiversity objectives, and these are increasingly introduced in many countries. Income tax deductions can be found for biodiversity products, land use changes and donations. Similarly, there are land tax exemptions for nature reserves and protection commitment, value added tax (VAT) exemptions for biodiversity equipment, products and special funds, custom duty exemptions for biodiversity-related imports and technology, tax exemptions on international cooperation procurement, tax exemptions for charitable organizations and foundations, and other tax exemptions that can be beneficial to biodiversity objectives.

22. Payment for the damage done to environment as a result of non-observance of rates and rules of nature utilization is a rather popular instrument used to collect resources for environmental purposes. In Brazil, the Law of Environmental Crimes stipulates rules on penal and administrative sanctions that may be applied to conducts and activities that are harmful to the environment. In China, administrative charges include charges for disposing pollutants, dumpage charge in sea area, charge for using sea area etc. Other examples include fines for illegal hunting. But fines and sanctions are not always effective, and do not necessarily promote fulfilment of biological diversity objectives. In some countries, the penalties established are too low to provide a real deterrent and do not reflect the actual economic realities and real costs of damage. In most cases, assessments of the overall fines for use of biological resources or

products is based on existing market prices, but does not take into account the costs associated with long-term and indirect environmental damage resulting from such activities.

23. Further non-tax revenues may come from direct operations sponsored by Governments, particularly those economic activities within the protected areas themselves, such as cutting woods, grazing, collection of mushrooms and medicinal plants, ecotourism, hotels, elephant rides, issuing filming licenses, and monkey export. In St. Lucia, local organizations have generated revenues from yachting, diving, snorkeling, forest produce, Christmas trees, and forest trails. In Zimbabwe, the Forestry Commission had a commercial wing operating as a company, and National Parks and Wildlife Authority charged for services given with a fund set-up.

24. Revenues generated from sustainable use of biological resources could be greatly enhanced. In Armenia, pricing policy was generally driven by the need to raise revenue rather than by market forces. For example, timber prices were determined by the costs of extraction and the need to generate specific revenues, and as a result timber products were undervalued and sold well below international prices. The introduction of modern technologies, along with revised pricing and effective marketing of timber, could increase income from forestry by 650%.

C. Sectoral mobilizing

25. Article 6(b) of the Convention calls for integrating, as far as possible and as appropriate, the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies. Most countries considered sectoral issues in national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and no country has further elaborated integration strategies that would bring biodiversity objectives and sectoral development goals together. European Commission required environmental integration into agriculture, cohesion policy, development, economic recovery plan, employment, energy, enterprise, fisheries, internal market, research, trade and external relations, transport, economic and financial affairs.

26. The understanding of biodiversity integration largely remains at the information level (Table 1). The purpose of information integration is to ensure that plans and policies (and even legislation) of different and relatively independently managed governmental segments are synchronized. When flows of information between departments and divisions are inadequate, policies and laws from one sector of the government may directly conflict with equally legally valid policies and legislation in other sectors. This can lead to considerable conflicts when such laws are put to the test, and often requires high level law-makers to make decisions in favor of one law over another. Such higher legal authorities may not have the necessary information or awareness of the importance of biodiversity conservation (and support of ecosystem services) over apparently far more tangible concerns regarding the potential impacts on the national economy in the immediate term.

27. One challenge to the effectiveness of information integration is that separate governmental segments (Ministers and associated personnel as well as civil servants) may promote their own key concerns and priority agendas in their domestic policies and plans (within which concerns for biological diversity may not feature particularly prominently). For instance, forest conservation and sustainable management is often in direct conflict with the pressing need to acquire foreign exchange revenue generation through immediate term lucrative logging agreements in developing countries. In many cases, effective integration thus must deal with trade-offs between biodiversity objectives and development goals.

Table 1 Conceptualizing biodiversity integration

Information integration

Information integration focuses on the provision of biodiversity information, data, and policy advices that can be read or used by pertinent user or impactor sectors.

Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming a biodiversity perspective is the process of assessing the implications for biodiversity of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making biodiversity objectives an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that the dichotomy between nature and human development is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve biodiversity objectives.

Conservation integration (horizontal expansion)

Horizontal conservation integration is a strategy used to take ownership and control of both in-situ conservation and ex-situ conservation in numerous conservation sites. Horizontal integration occurs when a national park or nature museum is being taken over by, or merged with, another nature reserve. One benefit of horizontal integration is to allow economies of scale, i.e., cost advantages obtained due to expansion. Economies of scale may derive from various sources, such as financial (having access to a greater range of financial instruments at lower costs), managerial (increasing the specialization of managers and learning by doing), technological and know how (taking advantage of returns to scale), operational (bulk buying of materials through long-term contracts), and marketing (spreading the cost of publicity over a greater range of media markets).

Sustainable use integration (vertical expansion)

Vertical sustainable use integration refers to the relationship between biodiversity management and economic sectors that have direct or indirect impacts on biodiversity objectives, in which biodiversity management has certain control on the user or impactor sectors. Biodiversity management thus extends its services to production sector, and is engaged in using biological resources in different production and trading. The benefit of vertical integration is to maximize development opportunities through upfront consideration of potentials of biodiversity and ecosystem services, such as various integrated production approaches.

Ecosystem integration

Ecosystem integration is to bring together the component natural and economic subsystems into one system and ensure that the subsystems function together as a system of achieving both biodiversity objectives and development goals. This approach assumes that biodiversity objectives and development goals are systematically pursued separately and independently, and can be linked together under an integration framework while avoiding having to make sweeping changes to the existing socio-economic structures. Effective ecosystem integrators who have a broad range of skills and a breadth of multidisciplinary knowledge can act as the go-between or broker between multiple natural and human systems.

Green economy integration

Instead of merely bringing biodiversity issue into development goals, green economy integration seeks to develop a new model that draws on biodiversity objectives and development goals by enabling behavioral and economic transformation. As a result, biodiversity objectives gain full consideration and equal treatment in the formulation, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of socio-economic strategies and policies.

28. The lack of progress in sectoral integration with biodiversity objectives at the national level can be observed at the policy development of global sectoral organizations. No global sectoral organizations have formulated biodiversity-specific guidance or tools to assist with national integration between biodiversity objectives and sectoral development goals. The only sectoral tool developed under the Convention is the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development.

D. Government debt operations

29. Biodiversity can be part of government solution to their external debt service problems. In the last years of the past century, considerable amount of debt relief was made possible through debt-for-nature swaps, and as a result, over US$1 billion in environmental funding was generated in nearly 30 developing countries, in particular in the form of trust funds. Major donors, including the United States, Germany and France, continue to tap biodiversity as a sustainability solution to debt problems. Germany alone had nearly 1.7 billion Euros outstanding debts in 2007 that could be converted for biodiversity purposes.

30. On 12 August 2010, US Government announced a debt-for-nature agreement to reduce Brazil's debt payment to the United States by close to $21 million over the next five years. In return, Brazil commits these funds to support grants to protect its tropical forests. Similar earlier agreements have brought more than $239 million to protect tropical forests under the US Tropical Forest Conservation Act (TFCA) of 1998. An earlier program, Enterprise for the Americas Initiative (EAI), established in 1991, generated some US$172 million for environmental conservation and child survival projects.

31. France established the Debt Cancellation and Development Contract (C2D) as a supplement to the Debt Relief Initiative for Highly-Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC). The total sum of debt cancellations under the initiative was estimated at 12.7 billion Euros. In 2006, Cameroon and France signed the C2D debt-for-nature swap agreement, allocating $25 million over five years to protect part of the world's second largest tropical forest. In 2008, Madagascar and France agreed to the largest debt-for-nature swap in Madagascar's history that provide $20 million to directly fund the Madagascar Foundation for Protected Areas and Biodiversity, established in 2005, for long-term support of the country's protected areas. This debt swap helped to exceed the Foundation's endowment goal of $50 million.

E. National environmental funds

32. Most countries have one or more environmental funds, in particular in Latin America and the Caribbean, and many environmental funds have been supported by external resources, such as those from debt-for-nature swaps. A review of 50 conservation trust funds has observed that some US $810 million have been raised for biodiversity conservation worldwide, including 74% in Latin America, 10% in Asia, 9% in Africa, and 7% in Europe. The contribution from United States, Global Environment Facility and Germany accounts for 70%, and resources from national governments and other donors cover the remaining 30%. For Latin America and the Caribbean, conservation funds and debt-for-nature swaps are considered as a mid-term and in some cases a long term financial basis to address, in some measure, the funding gaps in the management of protected areas and biodiversity conservation. Trust funds with broad environmental objectives are much larger, but provide smaller proportion of their funding to biodiversity objectives.

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