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REGIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP FOR CENTRAL AFRICA ON NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS AND MAINSTREAMING OF BIODIVERSITY

Limbé, Cameroon, 22-25 September 2008
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

STATUS OF NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Article 6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity ^{1/} requires each Party to develop or adapt national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and to integrate, 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.
2. In its decisions VI/26, on the Strategic Plan for the Convention, and VI/27 A, on implementation of the Convention and, most recently, in decision IX/8, the Conference of the Parties of the Convention stressed that the development and implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans constitute the cornerstone of national implementation of the Convention. This is reflected in goal 3 of the Strategic Plan, namely, that “national biodiversity strategies and action plans and the integration of biodiversity concerns into relevant sectors serve as an effective framework for the implementation of the objectives of the Convention”.
3. The Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention, at its first meeting, in September 2005, examined progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and concluded that there is little progress towards goal 2 and that this remains a major constraint on implementation. The Working

* UNEP/CBD/NBSAP/CBW-CAFR/1/1.

^{1/} Article 6 of the Convention states that:

“(a) Each Contracting Party shall, in accordance with its particular conditions and capabilities, develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity or adapt for this purpose existing strategies, plans or programmes which shall reflect, *inter alia*, the measures set out in this Convention relevant to the Contracting Party concerned.

(b) Each Contracting Party shall, in accordance with its particular conditions and capabilities, integrate, 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.”

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Group also noted that progress towards goal 3 is also poor. In view of this slow progress, the Conference of the Parties decided to conduct an in-depth review of the implementation of goals 2 and 3 of the Strategic Plan. This note provides a summary of the results of that review, as considered by the Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention, at its second meeting, in July 2007 (Section II), and presented to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in May 2008 (UNEP/CBD/COP/9/14/Rev.1 and UNEP/CBD/COP/9/4).

4. This series of regional workshops on capacity-building for NBSAPs is intended to contribute to the review process. Section III of the note provides information on the status and implementation of NBSAPs in Central Africa, as a basis for further work during the workshop (see section IV below).

5. Since considering the issue of national biodiversity strategies and action plans at its second meeting, the Conference of the Parties has issued guidance on the preparation and implementation of such strategies and plans and endorsed third-party guidelines developed to assist countries to fulfil their obligations under Article 6 of the Convention. The second meeting of the Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention, held in July 2007, prepared consolidated and updated guidance (see UNEP/CBD/NBSAP/CAFR/1/3). The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, held in May 2008 in Bonn, adopted this guidance in Decision IX/8 (paragraph 8).

II. IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF THE STATUS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NBSAPS: A GLOBAL OVERVIEW

6. As noted above, at its eighth meeting, the Conference of the Parties decided to consider at its ninth meeting the in-depth review of goals 2 and 3 of the Strategic Plan (decision VIII/8). It requested the Working Group on Review of Implementation (WGRI) to prepare for the in-depth review by focusing in particular on the following elements:

- (a) The status of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and their updating;
- (b) The extent to which biodiversity concerns have been effectively mainstreamed in accordance with Article 6(b) of the Convention ;
- (c) The implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs); and
- (d) The provision of financial resources, capacity-building, access to and transfer of technology and technology cooperation.

7. The relevant goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan are:

Goal 2: Parties have improved financial, human, scientific, technical, and technological capacity to implement the Convention.

Objective 2.1: All Parties have adequate capacity for implementation of priority actions in national biodiversity strategies and action plans

Objective 2.2: Developing country Parties, in particular the least developed and the small island developing States amongst them, and other Parties with economies in transition, have sufficient resources available to implement the three objectives of the Convention

Objective 2.5: Technical and scientific cooperation is making a significant contribution to building capacity

Goal 3: National biodiversity strategies and action plans and the integration of biodiversity concerns into relevant sectors serve as an effective framework for the implementation of the objectives of the Convention.

Objective 3.1: Every Party has effective national strategies, plans and programmes in place to provide a national framework for implementing the three objectives of the Convention

Objective 3.3: Biodiversity concerns are being integrated into relevant national sectoral and cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies

Objective 3.4: The priorities in national biodiversity strategies and action plans are being actively implemented, as a means to achieve national implementation of the Convention, and as a significant contribution towards the global biodiversity agenda.

8. In line with decision VIII/8, the Executive Secretary synthesized and analysed information in NBSAPs, the 127 third national reports submitted by Parties by April 2007, ^{2/} and other information submitted by Parties in response to the invitation in decision VIII/8 to provide updates on the status of NBSAPs, obstacles to implementation, national reviews of implementation and the availability of resources. The Secretariat also consulted relevant academic studies and reports prepared by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its implementing agencies. The latter includes evaluations of GEF support for enabling activities, National Capacity Self-Assessment reports and analyses of environment-related issues included in poverty reduction strategies and strategies for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

9. The following provides a summary of the main conclusions of the review, focusing on implementation of NBSAPs and the availability of financial resources^{3/}. It reproduces the conclusions of the second meeting of the Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention (July 2007) presented to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (May 2008). Data in sub-paragraphs (a) and (b) have been updated to 7 July 2008.

(a) From information provided to the Secretariat from Parties, 160 Parties (84% of the total) have finalized their NBSAPs or equivalent instruments. Twenty Parties have informed the secretariat that they are preparing their NBSAP. Ten Parties have not prepared an NBSAP or initiated the process to do so, or have not informed the Secretariat that they have done so;

(b) Twenty Parties have revised NBSAPs, and fourteen more have revisions in progress. Revisions are designed to identify and meet new challenges and to respond to recent guidance from the Conference of the Parties. Some Parties are developing biodiversity strategies and/or action plans at the sub-national level;

(c) Stakeholder consultations have been a major part of NBSAP preparation. However, the range of stakeholders involved is often not adequate to ensure effective ownership of NBSAPs or to ensure mainstreaming of biodiversity beyond the environment community;

^{2/} Third national reports had been received by 142 Parties by 7 July 2008.

^{3/} The full results of the Secretariat's analysis is provided in the following documents:

- Implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan (UNEP/CBD/COP/9/14/Rev.1)
- Report of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention on the work of its second meeting (UNEP/CBD/9/4)
- Status of implementation of goals 2 and 3 of the strategic plan focusing on implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and availability of financial resources: an overview (UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/2/2)
- Synthesis and analysis of obstacles to implementation of NBSAPs, lessons learned from the review, effectiveness of policy instruments and strategic priorities for action (UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/2/2/Add.1)
- Updated synthesis of information contained in third national reports (UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/2/INF/1)
- NBSAPs: a meta-analysis of earlier reviews (UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/2/INF/9)
- Review of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, biodiversity mainstreaming and implementation of the Convention: a bibliography (UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/2/INF/10).

(d) While most NBSAPs include goals and targets few are quantitative and few respond directly to the 2010 biodiversity target or other targets established under the Convention. In part, this results from the fact that most NBSAPs pre-date the establishment of the targets by the Convention on Biological Diversity;

(e) Similarly, reference to the ecosystem approach is absent from most NBSAPs, and most do not include reference to all of the relevant programmes of work and thematic issues under the Convention;

(f) Most NBSAPs include action plans. However, frequently these tend to be focused on projects rather than on the fundamental issues that need to be addressed to achieve the objectives of the Convention. Few specify domestic funding sources;

(g) Effective communication programmes are lacking from many NBSAPs;

(h) Most countries report efforts to mainstream biodiversity into sectoral and cross-sectoral policies, plans and programmes. This is probably more effective with some sectors (e.g., forestry, tourism) than others. Mainstreaming of biodiversity into national development and poverty reduction strategies and broader planning processes appears to be generally weak;

(i) Most countries have identified priorities for implementation of their NBSAPs, but few of them have indicated in their national reports whether and to what extent they have been implemented. Some countries may have comprehensive reports on implementation but these are not systematically available to the Secretariat;

(j) 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”. Articles 7, 12, 8(h) and 8(a-e) are reported to be the provisions most constrained by lack of resources;

(k) While nearly all countries indicate that they provide some financial support or incentives to national activities that are intended to achieve the objectives of the Convention, budget cuts are a serious problem in some countries. There are many examples of private contributions and resources generated from revenue measures, but the resources are generally small at national or international levels;

(l) Several countries have begun to introduce innovative financial mechanisms such as payments for ecosystem services, but, generally speaking, they have not yet borne fruit in generating sustainable financing. About one third of the reporting countries have adopted tax exemption status for biodiversity-related donations

(m) Most countries do not have a process to monitor financial support in their countries, and only one fifth of reporting countries have conducted a review of how their national budgets (including official development assistance) support national biodiversity activities;

(n) According to data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) about US\$ 9 billion dollars of biodiversity-related donor assistance have been provided for the period 1998–2005. No clear long term trends in bilateral assistance can be discerned;

(o) While some positive outcomes are reported for specific activities, in general, technology transfer and cooperation under the Convention appears to have been very limited;

(p) Important progress has been made with respect to the exchange of information and scientific and technical cooperation in general. However, the overall role of the clearing house

mechanism in supporting such cooperation needs to be further elaborated. About one half of the Parties have developed a national clearing house mechanism.

10. In their third national report, Parties were asked to indicate the relative importance of various obstacles ^{4/} to implementation of the provisions of the Convention and the thematic programmes of work, by ranking them as “high-level”, “medium-level”, or “low-level” challenges. Taking all reporting Parties together, the following ten challenges were ranked as “high” or “medium-level” by more than 70% of Parties for the implementation of Article 6:

- Lack of financial, human, technical resources (84%);
- Lack of economic incentive measures (82%);
- Loss of biodiversity and the corresponding goods and services it provides not properly understood and documented (76%);
- Lack of public education and awareness at all levels (75%);
- Lack of effective partnerships (74%);
- Lack of horizontal cooperation among stakeholders (73%);
- Unsustainable production and consumption patterns (72%);
- Lack of mainstreaming and integration of biodiversity issues into other sectors (71%);
- Inadequate capacity to act, caused by institutional weakness (70%);
- Lack of knowledge and practice of ecosystem-based approaches to management (70%).

III. THE STATUS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NBSAPS IN CENTRAL AFRICA

11. Of the 10 Parties invited to participate in this regional workshop, nine (90%) have completed national biodiversity strategies and action plans (See table 1) – a completion rate somewhat above the global average. Annex I provides a digest of the NBSAPs as featured in the country profiles on the Convention’s website. While some Parties have prepared posters on aspects of their NBSAPs, none of these Parties are from the Central African region. The posters are available at: <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/wgri-02/poster-session.shtml>

12. Only one Party (Democratic Republic of Congo) in the region has revised its national biodiversity strategy and action plan.

13. As part of the global analysis, summarized in section II above, Parties were invited to submit information on the status of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, their implementation and updating, and the extent to which biodiversity concerns have been effectively mainstreamed in accordance with Article 6(b) of the Convention on Biological Diversity. From the Central African region, only Rwanda provided information, which was included in the compilation prepared by the Secretariat for the second meeting of the Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention (UNEP/CBD/WGRI/2/INF/7).

14. To complement and extend the global analysis, the Secretariat requested each participant to the Workshop, nominated by CBD National Focal Points, to provide further information on their country’s NBSAP (See UNEP/CBD/NBSAP/CBW-CAFR/1/Add.1, Annex III).

^{4/} See UNEP/CBD/WGRI/2/2/Add.1 These obstacles correspond generally, but not exactly, to the list appended to the Strategic Plan (decision VI/26).

IV. ACTIVITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN DURING THE WORKSHOPS

15. As noted in the annotated agenda (UNEP/CBD/NBSAP/CBW-CAFR/1/Add.1), participants will be invited to discuss national experiences and lessons learned in the development and implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, focusing on:

- (a) Status of NBSAPs or similar strategies and programmes;
- (b) Major Features of NBSAPs;
- (c) Priority actions identified for implementing NBSAPs;
- (d) Mechanisms identified for implementing NBSAPs;
- (e) Obstacles encountered in the implementation of NBSAPs; and,
- (f) Reviews undertaken of the implementation of NBSAPs and assessment of the effectiveness of the strategy;

Table 1: Status of NBSAPs and national reports in Central Africa

Country	NBSAP (year of adoption) * year of completion indicated where year of adoption is unknown	National reports		
		1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Burundi	Yes (2000)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cameroon	Yes (1999)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Central African Republic	Yes (2003)	No	Yes	Yes
Chad	Yes (1999)	Yes	No	Yes
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Yes (2000, 2002) *Provincial biodiversity action plans also prepared in 1999	Yes	Yes	Yes
Equatorial Guinea	No	Yes	No	No
Gabon	Yes (1999)	Yes	Yes	No
Republic of Congo	Yes (2001) * NBSAP deals with agriculture only	No	Yes	Yes
Rwanda	Yes (2003)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sao Tomé et Príncipe	Yes (2005)	Yes	No	Yes

*Annex I***ANNEX I: MAJOR FEATURES OF NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS IN CENTRAL AFRICA**

This annex provides brief outlines of the major features of national biodiversity strategies and action plans as provided on the Convention's website at <http://www.cbd.int/countries/>. Those entries with a tick mark (✓) have been finalized and approved by Parties on the basis of a draft prepared by the Secretariat. For the remaining countries, the profiles have been prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of information provided in the NBSAP and national reports, but have not been reviewed by the Party concerned.

Burundi ✓

The national vision is to ensure that the population is rightly informed of the value of biodiversity and the threats it faces, as well as involved and engaged in its conservation and sustainable use for the well-being of present and future generations. The strategy is based on the eight following axes: conservation of biodiversity; sustainable use of its components; fair sharing of responsibilities and benefits; biotechnologies; public education and awareness raising; training and research; impact assessments and reduction of negative impacts; and cooperation and exchange of information. In addition, 13 main objectives, 27 specific objectives and 96 actions have been identified. The NBSAP also contains 16 detailed projects intended to implement the strategy and action plan.

Cameroon

An analysis of both the proximate and underlying causes of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation in Cameroon led to the adoption of the following strategic goals: i) Reduce and/or stop biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation in the short and medium term, and reverse the current trend of ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss, in the long term, through environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable biodiversity management systems; ii) Promote known values of biodiversity and its components and assess unknown values so as to raise awareness of biodiversity importance, derive incentives and enhance awareness so that all stakeholders can pledge more commitment to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and its components; iii) Develop and/or strengthen capacity for planning, implementation and monitoring of biodiversity programmes and projects at all levels of the society, particularly, at the local community level; iv) Adapt legislation to include CBD requirement. v) Promote the development of project proposals and fundraising.

Cameroon identified some key objectives, specific to the various ecosystems, which are considered key to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the country. They include such things as: reduction of man-made pollution in marine and coastal ecosystems; promote traditional knowledge of forest biodiversity and its socio-economic importance; institute measures against activities and practices likely to produce uncontrollable bush fires; to ensure sustainable harvesting of fuel wood and fauna; to ensure the promotion of appropriate agro-pastoral techniques and to increase knowledge of fresh water biological resources and their value for beneficial exploitation.

Central African Republic

The NBSAP identified eight major issues with regard to biodiversity, including: vegetation loss; decreasing fauna; threats faced by domestic animal species; loss of agro-biodiversity; biosafety hazards ignored; non-equitable sharing of benefits; waste of biological resources and degradation of humid zones. To tackle the set of issues as a whole, a global objective was proposed: human development is assured in a sustainable fashion for the Central African Republic. For each individual issue, specific actions were proposed as well as expected results and indicators to be used in future assessments. Several examples of actions to be taken include: to develop and implement an action plan for protected areas; to elaborate, through public participation, policies for the management of renewable resources; to promote enhance traditional practices for use of biological resources; to put in place a financial mechanism for the rehabilitation of biological resources; and to promote and strengthen in situ and ex situ conservation of agro-biodiversity.

Chad

Several strategic focus points were developed in order to meet the primary objective, which is the conservation and sustainable management of the biological diversity of Chad. These focal points are as follows: increased knowledge and surveillance of the biological diversity; threatened ecosystems and species inventoried, protected and/or restored; usage of substitute resources increased; sustainable use practices adopted and fair and equitable use of biological resources. Each of these points has a list of several actions to be taken in order for these objectives to be met. Several priority actions include: protection and restoration of local gene pool; complete research on ecosystems and species, especially those that are threatened; improve the productivity of carbonization techniques; adapt and apply legislation concerning biological resources and accelerate the reform and application of land tenure.

Democratic Republic of Congo

There were three principal themes considered in the development of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. These themes were then broken down into specific objectives and programmes. The three themes are: conservation of biological diversity; sustainable development and management of the biodiversity resources; and the implementation and follow-up of the national strategy and action plan. Several long and short term projects were initiated such as: project for the restoration and rehabilitation of the national parks, plans for the protection and rehabilitation of endangered species and ecosystems, development of the Zoological and Botanical Institute of Congo, program to fight the vectors of malaria, National Program for sustainable agriculture and the National Strategy on Biosafety. Following the formal adoption of the National Biodiversity Action Plan by the National Economic/Finance Commission in 2000, the country subsequently updated this plan for the period 2002-2010, incorporating cross-cutting activities into twenty-one sub-themes divided among the three principal themes indicated above. Provincial Biodiversity Action Plans were also prepared in 1999 and presented as an appendix to the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

Equatorial Guinea

n/a

Gabon

The NBSAP comprises two types of objectives. The “development objective” aims to integrate biodiversity conservation issues in economic development planning, and the “specific objective” aims to exploit and protect biodiversity in a sustainable manner. Activities will be undertaken in regard to: forests; freshwater; marine and coastal zones; agrobiodiversity; local and indigenous knowledge; biosafety; protected areas; and public participation.

Republic of Congo

The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan includes 10 thematic actions selected for the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural resources, and 15 projects through which these actions will be implemented. Priorities include, among others, to place at the disposal of selected producers improved seeds and promote the technique of seed multiplication for sustainable agriculture; to provide rural areas with young seedlings of improved fruit to promote fruit-bearing arboriculture and guarantee a sufficient level of quality fruit production; promote a financing system for familial agriculture and small and medium-size agricultural enterprises; provide agricultural producers with training and awareness-raising in the production and use of compost; to rehabilitate and create small units for the production of quality food for livestock, through adapted technology; to acquire functional and adapted agricultural material and equipment, permitting producers to expand the surface of agricultural areas.

Rwanda✓

The strategy focuses on five major aims: improved conservation of protected areas and wetlands; sustainable use of biodiversity in natural ecosystems and agro-ecosystems; rational use of biotechnology; development and strengthening of policy, institutional, legal and human resources frameworks; and equitable sharing of benefits derived from the use of biological resources. The Action Plan consists of urgent and priority actions which are attainable in a period of five years

Sao Tomé et Príncipe

The Convention on Biological Diversity gave rise to the following sub-objectives in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan of Sao Tome and Principe: reinforcement of in situ and ex situ conservation; the valorization of biodiversity; the reinforcement of legal and institutional frameworks; and the creation of mechanisms to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of biological resources at the national and international level. Five strategic axes were developed and taken into consideration, which are: the conservation of the coastal and marine ecosystem; the conservation of inland waters; the conservation of forest ecosystems; conservation of agricultural ecosystems and the reinforcement of legal and institutional frameworks. For each of these axes the action plan where presented incorporates primary activities and measures. These measures and activities should continue into subsequent actions that will develop depending on the organizational capacities and financing resources that become available.
