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REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR MIDDLE EAST AND
NORTH AFRICA ON THE PREPARATION OF
THE FIFTH NATIONAL REPORT
Doha, 14-17 December 2013

REPORT OF THE REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA ON THE PREPARATION OF THE FIFTH NATIONAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. The regional workshop for the Middle East and North Africa on the preparation of the fifth national report was held from 14 to 17 December 2013 in Doha, with the generous financial support of the Government of Japan, through the Japan Biodiversity Fund, and in-kind support from the Ministry of the Environment of Qatar in collaboration with UNEP's Regional Office for West Asia. The workshop was held in response to decision X/10, which requested the Executive Secretary to continue to provide support to developing countries for the preparation of the fifth national reports. The workshop was the seventh in a series of workshops being convened to strengthen the capacities of countries to prepare their fifth national reports and to facilitate the submission of the reports by the deadline of 31 March 2014.

2. The workshop was attended by government-nominated representatives from the following countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Palestine attended as an observer. Participants were comprised of government officials and experts involved in the preparation of their country's fifth national report and/or the development and implementation of relevant biodiversity policies and programmes. Experts from UNEP's Regional Office for West Asia, the Institute of Biodiversity and the Egyptian Ministry of the Environment also attended the workshop. The list of participants is contained in annex I to this report.

ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE WORKSHOP AND ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

3. The workshop was opened by Mr. Ahmed Bin Mohammed Al-Sada, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of the Environment of Qatar. He welcomed all participants and highlighted the strategic importance of the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets adopted by the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. He elaborated how implementing these targets could help in protecting habitats and reiterated the importance of establishing new protected areas and protecting endangered species, among other matters. He also highlighted that the processes for revising and updating national biodiversity strategies and action plans, in line with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, as well as the preparation of national reports, should be inclusive and engage all stakeholders, including indigenous and local communities. He believed that this workshop would contribute significantly to the preparation of the fifth national report through actively engaging all participants.

4. Ms. Diane Klaimi delivered an opening statement on behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme, Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP-ROWA). She emphasized that, despite various efforts, biodiversity in the region continued to be under great pressures, which had led to the loss of an

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important part of our global natural heritage. In addition, this loss had many economic and social implications for the region. All of this was revealed through working with Governments in the region over the last three years and through capacity-building activities supported by UNEP ROWA for implementation of the biodiversity-related MEAs. She commended the State of Qatar for its efforts in biodiversity conservation, particularly in ratifying biodiversity-related MEAs and meeting its obligations to these treaties, developing sound policies in regard to marine protected areas, habitat rehabilitation and combating the illegal use of endangered species. She noted that the preparation of the fifth national report would allow countries to provide updates on the status and trends of biodiversity, implementation of the NBSAP and on mainstreaming biodiversity into relevant sectors and, more importantly, to review the progress made in achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets over the past three years, which would be reflected in the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-4). Noting that most countries were having difficulty developing successful indicators due to inadequate information on biodiversity, she stressed that political support for biodiversity conservation would be needed for investing in biodiversity assessments, valuation and continuous monitoring to fill in the gaps in information. She also indicated that UNEP-ROWA, as part of its support to implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 in the region, would provide technical support to countries to facilitate submission of their fifth national report by the deadline of 31 March 2014. She concluded by expressing appreciation to the Ministry of Environment of Qatar and the CBD Secretariat for their efforts in organizing the regional workshop.

5. Mr. Lijie Cai, National Reports Officer (SCBD), delivered an opening statement on behalf of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Mr. Bráulio Ferreira de Souza Dias. In his remarks, he noted that the workshop on national reporting complemented and built on the series of capacity-building workshops on national biodiversity strategies and actions plans (NBSAPs), on indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and on synergies between conventions. He mentioned that the mid-term review of the Strategic Plan and progress towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets would be undertaken at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in October 2014 in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea. As the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-4) would draw on information from the fifth national reports and other sources, he stressed the importance of receiving a meaningful number of fifth national reports by the submission deadline. While urging countries in the region to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including recognizing the values of biodiversity and mainstreaming biodiversity into all relevant sectors, he stressed that the preparation of the fifth national report would provide an opportunity for countries to review where they stood and navigate ways forward. He concluded by urging countries in the region to prepare and submit their fifth national reports in time for review at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which would be crucial for the success of COP 12 and, more importantly, for developing a roadmap to enhance the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

6. Following introductory remarks and a quick round of introductions, participants were asked to consider three questions:

- (a) How directly are you involved in the preparation of your country's fifth national report?
- (b) At what stage is your country in regard to NBSAP development/revision?
- (c) At what stage is your fifth national report preparation?

7. During the subsequent discussion, it was observed that almost all participants were directly involved in the preparation of their country's fifth national report. Regarding NBSAPs, about half of the participating countries had processes underway to revise and/or update their NBSAP, while another half of the countries had not yet initiated any pertinent activities. Two countries were close to completing their NBSAP revision or updating. Regarding the fifth national report, 7 countries had not initiated national processes in this regard, while the rest of the countries were either in the process of preparing the report or close to completing the first draft of the report.

ITEM 2. OVERVIEW OF THE OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAMME FOR THE WORKSHOP

8. Mr. Lijie Cai provided an overview of the workshop, anticipated outcomes and the working methods that would be used. He explained that the workshop would be conducted in an informal and interactive manner and that participants were welcomed to ask questions or seek clarification at any time. The workshop would comprise a mix of presentations with question-and-answer sessions, discussions and exercises in small working groups. Regarding general suggestions provided during the workshop, Mr. Cai stated that countries should apply them as appropriate to their national circumstances. He emphasized that the national reporting process should be closely linked to the process of NBSAP development and revision/updating.

ITEMS 3 AND 4. EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PREPARATION OF THE FOURTH NATIONAL REPORTS, AND THE NATIONAL PROCESS OF PREPARING THE FIFTH NATIONAL REPORT AND LINKING IT WITH THE REVISION/UPDATING OF NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

9. Mr. Lijie Cai provided an overview of the experiences and lessons learned from the fourth round of national reporting under the Convention, focusing on the factors that contributed to the high rate of submissions. These factors included the strong political will of Parties, changes in the format of national reports, development of support materials and tools, capacity development workshops, more frequent communication with Parties and an increase in the availability of biodiversity monitoring programmes and assessments, among others. It was however noted that challenges remained, particularly in relation to the timely submission of reports (only 26 fourth national reports had been received by the submission deadline). If a similar situation were to occur in regard to the fifth national reports, challenges would be created for the preparation of the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, and the mid-term assessment of progress towards the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 to be undertaken by the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in October 2014. Lessons learned from the previous round of reporting were also discussed, including the need to start preparing the report well before the deadline and increase stakeholder involvement in activities, and the importance of using different sources of data and information. A number of tools and resources to help Parties prepare their national reports and revise their national biodiversity strategies and action plans were highlighted. One such resource was the “NBSAP Forum” developed early in 2013 through a partnership between SCBD, UNDP and UNEP-WCMC and intended to support countries in activities related to NBSAP revision, and which could potentially bring additional partners on board.

10. During the opening presentation, an update of the status of NBSAP revision/updating was also presented. Mr. Cai elaborated that the NBSAP revision process and the preparation for the fifth national report were closely linked, pointing out that the biodiversity assessments or country biodiversity studies and review of NBSAP implementation undertaken for revising/updating the NBSAP could be directly used in Parts I and II of the fifth national report, and also as a basis for assessing progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. At the institutional level, bodies established to coordinate NBSAP activities could continue to provide guidance and support for the preparation of the fifth national report. If countries had not undertaken biodiversity assessments or a review of NBSAP implementation, this should not delay the preparation of the fifth national report, which in fact provided an opportunity for countries to assess biodiversity status, trends and threats as well as the level of implementation. This would in turn facilitate the revision/updating of NBSAPs. In brief, processes for preparing the fifth national report and revising/updating the NBSAP should be mutually supportive and could be undertaken in parallel, though ideally early NBSAP revision/updating provided a solid basis for preparing the fifth national report. Mr. Cai suggested that countries should pool and analyze all the information available for the preparation of the fifth national report, with a view to submitting the report by or around the deadline (finalization of

the NBSAP would take a bit more time given that it involved a high degree of stakeholder consultation and a process for its adoption as a policy document). A few countries (Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait and Oman) had undertaken reviews of the effectiveness of their NBSAPs while revising/updating them.

11. Following the opening presentation, Algeria, Egypt, Iraq and Tunisia introduced the experiences and lessons learned from the preparation of their fourth national reports. All four countries underlined the importance of getting relevant stakeholders involved, establishing coordinating and expert working groups and reaching out to different sectors and institutions for data and information. They also elaborated challenges encountered, such as lack of data and information, collaborations from relevant sectors and stakeholders and a lengthy domestic process of consultations and approvals.

ITEM 5. PREPARATION OF THE PARTS AND APPENDICES OF THE FIFTH NATIONAL REPORT

(a) Assessing the status and trends of, and threats to, biodiversity and implications for human well-being (Part I of the fifth national report)

12. Mr. Lijie Cai provided an overview of the preparation of the fifth national report, highlighting the guidance provided in decision X/10, which requested Parties to focus on: (a) implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and progress towards the 2015 and 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets; (b) an update on NBSAP activities and implementation; (c) an update on the status, trends and threats of biodiversity and implications for human well-being; (d) contributions of the implementation of the Convention, particularly its Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, towards the achievement of relevant targets of the Millennium Development Goals, and (e) an overall assessment of the implementation of the Convention, including areas where implementation had been successful and those where it had not been successful, and future priorities and needs. In doing so, countries were requested to: (a) elaborate on outcomes and impacts of implementation; (b) provide a quantitative analysis and synthesis of information/data available; (c) provide cases or examples to illustrate outcomes/impacts of implementation; (d) use indicators where possible; and (e) provide updates, rather than repeat information covered in earlier national reports. Following the presentation, a few participants asked questions. One participant underlined the difficulty of identifying links between actions and impacts, considering that impacts or outcomes could be identified years after actions had been taken. One participant also underlined the difficulty of developing and using indicators without adequate information/data basis, particularly baseline data. Mr. Cai responded that such issues should ideally be addressed by a regular monitoring system and an established information collection system. Another participant pointed out that, while the fifth national report should provide the most up-to-date information, particularly regarding actions taken since 2010, it should also report on accumulative information, considering that some projects and/or programmes were initiated years before and implemented in different phases and had generated different outcomes or impacts.

13. Mr. Cai also provided suggestions for the preparation of the first part of the fifth national report. For Part I, it was suggested that Parties should focus on providing information on why biodiversity was important for their country, what major changes to the status and trends of biodiversity had taken place since the last national report was prepared, the main threats to biodiversity, the impacts of any changes to human well-being, as well as any information related to possible future changes. Participants were encouraged to use a variety of information sources in this section of the report, including indicators, expert assessments, graphs and maps. It was also emphasized that this part of the report should provide an analysis of the changing conditions of biodiversity and the implications for human well-being, as opposed to solely describing the status of biodiversity.

14. Several participants asked questions in relation to the preparation of Part I of the fifth national report. Concerning impacts of changes to human well-being, one participant pointed out that changes should be both positive and negative. Another participant indicated that the latest information should be

used for status reporting, but for trend analysis, the use of longer-period data was better, as it was easier to identify a trend over a long period. One participant suggested that threat analysis should be linked not only to changes in the status and trends of biodiversity, but also to the outcomes or impacts of implementation of relevant policies, laws and measures. Mr. Cai suggested that the fifth national report should focus on analysis of emerging threats, rather than those covered in the fourth national report, and that threat analysis was not necessary for all ecosystems and species.

15. Following a question-and-answer session on the first part of the fifth national report, Mr. Khaled Harhash from the Egyptian Ministry of the Environment introduced the Ministry's work on biodiversity assessment covering seven areas. The assessments are being made as part of the ongoing efforts for updating the NBSAP. The presentation covered the methodologies and information for: (1) assessment of the old NBSAP (implementation level and gaps in knowledge); (2) types of data needed and their availability at both the national and international levels; (3) available websites that provide free data and satellite images; (4) standardized habitats classification and their mapping in Egypt; (5) habitats' representativeness in the protected areas network with maps; (6) criteria and mapping of habitats' protection levels in Egypt; (7) trends of changes in some habitats; (8) future and planned steps. During the open discussion, participants asked about the experts involved, their expertise, time needed for undertaking such assessments, types of computer software used and how these results would be used and for whom? In response, Mr. Harhash said that there was a need to use GIS and other mapping tools in the assessment, and the use of figures and maps in updating the NBSAP would help the decision-making process regarding conservation of biodiversity.

16. Dr. Florian Eppink of the Institute of Biodiversity presented the range of techniques for economic and monetary valuation of natural resources, including ecosystems and biodiversity. For each technique, he discussed the underlying concepts, common applications, data needs as well as crucial assumptions and known shortcomings. Where available, these aspects were illustrated using examples from the region. Also presented was a value transfer study recently concluded for coastal and freshwater wetlands in the West Asian region. Dr. Eppink concluded by emphasizing that valuation alone is not useful and that it must be conducted within a policy context. One participant asked if a replacement cost study can be improved by considering more ecosystem services. While this is true, the problem remains that costs of infrastructure are not considered to be good representations of the value of ecosystem benefits. The participant also wondered whether certain benefits that were not currently enjoyed in his country, however may be enjoyed in the future, should be included in a valuation study undertaken at the present time. This would be a misrepresentation of the current value of the ecosystem. Dr. Eppink emphasized that people's preferences change over time and that investments in the ecosystem could change the ecosystem services that were enjoyed. Such changes should be taken into account, possibly in a new valuation study, for a future policy change. A question was raised that value transfer was not a good technique for the evaluation of ecosystem services. The regional value transfer study presented estimates a Total Economic Value, but given enough literature on specific ecosystem services, transfer value could be applied for that purpose. Another participant asked if she could use results from the regional value transfer study in her country's fifth national report (Ms. Diane Klaimi recommended not doing this; Dr. Eppink did not recommend using the results without emphasizing all the uncertainties mentioned in the study). Morocco was using value transfer as well to look at the value of its natural resources.

17. Following the presentations and question-and-answer session, Mr. Lijie Cai introduced a group exercise designed to help participants identify the type of information they might wish to include in their national reports (see annex II below). The exercise consisted of a table based on the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets. It was suggested that participants initially focus on Targets 5 to 15 and identify, for each target, the status and trends of the relevant components of biodiversity (ecosystems, species, genes, pressures, threats, etc.) and assess the implications of these trends for human well-being. He also provided examples for Targets 5 and 8.

18. Mr. Gomaa from Egypt also shared information on some studies undertaken in his country to evaluate some of the natural capital including some important species, such as sharks in the Red Sea, and important Egyptian ecosystems.

(b) *Implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and mainstreaming of biodiversity (Part II of the fifth national report)*

19. Mr. Lijie Cai provided suggestions for the preparation of Part II of the fifth national report, which focused on NBSAP implementation and biodiversity mainstreaming. It was suggested that Parties should report on all the actions taken to implement the Strategic Plan, rather than limit reporting only to NBSAP implementation. It was also suggested that Parties should consider reporting on implementation of their previous NBSAP, as well as on the progress made in developing their new NBSAP, particularly regarding national targets developed in line with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. He also stated that the main differences between the old and new NBSAPs should be highlighted. As with the first part of the report, Parties were encouraged to include more analysis than description, particularly in regard to the effectiveness of the actions which had been taken. Where possible, Parties were also encouraged to incorporate case studies or success stories to illustrate the impacts of implementation. It was also suggested that Parties should consider including in this section information on the effectiveness of biodiversity mainstreaming in their country, as well as actions taken by various sectors and outcomes achieved.

20. Ms. Diane Klaimi made a presentation on mainstreaming of biodiversity, focusing on who should be involved, entry points for mainstreaming and tools used for mainstreaming, such as payment for ecosystem services, EIA, SEA and spatial planning. She also introduced some examples of mainstreaming from a few countries inside and outside the region.

21. Mr. Lijie Cai also introduced approaches used by a few countries for reviewing implementation of NBSAPs, based on information provided in their fourth national reports or reviews submitted by these countries to the Secretariat. He emphasized that the review should focus on what had been achieved, the extent of implementation and cite developments in legislation, funding, cooperative mechanisms, programmes and projects implemented and outcomes achieved as well as challenges encountered. Indicators should be used for such a review and cases/success stories (including stories of failure) should be collected and included to support analysis. He commented that countries may not necessarily undertake such a review (if not yet undertaken at this stage) for preparing the fifth national report, though ideally such a review provided a solid basis for both revising/updating the NBSAP and preparing the fifth national report. He suggested that countries pooled together all information available and analysed the status of NBSAP implementation for the preparation of the fifth national report, if such a review had not been undertaken yet.

22. Following a question-and-answer session, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Yemen presented their reviews on NBSAP implementation. The United Arab Emirates introduced their process, including stakeholder consultations undertaken, development of milestones for updating the NBSAP and preparing the fifth national report. Kuwait shared its updated NBSAP and a draft of the fifth national report, including national targets developed and a review of NBSAP implementation provided in the draft fifth national report. Yemen shared findings from its review of NBSAP implementation, including achievements, gaps identified as well as challenges encountered.

(c) *Assessing progress towards the 2020 biodiversity targets and relevant targets of MDGs (Part III of the fifth national report)*

23. Mr. Lijie Cai provided suggestions on the preparation of Part III of the fifth national report, which focused on assessing progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the relevant Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). He informed participants that the overall purpose of this part of the report was to provide an assessment of progress towards any national targets which had been set and their

contribution to implementing the global Aichi Biodiversity Targets. He pointed out that the assessment contained in this section of the report should draw on, and build upon, the information contained in the previous two parts of the report. He suggested that countries undertake target-by-target analysis focusing on those targets that were nationally important or relevant, supported with evidence and cases using indicators where possible. He also suggested that countries use a large table to summarize progress by highlighting national targets, actions taken to achieve national and global targets, outcomes achieved, progress made (using schemes such as traffic lights to demonstrate levels of progress), indicators used for assessment and relevant cases. He also stressed that this part should cover how the implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 had contributed to the achievement of relevant 2015 MDG targets. He said that this part should conclude with a summary highlighting areas where implementation had been successful and those where implementation had not been successful, challenges encountered and future priorities.

24. Ms. Maryam Mohammed Al-Busaidi from Oman introduced her country's process of NBSAP revising/updating, including a review undertaken on NBSAP implementation as well as a preliminary assessment of progress made by Oman in achieving the twenty global targets (provided in a master's thesis presented to the United Nations University). The study indicated that Oman had made considerable progress in achieving some targets (e.g. Aichi Biodiversity Targets 1, 3, 10, 11, 13), while not much had been done to achieve others (e.g. Aichi Biodiversity Target 2, due to several reasons), and that the country had retrogressed regarding other targets (e.g. Aichi Biodiversity Target 9, considering that the number of invasive alien species was increasing while measures to track and eliminate AIS were not in place yet). She pointed out that relevant methodologies for such an assessment were still under development and more information and data needed to be collected to further assess progress.

25. Following these presentations, Mr. Lijie Cai introduced group exercises for Part III. Participants were asked to assess the level of progress made towards the achievement of each of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and outcomes achieved. They were further asked to identify any relevant indicators or sources of information, cases that could illustrate progress and outcomes, as well as relevant stakeholders that needed to be involved to undertake relevant actions or achieve relevant targets. Participants were then divided into four groups, with each group working on 5 targets, covering Parts I, II and III, as they were not given time earlier to work on Parts I and II.

(d) Preparation of the executive summary and reviewing the implementation of thematic programmes of work and the cross-cutting issues under the Convention (appendix III of the fifth national report)

26. Mr. Lijie Cai provided suggestions for the preparation of the executive summary of the fifth national report, emphasizing that it was often the most highly-read section of the report and, as such, should contain the main messages of the report and present important facts, necessary background information and major conclusions. While the executive summary should be concise, it should provide the reader with an overall sense of the content of the entire report. Thus, it should draw from all parts of the report. It was also suggested that the executive summary could serve as a basis for additional communication or outreach materials. Mr. Cai stressed that the executive summary should not be an introduction to, or outline of, the report. He highlighted key information that should be captured in the executive summary, including the status and trends of and major threats to biodiversity and implications for human well-being, information on national targets set in line with the Aichi Targets, extent of NBSAP implementation, progress in achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and relevant targets of the MDGs and overall assessment of implementation of the Convention.

27. With regard to the appendices, it was noted that these parts of the report offered Parties the opportunity to provide detailed information on topics which were nationally important without increasing the length of the main body of the report. It was suggested that appendix I could be used to provide information on the process followed for preparing the report, while appendix II could be used to include

additional references or links to relevant reports. Lastly, appendix III could be used to report on implementation of the thematic programmes of work and cross-cutting issues under the Convention. It was noted that there were a number of decisions of the Conference of the Parties requiring that such information be included in the national report (although much of this information was likely to be reflected in the three main parts of the report). However, if specific issues were particularly important to national circumstances and warranted further presentation of details, this information could be included in appendix III and countries should focus on those areas and issues of national relevance. Mr. Cai concluded by stating that countries could use tools (e.g. matrices) to summarize actions and outcomes in implementing the thematic programmes of work and cross-cutting issues under the Convention.

28. Participants were provided with a proposed outline for an executive summary and encouraged to prepare a draft executive summary by outlining key points that could be inserted in each part.

ITEM 6. USE OF INDICATORS FOR MONITORING AND REPORTING

29. Ms. Diane Klaimi from UNEP ROWA provided an overview on biodiversity indicators as tools to monitor progress in achieving national and global biodiversity targets. Indicator types and their development and uses were discussed in the context of NBSAPs and fifth national reports, as were the strong linkages and differences between both processes. In the case of fifth national reports, impact indicators as opposed to performance indicators should be developed to monitor the progress achieved in implementing the global and national targets. Guidance tools and methods developed by the Biodiversity Indicator Partnership (BIP), hosted by UNEP-WCMC in Cambridge, United Kingdom, were covered in this session. A group exercise was also conducted. The Biodiversity Indicator Development Framework (BIDF) was introduced as a useful step-wise guide to develop successful indicators for both NBSAPs and national reporting. Ms. Klaimi highlighted the importance of developing indicators according to context, and elaborated upon the different kinds of indicators (impact versus performance indicators), including their purposes and limitations. Emphasis was also placed on linking SMART target-setting to successful indicators, using specific key questions, management or policy objectives, stakeholder engagement and scientific data flow. The importance of using the status-threats-benefits-response framework was also cited as a useful conceptual model to identify successful indicators. For the group exercise, three working groups developed impact indicators following questions specified in the BIDF guide and based on existing national targets related to Aichi Biodiversity Target 5 on habitat loss. The groups reported back with conceptual models and developed storylines around the developed indicators, thus gaining experience in use of indicators in different contexts.

ITEM 7. INFORMATION NEEDED FOR THE FOURTH EDITION OF THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY OUTLOOK

30. Mr. Lijie Cai provided an overview of the production plan for the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-4). It was noted that the Global Biodiversity Outlook was the flagship publication of the Convention and that the fourth edition of the report would provide a mid-term assessment of progress towards the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The main source of information for GBO-4 would be the fifth national reports and, as such, it would be imperative that the reports be submitted by the submission deadline (one of the main weaknesses of GBO-3 was the limited amount of national information included). It was also emphasized that there were a number of ways for Parties to participate in the preparation of GBO-4, including by providing advance drafts of their fifth national reports and other assessments, providing case studies, and participating in the process of peer-review of GBO-4 drafts. In this regard, he urged participants to provide advance drafts, case studies and other related information as early as possible. He elaborated criteria for cases or case studies, which should be linked with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and contained a "story line", experiences and lessons that may be widely applicable, quantitative information, outcomes/impacts and factors that contribute to success.

31. Participants watched a video that provided key findings from the Environment Outlook for the Arab Region (EOAR). Ms. Diane Klaimi made a presentation on the methodologies used in the EOAR and its findings on biodiversity and other related issues (desertification, climate change, etc.). She said that the EOAR was published in 2009 by UNEP, the Arab League, the Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), Arabian Gulf University (AGU) and a number of other regional organizations, as a result of regional efforts that had been initiated in 2006. The EOAR attempted to assess the environmental trends in the Arab region as well as pressures faced by the environment in the region, such as population growth, urbanization, human development, political instability, poverty, impacts from land degradation and desertification, water and food insecurity, biodiversity decline, sand and dust storms and climate change. Biodiversity status and trends in most of the Arab countries were described in chapter 6 and focussed on the loss of biodiversity from direct pressures such as habitat change, land-based pollution, unsustainable use of natural resources, invasive species and GMOs. The report concluded that a regional strategy for sustainable environmental management would be needed for integrating sound national policies and laws into national development plans and strategies.

ITEM 8. INTRODUCTION OF A PILOT ON-LINE REPORTING SYSTEM

32. Mr. Lijie Cai introduced a pilot online reporting system, recently developed by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, for the purpose of allowing countries to report on a more regular basis on the implementation of NBSAPs and progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. He demonstrated how countries could report on progress achieved towards the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets on a yearly or multi-year basis, including information on relevant national targets and actions taken to achieve these targets, indicators used for measuring progress, as well as other types of information. He concluded by encouraging all participants to test the system and provide the Secretariat with feedback for its improvement.

ITEM 9. CLOSURE OF THE WORKSHOP

33. Before closing, participants reviewed the key messages and suggestions that had emerged from the workshop, as contained in annex III.

34. Mr. Lijie Cai, on behalf of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, thanked the Governments of Qatar and Japan and UNEP's Regional Office for West Asia for their support to the workshop. He also thanked participants for their hard work and expressed the hope that the workshop would be useful in assisting countries prepare their fifth national reports.

35. On behalf of the Ministry of the Environment of Qatar, Mr. Ghanim Mohammad also thanked the CBD Secretariat, UNEP ROWA and participants, stating that the workshop had been very helpful for facilitating the preparation of the fifth national report. Ms. Diane Klaimi from UNEP ROWA also thanked the Government of Qatar and the CBD Secretariat for their efforts towards the organization and conduct of the workshop, and encouraged all participants to make the best use of the knowledge gained at the workshop in their respective countries, and to put forth their best efforts towards ensuring that their fifth national report could be submitted by the end of March 2014. The workshop was closed at 1 p.m. on 17 December 2013. The host country arranged a short field trip for participants after its closing.

Annex I

List of Participants

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Annex II

WORKSHEET FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE FIFTH NATIONAL REPORT

The following worksheet was compiled from work provided by some participants, with some adjustments by the Secretariat. The information presented in the table is for illustration purposes only as it reflects only some of the issues discussed during the course of the workshop.

Aichi Biodiversity Target	Part 1 Biodiversity status, trends, and threats and implications for human well-being		Part 2 The NBSAP, its implementation, and the mainstreaming of biodiversity		Part 3 Progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and contributions to the relevant Millennium Development Goals			
	State of relevant biodiversity component or pressure	Impacts on or implications for human well-being	Implementation Actions/Case studies	Action Effectiveness	Assessment of progress towards Aichi Targets and MDGs	Key Outcomes	Indicators/ Other information	Relevant cases/relevant stakeholders
Target 1- Awareness increased	Different levels of awareness available in from low (local people) to moderate (ministries and institutes not relevant in their work with BD) to high (ministries with direct contact with the subject like MOE, MO agriculture) or in some cases the local people are aware but the government is not aware of the importance of BD because not all people levels are familiar with the biodiversity concept	- low appreciation of BD values - the continuity of unsustainable practices - species loss	Mainstreaming the BD concept within the national environmental strategy, educational plans, and post and under graduate research programmes in the universities and various form of media	Medium (Awareness increased among local communities and students)	Low (More needs to be done to raise public awareness)	Research policies on BD improved	Generation of biodiversity-related knowledge and research results Changes in students' behaviour	All relevant stakeholders, like Ministry of agriculture, Ministry of Planning, Education, Oil, Industry & tourism, higher education institutions, and media
Target 2 - Biodiversity values integrated	The BD concept was integrated in to national master plan	- providing jobs for local people - conservation of	Legislation to be developed or revised	Low (relevant legislations being considered)	Low	Overhunting decreased	Number of relevant plans that integrate biodiversity values	Planning department, legislative bodies

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	for land use, and rules for public hunting	protected areas	requiring biodiversity to be integrated into planning and accounting					
Target 3 – Incentives reformed	New legislations are being developed for sustainable use of biodiversity	Maintenance of natural resources	- New law developed for fish hunting - Law to ban the fishing of marine species.	Medium (fishing in the breeding season prevented) Medium (conservation of endangered marine species.)	Low (impacts of implementing relevant laws and rules are yet to be seen)	- Conservation of fisheries and the maintenance of local fish types -Endangered species preserved	Increased occurrence of fish types and endangered species.	Ministry of agriculture - Fisher men - State Consultative Council - Parliament
Target 4 – Sustainable consumption and production	Pressure on natural resources increasing	Loss of natural resources beneficial to human being	Development of policies and strategies by various government departments and the private sector	Medium	Low (relevant policies and strategies are yet to be implemented)	Limited responses from government and the private sector	Number of agencies with policies and strategies for sustainable use	Relevant government departments Industries Factories Traders
Target 5 – Habitat loss halved or reduced	Wood cutting resulting in fragmentation of habitats	Loss of benefits from species and habitats to human beings	Appropriate legislation development Coordination with other ministries or any relevant stakeholders	Low (relevant legislation under development) Low (mechanisms yet to be established for consultation)	Low	Restricted responses from other sectors	Rate of deforestation and losses of other habitats	Mostly the industrial sectors including oil and mining sectors
Target 6 – Sustainable management	Status: Over exploitation of marine resources Pressures; - Urbanization - Mass tourism - Pollution	Impact: - Shortage in fish production affecting national food security. - Loss of ecosystem services affecting other development	Actions: - Integrated coastal zone management policy. - Ban fishing during spawning seasons. - Take & non-take zone policy.	Effectiveness - Medium (weak implementation of ICZM policy) - Low (unstable political situation) - Low (unstable	- Low (unstable political situation, Low (lack of financial resources and weak law enforcement leading to weak achievement toward Aichi targets	- ICZM plan in place - Fishing regulation & monitoring plan exist - National CEPA in place. - Sites restoration plan in place.	- Trends in fish & invertebrates production. - Percentage of fishermen using sustainable harvesting methods.	- Lake Naser and Bardawil lake fishing scheme (Egypt). - Karkana Island fishing practices (Tunisia). - Fishing ban scheme in the Red Sea (Egypt). - Environmental clubs in

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	- Poor literacy - Illegal fishing	plans (tourism)	- update the existing fishing legislation. - Public awareness campaigns. - Restoration of degraded sites.	political situation) - Medium (no update law but there are regulations) - Low (no economic valuation) - Low (inadequate financial resources)	& MDGs)			schools (Palestine)
Target 7 – Sustainable agriculture, aquaculture and forestry	Status: Agriculture area increased Pressures; - shortage of water - pollution - invasive species - Illegal deforestation	Impact: Biodiversity losses Climate change CO2 increased Desertification	-Update the legislation -PA declared -Awareness campaigns	Medium High Low	Low High Low	Law developed PA declared	Number of endangered species Quality of production Forest coverage	Departments of agriculture, fishery, forestry, the environment, tourism, etc. Farmers Relevant industry sectors
Target 8 – Pollution reduced	State: Use of extensive fertilizers and pesticides for agriculture increased soil & water pollution. Pressures: - Mass use of pesticide impact on fauna in soil, freshwater and pollinators - Excessive use of	Impacts: - Discharging of untreated polluted water into fresh water and sea has implications for livelihood (e.g. drinking water, health, economy).	Actions: - Set up regulations for use of chemicals in agriculture. - National monitoring network of pollutants in water. - Proper system for tertiary sewage treatment.	Medium (lack of effective enforcement) Medium (monitoring is in progress) Medium (pilot project being implemented)	Medium (air and water pollution rules under the Environmental Management Act provides for some control)	Development of specific regulations to manage air quality, noise pollution and water quality, among other parameters Include the requirement of including mitigation measures in the permitting process Monitoring exercises	Major pollutants reduced	Relevant industry sectors Municipal sewage management Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Development

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	fertilizers negatively affecting soil fauna, freshwater - Untreated effluent & sewage from cities & industries - Weak management of solid waste					are completed as per environmental management plans		
Target 9 – Invasive alien species	<p>Status:</p> <p>The impact caused by IAS is particularly strong that tends to intensify on a long time basis. The number of IAS is rapidly increasing.</p> <p>Pressures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increasing international trade -Increasing international shipping -International tourism 	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>IAS reduces the populations and distributions of native species through predation and competition. They will also impact on fishery and horticulture</p>	<p>Identifying pathways of alien species</p> <p>Border control of plants and animals</p> <p>Agricultural pest control</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Medium (border control personnel need training)</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium (pathways for several invasive alien species identified and a draft national invasive species strategy was prepared and is being reviewed through broad-based consultations)</p>	<p>By 2015, a national strategy on management of IAS will be developed and implemented</p>	<p>List of IAS within the country identified</p> <p>IAS tracking system in place</p> <p>Measures in place to control and eliminate IAS</p>	<p>Departments of Tourism, Trade, Shipping, Transportation, Plant Quarantine; customs, local governments and farmers</p>
Target 10 – Pressures on vulnerable ecosystems reduced	<p>Status:</p> <p>Marine ecosystems still vulnerable primarily due to climate change and</p>	<p>Impacts:</p> <p>Reduced functions of coral reefs as fish nursery, affecting production of fish</p>	<p>Development of adaptation strategies, DRR guidelines to environmental management</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium (monitoring of anthropogenic pressures and climatic variables on coral reefs is ongoing by the IMA and</p>	<p>Increased areas of coral reefs protected</p> <p>Increased area of coral reefs rehabilitated</p>	<p>Areas of coral reef protected</p> <p>Areas of (degraded) coral reefs rehabilitated</p>	<p>Marine Park Department</p> <p>Forestry department, NGOs, local communities, fisheries department</p>

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	human activities such as tourism - coral reef	resource, and the livelihood of local people Reduced aesthetic value of the ocean - and reduced economic benefit	Coral reef monitoring projects		management interventions are proposed)			
Target 11 – Protected areas	Increase of the marine protected areas from 4% to 18% Pressures are the same	Fishery resources replenished in time Food security ensured Local livelihood provided	- implementing legislation for the preservation of biodiversity - development of an awareness program - implementation of new policies after accession to several conventions -activation of EIE - develop new partnerships with the private sector and the local population	Medium (management plan for PAs in place)	Medium	improvement of marine biodiversity	increasing the percentage of marine resource	Ministry of the Environment, Agriculture, Fishery, Marine Management, local communities
Target 12 – Extinction prevented	-increase of the Oryx -decrease of turtles pressure: climate change, desalination, lack of monitoring -presence of Dugans	Decrease of income of fishermen	- development of an awareness program -development of data base of biodiversity -Banning of fishing for crustaceans -hunting ban	Medium	Medium	The rym gazelle is reintroduced in the nature	increasing the percentage of rym gazelle	Ministry of the Environment, Agriculture and Fishery, local communities
Target 13 – Genetic diversity maintained	the trend of genetic erosion of national biological resources	decrease of income of farmers Loss of genetic	-Law on seeds and plants -The integration of	Medium	Low	Gene bank has been established	Local species maintained	Ministry of Agriculture, local farmers, research institutes

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	resulting from the importance of flows to import biological resources in the form of seeds and plants, reproductive or animal genetic material	resources	local organic products in public aid devices (FNRPA and FNDIA). -The reorientation of pilot farms to the development, preservation and dissemination of local genetic resources. -Development of an awareness program for farmers -Building a seed bank					
Target 14 – Ecosystems and essential services safeguarded	-river polluted by discharges from industries installed adjacent	-damage to human health	-closure of factories that have not complied with the regulations in force regarding the processing of their waste -Launch a study to clean up the contaminated river	Medium	Medium	Improvement in water quality of the river has brought back some fish species. By 2015, the river will be a place of relaxation for the people	The ecological functions of the river restored	Ministry of the Environment, industries, fishery department and local communities
Target 15 – Ecosystems restored and enhanced	- degradation of the forest ecosystem by fire and overexploitation	-Loss of forest functions -Local livelihood -Soil erosion	-program to fight against forest fires -development of an awareness program - establishment of a reforestation program	Medium	Low	The sink of carbon will be increased.	Forest area increased	Ministry of Forestry, local communities, fire prevention and control department, industries, the private sector
Target 16 – Nagoya	Status:	-Loss of genetic	-The country is	Medium	Medium (ratification)	By 2015 national	Ratification of	Ministry of Agriculture,

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Protocol	Nagoya Protocol is not yet ratified, and relevant domestic laws and mechanisms are yet to be developed.	resources -Benefit-sharing is not materialized	working towards ratifying protocol Nagoya . Raising awareness for decision makers -Revising all current legislations concerning genetic resources and ABS to ensure effective implementation of the protocol		upcoming, however domestic implementation not yet initiated	laws on ABS will be in place and implemented.	Nagoya Protocol Development and implementation of domestic rules related to ABS	Forestry, the Environment, Trade, and Tourism, research institutions, the private sector, local communities
Target 17 – NBSAPs adopted	NBSAP is being updated		Revising and updating the NBSAP is still under process organize a committee with representatives from different stockholders organizing workshops gathering data developing the final draft and sending it	Medium (updating NBSAP moves forward as planned)	Medium	By 2015 NBSAP will be updated, and mechanisms will be in place to implement it.	NBSAP updated, with national targets in line with ABT included	All relevant stakeholders

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			for approval					
Target 18 – Traditional knowledge respected	<p>Status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TK not documented No laws or mechanisms in place to protect TK Awareness of protecting TK low among the public 		<p>-A relevant national target included in NBSAP</p> <p>-Data about traditional knowledge is being collected</p> <p>International organizations were approached to help with documenting and conserving traditional knowledge</p>		Medium (efforts being made to document and protect TK)	Traditional knowledge will be documented, preserved and applied	<p>Documentation and preservation of TK;</p> <p>Application of TK for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use</p>	Local communities, Ministry of the Environment, research institutions, the private sector
Target 19 – Knowledge improved, shared and applied	<p>Status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National CHM is yet to be developed Relevant information systems are scattered Knowledge related to biodiversity not fully applied 		<p>National CHM is under development</p> <p>Programmes for research and development in the field of biodiversity are being implemented</p> <p>Relevant information systems are being integrated</p>	<p>Medium (National CHM is expected to operationalize in one year or two)</p> <p>Medium (challenges remain for implementing R & D programmes)</p> <p>Medium (information holders intend to integrate their systems)</p>	Medium (progress being made though a lot more needs to be done)	Biodiversity knowledge will be widely shared and disseminated through CHM and other media.	<p>Operation of national CHM</p> <p>Generation and dissemination of biodiversity-related knowledge</p>	Ministry of the Environment, research institutions, relevant stakeholders that hold biodiversity information

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			Plan in place for wider dissemination of biodiversity-related knowledge	Low (challenges remain ahead for dissemination and application of biodiversity-related knowledge)				
Target 20 – Financial resources increased	Status: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funds inadequate for CBD implementation Strategy for resource mobilization is yet to be developed 		Governments allocate resources for short term projects (3-5year) Support and investment from the private sector	Medium (resources from governments are still limited) Low (the private sector interest in investing in biodiversity projects still low.)	Medium (Governments intend to invest more while the private sector and other sectors are being mobilized to invest)	Investments into biodiversity projects will reach 1% of GDP by 2020.	Level of funding from governments and other sources Level of investment of the private sector	Ministry of Finance, the Environment, and other departments involved in biodiversity conservation, the private sector, international donors

Annex III

**MESSAGES FROM THE REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR THE MIDDLE EAST AND
NORTH AFRICA ON THE PREPARATION OF THE FIFTH NATIONAL REPORT (14-
17 DECEMBER 2013, DOHA, QATAR)**

Preparation process

1. Those countries in the region that have not initiated the preparation of the fifth national reports are called upon to do so immediately after the workshop considering that there will be less than four months before the report submission deadline set by the Conference of the Parties (31 March 2014).
2. Countries are encouraged to involve relevant stakeholders in the preparation of the report, particularly those sectors whose actions have impacts on biodiversity. The CBD national focal point is encouraged to reach out to those sectoral ministries and relevant institutions that hold relevant data and information to ensure that the fifth national report comprehensively reflects national circumstances and implementation.

Overall suggestions for preparing the report (all parts)

3. Countries are encouraged to provide updates/latest information since the last national report, rather than repeat information covered in earlier national reports.
4. Countries are required to do more analysis than description. Analysis should be evidence-based or supported with data and/or cases.
5. Countries should elaborate outcomes or impacts of actions. Efforts should be made to identify links between actions taken and impacts or outcomes achieved, though in some cases there are difficulties in identifying such links, considering that impacts of some actions cannot be seen within a short period.
6. Countries are encouraged to use indicators where available and possible.
7. Countries are encouraged to provide cases/success stories to illustrate impacts of actions.
8. Countries are encouraged to use graphics, figures, tables and other relevant tools to better present results or findings from analyses.

Suggestions for preparing Part I

9. Countries should provide more trend analysis, using historical data.
10. Countries are encouraged to include evaluation of natural resources and biodiversity to demonstrate the importance of biodiversity.
11. Countries should do some analysis of implications of biodiversity decline or loss for human well-being, livelihood and social and economic development.
12. Countries are encouraged to do scenario analysis if their capacities permit, using experts' opinions or assessments where data is lacking.

Suggestions for preparing Part II

13. In reporting on the revised and/or updated NBSAP, the relevance of national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, as well as the differences between the old and new NBSAPs, should be elaborated upon.
14. In this part, countries should report on ALL actions taken to implement the Convention (and not be limited to actions taken to implement the NBSAP or to those taken by the Governments only).
15. Countries are encouraged to analyze the extent of implementation of NBSAP using all information available and cases from all levels, if no systematic monitoring results are available or no systematic reviews undertaken.
16. It is important to report on mechanisms and tools employed for mainstreaming biodiversity into different sectors, in addition to the actions taken by the different sectors.

Suggestions for preparing Part III

17. This part should focus on analysis of progress in implementing national targets set in line with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.
18. Countries should draw upon relevant information in Parts I and II and additional relevant information to analyse progress towards each target (if it is nationally relevant), citing specific actions taken, outcomes achieved and relevant cases.
19. Countries are encouraged to use a large table to summarize progress made. This could cover national targets adopted, actions taken, outcomes achieved, indicators used for measurement and a self-assessment (one way of demonstrating progress could be through the use of symbols, e.g. simple “traffic light” scheme).
20. Countries should also report on how the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity for 2011-2020 contributes to implementation of Target 7 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
21. This part also provides countries with an opportunity to reflect on implementation in the past few years, highlighting areas that are successful and areas where progress is lacking, thereby identifying priorities for the next few years.

Suggestions for preparing the executive summary and appendix III

22. The executive summary should convey key findings and messages from the report, serving as a key communication tool for the general public and decision makers. The executive summary should not be an introduction to, or outline of, the report.
23. In appendix III, countries need to report on national implementation of nationally-relevant thematic programmes of work and cross-cutting issues, if relevant information is not covered in the three main parts of the report. In doing so, countries should take into consideration relevant information requests from decisions of the Conference of the Parties.

Contributions to the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook

24. Countries are encouraged to submit draft reports, case studies, reviews of implementation of NBSAPs, indicator information and other relevant materials to the Secretariat as early as possible.
25. Cases should be linked to the Aichi Targets, contain a “story line”, experiences and lessons that may be widely applicable, and provide quantitative information, outcomes achieved and factors that contribute to success.
