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### SUBSIDIARY BODY ON IMPLEMENTATION

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda\*

### PROGRESS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2015-2020 GENDER PLAN OF ACTION

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

1. Gender equality and empowerment of women are increasingly understood as essential elements of sustainable development, as evidenced most recently by their inclusion in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), not only in Goal 5 on gender equality, but in many other SDGs as well. At its twelfth meeting, the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted decision XII/7 containing the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action under the Convention on Biological Diversity. This decision reflects the importance of the integration of gender in the implementation of the Convention by Parties, and the work of the Secretariat and other stakeholders.

2. The Gender Plan of Action identifies four strategic objectives: to mainstream a gender perspective in the implementation of the Convention and the associated work of Parties and the Secretariat; to promote gender equality in achieving the objectives of the Convention, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; to demonstrate the benefits of gender mainstreaming in the achievement of the Convention's objectives; and to increase the effectiveness of all work under the Convention. In support of these strategic objectives, the Plan includes a framework for actions by the Secretariat and identifies possible actions to be undertaken by Parties. Areas of work are grouped under four spheres relating to: building an appropriate policy framework (policy); addressing gender equality within the Secretariat and relevant country organizations (organizational); mainstreaming gender in the implementation of the Convention (delivery); and working with relevant constituencies to mobilize partnerships and build on existing efforts, best practices and lessons learned (constituency).

3. The Secretariat has advanced the implementation of gender mainstreaming actions in respect to these four thematic spheres in a variety of ways. Notably, with the generous financial support of the Government of Finland, the Secretariat was able to complete the recruitment of a full-time Gender Programme Officer, who joined the CBD Secretariat on 16 April 2015, to lead the implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action and associated activities.

#### A. Policy Sphere

4. With the generous financial support of the Government of Japan through the Japan Biodiversity Fund, the Secretariat successfully developed a gender mainstreaming initiative which aims to build the capacity of developing country Parties to integrate gender into their biodiversity policy, planning and

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\* UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/1.

programming. This initiative will support at least three developing country Parties to integrate gender into their revised national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs). The International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Global Gender Office is collaborating as the implementing agency, and facilitated the first pilot country process with Mexico in February 2016. A three-day multi-stakeholder workshop was held in Mexico City from 15 to 17 February, bringing together experts in gender and biodiversity with community leaders and representatives from women's groups across the country. Participants received training on Convention processes and reviewed Mexico's draft revised NBSAP to determine the relevance of gender perspectives and provide input. All inputs were reviewed by a team of Mexican government and IUCN officials for submission to Government Ministries, following which the document will be sent out for a final public consultation. The process of stakeholder engagement and review has demonstrated positive initial results, in that the consideration of gender issues provided the opportunity to identify and incorporate a diversity of perspectives, including those of indigenous peoples and local communities. This process benefited from the strong engagement and support of the leading government ministries in Mexico, including the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), the National Commission for Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO) and the Ministry of Women's Affairs (Inmujeres).

5. In further support of efforts to integrate gender considerations into NBSAPs, IUCN is conducting a gender analysis of NBSAPs and National Reports, using methodology developed for the Environment and Gender Index (EGI) to quantify and analyze references to gender and women within these documents, spanning 20 years of implementation across 171 countries. This information will be used by the Secretariat and partners to help inform further guidance and support to Parties on gender mainstreaming needs and opportunities.

6. Under the Policy Sphere, one of the objectives identified for the Secretariat is to secure ongoing commitments from funders to support gender and biodiversity. It is important to note that at present, no funds have been obtained to maintain the work on this programme into the next biennium.

## **B. Organizational Sphere**

7. The Secretariat has established an internal Gender Integration Group with staff representatives from each of the functional units within the Secretariat, to address gender considerations in all areas of work under the Convention. The initial focus of group activities will involve building the capacity of group members to address gender issues. Training on gender mainstreaming was provided to Secretariat staff by the Senior Gender Advisor of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in April 2015, in combination with a course on results-based management.

8. Through the continued implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action, the Secretariat is contributing to UNEP's efforts to meet performance standards under the United Nations System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on gender equality and the empowerment of women. These performance indicators address aspects of accountability, results, oversight, human and financial resources, capacity development, and coherence, knowledge and information management. The Secretariat is also tracking relevant objectives set out under UNEP's Policy and Strategy on Gender Equality and the Environment 2014-2017. This document identifies internal gender parity at all levels as a primary objective, with a corporate goal to achieve by 2017 45% female staff at professional (P) levels P3 and above, and at least 30% male staff at general service (G) levels G7 and below. Currently, in core-funded professional posts in the Secretariat, female staff comprise 39% of staff at levels P3 to P5, and 25% of the Director-level staff. In core-funded general staff posts, male staff make up 20% of staff at levels G7 and below.

## **C. Delivery Sphere**

9. The Secretariat revised the document "Guidance on mainstreaming gender into work under the Convention on Biological Diversity" which had been presented at the fifth meeting of the Ad hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation (WGRI-5) as an information document UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/INF/17/Add.1. The revised document was circulated for peer review to over 80 representatives of organizations and individuals working in related areas. Useful feedback was received that will contribute to the restructuring of the guidance material in a streamlined format intended

to be more accessible to Parties and a variety of target stakeholders, which will be made available on the CBD website in advance of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

10. With a view to collecting and disseminating information on gender and biodiversity, pursuant to paragraph 7 of decision XII/7 of the Conference of the Parties, the Secretariat has issued a notification to invite Parties, indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as international and civil society organizations and other groups to submit information including case studies<sup>1</sup> on issues of gender equality and women's empowerment in relation to biodiversity conservation, sustainable use, access and benefit sharing or biosafety.

11. The Secretariat also produced a new fact sheet on Gender Perspectives on Biodiversity, focusing on three key sectors: agriculture, forestry and fisheries. This was made available on the CBD website in March 2016.<sup>2</sup>

#### **D. Constituency Sphere**

12. The Secretariat has been active in engaging with United Nations and other international organizations working in areas related to gender and biodiversity. This engagement includes participation in a number of gender networks, including the Gender Partnership of the Global Environment Facility, the Global Gender Climate Alliance network, and the UNEP Gender Implementation Committee.

13. The Secretariat has promoted dialogue and collaboration on gender and sustainable development issues, bringing together partners from over 19 organizations to participate in a day of discussions at the Rio Conventions Pavilion, convened at the margins of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Secretariat has also produced an issue of the NBSAP Forum newsletter on the topic of gender mainstreaming, which was sent out to Forum members in mid-March 2016.<sup>3</sup>

#### **E. Gender mainstreaming actions related to other programmes of work and cross-cutting initiatives under the Convention**

##### *1. Biodiversity and climate change*

14. Under the biodiversity and climate change programme of work, the Secretariat prepared a compilation and synthesis report of experiences with ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. The synthesis report included a chapter on gender considerations, which was presented during the day of discussions on gender and sustainable development at the Rio Conventions Pavilion at UNFCCC COP21. The report has been provided for SBSTTA 20 as document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/2.

##### *2. Resource mobilization*

15. An analysis of information on existing policies and legislation related to biodiversity financing mechanisms, contained in document UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/7/Add.2, requested by the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting (decision XII/3, paragraphs 17-18), includes an assessment of whether gender considerations were reflected in Parties' fifth National Reports as part of safeguards for biodiversity financing mechanisms. In this context, two countries (Lebanon and Nepal) made reference to women's empowerment through community-based natural resource management projects or programmes.

##### *3. Youth engagement*

16. With financial support from the Japan Biodiversity Fund, the Secretariat is supporting a project implemented by the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) to involve youth in CBD processes and

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<sup>1</sup> Notification 2016-043 - Compilation of Case Studies on Gender and Biodiversity: Call for contributions: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2016/ntf-2016-043-gender-en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Fact Sheet on Gender Perspectives on Biodiversity available online at: <https://www.cbd.int/gender/doc/fs-gender-perspectives-en.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> NBSAP Forum newsletter on the topic of gender mainstreaming available online at: <http://us9.campaign-archive1.com/?u=409efa4970749c19a811c50e7&id=65faba4230>

harness their potential to contribute to effective implementation measures. The Global Youth Biodiversity Network integrates gender in its work and promotes effective and equal participation of men and women in its projects and activities. Eight out of the fourteen members of GYBN's current Steering Committee are female, and there is one male and one female Global Focal Point. GYBN is also committed to ensuring gender balance in the youth delegations taking part in CBD meetings as well as other activities such as workshops and regional meetings. Seventy-five per cent of all youth delegates that participated at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties were female.

4. *Gender-balanced participation of CBD-led open-ended meetings, expert group meetings and workshops*

17. An analysis of Secretariat-led open-ended meetings, expert group and committee meetings, and workshops carried out from November 2014 to March 2016 was carried out. The two open-ended meetings came close to achieving gender-balanced participation. Of the nine expert group or committee meetings, five had equal gender balance, three had a higher number of male participants and one had a higher number of female participants. Notably, the three meetings pertaining to the Nagoya Protocol each had gender-balanced participation. Of the nine regional and subregional workshops, six had a higher number of male participants, two had a higher number of female participants, and one had gender-balanced participation.

## **F. Conclusions**

18. In conclusion, the Secretariat's steps to implement the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action are intended to set a strong foundation for a gender-responsive approach to work under the Convention. The Secretariat welcomes the interest and positive engagement from partners and stakeholders, who have contributed to advancing these efforts. The generous financial support from the Government of Finland for the post of Gender Programme Officer has been crucial in moving forward this work. Financial support from the Government of Japan through the Japan Biodiversity Fund has enabled the Secretariat to undertake meaningful action to strengthen the capacity of developing country Parties to integrate gender into their biodiversity policy and planning. It is important to note that the full implementation of the Gender Plan of Action will be dependent on continued funding for staff and programmatic costs, which has not yet been secured.

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