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Second Meeting

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**FUTURE PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR TERRESTRIAL BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
IN LIGHT OF THE OUTCOME OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Note by the Secretariat

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission on Sustainable Development was established by the United Nations to ensure the effective follow-up of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, June 1992), enhance international co-operation and rationalise the intergovernmental decision-making capacity for the integration of environment and development issues and examine progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 at the national, regional and international levels (Agenda 21, para. 38.11). Several chapters of Agenda 21 are directly related to the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

2. The Commission on Sustainable Development has adopted a Multi-Year Thematic Programme of Work for its second to fifth sessions (1994-1997). This Programme contains reviews of cross-sectoral clusters and sectoral clusters of issues, and is based upon the relevant chapters of Agenda 21. At its third session (New York, 11-28 April 1995), the Commission considered the 'review of sectoral clusters, second phase: land, desertification, forests and biodiversity', corresponding to chapters 10 to 15 of Agenda 21.

3. At its first meeting, the Conference of the Parties considered the preparation of the participation of the Convention on Biological Diversity in the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (agenda item 8). In decision I/8, the Conference of the Parties invited its President to transmit the statement contained in the Annex to the decision to the high-level segment of the third session of the Commission.

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4. The Conference of the Parties also decided at its first meeting to include in its Medium-term Programme of Work 1995-1997, for consideration at its third meeting in 1996, the agenda item 'Consideration of the future programme of work for terrestrial biological diversity in the light of the outcome of deliberations of the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 1995' (decision I/9).

5. At its third session in 1995, for the review of the sectoral cluster: land, desertification, forests and biodiversity, the Commission had before it the following documents:

- (i) E/CN.17/1995/2: Integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources;
- (ii) E/CN.17/1995/3: "Combating deforestation" and the Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests;
- (iii) E/CN.17/1995/4: Managing fragile ecosystems: combating desertification and drought;
- (iv) E/CN.17/1995/5: Managing fragile ecosystems: sustainable mountain development;
- (v) E/CN.17/1995/6: Promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development;
- (vi) E/CN.17/1995/7: Conservation of biological diversity.

6. The Commission also had before it the Statement from the Convention on Biological Diversity (document E/CN.17/1995/27).

7. The report of the review by the Commission of this sectoral cluster is contained in Chapter 1, section D (paras.158 to 230) of document E/1995/32 ('Commission on Sustainable Development, Report on the Third Session'). An information note, containing this section of the Report, has been prepared by the Secretariat for the present meeting (document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/2/Inf.1).

8. At its second meeting, the Conference of the Parties considered the outcome of the third session of the Commission under agenda item 8.1. The President of the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties reported on her presentation of the Statement to the Commission, as mandated in decision I/8 (UNEP/CBD/COP/2/19, paras.116-117). In its decision II/18, the Conference of the Parties reconfirmed that it would consider at its third meeting in 1996 the agenda item 'Consideration of the future programme of work for terrestrial biological diversity in the light of the outcome of deliberations of the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 1995'.

9. The present note has been prepared by the Secretariat to assist the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice with consideration of the future programme of work for terrestrial biological diversity in the light of the outcome of deliberations of the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and with the provision of relevant advice to the Conference of the Parties at its third meeting.

II. DELIBERATIONS OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

10. The aim of this section is to indicate conclusions and recommendation of the Commission, arising out of its review of this sectoral cluster, that have particular relevance to consideration of a future programme on work for terrestrial biological diversity under the Convention. References given are to relevant paragraphs of the Report of the Third Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (reproduced in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/2/Inf.1)

11. The overall considerations of the review of the sectoral cluster noted that chapter 10 of Agenda 21 (Integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources) provides an overall framework for the implementation of the entire cluster. While all the chapters relate to land, those on forests and sustainable agriculture are concerned with the sustainable management and use of physical and biological resources, while those on desertification and sustainable mountain development reflect the particular problems of fragile environments; the issue of the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of its components is of a cross-cutting nature, and includes those concerned with freshwater as well as coastal and marine ecosystems. Farmers - men and women - indigenous people, other rural communities and the private sector, as the major stakeholders in the use of land and its related resources, must be the focal points in all the areas of the cluster (para. 158)

12. The review by the Commission of the six chapters of Agenda 21 that constitute this sectoral cluster identified and reaffirmed the crucial role of a series of issues common to each of the topics under review. The Commission noted that addressing these issues would be central to the fulfilment of the objectives of each chapter and to attaining sustainable development. In this respect, the Commission noted the importance of financial resources, and of the transfer and development of technologies; the need for scientific co-operation, capacity-building and strengthening the knowledge base; and the need for participatory planning and resource management approaches, involving all stakeholders and recognising the specific roles and contributions of women, indigenous and traditional communities and other relevant major groups.

a. Integrated approach to planning and management of land resources

13. The Commission stressed that an integrated approach to the planning and management of land and water resources is central to the implementation of Agenda 21 recommendations concerning land, desertification, mountains, forests and biodiversity (para. 167). An integrated and multidisciplinary approach needs to address an array of cross-sectoral issues, including the clarification and security of land rights (para. 170). A people-oriented approach is central, and all stakeholders (especially women, indigenous peoples, landless labourers and other major groups) should participate in the planning and management of land resources and in the consensus-building process (para. 168).

14. The Commission urged Governments to achieve the objectives of chapter 10 [1] within the agreed timeframe (para. 174) and to develop national and/or local land-use planning systems (para. 175).

15. The Commission requested strengthened inter-agency co-ordination and co-operation. International agencies, Governments and non-governmental organisations should develop tools and recommend actions for integrated land management (para. 176).

16. The Commission urged Governments, with the co-operation and support of the United Nations system to pay particular attention to:

- (i) Establishing stable land-use systems in areas where important ecosystems or ecoregions are being endangered by human activities;
- (ii) Applying integrated planning and development approaches in regions that are becoming open to intensified settlement and agricultural production;
- (iii) Bringing about integrated approaches to capacity-building (para. 177).

b. Combating desertification and drought

17. The Commission noted that desertification and drought are closely interlinked with other issues such as loss of biodiversity, food security, population growth, poverty, climate change, water resources, deforestation, resource consumption patterns, deterioration of terms of trade, economics and, especially, social and cultural issues. It also recognised that desertification is a social and economic as well as an environmental problem, and that drought and land degradation can occur in most climatic zones (para. 180).

18. The Commission welcomed the conclusion of the Convention to Combat Desertification ('CCD')[2] and noted that implementation of the programme areas of Agenda 21 should be carried out within the context of the CCD, including its regional annexes (para. 181).

19. The Commission urged Governments to take an integrated approach to combating desertification and drew their attention to the potential for the CCD to provide an in-country co-ordinating mechanism for integrated land management in arid, semi-arid and sub-humid lands (para. 183).

20. The Commission recognised the importance of preserving the knowledge of farmers and indigenous and local people concerning dryland management and survival strategies. Their full involvement in the sustainable development of these drylands - their homelands - needs to be ensured. It noted that the principle of allowing more effective participation of local people in the planning and development of their natural resources is being more willingly accepted in many affected countries and that many organisations, especially non-governmental organisations, have stepped up their participatory approaches with the inclusion of marginalized and disadvantaged groups, especially women, in the dryland development process (para. 188).

21. Further agreements on a division of labour and proposals on further partnership arrangements between organisations are needed (para. 189).

c. Sustainable mountain development

22. The Commission recognised that mountain ecosystems and environments are of crucial importance as rich and unique centres of biological and cultural diversity, water stores and sources of minerals. They cover at least one fifth of the Earth's landscape and are home to at least 10 per cent of the world's population, predominantly economically poor people. Mountain ecosystems are complex, fragile, unique in geomorphology, and react sensitively to global climate change. There is thus a need for a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach to sustainable mountain development as well as for th

effective participation and empowerment of mountain people in the use and conservation of mountain resources (para. 190).

23. In order to reverse the trend of resource degradation and, in some cases, economic and political marginalization of mountain communities, and to combat the poverty of mountain people, strategies for mountain development must empower mountain communities to exercise larger control over local resource management and conservation and generate income in sustainable and equitable ways. Support is needed to recover and foster mountain cultural diversity, which is a strong and valid basis for the sustainable use and conservation of mountain resources. The protection of indigenous people's interests, including the recognition of their knowledge, should be an integral part of sustainable development (para. 191).

24. The fragility of mountain ecosystems and the adverse impact of the degradation of those systems on highland and lowland populations have not been fully appreciated. The Commission stressed the importance of providing adequate protection for both quality and quantity of water resources from mountainous regions and recognised the vital protective function of a stable forest cover for the safeguarding of mountainous settlements and infrastructure. It urged expanding the network of protected mountain areas to cover all types of mountain ecosystems, strengthening existing management capabilities for conserving mountain ecosystems, species and genetic diversity and promoting local and non-governmental organisations' participation in the management of these areas (para. 192).

25. The Commission urged interested Governments to prepare and implement comprehensive national and/or local mountain development programmes as outlined in chapter 13 of Agenda 21: the "mountain agenda". Action-oriented projects and programmes should emphasise the long-term monitoring of their environmental, economic and social impacts. These initiatives must incorporate a participatory approach involving all stakeholders, including farmers, women, and local and indigenous communities, as well as non-governmental organisations (para. 194). The Commission further recognised the need for a fair share of the benefits derived from the use of mountain resources to remain with the local people and their communities (para. 195).

26. The Commission noted that there is a need to examine the relationship of chapter 13 with other chapters of Agenda 21 and with the global conventions and to analyse the extent to which the concerns of mountain areas can be better integrated into their follow-up (para. 196).

d. Combating deforestation

27. The Commission noted that forests and forestry must be managed in order to continue to meet the growing needs of humankind for forest products, environmental services, and social and cultural benefits, as well as for livelihoods that are based on them. Particular attention should be focused on the integrated and balanced approach towards environmental and developmental functions of forests, sustainable forest management, conservation of biological diversity, air quality, conservation of soil and water resources, restoration of damaged forests; on shortages of forest products and services, including those that are vital for rural communities, such as fuelwood and forest-based medicines; and on participation of major groups, particularly indigenous people and local communities (para. 200).

28. The Commission called for further attention to the cross-sectoral factors that are the underlying causes of deforestation and degradation of forests, and stressed the need for addressing policy issues including the conservation, valuation and sustainable use of forests in an integrated and

holistic manner (para. 201). It considered that further actions are required to improve the conservation and sustainable management of existing forests, to restore degraded forests and, where possible, to create new forests, including plantations (para. 202).

29. The Commission considered further concrete actions, on the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests, to be an urgent priority. It stressed the need to further assess actions already undertaken to combat deforestation and forest degradation and to promote management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, including environmental and socio-economic impacts, and to propose options for further action. In order to pursue consensus and formulation of co-ordinated proposals for such action, the Commission decided to establish an open-ended ad hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, under its aegis (para. 204).

e. Promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development

30. The Commission noted that disappointment is widely expressed at the slow progress in moving towards sustainable agriculture and rural development (SARD) in many countries (para. 205). The Commission recognised the need for further practical action to promote and enhance sustainable agriculture and rural development, balancing the immediate need to increase food production and food security and to combat poverty, with the need to protect physical and biological resources. Recognising the potential of sustainable use of lands to enhance food production for local food security, the Commission noted that the approach must also focus on the small farmers in marginal lands and must lead to a productive sustainable agriculture which contributes to the social and economic vitality of rural areas and ensures balanced rural/urban development. Traditional agriculture, which produces a substantial proportion of the world's food supply and which at the same time contributes to the protection of biodiversity, must be maintained and developed in a sustainable way (para. 206).

31. There is a need for a deeper and wider understanding of various relations between the farmer and his and her environment at the household and community levels and of the biophysical processes that underlie the interactions between farming activities and the ecologies in which they take place. SARD objectives need to be pursued with the full and vigorous participation of rural people and their communities (para. 207).

32. The Commission stressed the importance of developing appropriate internationally agreed agri-environmental criteria and indicators applicable to developed and developing country situations in order to monitor the status of and progress towards SARD. Such indicators should cover environmental, economic, social and cultural dimensions (para. 212). The achievement of the multiple objectives related to sustainable agriculture and rural development requires a whole-system approach that recognises that it is not possible to focus on agricultural activities alone. There is a need to incorporate other aspects such as land-use planning and community development. The Commission urges Governments, with the support of the international community and non-governmental organisations, to work out their own comprehensive agricultural policies and programmes that take full account of environmental concerns and capacity-building, including strengthening farmers' organisations (para. 213).

33. The Commission noted the insufficient attention to, and progress in, the area of animal genetic resources. Improved international co-operation and support for the conservation and sustainable use of animal genetic resources were necessary. Such initiatives should be at a level similar to those concerning plant genetic resources (para. 218).

34. The Commission recommended that all countries take steps to reduce the environmental impact of pesticide use by promoting integrated pest management as an alternative to exclusive reliance on chemical pesticides (para. 220).

f. Conservation of biological diversity

35. The Commission reaffirmed the importance of the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components, including marine and coastal ecosystems, and recognised the Convention on Biological Diversity as the principal mechanism for advancing these objectives (para. 222).

36. The Commission recognised the crucial role of conservation and sustainable management of all types of forests for maintaining the biological diversity of the whole planet, as well as the role of biological diversity for the integrity and functioning of forest ecosystems. The Commission emphasised that biological diversity is of essential importance for the ecosystem functions of forests and further recognised the role of conservation, management and sustainable use of forests for achieving the objectives of the Convention (para. 224).

37. The Commission stressed that the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components cut across a wide spectrum of sectoral and cross-sectoral issues addressed in Agenda 21. The underlying motivation for conserving biological diversity and using its components sustainably is based on its significance for the integrity and functioning of the life-supporting ecosystems, and this is deeply rooted in concerns for the well-being and sustainable development of humankind, embracing such issues as ecosystem services, food security, poverty and the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous people and local communities (para. 226).

38. The Commission recognised the importance of the commitments under the Convention related to financial resources and the transfer of technology (para. 227).

39. The Commission urged Governments that have not yet done so to ratify, accede to and begin implementing the Convention and made nine recommendations for activities to be implemented through the Convention (para. 230).

III. FUTURE PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR TERRESTRIAL BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

40. The Commission, having considered the six chapters of Agenda 21 that constitute this sectoral cluster, concluded that two relate to the sustainable management and use of physical and biological resources (forests and sustainable agriculture) and two more reflect the particular problems of fragile environments (desertification and mountains). It noted that the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components is an issue of a cross-cutting nature, and thus has to be taken into account in order to fulfill the objectives of these four chapters. Finally it noted that all the chapters are related to land, and that chapter 10 provides the overall framework for the implementation of the entire cluster (see para. 11 above).

41. The SBSTTA will note that the objectives of chapter 15 of Agenda 21 (Conservation of biological diversity) can be realised through the Convention and that the Commission on Sustainable Development at its third session recognised the Convention as providing the principal mechanism for achieving this (see para. 34 above).

42. Issues concerning agriculture and biological diversity will be considered under agenda item 3.9 of the second meeting of the SBSTTA, and the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties will consider the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biological diversity under item 9 of the provisional agenda.

43. The links between forests and biological diversity, and consideration of inputs from the Convention to the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, constitute an ongoing element of the programme of work for terrestrial biological diversity under the Convention. These issues were considered at the first meeting of the SBSTTA and at the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties and, in accordance with decision II/9 of the Conference of the Parties, the present meeting of the SBSTTA will give further consideration to these matters, under this agenda item (see document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/2/11).

44. If it agrees with the view of the Commission that an integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources constitutes a framework through which to address the sustainable management and use of physical and biological resources, and of different categories of ecosystem, the SBSTTA may therefore wish, under this agenda item, to consider in more detail the links between biological diversity and the two remaining topics: desertification and mountains.

a. Desertification and drought

45. The Subgroup on Biodiversity of the International Panel of Experts of the INCD reports:

"A key factor for sustainable development of the world's drylands is our ability to maintain their biodiversity. The diversity within species of living organisms, between species and between or within ecosystems forms important elements in implementing strategies for development. It is unlikely that sustainable development can be achieved in drylands without the survival of and continuous access to the genetic material present there. Whilst sand dunes may be physically stabilised, gullies filled and plant nutrients added, the genetic codes that make up and create the biological diversity of dryland environments result from biological developments over thousands and millions of years. Desertification is not only soil erosion but potential genetic erosion of the plants, animals and micro-organisms that form the living elements of the dryland environments. When we lose a dryland plant species or a dryland animal species, or soil micro-organisms adapted to dry conditions, we have very likely lost something forever. And because species and genes well adapted to the drier areas are so few, our loss is great".[3]

46. The SBSTTA may wish to consider providing advice to the Conference of the Parties on the scientific, technical and technological aspects of the links between biological diversity and arid and semi-arid ecosystems. Should the SBSTTA conclude that there is a need for a programme of work on biological diversity and drylands, it may wish to consider the appropriate modalities for this.

47. In this respect, the SBSTTA may wish to note the provisions of Article 8.1 of the CCD (Relationship with other conventions):

"The Parties shall encourage the co-ordination of activities carried out under this Convention and, if they are Parties to them, under other relevant international agreements, particularly the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate

Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, in order to derive maximum benefit from activities under each agreement while avoiding duplication of effort. The Parties shall encourage the conduct of joint programmes, particularly in the fields of research, training, systematic observation and information collection and exchange, to the extent that such activities may contribute to achieving the objectives of the agreements concerned."

48. Recalling decision II/13 (Co-operation with other biodiversity-related conventions) of the Conference of the Parties, and that the 'relationship of the Convention with the Commission on Sustainable Development and biodiversity-related conventions, other international agreements, institutions and processes of relevance' is a standing item on the Medium-term Programme of Work of the Conference of the Parties and will thus be considered at its third meeting in Buenos Aires, the SBSTTA may wish to consider the advantages from the scientific, technical and technological points of view of a possible co-ordination of activities with the CCD in respect of biological diversity and drylands, and provide appropriate advice to the Conference of the Parties. In this respect the SBSTTA may wish to take note of other relevant provisions of the CCD. [4]

49. The SBSTTA may wish to note that at its February 1995 meeting the Council of the Global Environment Facility considered and approved the Scope and Preliminary Operational Strategy for Land Degradation. This includes activities at the interface between land degradation and biodiversity, climate change, and international waters focal areas. The Council agreed that the GEF's 1995 programme would give priority to arid, semi-arid and sub-humid areas. Pending a decision by the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CCD to identify an organisation to house the Global Mechanism (Article 21.5 of the CCD), the GEF has expressed its intention to contribute to activities supportive of the CCD.

50. Recalling Article 21, paragraph 1 of the Convention, and noting that the Conference of the Parties at its third meeting, will consider matters relating to the financial mechanism, the SBSTTA may also wish to consider providing scientific, technical and technological advice to the Conference of the Parties concerning guidance to the interim institutional structure operating the financial mechanism in respect of the provision of financial resources for activities relating to land degradation and biological diversity.

b. Sustainable mountain development

51. Two programme areas are included in chapter 13 of Agenda 21: i) generating and strengthening knowledge about the ecology and sustainable development of mountain ecosystems; and ii) promoting integrated watershed development and alternative livelihood opportunities.

52. Two fora for promoting international co-ordination and information exchange on the follow-up to chapter 13 have been established: an ad hoc inter-agency group on follow-up to chapter 13, co-ordinated by FAO as the Task Manager for this chapter, and the Mountain Forum.

53. The International NGO Consultation on the Mountain Agenda (Lima, Peru, 22-27 February 1995)[5] identified nine key areas for the follow-up to chapter 13 and submitted prioritised action recommendations in respect of these to the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. These areas are: cultural diversity; sustainable development; production systems and alternative livelihoods; local energy demand and supply in mountains; tourism; sacred, spiritual and

symbolic significance of mountains; water towers; mountain biodiversity; climate change and natural hazards.

54. Regarding mountain biological diversity, the Consultation concluded:

"Mountain ecosystems are a distinct priority for global conservation efforts. The rise in elevation in mountains creates altitudinal belts (or zones) of different climates, soils, and vegetation; thus, mountains have many diverse ecosystems. Mountain regions also often function as critical corridors for migrating animals and as sanctuaries for plants and animals that have long since disappeared from lowlands transformed by glaciation or extensive human settlement. In addition, mountains have high concentrations of endemic species and are vital reservoirs of genetic diversity, especially of valuable crop and medicinal species. Because mountain soils tend to be thin, young and poorly anchored, mountain environments can be exceptionally sensitive to disturbances and slow to recover. While mountain people possess a wealth of indigenous knowledge about local biodiversity, surprisingly little scientific data and understanding exist about these complex dynamic environments." [6]

55. The Consultation, echoing many observers, emphasised the inextricable links between the cultural and biological diversity of mountain regions:

"The world's mountains hold rich cultural diversity critical to the survival and well-being of the world. This diversity emerged due to the unique geo-ecology of mountains, which has frequently isolated mountain peoples from plains dwellers as well as from each other and has spawned locally specific adaptations. These cultures are rooted in intimate connections of people and nature; they are now increasingly threatened by outside interventions, modernisation and conflict. The cultural treasures of the mountains are a vast storehouse of human resources and wisdom that will be critical for safeguarding the biodiversity, natural resources, production systems, health and spiritual sustenance of humankind in the 21st century. This diversity must be valued and nourished while mountain peoples are empowered to improve their livelihoods, participate in their national and global communities, and find peaceful solutions to internal and external conflicts. [...]

Indigenous knowledge is a key component in sustaining mountain ecosystems, livelihoods, and production systems. This resource should be valued as much as modern knowledge, and, in some cases, integrated with it. Lack of recognition and ongoing loss of indigenous knowledge undermines sustainable production systems. In addition, indigenous knowledge is being extracted and marketed without recognition of and compensation to its discoverers and creators." [7]

56. The third Ad Hoc Inter-agency meeting on the Follow-up to UNCED Agenda 21, chapter 13 took place in Aviemore, Scotland in April 1996 and received reports on recent or forthcoming international meetings on sustainable mountain development, including:

- (i) International Symposium on Sustainable Mountain Development in the Andes (Bolivia, April 1995);

- (ii) Regional Intergovernmental Consultation on Follo -up to Chapter 13 (Peru, August 1995);
- (iii) Euromontana Conference on the Mountains of Europe (Poland, September 1995);
- (iv) International Seminar on Sustainable Reconstruction of Highland and Headwater Regions (India, October 1995);
- (v) International Symposium on Agricultural Development in Mountain and Hill Areas (China, April 1996);
- (vi) Rwenzori Mountains Scientific Conference (Uganda, April 1996);
- (vii) IGBP-BAHC/GCTE/START-SASCOM Workshop on Global Change Impacts on Mountain Hydrology and Ecology (Nepal, April 1996);
- (viii) European Intergovernmental Consultation on Follo -up to Chapter 13 (Scotland, April 1996 and Italy, October 1996);
- (ix) African Intergovernmental Consultation on Follo -up to Chapter 13 (Ethiopia, June 1996);
- (x) FAO European Forestry Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds (Norway, July 1996).

57. UNESCO reported that of the 102 natural World Heritage sites protected under the World Heritage Convention, 39 can be considered as mountain sites, together with 11 of the 17 mixed sites (cultural and natural) protected under the Convention. Of the 337 biosphere reserves in 85 countries approved under UNESCO's Programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB), 142 sites are in mountains.

58. In September 1995, the Mountain Forum was established as a decentralised network of networks of organisations working on sustainable mountain issues, with support from international agencies and research institutions.[8] An Information Server Node has been established to provide an Internet-based information exchange by facilitating a moderated discussion list and maintaining an Active Mountain Archive, a Mountain World Wide Web page, an electronically published magazine and the global Mountain Forum membership list.

59. Both the ad hoc inter-agency network on chapter 13 and the Mountain Forum are preparing for the Special Session of the General Assembly to review implementation of Agenda 21. A Global Meeting on the Mountain Agenda is planned for 1998.

60. The SBSTTA may wish to consider further the critical linkages between sustainable mountain development and biological diversity, and how the objectives, provisions and programme of work of the Convention on Biological Diversity are compatible with, and can contribute to, the implementation of chapter 13 of Agenda 21. It may wish to consider advising the Conference of the Parties on work that could be undertaken under the Convention on biological diversity and mountain regions and, as appropriate, on ways and means to cooperate and co-ordinate activities with other relevant ongoing processes, centres of relevant expertise and information exchange. In this respect it may wish to recommend that the Convention be represented at meetings of the ad hoc inter-agency group by the Secretariat, in accordance with Article 24, and that the Secretariat contact the Mountain Forum with a view to inviting its Information Server Node to become an active partner in the clearing-house mechanism in accordance with decision II/3.

NOTES

- 1/ "The broad objective is to facilitate allocation of land to the uses that provide the greatest sustainable benefits and to promote the transition to a sustainable and integrated management of land resources. In doing so, environmental, social and economic issues should be taken into consideration. Protected areas, private property rights, the rights of indigenous people and their communities and the economic role of women in agriculture and rural development, among other issues, should be taken into account. In more specific terms, the objectives are as follows: (a) To review and develop policies to support the best possible use of land and the sustainable management of land resources, by not later than 1996; (b) To improve and strengthen planning, management and evaluation systems for land and land resources, by not later than 2000; (c) To strengthen institutions and co-ordinating mechanisms for land and land resources, by not later than 1998; (d) To create mechanisms to facilitate the active involvement and participation of all concerned, particularly communities and people at the local level, in decision-making on land use and management, by not later than 1996." (Agenda 21, para. 10.5).
- 2/ The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa.
- 3/ INCED (1995) Biological Diversity in the Drylands of the World. Subgroup on Biodiversity, International Panel of Experts, Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Convention to Combat Desertification. See also UNEP (1995) Global Biodiversity Assessment. Cambridge University Press, section 6.1.4 'Arid and semi-arid lands' (pp 349-354).
- 4/ *Inter alia* the following Articles: 1(a) and (f) (Use of Terms); 4.2(a), (d) and (f) (General Obligations); 14 (Co-ordination in the Elaboration and Implementation of Action Programmes); 16 (Information Collection, Analysis and Exchange); 17 (Research and Development); 18 (Transfer, Acquisition, Adaptation and Development of Technology); 23.2(d) (Permanent Secretariat); 24 (Committee of Science and Technology); 25 (Networking of Institutions, Agencies and Bodies).
- 5/ Jointly organised by the Centro Internacional de la Papa (CIP) and The Mountain Institute, with representatives from 40 countries.
- 6/ International NGO Consultation on the Mountain Agenda (1995) Summary Report and Recommendations to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. The Mountain Institute (Franklin WV, USA) p.18.
- 7/ Ibid p.6. See also, Denniston, D. (1995) High Priorities: Conserving Mountain Ecosystems and Cultures. Worldwatch Paper 123, Worldwatch Institute (Washington DC, USA) and IPPF, IUCN, UNFPA and WWF (1996)'People and Mountains: Pinnacles of Diversity' People and the Planet vol.5, no.1. Planet 21 (London, UK).

- 8/ Report of the Initial Organizing Committee of the Mountain Forum, 21- 25 September 1995
The Mountain Institute (Franklin WV, USA). Support for the initiative was provided by Swiss
Development Co-operation, UNEP, IDRC (Canada), FAO, UNDP, Case Western Reserv
University (USA). The Interim Facilitating Committee of the Mountain Forum consists of th
International Potato Centre/Centro Internacional de la Papa - CIP/CONDESAN (Peru), th
International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development - ICIMOD (Nepal), and Th
Mountain Institute - TMI (USA).