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REPORT ON CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER BODIES

Report by the Executive Secretary

I. Introduction

1. Co-operation with other bodies is a central element in the operations of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA). The review of the operations of the Convention undertaken at the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) recognized that SBSTTA needs to make more effective use of existing scientific knowledge and expertise. Increasing the level of scientific and technical knowledge that is available to the Convention process would improve the effectiveness of the Convention. It would facilitate development of relevant policies and promote implementation of many of the provisions of the Convention. As the principal advisory body on these matters, SBSTTA has an important role to play in bridging the gap between the scientific community and policy makers.

2. As part of its review of the operations of the Convention, COP revised the modus operandi of SBSTTA and requested SBSTTA to co-operate with other relevant international, national and regional organizations under the guidance of COP, with a view to using existing experience and knowledge. An important part of the work of any meeting of SBSTTA is therefore to review ongoing co-operation with other bodies so as to advise the COP accordingly.

3. This Report has been prepared by the Executive Secretary in order to facilitate such a review and the development of appropriate recommendations by SBSTTA.

4. Section II reviews activities between other bodies and the Secretariat, SBSTTA and other relevant institutions of the Convention. The Secretariat and SBSTTA have emphasized co-operative activities within the framework of the current programme of work for the Convention, as a whole, and SBSTTA, in particular, and the Report reflects this emphasis. Accordingly, the Report is structured along the lines of the decisions of COP. The activities of most relevance to this item and hence to be highlighted are the initiatives with other scientific bodies of related conventions, such as the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) of the Convention on Wetlands, the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) of the Global Environment Facility, and scientific bodies such as the International Council for Science (ICSU) and DIVERSITAS.

5. At the request of the SBSTTA Bureau, the Report also addresses two emerging issues of importance: the International Biodiversity Observation Year (IBOY) and key assessments of relevance. Within the general framework of co-operation with other bodies, the Bureau also requested the Secretariat to review the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP). Co-operation with this Programme is detailed in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/8.

6. Section III considers the lessons learned with respect to developing effective means of co-operation within the framework of the work of SBSTTA, with a view to providing an input at the intersessional meeting on the operations of the Convention.

7. Section IV contains recommendations for the consideration of SBSTTA.

8. The report covers activities from the last meeting of SBSTTA which was held in September 1997. The focus is, however, oriented to those activities which have direct relevance to the implementation of the decisions of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties held in May 1998.

9. Co-operation with other bodies forms a central theme of many other aspects of the work of the Convention and the Secretariat. Details regarding this co-operation in wider context are provided in document UNEP/CBD/QR/4.

II. Report on Co-operative Activities to Implement the Decisions of COP

Decision IV/1 .. REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE THIRD MEETING OF SBSTTA AND INSTRUCTIONS BY THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO SBSTTA

10. The fourth meeting of the COP took a number of crucial decisions with respect to the work of SBSTTA, in general, and this meeting, in particular. The principal recommendations of the last meeting of SBSTTA pertained to the thematic work programmes which were adopted at the last COP. SBSTTA's recommendations on these issues formed the basis for developing these programmes. The COP formally considered and took note of the report of the last meeting of SBSTTA in decision

IV/1. This decision also contained a number of elements of a cross-cutting nature which are of central importance to the work of SBSTTA. These cross-cutting issues include: Indicators; Identification, Monitoring and Assessment; the Ecosystem Approach; Alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species; and the Global Taxonomic Initiative.

11. Co-operation with other bodies is an essential element of the work for all of these issues. Relevant activities in relation to the last two initiatives addressed in decision IV/1, the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP) and the Global Taxonomic Initiative (GTI), are described in documents UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/8 and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/6.

Indicators of biological diversity

12. In decision IV/1, COP endorsed recommendation III/5 of SBSTTA on indicators of biological diversity and requested the Executive Secretary to undertake the work outlined in the annex of the recommendation. This recommendation was based largely on the recommendations of the liaison group (established by the Executive Secretary in 1997 to address this issue) which drew largely from the results of the eighth meeting of the Global Biodiversity Forum. The Secretariat will convene a new liaison group on indicators of biological diversity to continue the work on recommendations, after consultation of the Chairman with the SBSTTA Bureau members. This liaison group meeting is expected to take place in 1999 and will be composed of at least fifteen geographically-balanced experts.

13. To enhance the extent to which the work on indicators draws upon relevant outside expertise, the Secretariat is developing the procedure for the establishment of a roster of experts for indicators on biological diversity. The roster of experts will be open to relevant organisations.

Identification, monitoring and assessment of biological diversity

14. In the same decision, the COP welcomed the contribution provided by DIVERSITAS to the work of the Executive Secretary. It also decided to transmit the recommendations of DIVERSITAS to SBSTTA for further consideration and use, which are of direct relevance to this meeting, consideration of item 4.3 (document UNEP/SBSTTA/4/6), item 4.4 (document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/7) and item 4.7 (document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/10).

15. The COP also encouraged SBSTTA to further co-operate with DIVERSITAS and other relevant organisations, particularly on the issues of identification, monitoring and assessment of biological diversity. In this connection, the SBSTTA Bureau noted the relevance of the International Biodiversity Observation Year (IBOY) Programme launched by DIVERSITAS in March 1998 to the work of SBSTTA and the Convention.

16. Accordingly, the Secretariat has been working closely with DIVERSITAS and its Secretariat. In particular, it has participated in the work of the Scientific Steering Committee for the DIVERSITAS - International Biodiversity Observation Year (IBOY) Initiative which brings together representatives of the

national committees of DIVERSITAS and a number of interested organizations to consider the planning and co-ordination of the IBOY Initiative.

17. The Committee has discussed a number of proposals that have been submitted following a call by the Steering Committee, with a view to identifying flagship activities to popularize the IBOY Initiative. The Committee has, on a preliminary basis, also considered the criteria and principles to guide selection of such projects in order to qualify for inclusion in the IBOY umbrella which aims to:

- a) promote international co-operation;
- b) be achievable within a short time (i.e., be able to yield results by 2001);
- c) contribute to the advancement of biodiversity science (i.e., be important and interesting in terms of research and monitoring);
- d) justify urgency for policy purposes;
- e) be the basis for sustained international programmes; and
- f) include a strong outreach component (i.e., involve some sections of society in its activities, such as school children or the public at large).

18. Finalisation of the criteria is expected to take place before this meeting of SBSTTA.

19. The Committee has also considered the need for modalities to obtain endorsement of this initiative by the UN General Assembly in order to attract broader and wider media and public attention. The Committee has also considered the procedure to be followed in order to translate the proposal to declare the year 2001 as the International Biodiversity Observation Year into a UN General Assembly resolution. It was agreed that UNESCO, UNEP and the CBD Secretariat should work closely to this end. It is hoped that the year 2001 will be declared International Biodiversity Observation Year, beginning on international biodiversity day, 29 December 2000, and ending on 29 December 2001.

The Ecosystem Approach

20. Further conceptualisation of the ecosystem approach and follow-up to Part B of decision IV/1 is centred around preparing issues for consideration by SBSTTA at its fifth meeting. An important part of these preparations is the convening of a liaison group on the Ecosystem Approach after due consultation of the Chairman with SBSTTA Bureau members. This liaison group will build, inter alia, on the work of the Malawi Workshop, in terms of its membership as well as its documentation, and on the other initiatives undertaken since the Malawi Workshop, such as the workshops held in Bratislava at the GBF (May 1998), Oslo (June 1998), and Isle of Vilm, Germany (November 1998). It will also build on the work of the

Ecosystem Conservation Group (comprised of FAO, UNEP, UNDP, World Bank, IUCN and WWF) as well as on the outcome of the Trondheim Conference (6-10 September 1999) and, possibly, on the Dutch initiative in Southern Africa. It is expected that this meeting will be held in the third week of September 1999. The liaison group will be composed of at least fifteen geographically-balanced experts with a view to also incorporating the views of key international organisations.

21. An initiative being organised under the work programme on agricultural biological diversity, however, of direct importance to this topic is the workshop organised by the Secretariat in conjunction with the FAO focusing on agricultural biological diversity at ecosystem and production system levels. The technical experts represented some fifteen international organisations and twenty Parties. This workshop helped to identify the main elements required to provide enabling environments and technical, policy, institutional and legal incentives for implementing the Convention within the context of agricultural systems. The report of the workshop will be made available through the clearing-house mechanism in March 1999, with a view to assisting in the priority-setting process for the further development of the multi-year work programme at the fifth meeting of SBSTTA in January 2000.

THE WORK PROGRAMMES AND DECISIONS: IV/4 STATUS AND TRENDS OF THE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF INLAND WATER ECOSYSTEMS AND OPTIONS FOR CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE; IV/5 MARINE AND COASTAL BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY; IV/6 AGRICULTURAL BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY; AND IV/7 FOREST BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY.

22. Implementation of each of the thematic programmes is undertaken by the Convention in a broadly similar fashion. Firstly, a review of existing efforts is undertaken to identify synergies and gaps within the existing institutional framework. The review mechanism is co-ordinated by the CBD Secretariat, supported in some instances by either informal inter-agency task forces or ad hoc groups of experts. On the basis of this review, the Secretariat develops programmatic links with relevant organizations to promote the purposes of the Convention and, where appropriate, begin the process of developing guidance and tools in areas identified as requiring specific attention to assist Parties with implementation. Periodically, the advice of SBSTTA is sought. Results of this work are disseminated to Parties and other stakeholders for their application, evaluation and further refinement. All these programmes and the relevant decisions have placed considerable importance on the co-operation and input of relevant organisations and processes including other environment-related conventions. This importance has been reflected in the work of the Secretariat and SBSTTA to implement these decisions.

23. In the implementation of the thematic programmes of work on marine and coastal, agricultural, forest and inland water biodiversity, the Convention is benefiting from substantial scientific and technical co-operation provided by UN agencies, biodiversity-related conventions and other relevant organisations. Progress to date with respect to contributions from other organisations is described in document UNEP/SBSTTA/4/3. An example of such co-operation is the organisation of a second ad hoc inter-agency consultation on promoting co-operation on the conservation and sustainable use of wild plants of importance for food and agriculture, by DIVERSITAS, FAO, UNESCO and UNEP. This consultation will be convened by DIVERSITAS and hosted by FAO in Rome in May 1999.

IV/8 ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING

24. A reminder for submissions was sent to all National Focal Points on 13 November 1998 regarding a) information on ex situ collections which were acquired prior to the entry into force of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and which are not addressed by the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (the Commission), b) legislative or administrative measures, policies and programmes to promote sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources on mutually-agreed terms, and c) impacts of intellectual property rights on the achievement of the objectives of the Convention. The deadline for submissions was 15 January 1999. The Executive also sent an invitation for submission to relevant organizations, including botanical gardens and zoos. Several organizations, including the Commission and several centres of the CGIAR network, made submissions as did Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) and the World Federation of Culture Collections (WFCC).

IV/9 IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 8(J) AND RELATED PROVISIONS

25. Decision IV/9 of the Conference of the Parties established the ad hoc open-ended intersessional working group on the implementation of Article 8(j) and related provisions, and a short- and medium-term programme of work to facilitate the work of the Parties. The working group is to meet in conjunction with SBSTTA and its first meeting is planned for January 2000, just prior to the fifth meeting of SBSTTA. Parties are urged in decision IV/9 to include the widest possible participation in their representation at this meeting. The terms of reference for this group include "to identify opportunities for collaboration and co-ordination with other relevant bodies or processes with the aim of fostering synergy and avoiding duplication of work". By way of preparation for this meeting, COP further called for the submission of additional case studies. In order to facilitate the widest possible involvement in the work of this group, the Executive Secretary sent letters to indigenous and local community organisations and other relevant organisations, as well as National Focal Points, calling for the submission of case studies on the basis of a proposed outline developed by the Secretariat. Submissions have been requested by 20 March 1999. It is hoped that these submissions will form the basis of documents before the meeting of the working group.

26. The COP also requested the Executive Secretary to seek ways to enhance a collaborative relationship with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), in order to further address the issue of determining how best to protect the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. A scheme for the Joint Work Plan (matrix) has been developed in collaboration with the Secretariat of WIPO, and preliminary talks have been held regarding the implementation of the Joint Work Plan.

27. With a view to promoting co-operation on this topic, the Secretariat

participated in a series of key meetings. Important meetings in this respect which the Secretariat has participated in are: the Roundtable on Intellectual Property and Indigenous Peoples hosted by WIPO; the Inter-agency consultation on indigenous issues organised by the Centre for Human Rights; and the 16th session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations under the Centre for Human Rights.

IV/10 MEASURES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

A. Incentive measures: consideration of measures for the implementation of Article 11

29. The Secretariat continues to collaborate with the Organisations for Economic Development and Co-operation (OECD) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the key partners identified in decision IV/10. IUCN organised an exploratory meeting in December 1998, involving organisations identified in decision IV/10 (a) (Incentive Measures) and (c) (Impact Assessment), to discuss key opportunities for developing and implementing programmes of work on these two areas. Although the key goal is to collaborate on a background document to be submitted to the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, several other inter-sessional opportunities were identified. One major potential area of collaboration is to develop a network of information sharing, involving other relevant organisations.

B. Public education and awareness: consideration of measures for the implementation of Article 13

30. Decision IV/10B was transmitted to relevant international organisations as well as to National Focal Points.

31. Informal negotiations were held between the Secretariats of the CBD and UNESCO on this issue. On the basis of these consultations, UNESCO is developing a comprehensive proposal for action. This proposal identifies the main strategic steps for the elaboration of contents and activities within such a global initiative on biological diversity education, training and public awareness and for their implementation, including funding aspects. It is proposed that a consultation of experts and donor agencies on the Global Initiative be organised jointly by UNESCO and CBD and hosted by UNESCO.

32. The need for a high-level Report on Biological Diversity Education, Training and Public Awareness, along the lines of the Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century and the Report to UNESCO of the World Commission on Culture and Development, is also under consideration.

C. Impact assessment and minimising adverse effects: consideration of measures for the implementation of Article 14

33. Decision IV/10(c) was transmitted to relevant organizations with a request for information and case studies. Submissions have been made by CMS, the Convention on Wetlands, the International Association for Impact Assessments, the World Bank, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the United Nations

Environment Programme. The meeting referred to under decision IV/10(a), also considered this part of decision IV/10, at which representatives of the Convention on Wetlands, the Bonn Convention, IUCN, the World Conservation Union, the International Association for Impact Assessment considered modalities for implementing decision IV/10 C with the Secretariat. The various representatives presented relevant work carried out by their organizations. The results of this meeting has formed the basis for subsequent discussions on opportunities for co-ordination and collaboration. The results of this synthesis are before this meeting of SBSTTA in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/10.

IV/2 REVIEW OF THE OPERATIONS OF THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM

34. The development of the clearing-house mechanism is being assisted by the Informal Advisory Committee. Five of the fifteen representatives are from international bodies (IABIN, OECD, IBIN, BIN21 and BCIS). The IAC is also involved in the independent review of the pilot phase of the CHM.

35. Anelectronic database on scientific and technical co-operation and a biodiversity-related search engine have also been developed for the home page of the Secretariat to promote better access to relevant activities of other organizations.

36. The Secretariat continues to participate in the co-ordination of biodiversity-related networks, activities and focal points. The goal is to make information arising from the Secretariat available to a wide constituency. In addition, the CHM is promoting synergies in regards to information exchange with other biodiversity-related conventions (CITES, CMS, Convention on Wetlands and World Heritage Convention) and ongoing international or supra-national information initiatives. CHM is also contributing to the harmonization of the information management of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. To this end, the Secretariat committed itself to the establishment of a listserv and a joint Internet website for the biodiversity-related conventions as well as the Rio conventions.

IV/14 NATIONAL REPORTS BY PARTIES

37. A preliminary draft of the Global Biodiversity Outlook was distributed to members of the Bureaux of SBSTTA and COP at COP/4. Work continues on preparing the first draft of the Global Biodiversity Outlook. Once finalised, an extensive process of peer-reviewing will take place which will draw on a wide network of relevant bodies.

38. Decision IV/14 requests the Executive Secretary to prepare a revised synthesis of the national reports submitted by Parties pursuant to Article 26 of the Convention and other relevant information. On the basis of this synthesis, SBSTTA has been requested to provide advice to the COP on the overall format of future national reports. The synthesis is to be ready for the fifth meeting of

SBSTTA. The elements which the COP recommended SBSTTA should consider include the ways and means to consider the participation of all relevant stakeholders in the preparation and use of national reports. Accordingly, the Secretariat has begun to prepare such a synthesis based on relevant expertise from other institutions. An important element in these preparations is a preliminary synthesis which is being prepared by the Secretariat in conjunction with the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC).

IV/15 THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY WITH THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS, OTHER INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS, INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES OF RELEVANCE

39. The importance that COP places on co-operation with other processes is reflected in the fact that the matter is a standing item on the agenda of meetings of the COP. Accordingly, COP in decisions II/13, III/17, III/21 and IV/15 has highlighted a number of areas for which co-operation is crucial to the operation of the Convention. Although all elements of this decision have relevance to the work of SBSTTA, the following paragraphs address those elements of direct relevance to this meeting of SBSTTA.

40. In paragraph 2, COP endorsed the Joint Work Plan with the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat, as a framework for enhanced co-operation between these conventions and encourages its implementation. Accordingly, the Work Plan has provided the basis for further co-operation between the Convention on Wetlands and the CBD. Details of the relevant activities are covered in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/3. Further co-operation will be made possible at the forthcoming meeting of the Convention on Wetlands Standing Committee, to be held in Costa Rica in May 1999 which will consider a proposal that the Chair of SBSTTA be considered as a permanent observer to STRP.

41. In Paragraph 3, COP endorsed the memoranda of co-operation entered into by the Executive Secretary with: the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the Cartagena Convention, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Previously endorsed by COP are memoranda of co-operation with the Convention on Wetlands, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals.

42. Since the fourth meeting of the COP, the Executive Secretary has signed one further memorandum with CCD. Specific activities undertaken pursuant to these and other memoranda have been discussed in the framework of the work programme of the Convention and decisions of the COP.

43. In light of the agenda of this meeting of SBSTTA, an important consideration will be the results of the assessment by SBSTTA of the drylands bioms ecosystems and the ways and means that this might form the basis of further co-operation with the CCD, in particular its CST and its Secretariat.

44. Follow-up to paragraphs 5 (a) and (b) centres around the WCMC project on harmonisation of national reports of the biodiversity-related conventions. The Secretariat supported and participated in this project as did the Secretariats of CITES, CMS, RAMSAR and World Heritage Convention, as well as UNEP. The World Conservation Monitoring Centre completed an initial feasibility study, the results of which were considered at a meeting in early October for the Secretariat Information Managers. Follow-up to the results of this initiative are expected to form the framework for the Secretariat activities in this area for the foreseeable future. The first steps in these joint efforts have included, inter alia, the establishment by the Secretariat of an electronic listserv and a joint Internet webpage.

45. A similar initiative regarding information management between the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, is under way.

46. Co-operation in information management initiatives contributing to the CBD clearing-house mechanism include, besides national and regional efforts:

- a) The UNEP Biodiversity Data Management Project (capacity-building);
- b) The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Megascience Sub-group on Bioinformatics and the G7 ENRM topic working group on biodiversity (information structure); and
- c) BCIS, a consortium of global acting and biodiversity-related non-governmental organizations (information content and capacity-building).

47. The Conference of the Parties has repeatedly recognized, in the development of the clearing-house mechanism, a need to establish a reliable biodiversity network of existing and evolving institutions and initiatives which can serve the needs of Parties to the Convention. Major institutions and initiatives are now beginning to establish joint initiatives and consortia addressing areas of direct relevance to the programme areas of the Convention. The opportunity could be taken to support and facilitate this process of creating a joint biodiversity network with clearly identified and shared responsibilities for such a globally owned network. To this end, a memorandum of understanding between the major institutions could be useful, in order clearly to identify, harmonize, and designate responsibilities of such a system.

48. In paragraph 5 (c), COP requested the Executive Secretary to explore the possibility of developing further joint work programmes with other international processes. The memorandum of understanding, currently being discussed with WIPO and described above, is expected to lead to the adoption of such a joint work programme. Moreover, the MOU with the CCD is understood as the first step towards a joint programme of work between the Convention and CCD, in particular between the CST and SBSTTA. The MOU with FAO also includes a joint work programme in accordance with the mandates of both bodies and the FAO Working Group on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture provides the mechanism in FAO for

co-ordinating the contributions of its sustainable development, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, sustainable development and economic and social policy departments in the further development and implementation of this joint programme.

49. An important precursor to developing guidelines, as envisaged in paragraph 6, is the development of a scientific assessment of the representivity of the protected area network. Generation and development of information to make this assessment is a central feature of existing efforts to co-operate with other protected area instruments, such as the Convention on Wetlands and the World Heritage Convention. Pursuant to the work programme adopted in decision IV/16, "Protected Areas" will be a focus of the seventh meeting of the COP. An important factor in determining this timing was that it would enable the Convention to lend its normative weight to the results of the next World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas, planned for 2002 in Africa. Close co-operation is anticipated with the WCPA, which has a key role in organizing this meeting. To this end, the Secretariat has prepared a detailed paper outlining the process for preparing for this topic and initiated preliminary consultations with the above organizations. The Secretariat also participated in the most recent meeting of the International Co-ordinating Committee of the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB) with a view to promoting co-operation for the preparations for COP. The Executive Secretary invited the Secretariat of the MAB to provide a mechanism for the collection of relevant information. Further details regarding the product of these consultations, and what they mean in terms of activities for SBSTTA, are described in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/4.

50. As a result of the request in Paragraph 13, and with a view to further developing co-operation with the Rio Conventions, the Executive Secretaries of the Convention on Combating Desertification and this Convention signed a Memorandum of Co-operation which identified general measures for co-operation and specific proposals on: a) joint activities to support implementation of the conventions; b) the development of joint scientific assessments; c) synergies in information management; and d) liaison arrangements in New York. Implementation of these activities is under preparation.

51. The Secretariat participated at both COPs for CCD and FCCC. As a result, the COP of FCCC decided to consider issues related to forests, marine and coastal biodiversity and the clearing-house mechanism at the next meeting of its subsidiary bodies in May 1999.

52. With respect to Paragraph 14, the Executive Secretary invited Parties to submit relevant information regarding paragraph 14 on sustainable tourism, as well as on paragraphs 15 and 16 of decision IV/15 on other relevant issues addressed by the Commission on Sustainable Development. To date, the Secretariat has received one submission from the Government of The Netherlands. The Secretariat is actively participating in the CSD process, including the ad hoc intersessional Working Group held from 22 February to 5 March 1999, and particularly in the session on tourism and, through the IACSD and the ACC Subcommittees, on Water Resources and on Oceans and Coastal Areas. As a result, it is currently expected that the CSD may request the COP to contribute international guidelines on sustainable tourism.

53. With reference to paragraphs 15 and 16, the Secretariat has also worked closely with the CSD process, based on the recommendations of SBSTTA and the decisions of COP in order to ensure that the Commission work on relevant issues takes proper account of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Further details of the co-operation and its relevance for the work of SBSTTA are contained in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/3.

54. During the period of this report, the Secretariat assisted in the preparation of the meetings of the Global Biodiversity Forums, as well as participated in these meetings - most notably in the 10th Global Biodiversity Forum immediately prior to COP/4 of CBD, the 11th Global Biodiversity Forum held in conjunction with COP/4 for UNFCCC, and the 12th Global Biodiversity Forum held in conjunction with COP/2 for CCD. It is involved in the preparation of the latest Forum to be held during COP/7 of the Ramsar Convention in May 1999. These have provided an important mechanism for raising awareness among experts about the issues on the agenda of SBSTTA. The Secretariat has joined the steering committee of the Global Biodiversity Forum, organised under the auspices of the IUCN, in order to promote further co-operation and enhance the ability of these Forums to provide information and advice of direct relevance to the work of SBSTTA.

55. Co-operation with STAP has not only been an important activity of the Secretariat but also has been a priority of the SBSTTA Bureau. In this respect, the Bureau has been represented in meetings of STAP and provided guidance towards the development of research priorities for the period to 2001. This close co-operation and interaction is expected to remain a priority of both the Bureau and the Secretariat.

56. The Secretariat reported on the decisions of the fourth meeting of COP at the 53rd session of the UN General Assembly (document A/53/471). The Secretariat also participated in the Panel of the Second Committee on "How to achieve a better coherence and improve co-ordination among environmental and environment-related Conventions", in October 1998, along with the UNFCCC and CCD. The focus of the comments of the Second Committee and one of the main elements of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly was the need for further co-operation among the environmental conventions, in particular with respect to necessary scientific assessments. This is reflected in resolution 53/186 which encourages the COPs of the CBD, UNFCCC and CCD to "examine appropriate opportunities and measures for complementarities and better scientific assessments of ecological linkages between the three conventions".

IV/16 INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS AND THE PROGRAMME OF WORK

57. At its last meeting, COP undertook a review of the operations of the Convention, including the operations of SBSTTA. The results of this review are contained in decision IV/16. An important factor in the changes which COP made was the need to promote the ability of the Convention process, as a whole, and SBSTTA, in particular, to draw more effectively on existing networks of other bodies.

58. The views submitted by Parties on this matter noted that SBSTTA has an important role to play in bridging the gap between the scientific community and policy makers. It was acknowledged that SBSTTA needs to use the existing scientific knowledge and expertise more effectively. Discussion also focused on developing closer co-operation with other scientific bodies such as the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the Global Environment Facility (STAP), the DIVERSITAS International Programme of Biodiversity Science and the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), through the exploration of more formal arrangements with these organisations that would facilitate their greater inclusion in the process and ensure better use of their networks. It was noted that building on the Global Biodiversity Assessment would also provide an important opportunity to develop such relationships. Better links between preparatory meetings and satellite meetings, such as the Global Biodiversity Forum, would also promote the involvement of other scientific bodies and civil society. Some Parties observed that the Chair and the Bureau of SBSTTA have played an important role in developing co-operation with other bodies and this should be continued and supported by the process, particularly with support from the Trust Fund of the Convention.

59. The contribution that the FAO, UNESCO, and UNEP have in terms of seconding professional staff to the STTM, whose primary responsibility is assisting with the work of SBSTTA is an important and practical, although often overlooked, mechanism for promoting co-operation between SBSTTA and these organisations. Further details of these secondments are contained in document UNEP/CBD/QR/4.

60. In decision IV/16, COP made a number of important changes to the modus operandi of SBSTTA, particularly with respect to how it operates with other bodies. For example, requiring the pre-session documentation for meetings of SBSTTA to be distributed three months prior to the meeting was intended to improve other bodies' ability to effectively prepare for and thereby participate in the particular meeting. Adopting an overall programme of work for the Convention for the next three meetings of COP, along with a request for SBSTTA to prepare its own programme of work in light of the programme of COP, is also intended to facilitate the participation of other bodies. Convening two meetings of SBSTTA before the next COP was also partially intended to allow for better participation, as well as provide the opportunity to undertake the work of SBSTTA in a more considered and deliberate manner. With respect to increasing participation, it is hoped that, by allowing other processes twelve months to consider some recommendations of SBSTTA (those of SBSTTA/4 in this instance), in advance of their consideration by COP, the ability of other organisations to participate effectively in meetings of the COP will be facilitated. Two critical aspects of the revised modus operandi of SBSTTA are the use of technical expert groups intersessionally and the use of rosters of experts.

Ad hoc technical expert groups

61. According to Annex• to COP decision IV/16 on the modus operandi of SBSTTA, a limited number of ad hoc technical expert groups on specific priority issues in the SBSTTA programme of work may be established for a limited duration. Document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4 has been prepared which outlines terms of reference for five groups: a) marine and coastal biological diversity, b) inland water biological

diversity, c) dryland ecosystem biological diversity, d) alien species, and e) forest biological diversity.

62. Since SBSTTA is requested to submit the terms of reference of the ad hoc technical expert groups for the approval of COP, it will not be possible to establish such expert groups prior to the current intersessional period. Intersessional activities up to the fifth meeting of COP will therefore depend on liaison groups to assist the Secretariat in preparing the documentation for SBSTTA meetings, in accordance with paragraph 9 of Annex I to decision COP IV/16. These liaison groups will be established by the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Chairman and the other members of the SBSTTA Bureau. Currently, it is planned to have liaison group meetings on ecosystem approach, indicators of biological diversity, agrobiodiversity, and drylands.

63. A key criterion for the technical expert groups is that they draw upon existing knowledge and competence within international, national and regional organisations, including non-governmental organisations and the scientific community, through regular liaison with these organisations. The same criteria are being used to guide the work of the liaison groups. Further details of the proposed expert groups are contained in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/5. Consequently, the liaison groups and the expert groups all provide ways and means for international bodies to co-operate with SBSTTA, through the provision of information for groups to consider, participation in the meetings of the groups and peer reviewing of the products of the groups.

Rosters of Experts

64. An important change to the modus operandi, in order to address the problems associated with transparency in the preparation for meetings, was the emphasis placed on the use of the rosters of experts. The experts on the rosters are invited to make available their specific expertise in order to contribute to the further development of the scientific, technical and technological issues of the Convention• work programme. Such requests could entail, inter alia, peer reviews, questionnaires, clarifications or examinations of scientific, technological and technical issues, specific contributions to the compilation of documents, participation in global and regional workshops and assisting in connecting the CBD process to international, national and regional scientific, technical and technological processes. The decisions of the COP have called for such rosters of experts for four thematic issues (marine and coastal biodiversity, agricultural biodiversity, forest biodiversity and inland water biodiversity). The Secretariat had also received nominations from Parties and countries for inclusion in the rosters of experts on access and benefit sharing, and indicators. The rosters will therefore be the basis through which other bodies and processes can apply their expertise and knowledge to the Convention processes and the work of SBSTTA.

65. The Secretariat is in the process of finalising the database for the rosters of experts, whose formats will be consistent with other rosters developed under the Convention. This work has been based on the experience gained in developing a methodology to promote and enhance the full, efficient and

transparent use of the roster of experts on marine and coastal biological diversity. Background documents and a questionnaire have been prepared with the purpose of assisting individual experts in obtaining the necessary familiarity with the Convention process and clarifying the role which they can play in the process of implementing the Jakarta Mandate on marine and coastal biological diversity. These background documents and a questionnaire have been sent to all the experts on the existing roster. In addition, a separate letter also has been sent to all those countries who have not yet provided the Secretariat with the names of experts to be included in the roster of experts. It is expected that a similar process will be initiated for the other rosters.

III. Lessons learned: the further review of the operations of the Convention

66. As has been stressed a number of times previously, one of the most crucial issues identified in the review of the operations of the Convention by the COP is the reinforcement of the role of science in the process. The prominence of science in the development of the thematic programmes is evident in the breadth of matters referred to SBSTTA. Based on the requirements of the thematic programmes, the immediate tasks with respect to promoting this role of science from an institutional perspective include:

- a) development of modalities to undertake the necessary assessments called for in the thematic programmes;
- b) development of indicators and criteria;
- c) development of modalities of peer review which meet concerns regarding transparency whilst, at the same time, are flexible enough to be practical and allow access to the best available expertise regardless of where that expertise is located;
- d) development of mechanisms for the production of the various case studies and calls for further information;
- e) conceptual development of modalities and expectations regarding the transfer of technology based on scientific and technical co-operation;
- f) use of the panels;
- g) how the work of the first intersessional SBSTTA can be utilised prior to the COP thereby avoiding an eighteen-month lag between recommendation and decision; and
- h) development of modalities of co-operation, networking and platform building.

67. With respect to developing effective forms of co-operation between SBSTTA and the scientific community, in particular other international organisations, the experience in implementing these decisions has highlighted a number of important matters which are considered below. Consideration of these matters

will be important for the intersessional meeting on the operations of the Convention which will further consider the operations of SBSTTA.

Links with other institutions and the use of assessments

68. Further attention needs to be given to the role SBSTTA can play in bridging the gap between research and policy-making. As was noted in the views of Parties expressed during the review of the operations of the Convention, SBSTTA is unlikely to generate new information itself, however, is required to review existing information and translate it into policy-relevant advice to the COP. To do this more effectively, SBSTTA will need to strengthen its links with the development of research upon which the decision-making capacity of the Convention rests.

69. One body with which close links have been established is DIVERSITAS, a partnership established to promote, facilitate and catalyze scientific research on biodiversity. The attraction of DIVERSITAS as a "partner" for the Convention lies partly with the breadth of its programme, and partly with the fact that it offers a pre-existing network of institutional partners. The sponsoring institutions of DIVERSITAS are IUBS, SCOPE, UNESCO, ICSU, IGBP-GCTE and IUMS. A former Chair of SBSTTA is a member of the Steering Committee of DIVERSITAS. The programme elements of the DIVERSITAS scientific research programme already reflect many of the concerns and the research needs of the CBD. It may be worth considering whether it is possible to further develop the relationship between SBSTTA and DIVERSITAS by giving a place on the Steering Committee to the Chair of SBSTTA.

70. While developing more secure relations with relevant research bodies is important, no one body or network is likely to be able to yield all the information required for the implementation of the Convention. In relation to technology, for example, much of the available expertise resides with the private sector and non-governmental organisations, and SBSTTA also needs to develop broad partnerships in these areas. One way of engaging a wide range of bodies in the work of SBSTTA might be to consider allowing research institutions the opportunity to make presentations to meetings of the SBSTTA. Relevant organisations might be specifically encouraged to sponsor workshops to support SBSTTA work programme, and to provide inputs to SBSTTA meetings through such means. They could also be requested to make such a contribution to expert meetings.

71. Another mechanism for engaging a wide range of actors would be to publish a periodical within the auspices of the Convention. The Editorial Board could be composed of a limited number of eminent scientists proposed by the Executive Secretary and reviewed by the Bureau of SBSTTA, which could also assist with preparation of documentation for meetings of SBSTTA. Such an activity would, however, require the organisational resources of a partner organisation.

72. The role of the Bureau might be an area of focus for further refinement. In this respect, the role of the Chair is particularly significant. The

Government of Norway provided support to enable the former Chair of SBSTTA to engage in activities related to the Convention. This is a useful precedent which might be considered further - for example, SBSTTA might request COP to consider whether provision could be made in the regular budget to support the work of the Chair. The Chair has represented SBSTTA in meetings of other scientific bodies, such as the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the Global Environment Facility (GEF/STAP). Support for the work of the Chair might enable him or her to become more involved in the activities of research bodies and other scientific institutions which could support aspects of the work of the Convention. In this way, the Chair of SBSTTA could provide a practical link between SBSTTA and the wider research community, as well as to other scientific advisory bodies of relevance to the Convention.

73. The manner in which SBSTTA draws on work developed outside the auspices of the Convention may warrant further attention. In the past, there has been a reluctance towards SBSTTA properly using or endorsing the outputs of such activities, and no mechanisms have been developed formally to encourage such activities to provide input to SBSTTA. An important test of SBSTTA's willingness to take the products of other meetings will be the nature of SBSTTA's response to many of the items on its agenda at this meeting, in particular the GTI and the GISP. A way of addressing this reluctance on SBSTTA's behalf might be to set out in a more structured manner the way in which other meetings and institutions can provide relevant information to SBSTTA. A first step towards developing these types of arrangements might be for SBSTTA to identify relevant meetings from the calendar of meetings developed by the Secretariat and request the Chair of SBSTTA, with the assistance of the Secretariat, to participate in the meeting.

74. Utilisation of existing and ongoing assessments, such as the Global Biodiversity Assessment (GBA), is also likely to be an important element of SBSTTA's work. The importance is indicated by the prominence this matter was given by the General Assembly in its recent consideration of the role of environmental conventions. Currently, there are at least four major assessments of direct relevance to the work of SBSTTA being undertaken outside the auspices of the Convention. Moreover, while the GBA would appear to provide a useful basis for SBSTTA's work, it does not seem to have been utilised in any systematic manner to date. SBSTTA and COP need to ensure that existing assessment exercises, such as the assessment of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP), or future assessments, such as UNEP's proposed Global International Waters Assessment, generate information useful to the work of SBSTTA.

75. Unlike the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC), which is able to draw upon the ongoing work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), there is no independent scientific body of experts outside the Convention on which the CBD can draw, which produces guidance and policy-relevant information in all areas relevant to the Convention. This has had an important impact on the ability of SBSTTA to draw upon relevant expertise and knowledge from other bodies.

76. The working methods of the IPCC may also offer some useful models for the future work of SBSTTA, particularly the way in which it might use relevant assessments undertaken by outside bodies. The IPCC is an intergovernmental body

of experts, established by WMO and UNEP, on aspects of climate change. The IPCC has established three working groups to address specific issues, each co-chaired by one developed country and one developing country representative. Although the working groups are formally open-ended, the preparation of working group reports is carried out through a system of lead authors, contributing authors and expert reviewers. The reports therefore draw upon a wide range of scientific and technical expertise. For example, the report of Working Group I for the IPCC Second Assessment Report was produced by more than 350 scientists and reviewed by another 500. It should be noted, however, that around half of the lead authors of IPCC reports have been from the USA or UK, and less than ten per cent from developing countries, although the IPCC has made specific efforts to redress this imbalance. For example, the Decision of the IPCC in its Third Assessment Report (accepted at the 13th session of IPCC, September 1997) addresses the promotion of participation of experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition. It also promotes participation of experts from business/industry/finance, development and environmental organisations. This imbalance has also been reflected in the membership of other limited membership expert bodies including, for example, the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP).

77. Expert review is an integral part of the IPCC preparation process, and includes a review of scientific and technical content by governments. The Working Group reports comprise several 'layers'. For example, the Working Group I report for the Second Assessment Report comprised eleven technical chapters in the form of a scientific review paper drafted by a large number of contributors; a forty-page technical summary prepared by the lead authors of the technical chapters and taking into account comments of reviewers; and a five-page summary for policy-makers, based upon the technical chapters, however reflecting line-by-line negotiation in the IPCC plenary. While this type of product might be beyond what is required of SBSTTA, it suggests a model of working which might assist SBSTTA in gaining recognition as an expert and authoritative body while at the same time respecting its intergovernmental character.

78. The IPCC has detailed procedural guidelines for the selection and responsibilities of lead authors, contributors and expert reviewers, as well as for the acceptance and approval of the various types of reports produced under its auspices. The CST of the CCCD has similar mechanisms. It may be worthwhile to consider this issue within the context of how SBSTTA might review and use assessments being undertaken by other bodies.

Participation at meetings

79. The organizations that have participated in the meetings are indicated as follows:

SBSTTA 1:	4 UN specialised agencies
	1 Convention secretariat (CITES)
	7 other IGOs
	50 NGOs (including academic/media)

SBSTTA 2:	3 UN specialised agencies
	2 Convention secretariats (Ramsar and CMS)
	4 UN bodies
	6 other IGOs
	66 NGOs (including academic/media)
SBSTTA 3:	4 UN specialised agencies
	7 UN bodies
	2 Convention secretariats (CITES and Ramsar)
	8 other IGOs
	105 NGOs (including academic/media)

80. The increased participation of non-governmental organisations in the meetings of SBSTTA is noteworthy. This may in part be due to the meetings of the Global Biodiversity Forum, which took place immediately before the second and third meetings of SBSTTA. The Global Biodiversity Forum tended to attract a wider range of individuals and institutions than might otherwise attend SBSTTA meetings, and appears to have a role to play in bringing the scientific community into contact with the Convention process. It may be worthwhile considering whether the Chair of SBSTTA should be involved in meetings of the Global Biodiversity Forum.

81. The participation of NGOs in SBSTTA emerged as an issue at the third meeting of SBSTTA in relation to some of the discussions on forests and biodiversity. Although the modus operandi of SBSTTA encourages participation of NGOs in accordance with the rules of procedure, in fact, the rules have been applied with some flexibility. In practice, it has been left to the discretion of the Chair of particular contact or drafting groups to determine whether NGOs may observe proceedings or even participate more actively. The strict differentiation between formal and informal discussions which has been observed in many other conventions has not been strictly applied in the CBD. It is also relevant that the revised modus operandi of COP encourages participation of observers as well. The principal rationale for a more open approach to NGO participation has been the emphasis in the Convention on the need to involve all stakeholders in order to achieve the Convention objectives. In relation to SBSTTA, the scientific, technical and technological nature of the body, and the need to marshal all available expertise and knowledge, not just that which resides in governments, would also seem to support a continuation of a flexible approach. If SBSTTA begins to work increasingly through intersessional bodies, as may be desirable, these bodies should incorporate and draw upon non-governmental and private-sector expertise as readily as that of governments and inter-governmental organisations.

IV. Conclusions

82. The most important issue facing SBSTTA with respect to co-operation is the relationship to and use of relevant assessments undertaken by other bodies. SBSTTA may wish to consider a request of the Executive Secretary to prepare for

the next SBSTTA meeting a comprehensive review of the matter and invite the relevant bodies to make presentations to the next meeting of SBSTTA, with a view to making a detailed recommendation to COP.

83. SBSTTA may wish to consider the role of the Chair of SBSTTA and request him or her, if invited, to participate in the GBF process, the ECG, the Steering Committee of DIVERSITAS and STAP.

84. SBSTTA may also wish to consider the feasibility of establishing a periodical (with a focus on issues such as assessments, methodologies, technologies or social aspects of biological diversity) with a partner organisation and request the Executive Secretary to explore modalities for co-operation for the consideration of the COP.

85. SBSTTA, through its Bureau, may wish to review the calendar of events prepared by the Executive Secretary and identify those meetings which could be invited to present results to SBSTTA meetings. The Executive Secretary may be encouraged to identify relevant research initiatives to this end as well. Moreover, the SBSTTA may wish to request that the Chair and the Executive Secretary consider necessary arrangements which are appropriate in order to allow the outcome of relevant meetings and initiatives to be presented.

86. Relevant organisations might also be invited by the Executive Secretary to participate in the work of liaison groups as well as be encouraged to sponsor workshops and meetings to support SBSTTA work programme.

87. SBSTTA may wish to request its Chair to present to the intersessional meeting on the operations of the Convention suggestions as to the institutional requirements required to promote co-operation with other relevant bodies.

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