



**CONVENTION ON
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Fourth meeting
Montreal, Canada
21-25 June 1999
Item 4.3 of the Provisional Agenda*

FURTHER ADVANCEMENT OF THE GLOBAL TAXONOMY INITIATIVE

Note by the Executive Secretary

Please note that the following paragraphs supersede the paragraphs with the same numbering in the document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/6/.

4. Although the third meeting of SBSTTA did not have on its agenda a specific item on capacity-building for taxonomy, the urgency of needed action on taxonomy was reiterated in the framework of the thematic work on ecosystems (specifically in inland water ecosystems, which was the main thematic focus of the meeting). Consequently, recommendation III/1.D was adopted by SBSTTA advising the COP to consider, at its fourth meeting, directing the Executive Secretary to take decisive action to advance a Global Taxonomy Initiative as set out in decision III/10, which should be implemented as soon as possible.

15. Another approach that SBSTTA might consider as a way of providing the COP with advice for the further advancement of a Global Taxonomy Initiative is the

* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/1/Rev.1

compilation of a number of framework projects that could be started to activate this Initiative. Such a project-based approach would also need to be based on criteria and guiding principles that would make it possible to set priorities, with the aim of building capacity across the range of levels required to rapidly enhance our taxonomic capacity to support decision-making. The generic considerations suggested in paragraph 13 above can also be applied for prioritizing among the broad range of possible framework projects. A sample list of such projects, which the meeting may wish to consider as a reference, can be found in the report of the meeting entitled "The Global Taxonomy Initiative: shortening the distance between discovery and delivery" (Environment Australia/DIVERSITAS/STAP) which is available to the fourth meeting of SBSTTA as an information document (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4. Inf.1).

16. Should SBSTTA wish to recommend to the COP a sample of project concepts that could activate a Global Taxonomy Initiative, for the COP to decide on the financing modalities, these projects would understandably primarily consist of those of a global or regional/subregional scope. Many countries are still in the process of formulating their national biodiversity strategies and action plans, which will constitute the framework against which projects for building capacity for taxonomy at national level will be identified and proposed by individual Parties on the basis of national taxonomic needs assessment. Therefore the advice of SBSTTA on projects at national level might be unfeasible, whereas there is a certain consensus in the scientific community on a number of global, regional and subregional initiatives that could be initiated to enhance our taxonomic knowledge base to support decision-making, to foster partnerships between institutions dealing with biodiversity in different countries, or to provide a valuable framework for the development of subregional, regional or global training programmes in taxonomy, which could focus particularly on the less charismatic components of biodiversity such as invertebrates, lower plants and microorganisms. These less well-known components comprise the vast majority of biological species, some of which have great economic significance and ecological impact (ref. Proposals suggested in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4. Inf.1 mentioned in the preceding paragraph).