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BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF INLAND WATER ECOSYSTEMS

Progress report on the implementation of the programme of work

Note by the Executive Secretary

Executive summary

The present note reports on the progress of the implementation of the programme of work on biological diversity of inland water ecosystems, which was adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity as annex I to its decision IV/4.

In response to paragraph 4 of decision V/2, an addendum to the present note identifies elements from the report of the World Commission on Dams that could be considered by SBSTTA for integration in the programme of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems.

Suggested recommendations

The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) may wish to take note of the progress report on the implementation of the programme of work on biological diversity of inland water ecosystems.

A suggested recommendation concerning the introduction of elements from the report of the World Commission on Dams into the programme of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems will be included in an addendum to the present note describing those elements.

* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/1.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its decision V/2, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to compile systematically information on the implementation of the programme of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems, including the report of the World Commission on Dams, for dissemination through the clearing-house mechanism.
2. It further requested SBSTTA, in the same decision, to consider the recommendations contained in the report of the World Commission on Dams, published in November 2000, and, as appropriate, to recommend to the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting the introduction of suitable elements into the programme of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems. A note by the Executive Secretary on the Commission's report and the elements for possible inclusion in the programme of work on inland water biological diversity will be circulated as an addendum to the present document for the consideration of SBSTTA under this item of the provisional agenda.
3. In addition, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to report on various ways and means to implement the programme of work and obstacles in implementing some aspects of the work plan of SBSTTA before the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties as part of the review of the programme of work in the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems by the Subsidiary Body at its eight meeting. COP also requested the SBSTTA to include in its review, before the seventh meeting of the COP, advice on the further elaboration and refinement of the programme of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems, having due regard to the issues relating, *inter alia*, to water supply, land use and tenure, pollution, alien invasive species, the effects of El Nino, and environmental impact assessment. A report on these issues will be prepared for consideration by SBSTTA at its eight meeting.
4. Section II of the present note covers the progress in the implementation of the programme of work on biological diversity of inland water ecosystems since the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in May 2000. The structure of this section follows that of the programme of work in annex I of decision IV/4. Section III addresses possible elements for further elaboration of the programme of work.

II. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF INLAND WATER ECOSYSTEMS

A. *Assessment of the status and trends of the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems and identification of options for conservation and sustainable use*

1. *General*

(a) *Collaboration with other bodies*

5. The Executive Secretary implements the programme of work on biological diversity of inland waters ecosystems essentially through collaborative activities and joint work plans between the Secretariat and organizations, institutions, and conventions working on topics related to inland water biological diversity.
6. The River Basin Initiative was launched during the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, held in Nairobi in May 2000, as part of the joint work plan between the Secretariat and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat. This Initiative aims at establishing a network to link and support activities and projects in which the principles and

practice of integrated management of biodiversity, wetlands, and river basins/ catchments/ watersheds will be demonstrated. The secretariat of the Initiative is based at the Global Environment Centre in Malaysia.

7. The secretariat of the Ramsar Convention was invited by Executive Secretary to participate in the liaison group meeting on invasive alien species held in South Africa in September 2000. During the meeting, the representatives of the two secretariats discussed the grounds for further cooperation. They noted that the second joint work plan between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on Wetlands will end in 2001, and the full report, including suggestions on future joint activities, could be prepared for the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

8. In September 2000, the Secretariat signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Coordination Unit of Wetlands International. Wetlands International will cooperate with the Secretariat in its work, in particular through the provision of technical support and information. The agreed objectives and areas of mutual work include, *inter alia*, activities to support the implementation of the joint work plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention.

9. As a member of the Subcommittee on Water Resources of the Administrative Committee on Coordination of the United Nations, the Executive Secretary has prepared a contribution to the Rio+10 process on chapter 18 of Agenda 21.

(b) *Roster of experts*

10. To date, the roster of experts under the Convention on Biological Diversity includes 237 experts on inland water biological diversity nominated by a total of 44 countries and organizations.

2. *Work plan of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice*

11. The work plan of SBSTTA addresses, *inter alia*, the status and trends of inland water biological diversity. The Secretariat is preparing the first edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO), which will contain information on the status and trends of global inland water biological diversity. The GBO is intended to be a periodic report on the status of biological diversity and the steps being taken by the global community to ensure that biodiversity is conserved and used sustainably and that benefits arising from the use of genetic resources are shared equitably.

12. A global view of the status and trends of freshwater ecosystems is provided in *World Resources 2000-2001*, published by the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Bank and the World Resources Institute. The report is based on the review of existing environmental assessment and compilation of available data into a global comprehensive package.

13. The Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) of the Ramsar Convention is developing globally applicable protocols for wetland inventory and data management (considering the use of remote sensing and low-cost and user-friendly geographic information systems) for purposes such as spatial scale selection, wetland classification, and assessment of status and trends of wetlands. Those protocols are useful tools for the assessment of biological diversity of inland water at the ecosystem level.

14. The Secretariat is cooperating with the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA), a project that encompasses the ecological status, and causes of environmental problems of international waters (marine, coastal and freshwater). The Assessment addresses the major concerns regarding shared water bodies under the five broad headings of: freshwater shortage; pollution; habitat and community modification; unsustainable exploitation of fisheries and other living resources and global change.

B. Provision of scientific advice and further guidance to assist in the national elaboration of annex I of the Convention on Biological Diversity

15. At its fourth meeting, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to work closely with the Ramsar Bureau and further directed SBSTTA to work jointly with the Scientific and Technical and Technological Review Panel of the Ramsar Convention to achieve desirable convergence between approaches on criteria and classification of inland water ecosystems between the two conventions.

16. Pursuant to this request, the Secretariat has started to work with the Ramsar Convention to consider its criteria and classification of wetlands in the light of annex I to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

C. Review of methodologies for assessment of biological diversity (as pertaining to inland water ecosystems)

17. The Executive Secretary has started to compile information from national reports related to inland water programme of work including methodologies for assessment of biological diversity.

D. The urgency of needed action on taxonomy

18. CBD prepared a programme of work for the Global Taxonomy Initiative (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/11) defining timetables, goals, products and pilot projects. Expected output for inland waters biological diversity will be a series of regional guidelines on freshwater fishes and invertebrates as an input to ecosystem monitoring for river and lake health.

III. ELEMENTS FOR THE FUTURE ELABORATION AND REFINEMENT OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK

19. The Executive Secretary is working on identification of elements that could be considered in the further elaboration and refinement of the programme of work on biological diversity of inland water ecosystems to be considered by SBSTTA at its eighth meeting. For this purpose, the Executive Secretary:

(a) Has been consulting with the secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on elements for further joint activities, and

(b) Has considered the report of the World Commission on Dams entitled *Dams and Development: a New Framework for Decision-Making*, released on 16 November 2000, for elements that could be introduced into the programme of work on biological diversity of inland water ecosystems. As noted above, these elements are described in an addendum to the present progress report (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/5/Add.1).
