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Item 3.1 of the provisional agenda*

**PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THEMATIC PROGRAMMES OF
WORK**

Note by the Executive Secretary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present note has been prepared by the Executive Secretary to briefly report on progress in the implementation of the work under the thematic programmes of the Convention since the last report submitted to the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in April 2002 up to 1 November 2002. The thematic programmes considered are:

- (a) Biological diversity of inland water ecosystems;
- (b) Marine and coastal biological diversity;
- (c) Agricultural biodiversity;
- (d) Forest biological diversity;
- (e) Biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands;
- (f) Biological diversity of mountain ecosystems.

The present note has been prepared for reporting purposes only, as any substantive issues and recommendations relating to the thematic programmes concerned are presented in the other relevant working documents for the eighth meeting of the Subsidiary Body (see UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/1/Add.1, annex II).

* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/1.

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SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

The Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and technological Advice (SBSTTA) may wish to take note of the progress report on the implementation of the thematic programmes of work.

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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THEMATIC PROGRAMMES OF WORK

A. *Biological diversity of inland water ecosystems*

1. The review, further elaboration and refinement of the programme of work, as enabled by decision V/2 and supported by decision VI/2, is reported on in detail in the note by the Executive Secretary under agenda item 5.1 (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/8) and related addenda and information documents.

B. *Marine and coastal biological diversity*

2. The progress made in the implementation of each programme element of the marine and coastal biodiversity programme of work, as enabled by decisions IV/5, V/3 and VI/3 is reported on in detail in the note by the Executive Secretary under agenda item 5.2 (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/9) and related addenda and information documents.

C. *Agricultural biological diversity*

3. In paragraph 2 of its decision VI/5, the Conference of the Parties adopted the steps for the further implementation of the programme of work on agricultural biological diversity by the Executive Secretary and partner organizations and the reporting schedule contained in annex I to the decision. In line with that decision, the Executive Secretary is expected to prepare the following reports for consideration by SBSTTA prior to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties:

(a) A preliminary assessment of status and trends of agricultural biodiversity, to be prepared in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment; and

(b) An analysis of lessons learned from case-studies, to be completed in collaboration with FAO, the World Trade Organization (WTO), Parties and other relevant organizations.

4. In addition, the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting is to consider recommendations from SBSTTA on capacity-building and policy.

5. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, *inter alia*, to:

(a) Prepare a draft format for the thematic report on agrobiodiversity and report to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting (paragraph 5);

(b) Study further the impacts of trade liberalization on agrobiodiversity in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), FAO, WTO and other relevant organizations (paragraph 17);

(c) Invite FAO in collaboration with other organizations to investigate the potential impacts of the applications of genetic use restriction technologies (GURTs) in forestry, livestock, aquatic and other ecosystems (paragraph 25 (b)); and

(d) Invite relevant organizations to examine the applicability of existing and to explore the need to develop new, legal mechanisms to address the application of GURTs (paragraph 25 (c)).

6. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties, *inter alia*:

(a) Invited Parties, other Governments, and relevant organizations to submit case-studies on their experiences with mainstreaming matters related to agricultural biodiversity in their plans, programmes and strategies, to be made available through the clearing-house mechanism (paragraph 3);

(b) Adopted and decided to periodically review, as appropriate, the Plan of Action for the International Initiative for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Pollinators (paragraph 8) and welcomed the leading role played by FAO (paragraph 9); welcomed efforts to establish the African Pollinators Initiative (paragraph 10); invited Parties, other Governments, and relevant organizations to contribute to the implementation of the International Pollinators Initiative (paragraph 11); and invited Parties, other Governments, the financial mechanism and funding organizations to provide adequate and timely support to the implementation of the Plan of Action (paragraph 12);

(c) Encouraged Parties to participate in the development of the first Report on the State of World's Animal Genetic Resources and invited Parties, other Governments, the financial mechanism and funding organizations to provide adequate support to enable countries to participate fully in its preparation and follow-up actions (paragraphs 15 and 16);

(d) Decided to establish an International Initiative for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Soil Biodiversity (paragraph 13); and

(e) Established an ad hoc technical expert group on the potential impacts of genetic use restriction technologies on smallholder farmers, indigenous and local communities and Farmer's Rights to report to both the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions and SBSTTA prior to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (paragraph 21).

7. In response to these decisions, the following activities were carried out:

(a) The Executive Secretary and the main partner institutions are exploring collaborative arrangements for the full implementation of the programme of work on agricultural biological diversity, including the compilation and analysis of existing data, information and case-studies related to the four programme elements. FAO organized, in collaboration with the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), an expert meeting for the review and development of indicators for genetic diversity, genetic erosion and genetic vulnerability, which was held in Rome from 11 to 14 September 2002;

(b) The Executive Secretary has prepared a draft format for the thematic report on agricultural biodiversity, which will be discussed, following a recommendation made by the Bureau of SBSTTA at its meeting on 21-22 October 2002, among SBSTTA focal points before and during the eighth meeting of SBSTTA, prior its submission to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting;

(c) The Executive Secretary has prepared a outline paper for the further study on impacts of trade liberalization, and invited, among others, UNEP, FAO, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), WTO, and IUCN to cooperate in the further study of the issue;

(d) In August 2002, the Executive Secretary invited the FAO, the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) to consider undertaking studies on potential impacts of GURTs, in collaboration with other organizations as necessary;

(e) In response to the call for submission of case-studies on experiences with mainstreaming matters relating to agricultural biodiversity made by the Conference of the Parties, the Executive Secretary has not received any submissions to date;

(f) With regard to activities related to the International Pollinators Initiative (IPI):

(i) The Executive Secretary has invited institutions, including the International Commission for Plant-Bee Relationships (ICPBR), the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) and the International Bee Research Association (IBRA) to collaborate with the FAO in implementing the initiative on pollinators;

(ii) As a contribution to the implementation of the International Pollinator Initiative, FAO has submitted a project proposal on the conservation and sustainable use of pollinators for consideration of the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), proposing UNEP as the implementing agency and FAO as the executing agency.

(iii) The Executive Secretary is discussing with the ICPBR and FAO the possibility to consider the IPI, its plan of action and further development of its activities at the ninth International Symposium on Pollination. This meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held late in 2004 or early in 2005.

(iv) The following initiatives are examples of activities at the international, regional and national levels, that contribute to the IPI:

a. Dissemination of the proceedings of the first workshop on the African Pollinators Initiative (API), which was held from 18 to 22 February 2002 at ICIPE headquarters in Nairobi. The API is led collaboratively by the Environment Liaison Centre International (ELCI), the Plant Protection Research Institute of the Agricultural Research Council (ARC-PPRI) of South Africa and ICIPE;

b. Development of three regional nodes in Europe, South America and North America, supported by the International Network for Expertise in Sustainable Pollination (INESP);

c. Establishment of a "Declining Pollination Task Force" within the IUCN Species Survival Commission;

d. Organization of the VIIIth International Symposium on Hazards of Pesticides to Bees by the Istituto nazionale di Apicoltura (INA) and the University of Bologna, together with the ICPBR, in Bologna, Italy, from 4 to 6 September 2002);

e. Organization of the workshop "Nectar and nectary: from biology to biotechnology" held by ICPBR in Siena, Italy, from 28 to 31 May, 2002 and

f. Expression of interest by a group of European scientists for the development of a network of excellence called "Sustainable Use of Pollinators as a European Resources (SUPER)";

(g) The FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, at its ninth session, held from 14 to 18 October 2002, reviewed a progress report on the development of the first

Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources in the context of the Global Strategy for the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources, ^{1/} and gave guidance on its further development. The Commission considered also a report on cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity, ^{2/} which provided the Commission with information on the various requests from the Conference of the Parties and reviewed ongoing FAO cooperation with the Convention. The Commission:

- (i) Welcomed the growing cooperation on a wide range of sectoral and cross-sectoral activities, which included the Commission's work towards the first Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, noting that the Conference of the Parties had invited the financial mechanism of the Convention to support countries in this important process. The process of preparing the report will provide an opportunity to promote the involvement of relevant international and non-governmental organizations, and to assist Governments in developing regional networking and training;
 - (ii) Noted that this cooperation could assist members of both organizations in avoiding duplication of effort and requested FAO to transmit to the Executive Secretary of the Convention the indicators that had been developed to assist reporting on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, with a request that these—supplemented by higher-order, synthetic indicators—be used to promote harmonized reporting;
 - (iii) Agreed that the technical study on potential impacts of GURTs on agricultural production systems, which had been prepared following the request from the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, should be forwarded to the Conference of the Parties at its next meeting, for information (with paragraph 50 removed, and additional written comments by one member appended);
 - (iv) The Convention Secretariat participated in the ninth regular session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and presented a report on its activities related to the subject, covering the period since the eighth regular session of the Commission, in April 1999; ^{3/}
- (h) Regarding the activities related to the establishment of the International Soil Biodiversity Initiative:
- (i) The Secretariat participated in an international technical workshop on biological management of soil ecosystems for sustainable agriculture, held in Londrina, Brazil, from 24 to 27 June 2002, organized by FAO jointly with the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA). The workshop identified, *inter alia*, initial collaborative actions towards the development of a strategy and plan of action for the Initiative;
 - (ii) The FAO prepared a background document entitled “Soil biodiversity: the root of sustainable agriculture” for the ninth regular session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The document presents work in progress as well as opportunities for the sustainable management of soil

^{1/} Document CGRFA-09/02/4, available through the Internet at <http://www.fao.org/ag/cgrfa/docs9.htm>.

^{2/} Document CGRFA-9/02/16, *Cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity*, available through the Internet at <http://www.fao.org/ag/cgrfa/docs9.htm>

^{3/} In document CGRFA-09/02/15.1, available through the Internet at <http://www.fao.org/ag/cgrfa/docs9.htm>.

biodiversity that illustrate the contribution to both the agricultural biodiversity programme under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the FAO mandate of improving agricultural production and food security; ^{4/}

- (iii) Additionally, FAO submitted to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, through its FAO Soil Biodiversity Portal, case-studies on the matter, which are available through the clearing-house mechanism under the Convention; ^{5/}

(i) The Executive Secretary is making the necessary arrangements to convene the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on the Potential Impact of Genetic Use Restriction Technologies on Smallholder Farmers, Local and Indigenous Communities and Farmers' Rights, to be held in Montreal from 21 to 23 January 2003.

The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

8. In its decision VI/6, the Conference of the Parties:

(a) Appealed to Parties and other Governments to give priority consideration to the signature and ratification of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (paragraph 3);

(b) Requested the Executive Secretary to:

- (i) Develop cooperation with the Secretariat of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture acting as the Interim Committee for the Treaty (paragraph 5); and
- (ii) Convey the decision to the Commission acting as Interim Committee for the Treaty (paragraph 6).

9. As of 4 November 2002, 77 States and the European Community had signed and nine States had ratified the Treaty.

10. In response to the requests from the Conference of the Parties, the Executive Secretary:

(a) Is discussing with the Secretariat of the Commission acting as the Interim Committee for the Treaty how to develop further cooperation taking into account, *inter alia*, the results of the first meeting of the Interim Committee, held in Rome from 9 to 11 October 2002, and

(b) Conveyed decision VI/6 to the Commission at its ninth regular session.

11. The Commission thanked the Conference of the Parties for its support for the process of the negotiation of the International Treaty, noting that the Conference of the Parties had recognised the important role that the Treaty would play in the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity, in facilitating access to these resources, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their utilization.

^{4/} See <http://www.fao.org/ag/AGL/agll/soilbiod/cases.htm>.

^{5/} See <http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/areas/agro/case-studies.asp>.

D. Forest biological diversity

12. In decision VI/22, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Initiate, in collaboration with the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) secretariat and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), actions on the following areas identified as important first steps towards the implementation of the expanded work programme: ecosystem approach, collaboration with other bodies, cross-sectoral integration, protected areas, forest law enforcement and related trade, sustainable use/benefit sharing and servicing capacity building (paragraph 19);

(b) Develop, in consultation with other partners, a format to report on implementation of the expanded programme of work (paragraph 22);

(c) Develop a format for voluntary thematic national reports (paragraph 27);

(d) Implement, in collaboration with UNFF, collaborative actions for selected items in the expanded programme of work (paragraph 37).

13. In paragraph 44 of the same decision, the Conference of the Parties invited FAO, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the Global Fire Monitoring Centre, as well as other relevant organizations, to include forest biodiversity in their assessments of fire impacts; to explore possibilities for a joint work programme with the Convention on Biological Diversity, including, *inter alia*, fire impact assessments, development of guidelines on fire management, and community-based approaches to fire prevention and management; and to report on progress to SBSTTA prior to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

14. In response to these decisions, the following activities were carried out:

(a) *Initial actions:*

(i) A two-day meeting was held with two representatives of the UNFF secretariat in Montreal on 11 and 12 July 2002 to discuss all decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its sixth meeting that require collaboration with UNFF. The meeting also reviewed the activities that the Executive Secretary was requested to implement with the CPF members and a common timeframe for actions on relevant CBD decisions was agreed upon. The report of the meeting was transmitted on 18 July to the Chair of the CPF for his consideration and, on 9 August, to all CPF members. The Executive Secretary, the Chair of the CPF, and the acting Head of the UNFF secretariat agreed that the CPF meetings would address forest-related decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its sixth meeting;

(ii) *Ecosystem approach (paragraph 19 (a)).* In addition to the collaboration with the UNFF secretariat a consultant was hired to assist with the preparation of the pre-session documents for the ninth meeting of SBSTTA on the ecosystem approach and sustainable forest management;

(iii) *Collaboration with other bodies/enabling environment (paragraph 19 (b)).* A table showing common elements between the CBD expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity and the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF)/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF), including proposals for action, is

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being prepared by the secretariats of UNFF and the Convention on Biological Diversity. A questionnaire was also sent to selected governments to find out how countries implement their national forest programmes and the forest-related components of their national biodiversity strategies and action plans;

- (iv) At its meeting held in New York from 3 to 4 October 2002, the members of the CPF agreed to appoint the Convention Secretariat as the focal point for forest biological diversity within the CPF. Concurrently, the CPF members agreed to provide information to the Secretariat on their current activities and possible future contributions related to decision VI/22 (paragraph 39);

(b) *Collaboration with CPF members:*

- (i) A draft report on the implementation of the expanded programme of work format has been prepared for discussion with CPF members. The Secretariat accepted to be a member of the CPF Task Force on Streamlining Forest-related Reporting. The Secretariat is discussing its forest-related reporting formats with members of the Task Force;
- (ii) The Secretariat of the Convention participated in the Consultative Meeting entitled “Building assets for people and nature: a global initiative to catalyse and reinforce forest landscape restoration”, organized by the United Kingdom Forestry Commission, IUCN and WWF in Edinburgh on 20 September 2002. The meeting provided examples and guidelines for forest-restoration activities, taking into account the ecosystem approach. The Secretariat informed the participants that a web page on “restoration and rehabilitation of degraded ecosystems” is currently being created. The IUCN project on “Forest landscape restoration: building assets for people and nature”, which provides a description of the restoration approach in three African countries, and the WWF forests landscape restoration work in five ecoregions were presented, among others;
- (iii) The Secretariat has started work on the report pertaining to the “Management of forest biodiversity, sustainable use to derive products and services and benefit-sharing”. A notification together with a questionnaire were sent to Parties to request their contributions and inputs;

(c) *Thematic national report (paragraph 27).* A draft format for the voluntary thematic national report on the implementation of the programme of work has been prepared. It is being reviewed internally;

(d) *Dissemination of information.* The web page on forest biodiversity was updated in July to reflect the decisions of the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

15. In response to paragraph 44 of decision VI/22, the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), and the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) are currently undertaking research with funding assistance from the European Commission regarding the underlying causes and impacts of fires in Indonesia, which includes assessments of forest biological diversity. ITTO started a global-level initiative in 1997 on an integrated forest fire management programme, ranging from prevention to forest rehabilitation. ITTO is continually monitoring developments related to the prevention and management of forest fires through its regular Council Sessions and through financing research activities geared to this end. During its thirty-second session, held in May 2002, a side-event on “ITTO's role in tropical forest fire management” was organized with the aim of: (i) increasing awareness among Council

delegates of the ITTO work on forest fire management and on the fire management capability of members, and (ii) suggesting ways of increasing the effectiveness of the work of ITTO and others in forest fire management. One main conclusion from this event was that ITTO should evaluate the fire management situation at the request of member countries to identify practical actions that will lead to improving the issue. To this end, evaluations in a small number of countries have indicated areas where ITTO assistance would be useful. The ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation is carrying out a research programme on biodiversity impacts of climatic change, fire and forest restoration techniques in South-East Asia. FAO stresses its activities on forest fires on the need for participatory approaches to prevention, detection and control of wildfires, and the sound management of the use of fire as a tool in planned land clearing activities and in the management of grazing lands.

E. Biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands

16. Matters requested by the Conference of the Parties in paragraphs 5 and 6 of its decision V/23 and paragraph 2 of its decision VI/4, are reported on in the note by the Executive Secretary under item 6.1 of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/10). In addition, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to establish an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Dry and Sub-Humid Lands (decision V/23, paragraph 7). The group met twice. The final report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group is being circulated as an information document (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/INF/2).

17. In decision V/23, the Conference of the Parties additionally requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Collaborate with the Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification on the development of a joint work programme and collaboration with countries with sub-humid lands, and with other bodies relevant to dry and sub-humid lands (paragraph 8);

(b) Establish a roster of experts in close collaboration with the Executive Secretary of the Convention to Combat Desertification and other relevant bodies to provide synergy and avoid duplication (paragraph 9);

(c) Make available relevant information on the biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands (paragraph 10).

18. In response to these decisions, the following activities were carried out:

(a) The proposed joint programme of work between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification was revised by the secretariats of the two conventions in a meeting held at the seat of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in September 2002, in the light of comments provided by a liaison group meeting convened in 2001.

(b) A roster of experts on dry and sub-humid lands has been established and is already in use. The roster will be updated pursuant to decision VI/27 B, paragraphs 9 and 10.

(c) Dissemination of relevant information: The Secretariat updated the web page on the dry and sub-humid land programme for inclusion of decisions of the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and information relating to the work of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Dry And Sub-Humid Lands.

F. *Biological diversity of mountain ecosystems*

19. In decision VI/30, the Conference of the Parties welcomed the proposals put forward by the Executive Secretary in his note on preparations for the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties and requested that preparation for the priority themes for the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties continue as outlined in that document.

20. With regard to mountain biodiversity, the Executive Secretary planned to:

(a) Establish, depending on availability of funds, an ad hoc technical expert group on mountain biological diversity.

(b) Compile information on the status and trends of mountain biodiversity;

(c) Review measures taken for the conservation and sustainable use of mountain biological diversity; including management practices for its conservation and for the sustainable use of its components, including best practices, tools and approaches;

(d) Draft a programme of work on mountain biodiversity, including proposals on priorities, targets, timeframes, potential actors and partners, and indicators in implementation.

21. The following activities were carried out:

(a) The Executive Secretary is still looking for funds for the establishment of the ad hoc technical expert group;

(b) Three papers were commissioned and sent out for comments. They were used for the preparation of notes by the Executive Secretary on the status and trends of, and threats to, mountain biodiversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/5), measures taken for the conservation and sustainable use of mountain biodiversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/6), and proposed elements for a programme of work (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/7).
