

**CONVENTION ON  
BIOLOGICAL  
DIVERSITY**Distr.  
GENERALUNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/8  
28 November 2002

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL  
AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE**

Eighth meeting

Montreal, 10-14 March 2003

Item 5.1 of the provisional agenda\*

**INLAND WATER ECOSYSTEMS: REVIEW, FURTHER ELABORATION AND  
REFINEMENT OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK***Note by the Executive Secretary***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The programme of work on biological diversity of inland water ecosystems was adopted in 1998 as annex I to decision IV/4 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. It consists of four programme elements: (i) assessment of the status and trends of the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems and identification of options for conservation and sustainable use; (ii) provision of scientific advice and further guidance to assist in the national elaboration of Annex I of the Convention; (iii) review of methodologies for assessment of biological diversity; and (iv) urgency of needed action on taxonomy. In paragraph 5 of decision V/2, adopted in 2000, the Conference of the Parties requested the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) to review the implementation of this programme of work and to include in its review advice on the further elaboration and refinement of the programme of work. In paragraph 1 of the same decision, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to report on various ways and means to implement the programme of work, including obstacles in implementation. In paragraph 3 of decision VI/2, adopted in 2002, the Conference of the Parties emphasized the importance of the review and elaboration of the programme of work.

The present note contains a review of the implementation of the programme of work, including major obstacles in implementing it, and some advice on its further elaboration and refinement. Additional details on implementation of some elements of the programme of work are presented in addenda to the present note (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/8/Add. 1-4) and the relevant information documents.

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\* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/1.

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With regard to the activities described in the programme element on assessment of the status and trends and options for conservation and sustainable use, the Executive Secretary strengthened collaboration with all the organizations, institutions and conventions mentioned in paragraphs 1-7 of the programme of work. This was done essentially through the development of memoranda of cooperation including joint activities, exchange of information, linking databases and webpages, and contributions to report drafting and organization of meetings. Cooperation has been particularly beneficial in advancing the implementation of the programme of work and during the preparation of documents for relevant meetings under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The work plan of SBSTTA consists of two subprogramme elements: (i) development of an improved picture of inland water biodiversity, its uses and its threats, and regional guidelines for rapid assessment of inland water biodiversity; and (ii) identification of options for the conservation and sustainable use of inland water biodiversity, through case-studies and development of techniques and methods for the valuation of goods and services of inland water ecosystems.

To assist SBSTTA, the Executive Secretary has prepared a note (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/8/Add.1) describing the status and trends of inland water biodiversity and highlighting areas where lack of information limits the quality of assessments. In general, information on water availability and quality, and the extent and distribution of inland water ecosystems are not properly documented at the global or regional scale and, in some cases, even at the national level. Major threats to inland water ecosystems include modifications of river systems, water withdrawals (e.g., for agriculture), introduction of invasive alien species, overfishing, pollution and impact of climate change. A number of species are threatened of extinction and some inland water ecosystems are continuously being degraded. With regard to the development and dissemination of regional guidelines for rapid assessment of inland water biological diversity for different types of inland water ecosystems, the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the Ramsar Bureau and Conservation International, has convened a meeting of experts in December 2002. The experts' report will be submitted to SBSTTA at its eighth meeting.

Few case-studies have been compiled and lessons learned drawn regarding practices for the conservation and sustainable use of inland water biodiversity. Additional cases are being collected in the context of the work on ecosystem approach, sustainable use of biodiversity and other cross-cutting issues such as impact assessment and invasive alien species.

As part of the programme of work, the Conference of the Parties recommended 28 activities to Parties. Progress in these themes has been analysed based on the first and second national reports submitted under Article 26 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, national reports submitted to the Ramsar Convention for the seventh meeting of its Contracting Parties, and other information. Obstacles in implementation have also been highlighted. None of the documents consulted contained reports on each of the activities of the programme of work. Therefore, the conclusions drawn are only indicative. Watershed management, appropriate technologies, monitoring and assessment, sustainable use, environmental impact assessment, invasive alien species, education and public awareness, involvement of local and indigenous communities, cooperation and economic and legal instruments were found by many Parties to be important elements for the implementation of the programme of work. However, much remains to be done to implement the national plans developed. A few Parties undertook projects funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and others sought financial resources from other sources.

The Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the Ramsar Bureau, has prepared a proposal (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/8/Add.4) on the provision of scientific advice and further guidance to assist in the national elaboration of Annex I of the Convention (as pertaining to inland water ecosystems) (paragraphs 12 and 13 of the programme of work). In addition, the Executive Secretary will assist the

Parties in their review of methodologies for assessment of biological diversity (as pertaining to inland water ecosystems) through the document to be prepared by an expert meeting on the rapid assessment of inland water biodiversity convened in Montreal from 2 to 4 December 2002 (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/8/Add.5).

With regard to the urgency of needed action on taxonomy referred paragraph 21 of the programme of work, the present note highlights ongoing work and recognizes that planned activity 11, on inland waters, in the programme of work for the Global Taxonomy Initiative should be initiated systematically.

### **SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS**

The suggested recommendations regarding the review of the implementation of the programme of work on the biodiversity of inland water ecosystems are included in the consolidated suggested recommendations under item 5.1 as contained in the note by the Executive Secretary on elements for the further elaboration and refinement of the programme of work (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/8/Add.2).

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its fourth meeting, held in May 1998, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted the programme of work on biological diversity of inland water ecosystems in its decision IV/4 on status and trends of the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems.

2. In paragraph 5 of decision V/2, the Conference of the Parties requested the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) to review the implementation of the programme of work and to include, in its review, advice on the further elaboration and refinement of the programme of work, having due regard to the issues relating, *inter alia*, to water supply, land use and tenure, pollution, invasive alien species, the effects of El Niño, and environmental impact assessment. In paragraph 1 of the same decision, 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 on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems by SBSTTA. In paragraph 3 of decision VI/2 the Conference of the Parties emphasized the importance of the review and elaboration of the programme of work on biological diversity of inland water ecosystems.

3. The Executive Secretary has prepared this note containing a review of the implementation of the programme of work, a list of the major obstacles in implementing the programme of work, and some advice on its further elaboration and refinement. For easy reference, the review follows the structure of the programme of work annexed to decision IV/4. The Executive Secretary has also provided additional details on implementation of the programme of work in addenda to the present note (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/8/Add.1-4) and relevant information documents.

## II. REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK

### 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*

4. The Executive Secretary further developed collaboration with organizations, institutions and other conventions implementing aspects of the programme of work. The following is an indicative list of most recent activities:

(a) Joint activities in sustainable fisheries, sustainable aquaculture, traditional knowledge, and fish genetic conservation were explored with the Fisheries Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

(b) A memorandum of understanding between the Convention Secretariat and the International Coordination Unit of Wetlands International was signed to facilitate joint activities on the conservation of wetlands and their biodiversity;

(c) A draft memorandum of cooperation was sent to the Global International Water Assessment (GIWA). Planned collaborative activities focus on ecosystems assessments and include biological diversity considerations and the sharing of information on ecosystem evaluation in the protocols of the GIWA;

(d) The Secretariat cooperated with the Commission on Sustainable Development in the preparation of documentation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The Secretariat also contributed to the Rio+10 process and is involved in the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) and the World Water Development Report (WWDR). The WWAP is expected to assist Parties by providing a basis for policies for the conservation and sustainable use of inland water ecosystems;

(e) SBSTTA recommendation VI/3 considered the recommendations regarding inland waters contained in the report of the World Commission on Dams. In paragraph 2 of decision VI/2, The Conference of the Parties noted the report in the context of the programme of work on inland waters biodiversity;

(f) At the request of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP) is initiating an assessment of the biological and socio-economic impacts of invasive alien species on inland water ecosystems. The assessment is due to be completed in July 2003 and is being sponsored by the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United States Agency for International Development;

(g) The joint work programme with the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, endorsed by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting, includes actions relating to the programme of work on the biodiversity of inland water ecosystems;

(h) Examples of relevant activities being carried out by our partners include:

- (i) A FAO report on inland fisheries landings in Asia;
- (ii) Development by FAO of an aquatic animal diversity information system in collaboration with the Government of Italy and World Fisheries Trust;
- (iii) A UNEP report on the Conference on African Water Resources Management Policy, held in Nairobi in 1999;
- (iv) A UNEP GEF-funded sectoral report and international workshop on biodiversity and fisheries;
- (v) Further development of the biological database FishBase by WorldFish Center (previously known as the International Center for Living Aquatic Resources Management or ICLARM) in collaboration with FAO and other partners;
- (vi) Development and implementation of the "Fishes for the Future" proposal with IUCN, Fauna and Flora International (FFI) and the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC);
- (vii) The DIVERSITAS Special Target Areas of Research (STAR) programmes, including inventorying and monitoring, sustainable use of inland water ecosystems, biodiversity of aquatic living resources as indicators of environmental health, and cultural aspects of inland water biodiversity;
- (viii) The World Bank's inland water biodiversity guidelines published by the Inter-American Development Bank; and
- (ix) A new freshwater initiative for enhancing the capacities of IUCN members and partners to identify threats to freshwater resources and ecosystems and to promote their conservation and sustainable use.

5. Since the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, two joint work plans have been implemented between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention, and a third plan was endorsed by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting in paragraph 15 of its decision VI/20. The River Basin Initiative (RBI) was developed jointly by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention Bureau to promote the integrated management of biodiversity in wetlands and river basins. The Initiative is in its initial operating phase (2001-2003).

6. The Convention's roster of experts on the conservation and sustainable use of the biological diversity of inland waters now includes 237 experts on inland water biological diversity nominated by 44 countries and organizations. The roster is linked electronically with the Ramsar Convention Wetland Expert Database. Ramsar has established national focal points to assist its Scientific and Technical Review Panel, and Parties to the Convention on Wetlands have also nominated one governmental and one non-governmental national focal point for communication, education and public awareness. The roster will be revised pursuant to paragraphs 9 and 10 of decision VI/27 B of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

7. The clearing-house mechanism houses a webpage on biological diversity of inland water ecosystems, containing relevant case-studies and information provided by Parties and organizations, including links to useful website and fact sheets.

8. The Executive Secretary received nine replies to the requests sent out in 1999 and 2002 for all national focal points to identify inland waters suffering from ecological disasters and begin cooperation in developing rapid-assessment methodologies. Six of the respondent countries (Bahrain, Denmark, Estonia, Oman, Morocco and Spain) indicated that they had inland water ecosystems suffering from ecological disasters or other problems, such as eutrophication. The Secretariat also carried out a search of organizations working on the biological diversity of small island developing States and States suffering from ecological disasters and reported on in document.

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

9. The World Resources Institute (WRI) prepared an assessment of the status and trends of inland water biodiversity for both the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention. The report is being considered for publication in the Technical Publication Series of the Convention on Biological Diversity. In addition, the Executive Secretary prepared a short version of the WRI report highlighting essentially the gaps in information that limits the quality of the assessment of the status of inland water biodiversity (see UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/8/Add.1).

10. According to the latest WRI ecosystem assessment, the extent and distribution of inland water ecosystems are not properly documented at the global or regional scale and, in some cases, there is no comprehensive documentation even at the national levels. Information on species and genetic resources is generally fragmentary and, in a number of countries and regions, lacking for some categories of inland water biodiversity, particularly with respect to species and genes/genomes of socioeconomic, scientific and cultural value. WRI notes that inland water ecosystems and their dependent species are in more critical condition than forest, grassland, and coastal ecosystems. Major threats to inland water ecosystems include, *inter alia*, modifications of river systems, water withdrawals for flood control or agriculture, introduction of invasive alien species, pollution, overfishing and impact of climate change. These pressures occur all over the world. Their reported impacts vary from one watershed to another and are often underestimated. Although no major global extinction crisis has been reported and that assessments have not been carried out comprehensively, a number of groups of plants and animals are reported threatened, even critically endangered as is the case of snails inhabiting springs or "freshwater-dependent"

amphibians, and turtles. Waterbirds being probably the most comprehensively studied group of animals on Earth, their population trends are known in North and South America and in Europe and are reportedly decreasing, stable or increasing.

11. The note by the Executive Secretary referred to in paragraph 9 above contains a number of proposals for action in this respect.

12. With regard to the development and dissemination of regional guidelines for rapid assessment of inland water biological diversity for different types of inland water ecosystems, the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the Ramsar Bureau and Conservation International, has produced a draft document outlining existing assessment methods and proposing guidelines for application of the methods. The document will be considered by a meeting of experts in December 2002 to review and finalize the proposed guidelines for submission to SBSTTA.

13. A few case-studies on watershed, catchment and river basin management, experiences and best practices have been compiled and are expected to be circulated as an information document for the eighth meeting of SBSTTA. In addition, a note by the Executive Secretary (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/8/Add.3) on ways and means for developing methods for valuing goods and services generated by inland water ecosystems, incentives and policy reform and the understanding of ecosystem function has been prepared for submission to SBSTTA.

### 3. *Progress by Parties in recommended actions and obstacles to implementation*

14. The Conference of the Parties recommended to Parties 13 themes encompassing 28 activities to implement the programme of work with regard to assessment of status and trends of biological diversity of inland water ecosystems and identification of options for conservation and sustainable use. Progress in these themes has been analysed based on the first and second national reports under Article 26 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, national reports under the Ramsar Convention, and other information. Obstacles in implementation have also been highlighted.

15. Although most Parties to the Convention have submitted their first national reports, fewer than half have submitted their second. On the other hand, 107 Ramsar Parties submitted their national reports to the Ramsar Bureau. <sup>1/</sup> These have been analysed by the Ramsar Bureau using geographic regions that differ slightly from the United Nations regional groupings used under the Convention on Biological Diversity. Both conventions would benefit, and the analysis of the national reports would be strengthened, if the reporting formats and framework of analysis of the report were harmonized. The questions included in the format for reporting to Convention on Biological Diversity did not cover all the aspects of the programme of work. More complete information would be obtained by requesting Parties to submit a thematic report on inland water ecosystems. The second national reports indicate that none of the elements of the programme of work can be considered completed. Implementation of the programme of work was considered as a high or medium priority in most countries that submitted their second national reports, particularly in Africa, Central and Eastern Europe and in the members of the Western European and Others Group.

#### *Watershed management*

16. *Progress.* Many Parties now recognize watershed, catchment or river basin as an environmental planning and management unit, and are attempting to create the necessary cross-sectoral mechanisms.

<sup>1/</sup> Accessible at [http://www.ramsar.org/cop7\\_doc\\_10\\_e.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/cop7_doc_10_e.htm). More recent reports can be accessed at [http://www.ramsar.org/cop8\\_nr\\_natl\\_rpt\\_index.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/cop8_nr_natl_rpt_index.htm).



17. *Obstacles.* Many sectors compete for water use (e.g., agriculture, industry, human settlement, power generation). While it is now recognized that watershed management requires an ecosystem approach, such an approach requires greatly increased inter-sectoral links and alliances.

#### *Appropriate technologies*

18. *Progress.* Parties recognize the importance of appropriate technologies primarily in wastewater treatment and fisheries harvest and processing. These technologies are at an early stage of implementation. The national reports under the Convention on Biological Diversity did not specifically consider the appropriate technologies listed in the programme of work, nor do the Ramsar reports. However, Ramsar national reports provided some information on which actions had been taken to use appropriate technologies to address the impacts of toxic chemicals and pollution on wetlands.

19. *Obstacles.* Although alternative technologies exist, their economic impact discourages their uptake. Aggressive national research investments are needed to refine and adapt technologies, to develop new ones, and to eliminate dependence on servicing from outside the country.

#### *Technology transfer*

20. *Progress.* Transfer of technology appropriate for inland water ecosystems was rarely mentioned in national reports and national biodiversity strategies and action plans, indicating probably that mechanisms for receiving, adapting and disseminating technology are poorly developed in most countries with high inland water biodiversity.

21. *Obstacles.* Many transfers are still technology-driven rather than responses to local problems. Too few national programmes in technology donor and recipient countries recognize regional expertise, build on that expertise, and facilitate transfer.

#### *Research*

22. The questionnaire on which the second national reports are based does not specifically link “research” to “the ecosystem approach”. However, some case-studies on watershed, catchment and river-basin management highlight the type of research required to promote the application of ecosystem approach.

#### *Monitoring and assessment*

23. *Progress.* Monitoring and assessment are recognized by most Parties as a key issue and are reflected in many specific project initiatives. However, information of the detailed activities described in the programme of work were lacking, except those recommended under paragraph 9(e) (iv).<sup>2/</sup> The status of inland water biological diversity is being assessed in most reporting countries. Some assessments have been completed in a few countries. There was no information in the second national reports on identifying the most cost-effective approaches and methods to describe status, trends and threats. Neither

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<sup>2/</sup> Paragraph 9 (e) (iv) of the programme of work recommends that Parties:

“Undertake assessments in such inland water ecosystems which may be regarded as important in accordance with the terms of Annex I of the Convention. Furthermore Parties should undertake assessments of threatened species and conduct inventories and impact assessments of alien species within their inland water ecosystems.”

was there any information regarding studies on ecological functions and services to better understand effects of exploitation on non-target species.

24. *Obstacles.* Primary problems are the limited geographic nature of many research and monitoring projects. Inadequate technical capacity in biodiversity-rich countries creates dependence on short-lived interventions from developed countries. The available information on genetic diversity at sub-species level is rudimentary. Genetic resources information is globally scattered, not standardized and not accessible to policy makers and legislators. The almost complete lack of valuation of genetic diversity makes conservation hard to justify politically.

#### *Sustainable use*

25. *Progress.* Most Parties recognize sustainable use through promoting new fisheries management plans that reflect an ecosystem approach and participation of local communities. However, most such plans are still in the development and early implementation stages. There was no mention in national reports of “promoting guidance on the sustainable use of inland waters to maintain biological diversity”, as recommended in paragraph 9 (f) (ii) of the programme of work, or the establishment of gene-banks for fish and other species, recommended in paragraph 9 (f) (iv).

26. *Obstacles.* Communities depending on inland waters are not sufficiently involved in sustainable management, and need to be brought into the decision-making system. Stakeholders are also often unprepared to acknowledge multiple uses of inland waters resources. Where resource availability is declining, communities need tools (e.g., alternative livelihoods, negotiating skills) to cope with the changes.

#### *Environmental impact assessment*

27. *Progress.* Environmental impact assessment is recognized as important by Parties to both the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention. At its sixth meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopted guidelines for the integration of biodiversity consideration in environmental impact assessment legislation or processes and in strategic environmental assessment. The second national reports under the Convention on Biological Diversity indicate that strategic environmental assessments of cumulative and global effects of projects are undertaken only in a few countries.

28. *Obstacles.* Environmental impact assessments and strategic impact assessments are hampered by lack of qualified experts, lack of baseline data and lack of enforcement because of political interference.

#### *Alien species, genotypes and genetically modified organisms*

29. *Progress.* Parties have launched a variety of measures that suffer primarily from inconsistency across political boundaries, an emphasis on individual “problem” species and inadequate enforcement. Some countries reported in their second national reports that they have developed systems to track and prevent new introductions and control introduced invasive alien species. Information on potential risks of living modified organisms was generally lacking in the national reports. Some well known examples of invasive alien species in inland waters have been reported in the note by the Executive Secretary on the summary of the status and trends of, and threats to, inland water biodiversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/8/Add.1). At its sixth meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopted, in decision VI/23, guiding principles for the prevention, introduction and mitigation of impacts of invasive alien species.

30. *Obstacles.* Aquaculture is frequently promoted by national ministries of agriculture, which lack information on the consequences of establishment of invasive alien species and may not coordinate with ministries of the environment. The effects of aquaculture on native genotypes are rarely monitored. There is a lack of integrated policies that recognize all sources of invasive alien species (ballast water, aquaculture, intentional introductions, etc.).

#### *Education and public awareness*

31. *Progress.* Parties recognize the link between low awareness and low commitment to biodiversity protection and enforcement. They recognize two levels of biodiversity awareness: in managers and planners, and in the public. Countries where non-governmental organizations are particularly active appear the farthest ahead in promoting public awareness. Ramsar respondents indicated that wetlands issues and the Ramsar “wise use” principles are on the curricula of educational institutions in a number of countries. Reports submitted under the Convention on Biological Diversity indicate that most countries accord high priority to the implementation of Article 13 of the Convention, on public education and awareness. In general, education and public awareness programmes covering wetlands take place at the national or local levels and focus on both formal and informal education on the environment and sustainable development. In its decision VI/19, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted a programme of work for a Global Initiative on Communication, Education and Public Awareness, which is relevant to the implementation of the programme of work on the biodiversity of inland water ecosystems.

32. *Obstacles.* Targets are poorly defined, consultation with end users is usually insufficient, and follow-up is generally fragmentary; awareness of inland water biodiversity is usually an “add-on” to a research or training project. Inappropriate tools are often used (for example, video instead of radio) and distribution is poorly planned or absent. Schools are in general inadequately involved, and too few specialized campaigns are aimed at managers and policy makers.

#### *Collaboration with broader water-resource community*

33. *Progress.* Biodiversity concerns are beginning to be incorporated into national fisheries policies. A clear trend toward better communication between government departments or wetlands management institutions that affect aquatic biodiversity is evident, and multi-stakeholder involvement in fisheries management is increasing. In the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity and as reported in national biodiversity strategies and action plans, countries have developed national strategies and action plans for the conservation and sustainable use of inland water ecosystems that integrate major sectors (such as agriculture, energy, fisheries and water supply). Capacity-building needs for developing these plans are also mentioned.

34. *Obstacles.* The limited implementation of inter-sectoral linkages is critical. Many Parties still rate lack of inter-sectoral cooperation as the prime obstacle to the sustainable use of inland waters biodiversity. The users of such biodiversity at the community level lack decision-making and negotiating tools.

#### *Transboundary cooperation*

35. *Progress.* In addition to signing international treaties and regional agreements (for example, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ramsar Convention, the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement), Parties recognize the ecosystem approach through a variety of joint river basin management projects, regional training programmes, river-basin authorities, transboundary species conventions and regional, multi-party projects.

36. *Obstacles.* Transboundary life-cycle patterns of economically important species (for example, migratory fish) are poorly understood. There are no policy guidelines for trade-related restrictions made on the grounds of biodiversity. All projects are often hampered by lack of common methodology and terminology.

#### *Involvement of local and indigenous communities*

37. *Progress.* Most Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity report that local communities are included in the development and implementation of fisheries management plans, with increasing attention to provisions for access and benefit sharing. A number of Ramsar Parties are encouraging the participation of local stakeholders in the conservation and wise use of wetlands. GEF projects are frequent vehicles for increasing local participation, and some Parties have also enacted legislation that mandates community participation in resource management. Among the countries that submitted a second national report under the Convention on Biological Diversity, mechanisms for involving the private sector and local indigenous communities in sustainable use are being developed in some countries and are in place in a few others.

38. *Obstacles.* The lack of empowerment of local and indigenous communities has been reported as an obstacle to their involvement in planning and decision-making.

#### *Economic and legal instruments*

39. *Progress.* Parties have produced a wide variety of plans, statutes, codes and economic tools whose implementation and enforcement are highly variable. In close to half of the countries that reported under the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity, legislation and practices affecting wetlands or inland waters have been reviewed recently and sometimes amended. The identification of non-market values of biological diversity and their incorporation into national plans and policies are at early stages in the few countries that referred to them. In their second national reports to the Convention on Biological Diversity, countries did not refer to identification of stressed rivers, the allocation and reservation of water for ecosystem maintenance, and the maintenance of environmental flows as an integral component of appropriate legal, administrative and economic mechanisms.

40. *Obstacles.* The lack of inter-sectoral linkages frustrates development of policies and legislation for the appropriate conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in inland water ecosystems.

### 4. *Financing*

41. Efforts to strengthen funding for inland waters ecosystems have been intensified in recent years. In a number of decisions, the Conference of the Parties has not only requested the financial mechanism to support the work programme on inland water ecosystems, but has also considered mobilizing financial resources from other sources. The pattern of funded projects in the field of inland water ecosystems have shown an upward trend in several bilateral and multilateral donors and agencies, such as in the Netherlands Directorate-General for International Cooperation, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Danish International Development Agency and the Danish Cooperation on Environment and Development, the World Bank, among others, as well as the Global Environment Facility. However, the information concerning the overall funding status for inland waters biological diversity remains very much fragmented.

42. GEF-funded inland water projects are listed on the World Wide Web at: [www.gefonline.org/home.cfm](http://www.gefonline.org/home.cfm). Funding provided by the Government of the Netherlands through the Directorate-General for International Cooperation to Wetlands International for delivery of the "Partners

for Wise Use of Wetlands” supports actions that enable countries to fulfil their obligations under the Convention and the Ramsar Convention through the joint work plan of the two conventions. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity is a member of the Global Steering Group for funds allocated to wise use of wetlands and poverty alleviation.

***B. Provision of scientific advice and further guidance to assist in the national elaboration of Annex I of the Convention (as pertaining to inland water ecosystems)***

43. The Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the Ramsar Bureau, has prepared for consideration by SBSTTA at its eighth meeting the a note (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/8/Add.4) to provide scientific advice and further guidance to assist in the national elaboration of Annex I of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The note is based based on Annex I of the Convention, the Ramsar Strategic Framework for the List of Wetlands of International Importance and the IUCN Red Lists for threatened species and populations. The document promotes a convergence between the Convention on Biological Diversity and Ramsar Convention with respect to criteria for, and classification of, wetlands and inland water biodiversity.

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

44. Of the 60 national reports received, 25 per cent indicate that assessment of biological diversity of inland water ecosystems has been undertaken; 2 per cent of the respondent countries have completed the assessment and 4 per cent have not started one. Seven responses were from small island developing states, of which five have an ongoing assessment. Worldwide, rapid assessment and remote-sensing techniques are being used to a major extent only in a few countries, mainly in the developed world.

***D. The urgency of needed action on taxonomy***

45. At its sixth meeting, held in April 2002, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention adopted a programme of work on the Global Taxonomy Initiative. Inland waters biological diversity is addressed under planned activity 11 in the programme. This activity provides for a series of regional guides to freshwater fish and invertebrates to facilitate river and lake ecosystem monitoring. Major taxonomic research centres report ongoing work relevant to the programme, including on freshwater fish identification and the use of invertebrates and plants as indicators of water quality. Data on freshwater species are being supplied through several database systems.

46. The component of the GTI programme of work supporting the programme of work on the biodiversity of inland water ecosystems has been highlighted by the Convention Secretariat and discussed with participants at a number of meetings since the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Information on the implementation of the activity will be included in the third national reports, due in 2005.

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