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## OPEN-ENDED INTER-SESSIONAL MEETING ON THE STRATEGIC PLAN, NATIONAL REPORTS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Montreal, 19-21 November 2001

Item 5 of the provisional agenda\*

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION, IN PARTICULAR, IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIORITY ACTIONS IN NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

#### I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its fifth meeting, the Conference of the Parties requested the Open-ended Inter-Sessional Meeting on the Strategic Plan, National Reports and Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (MSP) to consider and, to the extent possible, develop, draft elements of a decision on means to support implementation of the Convention, in particular, implementation of priority actions in national biodiversity strategies and action plans (decision V/20, para. 38).

2. Article 6 of the Convention (General measures for conservation and sustainable use) states:

“Each Contracting Party shall, in accordance with its particular conditions and capabilities:

(a) Develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity or adapt for this purpose existing strategies, plans or programmes which shall reflect, *inter alia*, the measures set out in this Convention relevant to the Contracting Party concerned; and

(b) Integrate, as far as possible and as appropriate, the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies.”

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\* UNEP/CBD/MSP/1.

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3. The Article thus creates an obligation for national biodiversity planning, and the development and adoption of a national biodiversity strategy is the foundation for implementation of the Convention by Parties. A national strategy will reflect how the country intends to fulfil the objectives of the Convention in light of its specific national circumstances, and the related action plans will constitute the sequence of steps to be taken to meet these goals.

4. Article 6(b) requires that biodiversity considerations be mainstreamed into all aspects of national planning and is closely linked to Article 10(a), which states that each Contracting Party shall, as far as possible and appropriate “integrate consideration of the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources into national decision-making.”

5. The requirement to mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources across all sectors of the national economy and of the policy-making framework is the complex challenge at the heart of the Convention.

6. Some countries have prior or underlying national frameworks for biodiversity based on elements of biodiversity management, such as nature conservation strategies, wildlife policies, national park and protected areas plans and legislation, and have used or adapted these to meet the obligations of Article 6. However, the broad scope of the Convention has meant that many countries, developed and developing, are having to deal with a range of unfamiliar issues and concepts. This is the case both for Parties that are adapting existing frameworks to meet the obligations of the Convention and those that are developing national biodiversity strategies and action plans for the first time. New issues include access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing, bioprospecting, biosafety, and protection and application of traditional knowledge. For many Parties, such issues are among their highest priorities.

7. Parties need assistance in order to develop national biodiversity strategies and action plans. The following sections provide an overview of the assistance provided to date and the status of national biodiversity strategies.

8. The next phase will involve identifying priority actions in national biodiversity strategies and action plans, developing the necessary human and institutional capacity, and ensuring that Parties can obtain the appropriate financial support. Addressing the challenges set by Articles 6(b) and 10(a) with respect to the integration of biodiversity into sectoral and cross-sectoral decision-making is the key to fulfilling the objectives of the Convention.

9. The Convention recognizes that cooperation – between Parties and sources of external support, and between Parties themselves – is essential. A coordinated and effective response requires agreement on a common framework for action. The development of a Strategic Plan for the Convention will provide such a framework and operational goals 4.1 to 4.3 of the draft elements of the Strategic Plan (UNEP/CBD/MSP/2) address the role of national biodiversity strategies and action plans within this framework.

## **II. CONSIDERATION OF ARTICLE 6 BY THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES**

10. As part of its medium-term programme of work, the Conference of the Parties decided to address Article 6 for the first time at its second meeting, where it adopted decision II/7, entitled “Consideration of Articles 6 and 8 of the Convention”. It urged exchange of information and sharing of experiences on implementation of Article 6 and 8, and asked the Secretariat to make such information and experiences available through the clearing-house mechanism.

11. At its third meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopted decision III/9, entitled “Implementation of Articles 6 and 8 of the Convention”, in which it provided guidance to Parties and to

the financial mechanism. In the decision, the Conference of the Parties recommended the development of a thematic approach in the further collection and dissemination of information on the implementation of Articles 6 and 8 and commended the inclusion of specific areas of work within this approach, including protected areas and alien species.

12. The Conference of the Parties has provided specific additional guidance to Parties in relation to Article 6. For example, it has encouraged Parties, *inter alia*, to:

(a) Take into account guidelines such as those provided in *National Biodiversity Planning*, <sup>1/</sup> when preparing and implementing their national strategies and action plans to collaborate with relevant organizations; <sup>2/</sup>

(b) Include in their national plans, strategies or legislation measures for *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation; sectoral integration of biodiversity considerations; and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources; <sup>3/</sup>

(c) Set measurable targets to achieve biodiversity conservation and sustainable use objectives; <sup>4/</sup> and

(d) Ensure that the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, and of migratory species and their habitats, are fully incorporated into national strategies, programmes and plans. <sup>5/</sup>

13. The Conference of the Parties has also requested Parties to integrate elements of all the thematic work programmes into their national strategies and sectoral plans, and has also stressed the need for cross-border coordination of national strategies and the importance of regional and international cooperation for implementation of Article 6, <sup>6/</sup> which was the focus of the first national reports by Parties. <sup>7/</sup>

### III. SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

14. At its second meeting, the Conference of the Parties emphasized the importance of capacity-building and the availability of adequate financial resources, and requested the financial mechanism to facilitate urgent implementation of Article 6 (and Article 8) by making resources available to developing countries in a flexible and expeditious manner. <sup>8/</sup>

15. Accordingly, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) provides funding for enabling activities. The GEF Operational Strategy defines enabling activities in biodiversity as:

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1/ Miller, Kenton R. and Steven M. Lanou, *National Biodiversity Planning: Guidelines Based on Early Experiences* (World Resources Institute, United Nations Environment Programme and the World Conservation Union, Washington DC; Nairobi; Gland, Switzerland, 1995). <http://www.wri.org/wri/biodiv/nbp-home.html>.

2/ Decision II/7.

3/ Decision III/9.

4/ Decision III/9.

5/ Decision III/21.

6/ Decisions II/7 and III/9.

7/ Decision II/17.

8/ Decisions II/6 and II/7.

“[Activities] that prepare the foundation to design and implement effective response measures to achieve Convention objectives. They will assist recipient countries to develop national strategies, plans or programs referred to in Article 6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and to identify components of biodiversity together with processes and activities likely to have significant adverse impacts on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity pursuant to Article 7 of the Convention on Biological Diversity. They will normally involve the review and assessment of information and will assist a recipient country to gain a better understanding of the nature and scope of its biodiversity assets and issues as well as a clearer sense of the options for the sustainable management and conservation of biodiversity. Enabling activities include supporting country-driven activities for taking stock of or inventorying biodiversity based on national programs and relying on studies, without new primary research; identifying options and establishing priorities to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity; preparing and developing biodiversity planning exercises, such as national strategies, action plans and sectoral plans; and disseminating of information through national communications to the Convention on Biological Diversity.”

16. The GEF *Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities: Biodiversity* lays out the means of making this goal operational. In response to the emphasis that the Conference of the Parties placed on capacity-building needs and on identifying those needs, the GEF Council revised the operational criteria in 2000 in the light of guidance developed by the Conference of the Parties at its fifth meeting. <sup>9/</sup>

17. As of January 2001, 125 eligible Parties had been assisted with the development of their national biodiversity strategies and action plans through biodiversity enabling activity funding. In addition, some developing country Parties are developing their national biodiversity strategies and action plans with assistance from other sources, or without external assistance, and developed country Parties have developed national biodiversity strategies and action plans or have adapted existing strategies.

18. In its advice to the Conference of the Parties, the MSP may wish to recommend that it provide guidance on further support by the financial mechanism to the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

#### **IV. STATUS OF DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS**

19. Before the Conference of the Parties decided, at its the fifth meeting, that a request for information on the status of the reporting Party's national biodiversity strategy and action plan should be included in the format for national reporting, <sup>10/</sup> the Secretariat had no reliable mechanism for following the development of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, or even of knowing which Parties were in the process of developing a national biodiversity strategy and action plan.

20. Although Parties were requested to focus their first national reports on their implementation of Article 6, and thus on the status of development of their national biodiversity strategy and action plan, less than half of all Parties had submitted a report prior to the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The majority of the reports by developing country Parties were entitled interim or draft reports, as the development of their national biodiversity strategy and action plan had either not started or was at

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<sup>9/</sup> See *Guidelines for Additional Funding of Biodiversity Enabling Activities (Expedited Procedures)* (February 2000) and *Revised Guidelines for Additional Funding of Biodiversity Enabling Activities (Expedited Procedures)* (October 2000) on the Operational Guidelines for Enabling Activities webpage at:

[http://www.gefweb.org/Documents/Enabling\\_Activity\\_Projects/enabling\\_activity\\_projects.html](http://www.gefweb.org/Documents/Enabling_Activity_Projects/enabling_activity_projects.html).

<sup>10/</sup> Decision V/19.

an early stage. Since the reporting guidelines presumed that a legal and policy framework for biodiversity would be in place, or at least near completion, countries felt they had little to report on.

21. The guidelines for the first national reports called for the Party to provide information on the status of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan, but did not request the Party to provide the Secretariat with a copy of the strategy document. Thus, even Parties reporting that a national biodiversity strategy and action plan had been completed and adopted did not, in most cases, provide the Secretariat with a copy.

22. In the case of Parties eligible for assistance through the financial mechanism, the report of the GEF to the Conference of the Parties at its ordinary meetings provides information on biodiversity enabling activities that have been approved. However, confirmation that the planning process has begun in the country concerned, and reliable information on the state of progress and on completion and adoption of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan, has proved difficult to obtain. The Secretariat relies on the GEF implementing agencies for up-to-date information. However, in the case of two implementing agencies, such information tends to be held at the country-office level rather than at headquarters, thus increasing the difficulties for the Secretariat of maintaining a reliable overview. Information from the GEF and its implementing agencies has been supplemented by information obtained directly from Parties, from the network of regional partners of the Biodiversity Planning Support Programme (see paragraph 33 below) and from other sources.

23. In the case of developed country Parties, or others not availing themselves of support from the financial mechanism for the development of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan, information has proved just as difficult to obtain.

24. On various occasions since the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Executive Secretary has requested Parties to inform him of the status of their national biodiversity strategy and action plan and, in cases where it has been completed and adopted, to provide a copy to the Secretariat. The results have been meagre.

25. However, the Executive Secretary hopes that the problem will be resolved by the above-mentioned decision of the Conference of the Parties to include in the format for national reporting a request for information on the status of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan. The signs are encouraging – analysis of the 48 reports received by the end of July 2001 revealed the existence of completed national biodiversity strategies and action plans in 16 Parties for which this information had been previously unknown to the Secretariat.

26. The information that the Secretariat has so far obtained on the status of national biodiversity strategies and action plans has been made available on the Secretariat's website.<sup>11/</sup> By the end of July 2000, information on the status of national biodiversity strategies and action plans in 42 countries was available. The Executive Secretary expects that this number will have grown by the time the MSP meets, following receipt of further national reports.

27. Under this item on its agenda, the MSP is asked to provide advice to the Conference of the Parties on means to support implementation of the Convention particularly through implementation of priority actions under national biodiversity strategies and action plans. Ensuring that all countries have developed a national biodiversity strategy and action plan and are implementing it, identifying priority actions, and ensuring that the necessary resources – financial, human, technical – are available to undertake these actions, are proposed as key operational goals of the Strategic Plan.

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<sup>11/</sup> <http://www.biodiv.org/world/reports.asp?lg=0&t=ap>.

28. The MSP will thus need to consider current levels of support for implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and means to identify priority actions, in order that available support is targeted at these priorities in an effective and coordinated manner.

## V. SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

29. The development of a national biodiversity strategy and action plan (Article 6(a)) is not an end in itself, but rather the necessary first step to fulfilling the key Convention obligation of mainstreaming consideration of the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into sectoral and cross-sectoral planning, and into national decision-making generally (Articles 6(b) and 10(a)). Guidelines to biodiversity planning endorsed by the Conference of the Parties emphasize that the process should be adaptive and cyclical, as participatory as possible, and result in agreed arrangements for making decisions and taking action that are integrated into national planning and decision-making structures and procedures.

30. Parties, of all types and in all regions, have been addressing this key aspect of implementation of the Convention. Predictably the experiences are as varied as the countries involved. They range from countries where the biodiversity planning process appears to involve a restricted group of actors (where, for example, the process is confined to within environment ministries or wildlife departments, or is dependent upon external consultants) with little apparent impact so far on other sectors, to countries that may have adopted wide-ranging national biodiversity strategies and action plans involving multi-agency responsibilities and appropriate consultative mechanisms, but who still report that there is a lack of willingness, both within Government and outside, to see biodiversity as a guiding principle in policy and decision-making outside the area of traditional nature conservation.

31. A number of initiatives – global and regional – to assist developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition with implementation of their national biodiversity strategies and action plans have been developed since the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

32. The Biodiversity Planning Support Programme was established by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), with core financial support from the GEF. <sup>12/</sup> The programme sought to respond to the needs of Parties to strengthen national capacity to prepare and implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans in compliance with Article 6 of the Convention. The approved funding period for the programme ended in June 2001.

33. The programme <sup>13/</sup> had three components to be implemented at global and regional level:

(a) *Information gathering and dissemination:* Specialized information on biodiversity planning and issues related to the Convention was compiled, translated as appropriate, and distributed to national planning teams. Under the responsibility of UNDP, the programme established a network of regional partners to foster regular and ongoing information exchange including web sites, electronic mail

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<sup>12/</sup> The Governments of Norway and Switzerland have also provided co-financing.

<sup>13/</sup> Information on the Biodiversity Planning Support Programme is available on its website:  
<http://www.undp.org/bpsp/>

list-servers, and help-lines. <sup>14/</sup> With the end of the project funding it is not yet clear whether these partners will have the resources to continue these activities;

(b) *Guidelines and best practice experience:* Under the coordination of UNEP, the programme is developing guidelines and training modules, and facilitating dissemination of best practice experience developed during the course of the preparation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans. The programme will give priority attention to issues emerging from national reports and guidance from the Conference of Parties. <sup>15/</sup> These thematic guidelines will have been completed and will be available for dissemination and use by the end of 2001;

(c) A number of *regional exchange and thematic workshops* have been organized under the programme to promote intraregional and global exchange of knowledge, experience and expertise.

34. An external evaluation of the UNDP component of the project is being undertaken and will be completed by September 2001. The UNEP component will be evaluated following the completion of the guidelines for best practice.

35. In 1999, the GEF Council approved the Capacity Development Initiative as a strategic partnership between the GEF secretariat and UNDP, for the preparation of a comprehensive approach for developing the capacities needed at the country level to meet the challenges of global environmental action. The Capacity Development Initiative was launched in January 2000, as an 18-month consultative planning process and implemented in two phases: (i) assessment of capacity-building needs at a broad level and of activities of the GEF and other multilateral/bilateral institutions in the field of capacity building; and (ii) the formulation of elements of strategic collaboration, and a framework for GEF action to meet capacity building needs in the conventions it serves in a comprehensive manner.

36. The assessment phase of the Capacity Development Initiative was made as widely consultative and participatory as possible and produced nine reports. <sup>16/</sup> These reports form the foundation on which the strategy for collaboration and the framework for GEF action are built. The GEF secretariat presented the strategic elements and framework at an informal session during the sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) in March 2001.

37. At its seventeenth meeting in May 2001, the GEF Council considered a proposal entitled "Elements of strategic collaboration and a framework for GEF action for capacity building for the global environment" (GEF/C.17/6/Rev.1) and requested the GEF secretariat to:

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<sup>14/</sup> Organizations were identified and contracted to act as regional partners for the following ten regions: Arab States, Caribbean, Central and Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States, Eastern and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean, Latin America, Northeast and East-Central Asia, Pacific Islands, South and South-east Asia, West Africa (Anglophone), and West and Central Africa (Francophone).

<sup>15/</sup> Eight thematic issues are being addressed by the programme under this component, namely, the integration of biodiversity into: (i) the national agriculture sector; (ii) the national forestry sector; (iii) the national fisheries sector; (iv) the national tourism sector; (v) Improved integration of biodiversity into environmental impact assessment procedures; (vi) use of economic incentives in national biodiversity strategy and action plans; (vii) Improved financial planning in NBSAP preparation and implementation; and (viii) harmonization of the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity with that of other biodiversity-related conventions.

<sup>16/</sup> The nine reports are: one regional assessment each for Africa, Asia-Pacific, East Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean; an assessment of the special needs of small island developing States; an assessment of scientific and technical capacity-building needs; an analysis of capacity-building through activities regular GEF projects; a study of the capacity-building efforts of other multilateral and bilateral institutions; and a compilation of decisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Convention to Combat Desertification concerning capacity development. They are available at: [http://www.gefweb.org/Site\\_Index/CDI/cdi.html](http://www.gefweb.org/Site_Index/CDI/cdi.html).



(a) Consult with the conferences of the parties to the three conventions <sup>17/</sup> on the proposed strategic elements and framework for GEF action;

(b) Initiate processes so that the self-assessment of capacity-building needs can begin immediately in countries that request such assistance;

(c) Consult with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations participating in capacity building activities related to the global environment and sustainable development on the proposed strategic elements and framework for GEF action;

(d) Present to the Council in April 2002 revised strategic elements and framework for GEF action that take into account the views of the Conferences of the Parties and others consulted, as well as lessons emerging from the national assessments.<sup>18</sup>

38. The GEF Secretariat has indicated that in pursuance of the element in paragraph 37 (a) of the above, it will consult with the Parties on the proposed strategic elements and framework for the GEF action, and report to the GEF Council on the outcome. In order to operationalize the element in paragraph 37 (b) above, the GEF secretariat is currently developing “guidelines for self-assessment of country capacity needs for global environmental management” to assist countries with preparation of a national capacity self-assessment. This will enable countries to take the lead in articulating their own capacity needs and priorities with respect to the global environment taking into account the three global conventions on, respectively, biodiversity, climate change and desertification.

39. The MSP may wish to provide advice to the Conference of the Parties on the proposed strategic elements and framework for GEF action and the views that the Conference of the Parties should transmit to the GEF Council on this proposal.

40. The Biodiversity Service for implementing national biodiversity strategies and action plans has been established by a consortium of four organizations. <sup>19/</sup> The Service seeks to promote and facilitate the implementation of the Convention in Central and Eastern European countries and the Newly Independent States (CEE/NIS) by providing demand-driven and tailor-made assistance in implementing national biodiversity strategies and action plans. Many countries in the CEE/NIS region have completed, or are close to completing a national biodiversity strategy and action plan, and their next step is to implement their strategies, to monitor and report on progress, and to review the overall effect of implementation efforts.

41. A principal activity undertaken by the Biodiversity Service is to assist Governments in assessing the status of implementation of the Convention in their countries. Countries are able to request an assessment and the Biodiversity Service can draw upon a roster of experts to work with the country concerned. Each assessment is thus conducted as a voluntary exercise, and involving both national stakeholders and international experts.

42. The methodology for the assessment has been developed by UNEP/World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) from an assessment of implementation of the Convention in the United Kingdom undertaken in 1999 at the request of the Party and from the matrix of national commitments

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<sup>17/</sup> The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

<sup>18/</sup> Joint Summary of the Chairs, 15 May 2001, decision on agenda item 7.

<sup>19/</sup> UNEP, IUCN–The World Conservation Union, the European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC) and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC). See <http://www.strategyguide.org/bioserve/index.html>.



implied by the provisions of the Convention and the decisions of the Conference of the Parties that formed the basis for the national reporting format adopted in decision V/19. <sup>20/</sup>

43. The methodology for the assessment aims to provide the tools and training that will enable the national focal points to:

- (a) Identify progress in implementing the Convention;
- (b) Assess the extent to which national biodiversity strategies and action plans address the full range of obligations;
- (c) Identify limiting factors and what additional support is required.

44. Participatory training in the use of the methodology is provided for local staff. Six assessments have so far been undertaken. <sup>21/</sup>

45. A similar initiative is under way in the seven Parties of the Central America region <sup>22/</sup> using this methodology. A training workshop was held in June 2001, and the national focal points are carrying out the assessment. The country reports will be brought back to a regional workshop in late 2001 and the results of the assessment will be presented at the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

46. The GEF country dialogue workshops programme is designed to promote country ownership of GEF co-financed activities, facilitate national coordination of GEF programmes in countries, and enhance awareness of the GEF. The main objective of the workshops is to facilitate group dialogues amongst and between the participants, the GEF and its implementing agencies, the convention secretariats, and the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) on the GEF and national priorities. The workshops effectively allow the GEF to:

- (a) Inform a broad national audience about the GEF, including its governance and its mission, strategy, policies and procedures;
- (b) Facilitate national stakeholders' input to and information sharing on the country's priorities including national coordination efforts, to ensure that national priorities are fully reflected in GEF assistance; and
- (c) Provide practical information on how to access GEF resources and how to propose, prepare and implement GEF-financed activities.

47. Between April 2000 and May 2001, 19 workshops were conducted – 17 national and two subregional workshops involving a total of 29 countries. Amongst other outputs, these provided an opportunity to assess national experience with development of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan through enabling activity support and to discuss support for priority actions resulting from the

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<sup>20/</sup> See <http://www.unep-wcmc.org/cbd/assessment/index.html>.

<sup>21/</sup> Albania, Czech Republic, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova and Romania. The country reports are available at: <http://www.unep-wcmc.org/cbd/assessment/Europe/index.html>.

<sup>22/</sup> Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. The project is being undertaken by UNEP-WCMC, in collaboration with the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD) and the IUCN Regional Office for Central America (ORMA): [http://www.unep-wcmc.org/cbd/assessment/central\\_america/index.html](http://www.unep-wcmc.org/cbd/assessment/central_america/index.html)

national biodiversity strategy and action plan. <sup>23/</sup> More than 30 further workshops are planned for the period June 2001 to March 2003.

48. The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), through its Working Party on Environment and Development Cooperation, is developing policy guidance for DAC member countries on ways to mainstream support for implementation of the three Rio conventions <sup>24/</sup> into their development cooperation programmes in ways that support the national priorities of developing countries. The Working Party is currently consulting with selected developing country governments, donor agencies, and the secretariats of the conventions as part of the preparation of its recommendations to the DAC.

49. However, notwithstanding the contributions of these and other initiatives, the Executive Secretary is of the view that there is a need for a coordinated long-term strategic initiative to support the development of national capacity to implement priority actions in national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and that such a strategy should be closely linked to the operational goals, and the action plans to achieve the operational goals, of the Strategic Plan for the Convention.

## **VI. IDENTIFICATION OF PRIORITY ACTIONS IN NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS**

50. There are three broad categories of procedures for identifying priority actions in national biodiversity strategies and action plans, namely:

- (a) Identification through analysis of national reports;
- (b) Identification through a joint exercise between individual Parties and an external facilitation service; and
- (c) Self-contained national priority identification exercises by individual Parties.

These procedures are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary there are strong grounds for employing all of them. It should also be stressed that such mechanisms can and should be used to identify priority actions in all types of Parties, without distinction between developed and developing country Parties.

### ***A. Identification through analysis of national reports***

51. The format for national reporting is designed to bring out information on actions taken by Parties in respect of all the commitments implied by the provisions of the Convention and the decisions of the Conference of the Parties. It is designed to enable countries to specify the relative priorities they attach to different commitments in accordance with national circumstances, and to highlight how levels of available resources to meet different commitments are affecting implementation of these. The format is also designed to allow the entry of information into a database and its analysis by field of enquiry in a statistically meaningful way. This point is further explained in the note by the Executive Secretary on national reports (UNEP/CBD/MSP/3).

52. The process for bringing the information contained in national reports to the attention of the Conference of the Parties currently involves the Secretariat preparing a synthesis report for the first ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties that is held after the deadline for submission of the

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<sup>23/</sup> The reports of a number of these workshops are available at:  
<http://www.undp.org/gef/workshop/about/index.htm>.

<sup>24/</sup> The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

report. Given the number of Parties and the volume of information contained in the reports, this exercise will become increasingly complex and demanding of time and resources.

53. The note on national reports observes that the submission of reports in electronic format and their dissemination through the Secretariat's website enables analysis of particular issues or geographical regions to be undertaken by Parties and other bodies, and refers to some examples where this has occurred. Such decentralized and focused analysis is beneficial to the Convention process. The question to be addressed is how to ensure that such analyses are fed back into the wider assessment and policy development processes of the Convention.

54. The note on national reports also describes the procedures adopted by the Convention to Combat Desertification, which has established an ad hoc working group to review and analyse national reports in-depth in order to draw conclusions and propose concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the Convention. The note by the Executive Secretary on the operations of the Convention (UNEP/CBD/MSP/5) refers to recommendation 1 of the Inter-Sessional Meeting on the Operations of the Convention concerning options for mechanisms for reviewing implementation of the Convention. The MSP may also wish to consider the model offered by the ad hoc working group of the Convention to Combat Desertification, as well as the role that such mechanisms could play in identifying priority actions in national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

***B. Identification through a joint exercise between individual Parties and an external facilitation service***

55. This mechanism builds upon the experience of assessments of implementation described in section IV above. In response to requests for assistance from Parties, a support team of experts drawn from a roster would work with national biodiversity managers and other stakeholders in the national biodiversity strategy and action plan to assess progress in implementing the Convention, the extent to which national biodiversity strategies and action plans address the full range of obligations, and constraints and needs for support. Priority actions could be identified, together with financial and capacity-development needs, and an implementation plan developed.

56. The questions that need to be considered in respect of this option include whether such a service would be globally or regionally based, who would manage the service in either case, how the roster of experts would be established and maintained, selection criteria for support teams, financial support to the service, and mechanisms to ensure the transfer of skills from outside experts to national personnel. As with the previous option, there is a need to identify how the reports and outcomes of such individual national exercises would feed back into the Convention's processes and inform policy-setting.

***C. Self-contained national priority identification exercises by individual Parties***

57. A small number of Parties currently have effective national multi-stakeholder biodiversity bodies with responsibilities for implementing the national biodiversity strategy and action plan and/or reviewing its implementation, or even reviewing implementation of the Convention in its broadest sense. For such bodies to operate effectively, certain minimum levels of structure and resources must be available to the organizations taking part. They need to be able to allocate time and resources, undertake research and evaluation activities, participate in meetings, and maintain administrative and/or operational systems. As a result, such examples currently tend to be confined to developed-country Parties with strong civil-society institutions and a history of public participation in environmental policy-making.

58. However, it is clear that not only is the establishment of such mechanisms to be encouraged from the point of view of environmental governance and public participation, but many Parties are actively seeking to move in this direction in their implementation of the Convention. The provisions of the Convention generally, and the guidance from the Conference of the Parties on the development national

biodiversity strategies and action plans and on national reporting in particular, call for full stakeholder participation. For these reasons, national processes for identifying and implementing priority actions should be encouraged.

59. Once again, there is a need to identify how the reports and outcomes of such individual national exercises would feed back into the processes under the Convention and inform policy-setting.

## VII. SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIORITY ACTIONS

60. As noted in paragraph 18 above, the MSP may wish to recommend guidance on how the financial mechanism can support the implementation of priority actions in national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

61. In this regard, the note by the Executive Secretary on the operations of the Convention brings to the attention of the MSP current developments concerning the overall structure, process and procedures of the GEF and suggests that the MSP may wish to recommend to the Conference of the Parties that the role of the Secretariat be re-examined in this light (UNEP/CBD/MSP/5, para. 11).

62. Proposed operational goal 4.2 of the draft elements for a Strategic Plan for the Convention (UNEP/CBD/MSP/2) addresses the need for adequate financial, human and technical resources to implement the Strategic Plan, in particular capacity-building to support implementation of priority actions. The Conference of the Parties has considered the issue of resources additional to those of the financial mechanism. At its fifth meeting, in decision V/11, it emphasized the importance of financial support for implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and resolved that the inclusion of the private sector should become a standing item at its ordinary meetings and be integrated into the sectoral and thematic items under its programme of work.

63. The volume of potential resource flows from the private sector – including private foundations – for environmental and sustainable development purposes is considerable <sup>25/</sup>, and the MSP may wish to recommend to the Conference of the Parties ways by which such private donors can be encouraged to support implementation of priority actions in national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

64. The availability of financial resources for sustainable development will be considered at the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, from 18 to 22 March 2002 and at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 2 to 11 September 2002. The World Summit will seek to renew, at the highest political level, the commitments undertaken at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It will consider the impact of the revolutions in technology, biology and communications that have changed much of the world since 1992. New financial instruments, the functioning of international financial institutions and markets will be evaluated and their implications for sustainable development assessed.

65. The MSP may wish to recommend ways in which the Conference of the Parties can bring to the attention of the World Summit the central role that national biodiversity strategies and action plans can

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<sup>25/</sup> For example, charitable giving of all sorts in the United States of America in 2000 totalled \$203 billion, around 2 per cent of GDP. In 1995, total charitable giving of between 0.1% and 1% of GDP was recorded in Spain, the United Kingdom, Hungary, the Netherlands, Argentina, France, Brazil, Japan and Germany (“The new rich: giving something back” in *The Economist* of 14 June 2001). Giving by foundations in the United States totalled \$19.5 billion in 1998, an increase of 56 per cent over 1994. Of this, \$1.6 billion was for international grant-making, with 26 per cent of that amount being allocated for environment and international development purposes (The Foundation Center, *International Grantmaking II: Highlights of the Foundation Center’s 2000 Study* at <http://www.fdncenter.org>). A recent study predicts that intergenerational wealth transfer in the United States in the period 1998-2052 may be more than \$41 trillion, of which \$6 trillion may be devoted to philanthropic purposes (*The Economist*, op cit).

play in the implementation of the Rio commitments on sustainable development and the importance of ensuring the availability of resources for priority actions in national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

66. The World Summit will also consider matters relating to international environmental governance. The Governing Council of UNEP has established, in its decision 21/21, an open-ended intergovernmental group of ministers to undertake a comprehensive policy-oriented assessment of weaknesses in existing environmental institutions and to examine options for strengthened international environmental governance. <sup>26/</sup>

67. In this context, the Executive Secretary believes that a key to coordinated and effective support to implementation of the Convention by Parties, and in particular support to priority actions in national biodiversity strategies and action plans, requires action to mainstream the objectives and programmes of work of the Convention into the priorities and programmes of all relevant agencies providing support to Parties at the national level.

68. The World Summit will consider how to better integrate the economic, social and environmental objectives of sustainable development and how to promote greater policy coherence and coordination between the various processes.

69. The conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources are keys to achieving sustainable human development in the twenty-first century. Implementing priority actions in national biodiversity strategies and action plans over the coming decade in the context of the Strategic Plan will require policy coherence between all relevant instruments and processes, renewed political will on the part of Governments, and a renewed commitment to cooperation and to providing the resources and technology required. The MSP is invited to recommend to the Conference of the Parties that it urge the World Summit to renew the commitment to make available the financial resources and support for capacity development required for effective implementation of the Convention.

## VIII. DRAFT RECOMMENDATION

70. The MSP is invited to consider the following elements of its recommendation concerning means to support implementation of the Convention, in particular implementation of priority actions in national biodiversity strategies and action plans:

*The Open-ended Inter-Sessional Meeting on the Strategic Plan, National Reports and Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity*

*Recommends* that the Conference of the Parties, at its sixth meeting consider the following elements of a draft decision with a view to their adoption:

*The Conference of the Parties,*

1. *Urges* Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity:

(a) To develop and adopt national biodiversity strategies and action plans, where they have not yet done so;

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<sup>26/</sup> For further details, see: <http://www.unep.org/IEG/>.

- (b) To identify priority actions in national biodiversity strategies and action plans;
- (c) To give priority to the integration of the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies;
- (d) To establish national mechanisms or consultative processes for monitoring, evaluating and periodically revising national biodiversity strategies and action plans;

2. *Calls upon* all donors and institutions able to support implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, in particular of priority actions, to target such priority actions in an effective and coordinated manner within the framework of the Strategic Plan of the Convention;

3. *Welcomes* the contribution to the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans provided by the Biodiversity Planning Support Programme established by the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Development Programme with core financial support from the Global Environment Facility, request the agencies and partners involved to consider how regional support for biodiversity planning and capacity-building can be enhanced, and request the United Nations Environment Programme to make the guidelines on best practice available to all Parties;

4. *Transmits* to the Council of the Global Environment Facility its view that a strategic approach to capacity-building for the global environment is urgently needed and that promoting cross-convention synergies in capacity-building activities in order to promote efficiency and quality is a priority;

5. *Encourages* Parties to avail themselves of the assistance available through the financial mechanism for preparation of a national capacity self-assessment within the thematic areas of biodiversity, climate change and land degradation;

6. *Commends* the assessments of implementation carried out by Parties in the Central and Eastern Europe/Newly Independent States and Central America regions to the attention of Parties in other regions;

7. *Encourages* private foundations and other donors that provide funding in support of sustainable development activities to support implementation of priority actions in national biodiversity strategies and action plans;

8. *Transmits* to the World Summit on Sustainable Development its view that implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, in particular of priority actions, will play a central role in the implementation of the commitments on sustainable development undertaken at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and urge the World Summit to renew the commitment to make available the financial resources and support for the capacity development required for the effective implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

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