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16 September 2014

## NOTIFICATION

### **Incorporating disaster risk reduction into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and opportunities to engage with national agencies responsible for the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 – 2015 and its follow up in 2015**

Dear Madam/Sir,

I would like to draw your attention to opportunities to highlight the contribution of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 – 2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets to disaster risk reduction (DRR).

In numerous decisions the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has noted the role of biodiversity in DRR. Some key references to DRR in COP decisions are provided in the annex to this notification and include with regard to: islands biodiversity, inland waters, marine and coastal biodiversity, protected areas, sustainable use, climate change and dry and sub-humid lands. These, *inter alia*, draw attention to the need to integrate ecosystem based approaches for DRR into relevant national policies and programmes including climate change adaptation strategies and plans, national plans to combat desertification, national biodiversity strategies and action plans, poverty reduction strategies, national disaster risk reduction or disaster management frameworks and sustainable land management strategies. Key institutional mechanisms at national level include National Platforms on Disaster Risk Reduction and National Disaster Management/Disaster Risk Reduction Councils, or their equivalents in your country. I encourage you to fully integrate the objectives of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 – 2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, as they relate to DRR, into all relevant areas at national level.

Ecosystem degradation is a major cause of “natural” disasters and/or can be a major factor intensifying the impact of disasters. Examples include how deforestation increases erosion risk, and therefore land-slides, loss of wetlands can increase flood risks, loss of coastal mangroves can increase vulnerability to coastal storms and degradation of soil biodiversity, including land cover, can contribute significantly to floods, erosion, drought and desertification. Therefore, ecosystem conservation or restoration has a major role to play in DRR and across many biomes, sectors and policy areas. DRR is directly relevant to a number of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets including: Target 7 (where DRR is a core element of sustainability for forestry and agriculture), Target 11 (regarding the role of protected areas in DRR), Target 14 (where essential services include those underpinning DRR) and Target 15 (where ecosystem resilience is a key requirement for DRR and ecosystem restoration a major opportunity to achieve DRR).

Disasters have been at the forefront of concerns of many countries for some time. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has concluded that climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of disaster events. At the international level there is attention to integrating DRR

To : CBD National Focal Points



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in the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals. The impact of disasters on the welfare and economic progress of people and countries is substantial. Action needs to be taken now to fully integrate the risk and impact of disasters, and ecosystem based approaches to DRR, into development planning to mitigate the costs and losses involved.

Countries and regional intergovernmental organizations are aligning their policies and practices to reduce disaster risk with the international blueprint entitled the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 – 2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters* (HFA) which was adopted in 2005, in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan. The HFA is coming up for revision in 2015. The Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) will take place from 14 to 18 March 2015, in Sendai, Japan, and is expected to attract around 8,000 participants with several thousand more participating in public-related events linked to the WCDRR. This conference will adopt a post-2015 framework for DRR, the successor to the HFA. You can access information on disaster risk reduction, as well as the WCDRR at [www.unisdr.org](http://www.unisdr.org). These and other forums represent significant opportunities to raise awareness of the importance of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 – 2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets to achieving DRR objectives. Updates on progress in integrating the ecosystem dimension into this conference can be found on the HFA2 pages of the *Ecosystems for Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction* website (<http://pedrr.org>).

The United Nations Environment Programme, through its Global Universities Partnership on Environment for Sustainability (GUPES) and Cologne University of Applied Sciences (CUAS) Germany, among other partners, will launch the first *Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Disasters and Ecosystems: Resilience in a Changing Climate* later this year. Further details and enrolment forms are available from [the.mooc@unep.org](mailto:the.mooc@unep.org).

Useful guidance about how ecosystems can be considered in DRR policies and strategies is available at <http://pedrr.org/publications/>. This includes: basic concepts and recommendations to governments regarding the ecosystem approach to DRR in Europe<sup>1</sup> and similar guidance produced in India<sup>2</sup>; how coastal ecosystems can contribute to DRR<sup>3</sup>; the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on managing the risks of extreme events and disasters to advance climate change adaptation<sup>4</sup>; an environment guidance note for DRR<sup>5</sup>; and, an integrated approach to ecosystems, livelihoods and disasters<sup>6</sup>. The same web-site also provides useful further background reading.

I hope that this information will help in your work on the revision and updating of NBSAPs. I also encourage you to engage in the national consultations leading to the WCDRR, to ensure that existing decisions taken in the context of the CBD, including the relevant Aichi Biodiversity Targets, are given sufficient visibility and support and that you can continue to demonstrate leadership in promoting integrated approaches to designing, implementing and monitoring progress in the relevant international agreements and forums.

Please accept, Madam/Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias  
Executive Secretary

Attachment

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/majorhazards/ressources/pub/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/majorhazards/ressources/pub/default_en.asp)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.gdnonline.org/resources/nidm\\_ecosystem\\_approach.pdf](http://www.gdnonline.org/resources/nidm_ecosystem_approach.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://coastalresilience.org/science/reports-and-publications>

<sup>4</sup> [http://ipcc-wg2.gov/SREX/images/uploads/SREX-All\\_FINAL.pdf](http://ipcc-wg2.gov/SREX/images/uploads/SREX-All_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/environmental\\_guidance.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/environmental_guidance.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/ecosystems\\_livelihoods\\_and\\_disasters.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/ecosystems_livelihoods_and_disasters.pdf)

## Annex

### Some key references to disaster risk reduction in CBD COP decisions

#### **COP VIII/1: Island biodiversity**

Under GOAL 8 of the programme of work on island biodiversity (Maintain capacity of island ecosystems to deliver goods and services and support livelihoods), Target 8.1 refers to capacity of island ecosystems to deliver goods and services maintained or improved, and actions 8.1.1. develop policies, programmes and actions to ensure the capacity of island ecosystems to deliver goods and services are maintained, and 8.1.2. understand and promote the role of island ecosystems and habitats in providing ecosystem services that prevent or mitigate the impacts of natural or anthropogenic disasters and extreme events, and protect islands, island biodiversity and island communities. *Rationale: Disasters tend to affect significant fractions of the area of islands, and integrated management can provide mitigation.*

#### **COP X/28: Inland waters**

##### *Biodiversity and natural disasters*

42. *Notes* the role of biodiversity and ecosystems in providing services that reduce vulnerability to the impact of some natural disasters, in particular water-related impacts such as flooding and drought, and that current global changes are anticipated to increase disaster vulnerability and risk;

43. *Encourages* Parties and other Governments to recognize the role of healthy ecosystems, and in particular wetlands, in protecting human communities from some natural disasters and to integrate these considerations into relevant policies;

44. *Encourages* Parties and other Governments to conserve, sustainably use and, where necessary, restore ecosystems so that freshwater flows and water resources sustain biodiversity and thus contribute to human well-being;

45. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to resources, in collaboration with partners, including the Ramsar Convention and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to:

(a) Undertake a gap analysis in relation to inland water biodiversity and ecosystem services and their potential role in disaster risk reduction;

(b) Seek ways to address these gaps, as necessary, and within the mandate of the Convention on Biological Diversity, through strengthened tools and information, including policy and management guidance; and

(c) Strengthen capacity-support to these ends as a means to assist Parties to improve the contribution of inland water biodiversity and ecosystem services to natural disaster risk reduction;

#### **COP X/20: Marine and Coastal Biodiversity**

77. *Recalling* the Manado Ocean Declaration adopted in Manado, Indonesia during the World Ocean Conference in May 2009, *invites* Parties, other Governments and donor agencies to promote ecosystem-based approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation to improve resilience, resistance and recovery of marine and coastal ecosystems, and incorporate climate change impacts and ecosystem-based adaptation in development and disaster-reduction planning, particularly in coastal areas, and *requests* the Executive Secretary to convene, subject to availability of financial resources and inviting collaboration with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, an expert workshop on the role of marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystems in adaptation to and mitigation of climate change impacts, with a view to sharing experiences and provide guidance for planning and implementing ecosystem-based approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and their integration in broader adaptation, mitigation and disaster risk reduction strategies, and in support of the development of elements on the issues of marine biodiversity and climate change as inputs to the development of joint activities between the three Rio conventions;

**COP X/31: Protected areas**

29. *Invites* Parties to:

(a) Increase understanding of and communicate the role, importance and costs and benefits of protected areas in sustaining local livelihoods, providing ecosystems services, reducing risks from natural disasters, adapting to and mitigating climate change, health, water and other sectors, at all levels;

**COP X/32: Sustainable use**

2(g) Where appropriate, review, revise and update national biodiversity strategies and action plans, taking into account the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, to further coordinate at the national level and engage different sectors (including, *inter alia*, energy, the financial sector, forestry, wildlife management, fisheries, water supply, agriculture, disaster prevention, health, and climate change) to fully account for the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services in decision-making;

**COP X/33: Biodiversity and climate change**

*Ecosystem-based approaches for adaptation*

(j) Recognizing that ecosystems can be managed to limit climate change impacts on biodiversity and to help people adapt to the adverse effects of climate change; implement where appropriate, ecosystem-based approaches for adaptation, that may include sustainable management, conservation and restoration of ecosystems, as part of an overall adaptation strategy that takes into account the multiple social, economic and cultural co-benefits for local communities;

(k) In accordance with national capacities and circumstances, integrate ecosystem-based approaches for adaptation into relevant strategies, including adaptation strategies and plans, national action plans to combat desertification, national biodiversity strategies and action plans, poverty reduction strategies, disaster risk reduction strategies and sustainable land management strategies;

**COP X/35: Biodiversity and dry and sub-humid lands**

8. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and, as far as possible, the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as other relevant partners, to:

(a) Explore and, as appropriate, subject to the availability of financial resources, develop and implement preferably through the means and procedures already established within each of the relevant conventions (for example, the programmes of work under the Convention on Biological Diversity) joint actions to increase cooperation between the natural and social science communities to increase the integration of biodiversity and sustainable land management and ecological restoration considerations in disaster reduction and risk management;

**COP XI/3: Monitoring progress in implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

“Trends in human and economic losses due to water or natural resource related disasters” adopted as an indicator for Aichi Biodiversity Target 14.

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