

to standardize descriptive headings and improve organizational schemes for web-based materials. These activities will make it easier for users to search, locate and use information archived on the Convention's website. An electronic library is being developed with the aim of disseminating information and making it possible to search the library catalogue.

Finally, the Secretariat publishes documents on the Convention's work in the six United Nations languages. The series of publications are:

- Legal texts, including the texts of the Convention, the Protocol on Biosafety and reports of the Conference of Parties;
- Brochures and leaflets on the Convention and its thematic areas;
- The CBD Technical Series, which disseminates accurate, up-to-date information on scientific topics; and
- The CBD newsletter, published in English three times a year.

The Secretariat will continue to create publications to raise public awareness. A complete up-to-date list is available at www.biodiv.org/outreach/awareness/publications.asp.



The International Day for Biological Diversity – 22 May

On 20 December 2000, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 22 May, the date the Convention was adopted, as the International Day for Biological Diversity.



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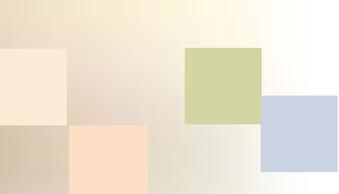
The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is the first-ever global agreement to cover all aspects of biological diversity – from genetic resources to species and ecosystems. It is also the first to recognize that conserving biological diversity is “a common concern of humankind” and a fundamental part of sustainable development.

The Convention's ambitious mandate and work programme can only be realized if governments have the necessary resources. Funding is vital for strengthening institutions and skills and for carrying out national projects with global biodiversity benefits. The Convention therefore makes a great effort to attract more financial resources for biodiversity activities.

Another essential resource is information. Information on biodiversity activities and best practices is gathered through national reports as a way of assessing the Convention's overall effectiveness. Further information is disseminated by the Convention Secretariat through a documentation center and the Clearing-House Mechanism.

Public awareness and support for the Convention's goals is no less important. Governments need to do much more to educate and inform the general public and key stakeholders about the value of biodiversity and the opportunities offered by the Convention.





National reporting



The Convention on Biological Diversity provides that governments should periodically share information on their efforts to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and promote the equitable sharing of benefits gained from the exploitation of genetic resources.

The Conference of the Parties (COP) uses these national reports to evaluate lessons learned, identify gaps in capabilities, and determine needs for technical and financial support. The reports also give the COP a basis for formulating guidance to the subsidiary bodies, the Secretariat, the financial mechanism, and other organizations with relevant expertise. Each government can use its own report for evaluating national progress and identifying opportunities and constraints. Reports are to be prepared on the basis of consultations involving all relevant stakeholders.

Parties also submit thematic reports for in-depth consideration in each cycle of the Convention's work programme. For the 2000-2002 cycle, for example, governments produced thematic reports on invasive alien species, benefit-sharing and forest ecosystems. All national reports are posted at www.biodiv.org/world/reports.asp; a tool for analysing the information they contain is available at www.biodiv.org/reports/nr-02.asp.

Based on the national reports, the Convention Secretariat analyses the status of implementation for the Conference of the Parties. It also works with other agencies to assist countries with developing national biodiversity strategies, actions plans and human and institutional capacity. Key initiatives include UNDP's Biodiversity Planning Support Programme (www.undp.org/bpsp) and the Capacity Development Initiative of the Global Environment Facility (www.undp.org/gef/web_files/index.html). Under the auspices of UNEP, WCMC is coordinating a project involving eight countries aiming to streamline the national reporting under a number of biodiversity-related conventions. The detailed information concerning this project can be found at www.unep-wcmc.org/conventions/harmonization.htm.

The Secretariat also prepares the 'Global Biodiversity Outlook', a periodic report on global biodiversity and progress under the Convention. The first edition of the report was published in November 2001 as part of the Convention's contribution to the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. Further details are available at www.biodiv.org/outreach/gbo.

Financial mechanism

The Convention recognizes that substantial new investments will be needed to conserve biological diversity. Improving access to relevant technologies is also essential. All governments have committed themselves to providing funds for national biodiversity activities and creating incentives to encourage the private sector and others to do so as well. Developed country governments have also agreed to support biodiversity projects in developing countries through the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the financial mechanism of the Convention, and other bilateral and multilateral channels.

The Conference of the Parties has given the GEF the responsibility for "operating" the financial mechanism. The mechanism is accountable to the COP and functions under its authority on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding. The COP issues guidance to the GEF at every meeting and regularly reviews the mechanism's effectiveness.

The COP reviews progress in this area at each of its biannual meetings and offers guidance to the Parties, the Secretariat, and financial institutions. The Secretariat actively promotes the sharing of information and experience concerning financing. For example, it has established a database on biodiversity financing to enable donors and recipients to exchange information. The database can be viewed at www.biodiv.org/financial/sources.asp.



Public awareness and education

Public awareness and education are fundamental for enabling governments to integrate biological diversity into their national development and environment strategies. A shift in public attitudes towards nature and biological resources, including changes in behavior and lifestyles, can only take place if information is available to make biodiversity issues better understood.

Governments are collaborating on this challenge through the Global Initiative on Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA). An interagency Consultative Group of Experts convened by the Secretariat and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has proposed three programme elements for the Global Initiative's start-up phase:

1. Establish, manage and stimulate global CEPA networks and create synergies amongst existing networks. This will involve establishing an Internet portal to share ideas and know-how, identifying potential partners and stakeholders, and developing the networks further.
2. Enhance professional exchange, development and innovation. Proposed actions include asking Parties to document relevant activities in their national reports; collecting and exchanging information on projects, case studies, and good practices; and providing copyright-free graphics and materials that can be adapted at the national or local level.
3. Develop capabilities for marketing biodiversity values and engaging educators and communicators. Key activities include creating training programmes, linking theory and practice, developing tool kits, establishing partnerships with the mass media, and fund-raising.



Information services

The Convention establishes a *Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM)* to facilitate technical and scientific cooperation amongst all regions of the world.

With the conclusion of its information-exchange pilot phase, the CHM is now focusing on active collaboration. Working with international initiatives such as the Global Invasive Species Program (with a mandate to assist countries in the prevention and management of invasive alien species) and the Global Taxonomy Initiative (set up to create an inventory of biological resources), the CHM is fostering cooperation in six key areas: decision-making tools and processes, training and capacity building, research, funding, access to and transfer of technology and repatriation of information.

The CHM's goal is being pursued through Memoranda of Cooperation with other international initiatives and organizations. In addition, regional workshops have been organized by the CHM in Africa and Latin America to ensure equitable participation by developing regions in new biodiversity projects. The CHM is also assisting in the development of the Biosafety Clearing-House for the Cartagena Protocol. For more information on the CHM, see www.biodiv.org/chm/.

The Secretariat is also promoting information sharing through its Montreal-based *documentation center*. The center collects, registers, and disseminates information on all aspects of biological diversity. It is helping the CHM

