



CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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CONTRIBUTION OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY TO IMPLEMENTING THE OUTCOMES OF THE JOHANNESBURG SUMMIT

Report of the Executive Secretary to the Commission on Sustainable Development

I. BACKGROUND

1. In its decision VI/28, adopted at its sixth meeting, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity decided to hold an open-ended inter-sessional meeting to consider the multi-year programme of work for the Conference of the Parties up to 2010. This meeting took place in Montreal from 17 to 20 March 2003. The meeting, *inter alia*, considered the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development as it relates to the Convention process. In its recommendation 1 B, entitled “the Contribution of the Convention on Biological Diversity to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and to the Commission on Sustainable Development process”, the meeting recognized the importance of close cooperation with the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) to ensure mutual supportiveness within the respective work programmes so that the work of the Convention contributes fully to the efforts of the international community to achieve sustainable development and poverty eradication. In this respect, the meeting requested the Executive Secretary “*to strengthen cooperation with the CSD and to report on progress made in the implementation of the Convention, with a particular focus on the contribution of the objectives of the Convention to poverty eradication.*” This report has been prepared by the Executive Secretary in response to that request. The report underlines the contribution of the Convention to the WSSD process, analyses the outcome of the WSSD as it relates to the Convention and provides information on actions taken within the Convention process as a follow-up to WSSD.

II CONTRIBUTION OF THE CONVENTION TO THE WSSD PROCESS

2. At its fifth meeting, held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 15-26 May 2000, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention recognized the importance of the 10-year review of progress achieved in the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and adopted decision V/27 addressing the contribution of the Convention to that review process. It also welcomed the invitation of the Commission on Sustainable Development extended to secretariats of

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conventions related to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to support preparatory activities of the 10-year review and requested the Executive Secretary to support such preparatory activities and, in particular, to report to the Commission on Sustainable Development on progress made in the implementation of the Convention.

3. As a follow-up to the decisions taken at the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Executive Secretary provided reports to the United Nations General Assembly and to the CSD acting as the Preparatory Committee for the WSSD (second and third sessions) regarding the implementation of the Convention and the contribution of the Convention to the implementation of Agenda 21.¹

4. At its sixth meeting, which took place in The Hague, The Netherlands, from 7-19 April 2002, the Conference of the Parties adopted a message to the WSSD, which was transmitted to both the Preparatory Committee at its fourth session in Bali, Indonesia, and to the Johannesburg Summit. This message was contained in both The Hague Ministerial Declaration of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and decision VI/21 entitled “Annex to The Hague Ministerial Declaration of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity”. The latter, incorporating an annex entitled “Contribution of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to the World Summit on Sustainable Development”, reviewed the inter-linkages between the Convention and Agenda 21, the experience gained and lessons-learned in the implementation of the Convention, and provided ideas and proposals regarding the further implementation of Agenda 21. In addition, the Executive Secretary participated in the elaboration of the report on biodiversity in the context of the UN Secretary-General’s WEHAB initiative and participated in the roundtables organized at the Summit on the initiative based on the WEHAB framework papers.

II. THE OUTCOME OF THE WSSD AS IT RELATES TO THE CONVENTION PROCESS

5. The World Summit on Sustainable Development was of great significance for the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Secretary-General’s WEHAB initiative and the intergovernmental negotiating process raised the profile of biodiversity and cemented the conceptual link between the objectives of the Convention and the attainment of sustainable development and poverty alleviation. The Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development incorporated major elements of the decisions taken at the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties with respect to biodiversity.² In particular, the WSSD reaffirmed that the Convention on Biological Diversity is the key instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources, and underlined the need for new and additional financial and technical resources to facilitate its effective implementation. It also endorsed the commitment of Parties at the sixth meeting to a more effective and coherent implementation of the three objectives of the Convention, to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of life on Earth. In short, the World Summit represented an acknowledgement at the highest political level of the validity of the Convention as a central tool in efforts to achieve the commitments to action made in Johannesburg and before.

6. Among other things, the World Summit highlighted the need to integrate the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity into global, regional and national sectoral and cross-sectoral programmes and policies, in particular in the programmes and policies of the economic sectors of countries

¹ See A/55/211 and A/56/126

² See United Nations, *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002*, (A/CONF.199/20), United Nations, New York, 2002, resolution 2, annex, and resolution 1, annex.

and international financial institutions. In doing so, the Governments represented in Johannesburg echoed not only the text of the Convention but also one of the main goals of the Strategic Plan adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting. The marginalization of biodiversity concerns has been identified as one of the main constraints to the full implementation of the Convention. It is to be hoped that, in view of the outcome of the World Summit, this marginalization will soon become a thing of the past. As the foremost world body dealing with sustainable development, and given its intersectoral nature, the Commission on Sustainable Development can do much to help make the mainstreaming of biodiversity concerns a reality.

7. The World Summit also addressed a number of thematic and cross-cutting issues within the Convention process, including forest biological diversity; marine and coastal biodiversity; access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing; the protection of the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities; enhancing synergies with relevant multilateral agreements and international trade agreements; the integration of the objectives of the Convention into global, regional and national programmes and policies; and the promotion of concrete international support and partnership for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. All the three objectives of the Convention have been addressed in a balanced manner. There are significant paragraphs dealing with the conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

8. In many instances the Plan has reinforced some of the decisions of the Conference of the Parties, particularly with regard to financial resources, capacity-building, scientific and technical cooperation, and the creation of synergies and mutual supportiveness with other international agreements, in particular trade-related agreements.

9. The WSSD has also introduced two significant new items into the international biodiversity agenda that were not contemplated by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting. In paragraph 44(o), the Plan calls for the negotiation “within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, bearing in mind the Bonn Guidelines, an international regime to promote and safeguard the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.” And, in paragraph 44(g) the Plan requires actions to “promote and support initiatives for hot spot areas and other areas essential for biodiversity and promote the development of national and regional ecological networks and corridors.” Although the issues of hot spots, networks and corridors are addressed within the Convention process in some of the thematic programmes of work and cross-cutting issues, the approach contemplated by the WSSD is more holistic. The Convention process will need to address the necessary follow-up actions required with regard to these two important issues.

10. In view of the transboundary nature of most sustainable development issues, the Plan has addressed not only issues specific to certain regions but also underlined the need for regional and sub-regional implementation. In the biodiversity area, the particular situation of small island developing States (SIDS) and of Africa has received considerable attention. Thus, paragraph 70(e) calls for measures to support the conservation of Africa’s biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources. Paragraph 58, addressing issues of SIDS, calls for effective conservation of natural resources; provision of support for the development and further implementation of SIDS-specific components of programmes of work on marine and coastal biological diversity; implementation of sustainable fisheries management; and the development of community-based sustainable tourism.

III. FOLLOW-UP TO WSSD WITHIN THE CONVENTION PROCESS

11. Existing programmed activities under the Convention constitute important elements of the follow-up to the World Summit. In several instances, however, it will be necessary to go beyond programmed activities. In this latter respect, the Conference of the Parties may adopt relevant decisions at its seventh meeting in March 2004. The outcome of the Open-ended Inter-sessional Meeting on the Multi-year Programme of Work of the Conference of the Parties up to 2010 has already provided a basis for further work by the seventh meeting on this issue.

12. The Open-ended Inter-Sessional Meeting on the Multi-year Programme of Work of the Conference of the Parties up to 2010 considered the outcome of the WSSD as it relates to the Convention process and made a number of recommendations as regards follow-up actions. In general, these actions are to be pursued within the framework of the Strategic Plan of the Convention and the Multi-year Programme of Work of the Conference of the Parties up to 2010. Within the overall framework of the proposed Multi-year Programme of Work of the Conference of the Parties, the meeting recommended that when undertaking in-depth reviews of the existing thematic and cross-cutting issues, items identified as priorities by the WSSD, such as poverty alleviation, human health, sustainable communities and livelihoods, and hotspots, ecological networks and corridors, should be considered in relation to the existing programmes of work. In this regard, the issue of island biodiversity has been incorporated as an item for in-depth review at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. In addition, the meeting recommended that the Conference of the Parties identifies, for each upcoming meeting, appropriate ways to address, including within the Ministerial Segment, issues of overarching importance, particularly the relevant socio-economic issues identified by the WSSD.

13. The proposed multi-year programme of work approved by the Inter-Sessional Meeting would considerably streamline and focus the work of the Conference of the Parties. With the exception of island biodiversity, no new issues would be taken up for in-depth consideration. Instead, the focus would be:

(a) First, on reviewing ongoing programmes of work to assess progress and to introduce the necessary adjustments and refinements as appropriate; and

(b) Second, on considering progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan, including the achievement of the 2010 target, and in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. In order to support implementation, the Conference of the Parties would also, at each of its meetings, seek ways of refining mechanisms to support implementation, such as the financial mechanism, the clearing-house mechanism, and capacity-building activities.

14. If approved by the Conference of the Parties, this multi-year programme of work would mark the final stage in the transition from policy-making to implementation that has been evident in recent meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

15. Several of the recommendations adopted by the Meeting are addressed to the Convention's subsidiary bodies which have been requested to further review them and provide advice to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting on appropriate follow-up actions. The succeeding paragraphs provide a brief summary of the specific recommendations of the meeting on some of the key issues.

A. *Hotspots, ecological networks & corridors*

16. The Meeting recommended that this issue be considered by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Protected Areas, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice at its ninth meeting and the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting in the context of the work on protected

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areas, taking into account other relevant thematic programmes and cross-cutting issues, in the context of national strategies and action plans, and focusing on biodiversity loss.

B. International regime on access & benefit-sharing

17. The meeting underlined the need to incorporate this decision of the WSSD into the Convention process. It recommended that the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing should consider the process, nature, scope, elements and modalities of an international regime and provide advice to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting on how it may wish to address the issue.

C. Contribution of the Convention to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and to the CSD process

18. The Meeting recognized the importance of close cooperation with the CSD and requested the Executive Secretary to strengthen such cooperation and to report to the CSD on progress made in the implementation of the Convention, with a particular focus on the contribution of the objectives of the Convention to poverty eradication.

19. The Inter-Sessional Meeting also requested that, in preparation for the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Bureau, should:

(a) Prepare a report on the relevance of the Millennium Development Goals for the programme of work under the Convention and to explore and articulate in each of the programmes of work the links between biodiversity and the Millennium Development Goals in order to identify and highlight ways that biodiversity conservation and sustainable use can facilitate their achievement; and

(b) Identify modalities to ensure the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is consistent with the objectives of the Convention.

D. Global partnership on biodiversity

20. Partnerships and cooperation with relevant international agreements and processes is amongst the key themes in the WSSD Plan of Implementation. The idea of partnership is a familiar one in the Convention process. Cooperation with other organizations, conventions and processes has been an integral part of activities since the Convention was adopted. The programmes of work under the Convention have been developed and are being implemented in close cooperation with a wide range of partners, and cooperation with other institutions is a standing item on the agenda for meetings of the Conference of the Parties. The Open-ended Inter-sessional Meeting recommended that, at its seventh meeting, the Conference of the Parties request the Executive Secretary to develop a global partnership on biodiversity comprising the major biodiversity-related organizations, with the Secretariat of the Convention facilitating the process in order to enhance synergies, avoid duplication of efforts and improve implementation of biodiversity-related agreements.

E. Technology transfer & cooperation

21. The meeting recalled paragraphs 105 and 106 of the WSSD Plan of Implementation which address the issue of technology transfer and cooperation and invited Parties and Governments to promote technology transfer in the context of Convention through type 2 partnerships, in accordance with the outcome of WSSD.

22. The full text of the recommendations of the Open-ended Inter-sessional Meeting on the Multi-year Programme of Work of the Conference of the Parties up to 2010 of relevance to the CSD is annexed to this report.

IV. FUTURE ORIENTATION OF THE CONVENTION PROCESS

23. The outcomes of the Inter-Sessional Meeting provide a useful insight into the current thinking of the Parties to the Convention on the direction that the Convention process should take in the years ahead.

24. On the one hand, the focus will be on implementation of ongoing work programmes, as endorsed by the World Summit, to ensure the achievement of the 2010 target. Implementation will be guided by the Strategic Plan, making use of quantifiable targets to ensure that everything is on track and making adjustments and refinements as necessary. A more conscious effort will also be made to ensure that the Millennium Development Goals and the outcomes of the World Summit are fully integrated, as appropriate, in the work programmes.

25. At the same time, there will be a need to ensure that other forums and processes—at all levels—take account of the objectives of the Convention in their activities for sustainable development and that the importance of biodiversity as a basis for achieving the overriding goal of poverty eradication is not lost from sight.

26. Central to all these efforts will be continued and strengthened cooperation with all partners. The Convention is a wide-ranging instrument that touches on all types of physical environments and virtually all sectors of human activity. It cannot be implemented in isolation. There is, however, good reason for confidence that, following the World Summit, the international community is in a stronger position to make process towards the objectives of the Convention.
