

Draft for consultation

Note: this document is an advance review version of a pre-session document for the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation under agenda item 13 – National reporting ¹

NATIONAL REPORTING UNDER THE CONVENTION AND ITS PROTOCOLS

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraph 8 of decision XIII/27, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity requested the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties, to develop, subject to subsequent endorsement by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meetings of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing, proposals for the alignment of national reporting under the Convention and its Protocols, and to report on progress to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at its second meeting.

2. In paragraph 9 of the same decision, the Conference of the Parties also requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions and Rio conventions, and the United Nations Environment Programme's World Conservation Monitoring Centre, to explore options for enhancing synergy on national reporting among these conventions and to report to the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation.

3. Following a brief overview of ongoing processes to further integrate the Convention and its Protocols, provided, for context, in section II, the two aforementioned issues are addressed in sections III and IV respectively. Suggested recommendations are provided in Section V.

II. INTEGRATION AMONG THE CONVENTION AND ITS PROTOCOLS

4. A gradual process is underway to bring the Convention and its Protocols closer together to facilitate the integrated implementation by Parties and to maximize synergies among the three instruments, while respecting that they are distinct legal instruments with specific obligations to their respective contracting Parties. To further advance this integration, the Conference of the Parties, in paragraph 2 of decision XIII/26, requested the Executive Secretary to continue using, where appropriate, integrated approaches in proposing agenda items and organizations of work, in the preparation of documents, and in planning and implementation of intersessional activities, and especially in addressing common cross-cutting areas, such as capacity-building, national reporting, the administration of clearing-house mechanisms, communication, education and public awareness, resource mobilization and financial mechanisms, with a view to achieving synergies in the consideration of issues and efficiency in processes related to these areas under the Convention and the Protocols.

5. Besides the integration of reporting processes considered in this note, progress in these areas is being considered under agenda items 8 (Resource mobilization), 10 (Capacity-building, technical and scientific cooperation and technology transfer – including the clearing-house mechanism), 14 (Enhancing integration under the Convention and its Protocols with respect to ABS-related provisions, Biosafety-related provisions, and Article 8(j) and related provisions) and 15 (Review of the effectiveness of the processes under the Convention and its Protocols – including experiences in holding concurrent meetings of the Conference of the Parties, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on

¹ Montreal, Canada, 9-13 July 2018. See: CBD/SBI/2/1 available at <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/SBI-02>

Biosafety and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising).

6. Furthermore, in decision XIII/1, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to prepare, in consultation with the Bureau, a proposal for a comprehensive and participatory preparatory process and timetable for the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, taking into consideration that this work must cover the Convention on Biological Diversity and also consider its Protocols, as appropriate. This matter will be considered under agenda item 16 (Preparation for the follow up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020).

III. ALIGNING OF NATIONAL REPORTING UNDER THE CONVENTION AND ITS PROTOCOLS

7. In decision XIII/27, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to take into account the following elements when preparing proposals for the alignment of national reporting under the Convention and its Protocols:

(a) Synchronized reporting cycles for the Convention, the Cartagena Protocol and the Nagoya Protocol, with common deadlines for submission of the reports after 2020;

(b) A common approach to the format of the national reports under the Convention and its Protocols;

(c) Gradual integration of the reporting facilities available in the clearing-house mechanism, the Biosafety Clearing-House and the Access and Benefit-Sharing Clearing-House;

(d) Appropriate cross-linkages between future strategic plans of the Convention and its Protocols with a view to facilitating alignment in reporting to the Convention and its Protocols;

8. These elements are each addressed in turn in this section which focuses on opportunities for a gradual alignment of national reporting processes and explores options arising from the elements listed in the decision, while taking into account the following considerations:

(a) The Convention and its Protocols are distinct legal instruments with specific obligations to their contracting Parties;

(b) National reports provide essential information at a specified point in time to enable the respective governing bodies to keep implementation of the instrument under review and to make decisions on future direction;

(c) Information requirements in the reporting format depend on the focus and goals of implementation strategies adopted under each instrument at a given time;

(d) Consequently, distinct reporting formats have been developed under each instrument to fulfil need for specific information requirements;

9. In addition, the following considerations have been taken into account with respect to online reporting tools and clearing-houses. Online reporting tools:

- (a) have the potential to streamline submission of information to the secretariat, while at the same time ensuring Party ownership of submitted information and reports;
- (b) facilitate the sharing of information through the clearing-houses of the Convention and its Protocols, and the opportunity to keep this information up-to-date;
- (c) enable pre-filling portions of the report where information exists elsewhere, and in particular earlier reports to the convention and its protocols;
- (d) enable harvesting the information provided by countries through their reports to populate other relevant sections of the clearing-houses; and
- (e) facilitate the wider sharing of reported information with other conventions and processes, where this is relevant and appropriate.

Synchronized reporting cycles with common deadlines after 2020

10. To date, national reports under the Convention and the Cartagena Protocol have been scheduled approximately in intervals of four years, enabling every second meeting of the respective governing bodies to review progress in implementation on the basis of information provided by Parties. National reports to the Convention had deadlines in 1997, 2001, 2005, 2009, 2014 and 2018. National reports to the Cartagena Protocol had deadlines in 2007, 2011 and 2015 (with an interim report in 2005 prior to first national report). In accordance with decision CP VIII/10, the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is expected to consider the reporting format for its fourth national report on the basis of documentation prepared for the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation. ² The interim national report to the Nagoya Protocol had a deadline in 2017 and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties is also expected to consider the intervals for reporting at its third meeting in November 2018.

11. Synchronized reporting cycles for the Convention, the Cartagena Protocol and the Nagoya Protocol would imply the preparation in parallel of these reports by countries, thereby facilitating coordination of the preparation process and potentially bringing together any support activities such as capacity-building and the mobilization of financial resources. Common deadlines for the submission of the reports would also ensure that the review of implementation of the three instruments could be done in a more integrated manner during the concurrent meetings of the governing bodies of the Convention and its Protocols, and, as appropriate by the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, in preparation for these meetings.

12. The deadline for the three reports should be timed so as to inform a timely review of implementation, possibly at mid-term, of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework while providing sufficient time for the full analysis of the information contained in the reports. A possible way forward would be to synchronize the reporting cycles under the Convention and its Protocols after 2020 by setting a common deadline for the submission of the national reports, for example in 2023, with approximately four-year reporting intervals thereafter. Such a deadline would enable the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair

² CBD/SBI/2/13

and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to draw on the national reports to provide guidance on further implementation of the three instruments in the context of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

13. Furthermore, a deadline in 2023 would represent a continuation of the reporting cycle under the Convention and the Cartagena Protocol. On the other hand it would represent a long gap from the 2017 interim national report on the Nagoya Protocol. If a deadline for the synchronized report is set to 2023, the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol might wish to consider possible ways of addressing this gap, including the possibility of inviting Parties to update the information provided in their interim national reports in 2019, as appropriate, and to request any new Parties (as well as any Parties that have not already submitted their interim national reports) to submit a national report by 2019.

Common approach to the format

14. The formats for the national reports to the Convention and the Protocols need to be designed in such a way that they facilitate the transmission of information and its analysis according to the requirements of the respective instrument at the particular time. Largely as a result of this, the formats under the Convention and the Cartagena Protocol have evolved over time. Amongst other things, this has had implications for the use of automated analytical tools and the ability to aggregate information across individual reports.

15. Reflections on issues common approaches to the reporting formats might focus on:

(a) Favours questions with binary, numerical, multiple-choice or otherwise quantifiable responses to facilitate the analysis of disaggregated data (for example, by gender, geographic regions, economic integration areas, etc.), identification of trends over time, and the use of graphic tools to display results;

(b) Providing appropriate space for entries in narrative format which can contextualize the quantitative information;

(c) Pre-filling fields with the latest information available elsewhere in the clearing-houses of the Convention and its Protocols and/or with information provided in previous reports, as appropriate, and allowing the users to verify or revise such entries;

(d) Favours the use of cross-references, including through hyperlinks and document uploading, to relevant information stored elsewhere such as national websites, publications and reports submitted under other instruments;

(e) Coordinated questions across the convention and its protocols relating to implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, recognizing that this is expected to address the Convention and its protocols.

16. At the same time, it may be noted that, the protocols, in contrast to the Convention, include more provisions with specific procedural obligations, and that thus it is possible that some differences in the reporting formats will need to be maintained.

Gradual integration of the reporting facilities

17. The Clearing-house Mechanism of the Convention, the Biosafety Clearing-House and the ABS Clearing-House represent essential tools for technical and scientific cooperation, and the exchange of information as well as to enable the review of compliance under the Protocols. Significant efforts are being undertaken to develop a common infrastructure for the three clearing-houses as part of implementation of the web strategy for the Convention and its Protocols, in line with the Framework for a Communications Strategy, as requested in paragraph 15(i) of decision XIII/23.

18. The online reporting tools for the sixth national report under the Convention, the financial reporting framework, and the interim report on the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol are already part of the CHM Information Submission Services that use the new infrastructure, while other parts of the CHM, the CBD website and the entire Biosafety Clearing-House are gradually being migrated to this new infrastructure. Technical details, including on common portal accounts, design, and access are available in the updated web strategy³ requested in paragraph 15(j) of the decision XIII/23 and supporting technical documentation on its implementation.

19. Efforts are being pursued to apply the most advanced and appropriate analytical tools across all instruments and to display information in ways that are more user-friendly, interactive and suitable for communication across various websites of the Convention and its Protocols as well as other relevant web pages and portals. To date, as part of this integration:

(a) The Biosafety Clearing-House and ABS Clearing-House offer a report analyser tool which allows users to select sections or questions of interest, compare results by region or country and visualize the number of responses and averages. The analyser has been used in the third assessment and review of the Cartagena Protocol to compare information between the latest national reports against baseline information submitted four years prior. The analyser will also allow future national reports on the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol to be compared the interim national report with in order to gauge and visualize progress. The analyser tool could be applied to information that is provided in binary, numerical, multiple-choice or otherwise quantifiable formats across all reporting processes under the Convention.

(b) Geographic display of information has been implemented for the financial reporting framework and for the sixth national report under the Convention.

20. The process of integrating reporting facilities is continuous and gradual. Ultimately, it aims to offer seamless access to all information facilities related to the reporting processes under the Convention and its Protocols and to provide operational consistency for the submission, retrieval, analysis and communication of information derived from national reports. Consideration will also be given to integrating the decision-tracking tool⁴ with reporting facilities. At the same time it will provide a consistent approach to restricting access while reports and/or submissions are in development, and ongoing confidentiality where this is necessary.

³ CBD/SBI/2/9

⁴ CBD/SBI/2/11, addressed under agenda item 12

21. To align the guidance provided by the Informal Advisory Committees for each Clearing-House draft joint modalities of operation are being considered under item 10 of the agenda of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation. Meanwhile steps have already been taken to increase interaction between the Informal Advisory Committees, including through joint sessions.

Cross-linkages between future strategic plans of the Convention and its Protocols

22. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (decision X/2) and the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety for the period 2011-2020 (decision BS-V/16) will expire at the end of the decade. Considerations on the process for the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity are being discussed under agenda item 16, noting that should cover the Convention and consider its Protocols as appropriate (paragraph 34 of decision XIII/1).

23. The way in which a post-2020 global biodiversity framework and any tools guiding the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols are interlinked would be expected to have implications for the choice of solutions for the alignment of the reporting format under the Convention and its Protocols.

24. It will therefore be essential to clearly articulate how any future global biodiversity framework and associated tools guide the respective implementation of the Convention and its Protocols. A logical and detailed understanding of the interlinkages and associated implementation of the respective instruments could help to facilitate a more integrated review of implementation of the Convention and its Protocols, including through better alignment of reporting formats and associated reporting tools such as indicators.

IV. OPTIONS FOR ENHANCING SYNERGY ON NATIONAL REPORTING AMONG BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS AND RIO CONVENTIONS

25. As noted in the introduction, the Conference of the Parties, in decision XIII/27, requested the Executive Secretary to explore options for enhancing synergy on national reporting among the biodiversity-related conventions and Rio conventions. In this respect, the Conference of the Parties requested consideration of the following possibilities, which are addressed, in turn, in this section:

- (a) Common sets of indicators, where appropriate;
- (b) Common reporting modules on shared issues;
- (c) Interoperability of information management and reporting systems; and
- (d) Harmonization of tools for national reporting;

26. In addition, in decision XIII/24, the Conference of the Parties invited the governing bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions to further strengthen cooperation and coordination at the global level within their respective mandates and enhance synergies among themselves, to encourage mutually supportive decisions, pursue their efforts to align their own strategies with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets and to support implementation of the options for action by Parties contained in annex I and the road map contained in annex II of the decision. The road map includes a section dedicated to “Enhancing management of and avoiding duplication related to information and knowledge, national reporting, monitoring and indicators” (section C). The informal advisory group on synergies among the biodiversity-related Conventions, established pursuant to decision XIII/24, considered

national reporting in reviewing the road map at its first meeting from 17 to 18 December 2017. The report of the group will be considered by the Subsidiary Body on Implementation under agenda item X.5

Common sets of indicators

27. In decision X/28, the Conference of the Parties emphasized the advantages of aligning the indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and those of the Sustainable Development Goals and other relevant processes, noted that shared indicators must be reviewed to determine the degree to which they are suitable for each use, and stressed the role of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership in this regard.

28. The Biodiversity Indicators Partnership and its website have been instrumental in promoting the availability of indicators and their potential multiple uses for the biodiversity-related conventions, the Sustainable Development Goals, and potentially the other Rio Conventions. This has included the use of indicators at global and national scales. It has also promoted thematic and geographical disaggregations of indicators, as well as the development of new indicators, thereby adding value to the existing data and generating new evidence.

29. The list of indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 annexed to decision XIII/28 contains a total of 40 indicators used or being developed for assessing progress towards the 169 targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. The significant use of common indicators reflects the representation of biodiversity-relevant elements across many Sustainable Development Goals and points to the multiple connections and nexus areas between biodiversity and other matters addressed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This facilitates the use of the same indicators by multiple institutions and processes and points to the value of disaggregations of global datasets (such as the indicators based on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species) to provide targeted information for multiple policy processes.

30. Several indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals are under active development involving a range of partners, including the secretariats of biodiversity-related conventions and Rio conventions and other partners. This includes the development, by UN Water under the lead of UNESCO of an indicator for Target 6.6 (“By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes”). It also includes the development, by members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests under the lead of FAO of an indicator for Target 15.2 (“By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally”). Further details on collaboration among the are contained in members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests is contained in document SBI/2/10/Add.2 considered under agenda item 11.

31. With regard to Target 15.3 (“By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world”), the Conference of the Parties, in decision X/35, requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and, as far as possible, the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as other relevant partners, to inter alia identify common

indicators between the ten-year strategic plan of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the 2010 biodiversity target and Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

32. The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (recommendation XIX/4, paragraph 10) called for continued collaboration with (i) the Inter-agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goals indicators under the United Nations Statistical Commission, in order to reflect the multiple links between the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Targets, and the Sustainable Development Goals and (ii) with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) on the further operationalization of the three land-based progress indicators (trends in land cover, trends in land productivity or functioning of the land, and trends in carbon stock above and below ground) set out in UNCCD decision XX/COP.12.

33. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Statistics Division, United Nations Environment, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and Convention on Biological Diversity developed the methodology for the indicator “Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area” and its three sub-indicators (land cover, land productivity and carbon stocks), which has been accepted by the Inter-agency and Expert Group as a Tier II indicator. The indicator is now being used by more than 100 countries participating in the UNCCD’s Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme. From 2018 onwards, and every four years thereafter, the UNCCD reporting process will contribute to the follow-up of progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In line with UNCCD decision 15/COP.13, the information compiled in national reports will be used by the UNCCD secretariat, in its capacity as custodian agency for SDG indicator 15.3.1, to contribute to the overall follow-up and review by the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The indicator is also included in list of indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 contained in decision XIII/28.

34. The majority of the indicators used by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for the regional and global assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem services are from among those listed in decision XIII/28. The additional indicators may also be of interest for the Convention and the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership will continue to attract indicator providers into the partnership.

Common reporting modules on shared issues

35. In the document prepared by UNEP with the support of the European Union, Switzerland and Finland, entitled “Elaboration of options for enhancing synergies among biodiversity-related Conventions”⁶, options for enhancing synergies in reporting include: (a) exploring the possible benefits of using a shared modular reporting approach, and developing and testing such an approach by addressing the identified benefits; (b) exploring coherence in reporting through supporting indicator development and monitoring; (c) further developing online reporting and information management systems and continuing working to ensure their interoperability; (d) continuing support for reporting processes through joint capacity building activities; (e) increasing reporting on enhanced synergies across the conventions.

⁶ <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/9967/elaborations-options-enhancing-synergies.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

36. The first option above was further supported by a detailed study⁷ undertaken by UNEP-WCMC and NatureConsult, with the support of Switzerland, on “Elements of a modular reporting approach against the Aichi Biodiversity Targets”. The study found that a modular approach to reporting could foster synergies at national, regional and global levels by highlighting interlinkages between different processes, taking advantage of similarities and overlaps in the information submitted through separate reporting processes, and by organising the activities and information required, into a series of modules of relevance to several processes, so as to avoid having to reproduce the same information in several reports. Following a detailed review of the reporting processes and guidelines/formats of all the biodiversity-related conventions, the study noted that national reports of all the biodiversity-related Conventions will contribute information to assessment of progress towards the Aichi Targets. For example, the national reports to CMS and Ramsar Convention are expected to broadly contribute information of relevance to each Aichi Biodiversity Target. The reporting processes under CITES can contribute substantial information that can be used for reporting against Aichi Biodiversity Target 12, in particular, however through their Implementation reports, CITES parties are also expected to produce information of relevance to Aichi Biodiversity Targets 1-4, 6, 12 and 14-20. The reporting template for the national reports to ITPGRFA indicate that Contracting Parties to the Treaty will report on issues of relevance to Aichi biodiversity Targets 2, 9, 11-14 and 18-20. Under WHC, States Parties will produce information of relevance, primarily for Aichi Biodiversity Target 11, however through their periodic reports also for Targets 1, 4-5, 8-14 and 18-20 (p. 37).

37. The Workshop on Synergies among the biodiversity-related Conventions held in Geneva in February 2016⁸ identified options for global actions for common reporting which include determining different and common elements of the reporting for each biodiversity-related Convention building on the work undertaken by UNEP-WCMC and others.

38. The Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions (JLG) at its 14th meeting held in August 2016 discussed options for increasing synergies in reporting to the Rio Conventions. The meeting agreed on the need for a permanent working group of the Joint Liaison Group to take up issues related to the synergies in reporting, among others, noting however that more coordination is needed to establish such a working group and to initiate its work. This was in the context of recognition by the 12th meeting of the Joint Liaison Group held in January 2013 that having a single template for reporting under the three Rio conventions would be hardly achievable and ultimately of limited impact, because of convention-specific information to be provided by country Parties, difference in reporting entities and relating reporting obligations, and difference in reporting and review timeframes under the three conventions⁹.

39. The main work on synergies among the Rio Convention in the past two years has focused on the development of indicators as elaborated in the sub-section above.

Interoperability of information management and reporting systems

⁷ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/cop/cop-13/information/cop-13-inf-24-en.pdf>.

⁸ <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/BRCWS-2016-01>

⁹ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/reports/jlg-12-report-en.pdf>.

40. InforMEA, the United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environment Agreements (www.informe.org) harvests information from over 20 MEAs in order to present it in an integrated way. The Portal offers a search facility into MEA texts and governing body decisions, internationally agreed goals, national legislation and jurisprudence, and provides detailed Party and Treaty profiles with ratification status, focal points, national reports and action plans. InforMEA is facilitated by UN Environment, financially supported by the European Union and steered by the InforMEA Initiative which includes over 30 global and regional Multilateral Environmental Agreements and benefits from the involvement of 5 UN entities and the International Union for Nature Conservation.

41. During the past year, InforMEA has continued its work to integrate information from multilateral environmental agreements and other sources into a single interface. As an active member of InforMEA, the Convention shares Parties' national reports and NBSAPs with the portal. Over 1,000 CBD national reports and NBSAPs are available through the portal. This automated sharing allows for increased access to information of national reports from all relevant MEAs and InforMEA is planning to look at opportunities for increasing access the content of reports to facilitate the enhanced use of reported information.

42. The InforMEA Initiative is also involved in the Data and Reporting Tool (DART) project, whose goal is to create collective national working spaces that will help organize, share and maintain documentation in the context of national reports. The use of the same working space by several reporters is expected to foster communication and cooperation at the national level and to facilitate the re-use of information in the spirit of "enter once, re-use several times". Integrating national biodiversity information in one place may also be of value in the context of analysing MEA-related information against SDGs and ultimately demonstrating the contribution of MEAs towards Agenda 2030. Being hosted on InforMEA, the DART will also draw from the neutral InforMEA infrastructure supported by many participating MEAs and institutions and its approach to connecting data sources.

43. As suggested by the European Commission, the online reporting tool for the sixth national report of the Convention has been made interoperable with the EU Biodiversity Target Cross-Linking Tool, considering that both tools serve the same process, i.e. the delivery of national/regional information of progress in implementation of the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 - 2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The Target Cross-Linking Tool aims at supporting users/countries in the maintenance and organisation of key components such as cross-linkages between national, European and Global biodiversity strategies and indicators used at national level, thus facilitating reporting not only to the Convention on Biological Diversity but also to other biodiversity-related conventions.

44. The Secretariat is looking at options to make the online reporting tool of the Convention interoperable with the online reporting tools or systems being used by other biodiversity-related Conventions and the Rio Conventions so that relevant data and information can be exchanged or shared among the different systems.

Harmonization of tools for national reporting

45. Several biodiversity-related conventions and agreements (CMS and several of its agreements (AEWA, EUROBATS, ASCOBANS, SHARKS MoU), CITES, Ramsar, ITPGRFA, and Bern Convention) have adopted the same online reporting system managed by the World

Conservation Monitoring Centre. This facilitates access and interoperability of biodiversity-related data.

46. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity decided to develop its own online reporting tool which was operationalized in March 2017, responding to a request contained in decision XII/29, paragraph 4. In the process of development of the tool, the Secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions and the Rio Conventions as well as FAO and UNEP-WCMC were invited to test the tool and provide their inputs and suggestions. Members of the Informal Advisory Committee of the Clearing House Mechanism were instrumental in this process. In addition, in the online reporting tool for the sixth national report, links are provided to the national reports and relevant datasets of the biodiversity-related conventions and the Rio Conventions so that countries can use or refer to relevant information contained in national reports they have submitted to other related Conventions.

Proposed options for enhancing synergies in reporting to the biodiversity-related conventions and the Rio Conventions

47. The greatest leverage and impact for enhancing synergies in reporting to the biodiversity-related Conventions is at the level of alignment of goals and targets which would facilitate the identification of common indicators to support action planning and reporting of progress. The preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework provides an opportunity to promote further alignment of the Convention on Biological Diversity with the other biodiversity-related Conventions and Rio Conventions, and the following proposed options should be considered in this context.

48. Being aware of this, and based on relevant work undertaken so far, in particular studies prepared by Switzerland, UNEP and UNEP-WCMC, and the InforMEA Initiative as well as suggestions from the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related conventions, the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions and the informal advisory group on synergies among biodiversity-related conventions, the following options are proposed:

(a) It is essential to continue ongoing consultations among the Secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions including through the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related conventions, while developing the post-2020 biodiversity strategic frameworks so that all the related Conventions will work within similar strategic frameworks where possible, which would be a fundamental step for enhancing synergies in reporting to the related Conventions;

(b) Developing or identifying a common set of indicators for reporting would be valuable for enhancing synergies in reporting and demonstrating common approaches and concerns. Relevant coordination activities undertaken so far (including CBD indicators, SDG indicators, indicators for measuring the implementation of the Paris Agreement, indicators for Land Degradation Neutrality Goal, and the work of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership) have provided a solid basis for work in this regard;

(c) Options for common reporting frameworks will continue to be explored including through the careful analysis of the experiences and lessons learned from regional/national pilot projects implemented in this regard. Practical options to be developed will be helpful to facilitate increasing synergies in reporting to the related conventions at national and global level.

(d) Efforts need to be made to increase interoperability of reporting tools, data, information and knowledge management systems of the biodiversity-related Conventions, the Rio Conventions and relevant international organizations (FAO, etc.) will enhance synergies in reporting by facilitating cross-referencing to and sharing of relevant data and information.

(e) It is increasingly important to adhere to commonly agreed definitions and metadata standards, such as species taxonomies, internationally agreed goals/targets/indicators, environmental institutions and geographical denominations in order to ensure information collected through different reporting systems can be meaningfully analysed at an aggregated level.

V. SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

49. To be completed
