

MISSION REPORT

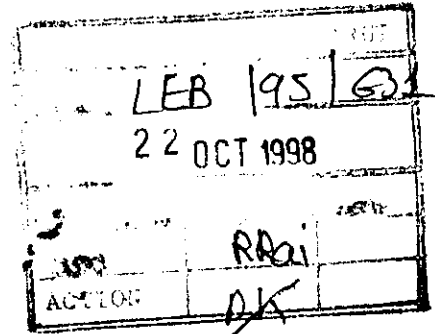
3-10 October 1998

NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AND COUNTRY REPORT TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES, CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

REPUBLIC OF LEBANON

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IUCN - The World Conservation Union

See Annex 1 for List of Abbreviations



BACKGROUND

1. A consultancy was carried out during 3-10 October 1998 to assist with final planning for the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) and reporting to the Conference of the Parties (CoP) for the Republic of Lebanon. Terms of Reference were as follows:

- assist the National Coordinator to plan an agenda for the biodiversity strategy and action plan
- assist the National Coordinator to review the whole process of the strategy and action plan
- review the process of reporting to the CoP
- assist the National Coordinator to prepare a prioritized action plan and related project proposals
- introduce the revised biodiversity training material
- submit a mission report.

Republic of Lebanon

Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform
Center for Public Sector Projects and Studies
(C.P.S.P.S.)

MAIN ACTIVITIES

2. The Terms of Reference were carried out in close cooperation with the National Project Coordinator (Project Manager), Dr. Michel Abi-Antoun. Other persons consulted during the mission are listed in Annex 2.

3. The Terms of Reference were carried out through the following activities:

- discussions with the Project Manager and members of the Technical Working Groups.
- discussions with members of the Project Steering Committee.
- discussions with the implementing agency (Ministry of Environment).
- discussions with the donor (UNDP).
- discussions with staff of related UNDP/Ministry of Environment projects.
- review of Technical Working Group reports and other project documents.

4. The project status at the time of this mission was as follows:
- the project timeframe, including the contracts of the PM and Administrative Assistant, is in the process of being extended to end of November 1998.
 - four provincial workshops (in north Lebanon, south Lebanon, the Bekaa Valley and Mount Lebanon areas), each attended by 75 to >100 people, have been held in order to identify and discuss goals, operational objectives and mechanisms for action related to biodiversity.
 - four Technical Working Groups (on Terrestrial Biodiversity, Freshwater Biodiversity, Marine Biodiversity and Agricultural Biodiversity) have prepared reports based on analyses of existing information and outputs of the provincial workshops.
 - a television spot and two posters have been prepared under the public awareness component of the project and are about to be launched.
 - the project's internet site is operational and is being maintained by SDNP.
5. Tasks remaining for completion of the project are:
- preparation of a draft strategy and action plan, based on the reports of the Technical Working Groups and additional inputs of the group members.
 - review of the draft strategy and action plan by socio-economic and legal consultants.
 - review and approval of the draft strategy and action plan by the Steering Committee at a second national workshop.
 - approval of the strategy and action plan by the Ministry of Environment and forwarding for higher level inter-ministerial or parliamentary approval.
 - preparation of reporting to the CBD.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BSAP Contents

Based on various generally accepted guidelines, the BSAP should:

- set out the justification for biodiversity conservation in the national context, including an assessment of the qualitative and quantitative values of biodiversity.
- identify priority biodiversity conservation issues, based on a defensible consensus.
- present the primary goals and objectives of biodiversity conservation within the national context.

- include an action plan that identifies priority actions to be undertaken to achieve the goals and objectives, including an indication of who will do it, when it will be done, and how much it will cost.

Approach to BSAP Write-up

- existing material should be utilized to the extent possible. This should include a review of the Lebanon country study and objectives and actions developed on a global basis and elsewhere in the region (as summarized in pages 16-31 of the report on the First National Workshop). Additional material related to threatened species, protected areas, rural areas, agriculture, freshwater wetlands, marine and coastal areas, and urban environments is contained in the training manual compiled for the project (Sections 11-17) and should also be reviewed.
- care needs to be taken in framing objectives and activities that there is always a clear focus on biodiversity, and its conservation/ sustainable use. Objectives and activities related to general environmental degradation, and/or that involve the use of non-indigenous species (e.g., regreening with exotic plants, fish farming with exotics) should be avoided or appropriately refocussed.
- objectives and activities should be derived from the country study to the extent possible, appropriately revised and added to based on recommendations from the national and provincial workshops. Objectives regarding biotechnology and biosafety, agrobiodiversity, international cooperation, and implementing the strategy should be added. Incentives and subsidies can be dealt with as a separate objective or as activities under one or more objectives.
- the write-up should be concise and short (e.g., easily readable in half an hour). Suggested length is 20-50 pages. Reasons: the more concise and to the point it is, the more people will read and understand it, including busy decision-makers; it will be easier to get government endorsement; and it will minimize editing, reproduction and distribution costs.
- the number of objectives and activities identified for implementation in the strategy and action plan should be manageable, but without diluting the recommendations and conclusions of the Technical Working Groups. It will likely be necessary/desirable to rework and combine similar or overlapping objectives and activities. There are no "rules" for determining an appropriate number of objectives and activities, but as a guideline Kuwait's strategy contains 12 objectives each supported by between 4 and 16 proposed actions, while Zanzibar's contains 8 objectives, each supported by up to 15 proposed actions. The World Conservation Strategy contains 21 objectives, supported by 85 associated actions.
- the final draft should be edited for grammar, punctuation, clarity and consistency by a professional editor in close consultation with the PM (the latter to ensure that changes in meaning are not inadvertently introduced).

BSAP Outline: Option 1

One approach to developing the BSAP write-up is to base it on an outline which includes the required elements in a logical sequence (i.e., justification, issues, goals and objectives, action plan) and to "invent" the level of detail and contents of each section from there. The disadvantage of this approach is that it could easily result in an unstructured or uneven document, and that it would probably take several iterations to get it right. Given the time constraints, a better approach is probably offered by Option 2 below.

BSAP Outline: Option 2

A second approach to developing the BSAP write-up is to review existing BSAPs to find a suitable format, and adapt this to the Lebanon situation. The BSAP for Kuwait is particularly well-structured and it is recommended that consideration be given to adopting this format. One of the most attractive elements of the Kuwait BSAP structure is that it provides a rationale (analysis), identifies constraints, identifies the required strategic response, and lays out an agenda and schedule for action all together under each objective. This eliminates the need for flipping back and forth between a strategy and action plan, and is probably a better approach than developing a strategy and action plan separately, as some BSAPs have done. If this format is adopted an appropriate outline for Lebanon's BSAP might be:

1. Lebanon's Response to the Convention on Biodiversity (1-2 pages, describing date of signing and ratification of the CBD, Lebanon's view of its responsibilities under the Convention and how these have been/are being dealt with).
2. Status of Biodiversity in Lebanon (2-3 pages, briefly summarizing numbers of species, species under threat etc.).
 - 2.1 Terrestrial Biodiversity
 - 2.2 Freshwater Biodiversity
 - 2.3 Marine Biodiversity
 - 2.4 Agricultural Biodiversity
3. Current Capacity for Biodiversity Management (1-2 pages, briefly summarizing existing legislative, institutional and educational capacities).
4. Purpose: 1- 2 sentences - 1/2 page, outlining the overall purpose of the BSAP: e.g., to provide a national framework for the protection, restoration, sustainable use and monitoring of all biodiversity in Lebanon).
5. Guiding Principles: 1-2 pages, listing principles of biodiversity conservation as accepted by Lebanon (e.g., see Kuwait strategy pp. 7-8; Canadian Biodiversity Strategy p. 17; World Conservation Strategy pp. 59-61).
6. The Strategy and Action Plan: goals (or objectives) and related activities, using the following outline for each priority objective. Most of this information can be pulled out of the consultant's reports. The write-up for each objective should be maximum 2-3 pages each.

Objective: clear one sentence statement of objective, based (as far as possible) on the 13 elements identified in the country study, appropriately modified and added to according to the consensus of the provincial and national workshops. It may be useful to reorder these and any additional objectives under subheadings as is done in the Kuwait strategy.

Analysis (or Rationale): brief, clear statement of the issues surrounding the objective, indicating why it is important.

Main Constraints: brief (one paragraph) identification of constraints (information gaps, inadequate legislation, lack of institutional capacity etc.).

Strategic Response: brief (one paragraph) statement of how the objective will be approached (special studies, legislation, incentives, institutional development, assignment of main responsibility etc.).

Agenda for Action: listing of activities (one sentence each) of activities to be undertaken, divided into immediate (within 1-3 years), medium-term (within 3-5 years), long-term (within 5-10 years). Estimated costing to be provided as possible/appropriate.

Targets and Indicators: one paragraph description of targets that will be used for meeting the objectives, and indicators that will be used for tracking results. This section is not included in the Kuwait BSAP but it is recommended as a means for documenting and reporting progress (see also "Reporting Process to CoP" below).

Other Reports

It is recommended that at minimum the following reporting be produced under separate cover from the BSAP:

- technical reports from each team of consultants (i.e., terrestrial biodiversity, marine biodiversity, freshwater biodiversity and agrobiodiversity working groups). It would be most useful if these followed the same general format (background, issues, recommended priority objectives and activities). These reports should be part of the project documentation, but as all recommendations will not be included in the BSAP and/or may be modified, they should not be part of the formal BSAP requiring government endorsement.
- portfolio of priority projects (for donor information).

Finalization of Training Manual

- the "training manual" provides a useful compendium of information on biodiversity planning. It should be subject to a final spellcheck and minor editorial changes as outlined below, reproduced and distributed to relevant agencies, and archived along with the other reports (see above) produced by the project. Major revisions at this point will not be helpful to completion of the project.

- based on discussions with the PM and UNDP focal point, it is recommended that the title be changed to "Compendium of Background Information on Biodiversity Planning" or similar, and to insert a foreword clearly indicating the target audience (technical working group members and other project participants, academics, government staff who need to be sensitized to the biodiversity planning process). It is important to remove the "training" implication, as this has to date inhibited its use by project participants who are expert in their own fields. **Note:** action by IUCN.

Reporting Process to CoP

Strategy and Action Plan

- Article 6 of the CBD requires each nation that ratifies it to develop and implement a national strategy for the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of biological resources.
- Article 26 of the CBD requires each contracting party to present periodic reports on measures taken for the implementation of the provisions of the Convention and their effectiveness in meeting the objectives of the Convention.
- according to the CBD Secretariat in Montreal (T. Gross, Environmental Affairs Officer (National Reporting), CBD Secretariat, pers. comm.) there are no specific CBD guidelines for the preparation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans except for that contained in paragraph 13 of Decision II/17 (CoP-2, Jakarta, 1995):

"Commends the guidance provided in the document "Guidelines for Preparation of Biodiversity Country Studies", prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme, and the document "National Biodiversity Planning: Guidelines Based on Early Country Experiences", prepared by the World Resources Institute, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Conservation Union (IUCN), and its relevance in assisting Parties to implement Article 6 of the Convention and in preparation of national reports."

- the Secretariat appreciates receiving copies of national strategies and action plans for their information and reference, but submission of these is not equivalent to the requirements for national reporting and should not be confused with same (T. Gross pers. comm.).

First National Report

- Decision II/17 indicates that the focus of the first set of national reports (as due 1 January 1998) should be on implementation of Article 6.
- reporting requirements are reviewed in detail in the Annex to Decision II/17 (Appendix 3 Part I attached), the UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA publication "Further guidelines for the preparation of national reports" (Appendix 3 Part II attached) and the CBD Secretariat Publication "Scientific and technical information to be included in national reports" (Appendix 3 Part III attached).

- the report "Strengthening the first set of national reports under the Convention on Biological Diversity. A discussion paper on indicators, targets and other types of information that could be included in the first national reports by CBD Parties" (Cohen et al. 1997) provides a set of 17 questions that could be addressed in first national reports, and that are also relevant to follow-up reporting on questions associated with Article 6 and Article 7 implementation. It is recommended that this paper be reviewed and the relevant questions answered on submission of the BSAP to CoP. Note that many of the questions can be answered simply by referring to the relevant section(s) of the BSAP.
- the "Report of the Sixth Global Biodiversity Forum. Exploring biodiversity indicators and targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity, U.N. Headquarters, New York, 1997" provides additional insight into the development of relevant targets and indicators.

Interim Reports

- Decision IV/14 (CoP IV, Bratislava, 1998) encourages those Parties that have submitted interim reports to submit a full report **as soon as they are in a position to do so**, and urges those that have yet to submit their first national report to do so as soon as they can and, in any event, no later than 31 December 1998.
- the interim report submitted by Lebanon in January 1998 has been received by the CBD Secretariat (T. Gross, pers. comm.).

Recommendation 1: on completion of the BSAP by the project, submit a full report based on the guidelines in the Annex to Decision II/17 (Appendix 3 Part I attached), and considering to the extent possible the recommendations and guidelines in the other publications referenced above.

Recommendation 2: attach a copy of the BSAP to the full report, indicating the BSAP's approval status in a covering letter and in the report itself.

Future National Reports

- Decision IV/14 requests the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, at its fourth meeting, to consider the report of the Executive Secretary and to provide the Conference of the Parties, at its fifth meeting, with advice on the intervals and form of future national reports, taking into account the elements contained in the annex to the present decision. This advice should cover the nature of the information needed from Parties in order to assess the state of implementation of the Convention; recommendations on improving the reporting process, through guidelines on format, style, length and treatment with a view to ensuring comparability between national reports; and identification of ways and means to further facilitate national implementation of the Convention.

Annex to Decision IV/14

Elements for the recommendation of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice on the preparation of national reports

1. A standard format should be developed which would allow comparability, but provide enough flexibility to give appropriate scope to reflect national conditions and capacities.
2. The focus of subsequent national reports should be consistent with the work programme of the Convention, taking into account decisions of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
3. Information contained in national reports should include, insofar as possible, a report on the progress of the implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans, and on lessons learned, including identification of gaps in national capacity for policy research and analysis, along with technical and financial requirements for meeting needs identified in the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and the possible use of nationally developed indicators.
4. Parties are encouraged to consider the participation of all relevant stakeholders in the preparation and use of national reports.

Schedule

In order to complete the BSAP by end of November 1998 the remaining work will need to be very carefully scheduled. The following timetable is suggested:

by 31 October 1998

- consultant's reports (revised to standard format) all received.
- draft BSAP completed and distributed to all national consultants (including socio-economics and legal consultants) for comments.

by 15 November 1998

- additional inputs of national consultants incorporated.
- presentation and review of revised draft BSAP to Steering Committee.
- presentation and review of revised draft BSAP at second national workshop.

by 30 November 1998

- completion of BSAP.

by 31 December 1998

- endorsement of BSAP by MoE on behalf of government.
- forwarding of BSAP and other reporting required to update interim report to CoP.

Terms of Reference for Socioeconomic Consultant

- review the socioeconomic component of the country study.
- assist the PM and national consultants with the development of socioeconomic activities and with the costing of proposed activities, as requested.
- review the draft BSAP to 1) ensure that socioeconomic issues are adequately addressed, and 2) assess the social and economic implications (costs and benefits) of actions proposed for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

- attend the second national workshop and assist with the presentation of the draft strategy and action plan. Note all discussion and relevant comments and assist with final revisions to the BSAP.
- advise on appropriate mechanisms for observing and measuring the impacts of the strategy and action plan on economic and social indicators.
- provide a written report on these activities.

Terms of Reference for Legal Consultant

- assist the PM and national consultants with the development of legislative activities, activities related to international treaties etc., as requested.
- review the draft BSAP to 1) ensure that legislative and international treaty issues are adequately addressed, and 2) assess the legal implications of actions proposed for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.
- attend the second national workshop and assist with the presentation of the draft strategy and action plan. Note all discussion and relevant comments and assist with final revisions to the BSAP.
- prepare a written report on these activities.

APPENDIX 1

ABBREVIATIONS

BSAP - Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

CBD - Convention on Biological Diversity

CoP - Conference of the Parties (of the Convention on Biodiversity)

PM - Project Manager

SDNP - Sustainable Development Networking Program

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

APPENDIX 2

LIST OF PERSONS CONSULTED

Michel Abi-Antoun, Project Manager, Biodiversity Project, Ministry of Environment, Beirut, Lebanon.

Faisal Abu-Izzeddin, Project Manager, Protected Areas Project, Ministry of Environment, Beirut, Lebanon.

Georges Akl, Project Manager, Sustainable Development Networking Program, Ministry of Environment, Beirut, Lebanon.

Dima Al-Khatib, Program Assistant (Environment), UNDP, Beirut, Lebanon.

Rachid Ayadi, Acting Resident Representative, UNDP, Beirut, Lebanon.

Talal Chartouni, Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Environment, Beirut, Lebanon.

Alia El-Husseini, National Coordinator, Lebanon IUCN National Committee, and NGO Specialist, Capacity 21, Ministry of Environment, Beirut, Lebanon.

Ghassan El-Zein, Member, Fresh Water Biodiversity Technical Working Group, Biodiversity Project, Ministry of Environment, Beirut, Lebanon.

Mostapha Haidar, Leader, Agrobiodiversity Technical Working Group, Biodiversity Project, Ministry of Environment, Beirut, Lebanon.

Simon Jahshan, Administrative Assistant, Protected Areas Project, Ministry of Environment, Beirut, Lebanon.

John Marsh, Professor, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada, and Advisor, Protected Areas Project, Ministry of Environment, Beirut, Lebanon.

Elias Matli, Director-General, Ministry of Environment, Beirut, Lebanon.

Francis Parakatil, Regional Programme Coordinator, West/Central Asia and North Africa, IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.

Samir Safi, Leader, Terrestrial Biodiversity Technical Working Group, Biodiversity Project, Ministry of Environment, Beirut, Lebanon.

Lara Samaha, Government Focal Point, Biodiversity Project, Ministry of Environment, Beirut, Lebanon.

Hala Schmeid, Administrative Assistant, Biodiversity Project, Ministry of Environment, Beirut, Lebanon.

Rami Zreik, Member, Agrobiodiversity Technical Working Group, Biodiversity Project,
Ministry of Environment, Beirut, Lebanon.

APPENDIX 3, PART I

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR NATIONAL REPORTING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 6

(Annex to Decision II/17, CoP-2, Jakarta, 1995)

- (a) Executive summary: a brief summary of the action plan report, stating succinctly the importance of biodiversity, the commitment to the Convention, the mandate, the participants list, the biotic wealth and national capacity, the goals and gaps, strategic recommendations and characteristics of the action (who will do what, when, where, with what means and funding).
- (b) Introduction: describe why biodiversity is important to the country and its local communities. Explain the Convention and the nation's commitment to its provisions. Present the aim of the national biodiversity action plan and specify to whom it is directed.
- (c) Background: describe the legal and policy framework that provides the mandate and instructions for preparing the action plan report. Provide a short summary of the nation's biotic assets, capacity (human resources, institutions, facilities and funding, and ongoing programmes). Explain the institutional arrangements and responsibilities, with a view to informing people of the manner in which the strategic recommendations will be implemented.
- (d) Goals and objectives: state the vision for biodiversity and its place in the society, focusing on its protection, scientific understanding, sustainable use, and on the equitable sharing of its benefits and costs. The specific targets to meet the local, national, and international goals in terms of protecting, assessing, utilizing, and benefiting from biodiversity and its components need to be determined.
- (e) Strategy: summarize the gaps between the current situation in the country and the shared vision, goals and objectives. Summarize the strategic recommendations, including the activities, policies and tasks that have been selected for implementation to cover the gaps. Assign relative priorities to each.
- (f) Partners: describe the public and private entities, communities and industries that have participated in the process and have agreed to be responsible for particular activities and investments.
- (g) Action: present the detailed activities, tasks and policies to be implemented. Explain which partner (Ministry, industry, indigenous group, NGO or university) will implement each item, where and what measures the partners will employ.
- (h) Schedule: present a timetable for the implementation of the various tasks, reflecting the priorities that have been assigned. Note signposts to help signal progress or delay.
- (i) Budget: provide the budget for the plan of action, showing funding requirements for operating expenses, capital purchases, transport, field costs, etc. List the personnel needed

by category of skill or background, the facilities and services required, and possible international technical and financial cooperation.

(j) Monitoring and evaluation: explain the measures to be used for tracking the results of the action plan and for monitoring changes in the economy, environment and society. Give the indicators that will be used. Present the individuals and organizations who will carry these responsibilities and how they were selected. Note the audience for the reports, along with the document's content and timing of implementation.

(k) Sharing of national experience: present information and case studies which reflect the range of experiences of countries encountered in the implementation of Article 6, taking into account local and external factors.

APPENDIX 3, PART II

FURTHER GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF NATIONAL REPORTS

Draft for discussion and comment

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/Inf. 16

10 August 1997

Original: English

Advanced Unedited Copy

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Contracting Parties are in the process of preparing national reports for submission to the Secretariat at the beginning of January, prior to the forthcoming Conference of the Parties (CoP) in Bratislava, Slovakia. A number of Contracting Parties have expressed the need for clearer guidance on the form and content of national reports, and it is recognised that, if the reporting objectives of the Convention are to be achieved, these reports will need to be accurate, comparable and useful.

2. Development of more detailed guidelines for use by Contracting Parties will certainly help achieve greater clarity and utility, and will also assist Contracting Parties by giving them a clearer outline to follow. Guidelines will also contribute to the process of harmonisation of reporting with other Conventions. Recognising this, the Commonwealth Secretariat has contracted the World Conservation Monitoring Centre to compile guidelines for national reporting which draw together and build on existing advice and decision.

3. Guidelines for National Reporting are therefore being compiled which aim to assist Contracting Parties by providing a framework which:

- relates directly to the text of the Convention
- is based on information required by CoP Decision
- takes account of related SBSTTA discussion
- takes account of other guidelines recommended by CoP Decision
- is based on information that would be required by Contracting Parties anyway in monitoring their own performance
- recognises the need for international assessment and comparison

II. CONTEXT FOR NATIONAL REPORTING

4. Article 26 of the Convention states that "Each Contracting Party shall, at intervals to be determined by the Conference of the Parties, present to the Conference of the Parties reports on measures which it has taken for the implementation of the provisions of this Convention

and their effectiveness in meeting the objectives of this Convention". Provisions of the Convention which define national responsibilities are summarised in Annex 1.

5. Decision II/17 of the CoP concerning the Form and interval of national reports by Parties, specifies that the first national reports will be due at the fourth meeting of the CoP and that they "will focus on the measures taken for the implementation of Article 6 of the Convention, as well as the information available in national country studies". Suggested guidelines are annexed to the Decision.

6. Decision III/9 of the CoP concerning the Implementation of Articles 6 and 8 of the Convention specifies that the first national reports referred to in decision II/17 should be submitted no later than 1 January 1998, taking into account Decision III/25 of the CoP that the next meeting would take place in Bratislava, Slovakia, in May 1998.

7. Other CoP decisions also have explicit implications for national reporting (CoP Decisions which define national responsibilities are summarised in Annex 2).

7.1 Decision II/8 which encourages parties to "identify priority issues specifically related to those components of biological diversity under threat" within their national reports.

7.2 Decision III/6 which urges developed country Parties to submit information on their financial support for the objectives of the Convention in their national reports.

7.3 Decision III/11 requesting Parties to "identify issues and priorities [concerning conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biological diversity] that need to be addressed at the national level and to report back to the Conference of the Parties".

7.4 Decision III/14, which urges Parties to "supply information about the implementation of Article 8 (j) and related articles and to include such information in national reports".

8. The report of the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (UNEP/CBD/CoP/3/3) also raised a number of significant issues, including inter alia the need for:

- development and refinement of guidelines for national reporting
- a core set of measurable and policy-relevant indicators for national reporting
- harmonisation in approach to allow comparison and facilitate development of overviews
- flexibility in approach to allow for widely varying conditions and national capacities
- coordination with related international conventions and processes

III. NATIONAL REPORTING AND BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

9. In implementing the Convention, all Contracting Parties should be seeking to improve the ways in which they manage biodiversity information, and the ways in which they use that information in their decision-making processes.

10. Mechanisms for doing this are described in the Guide to Information Management in the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity compiled by WCMC in collaboration with

UNEP. WCMC earlier collaborated with UNEP in the development of Guidelines for Country Studies on Biological Diversity, which aimed to assist countries in assessing the status and value of their biodiversity as a precursor to the development of national strategies and action plans.

11. National reports should as far as possible be based on information that Contracting Parties would require anyway in order to monitor their own actions, and to ensure that they are complying with their obligations. National reporting guidelines therefore need to be developed in the context of biodiversity information management within the country, and address two separate but related questions.

- What are the status and trends in biodiversity and the factors which affect biodiversity conservation and use?
- What is the status of implementation of the articles of the Convention and the CoP decisions that apply to contracting parties?

IV. COMPARISON AND SUMMARY

12. Decision II/17 requests the Executive Secretary to prepare a report based on the synthesis of information contained in national reports. In order to produce a useful and meaningful summary report, the national reports on which the summary report is largely (but not exclusively) based must be reasonably consistent in format, and must include information that is comparable across reports.

V. TARGETS AND INDICATORS

13. The establishment of targets, and the use of indicators in assessing the degree to which the targets are being met is an essential part of assessing progress in implementation of the Convention. Decision III/9 concerning implementation of Articles 6 and 8 encourages all Contracting Parties to set measurable targets in order to achieve biological diversity and sustainable use objectives, and Decision III/10 concerning implementation of Article 7 urges Contracting Parties to identify indicators of biological diversity.

14. SBSTTA Recommendation II/1 recognised the importance of developing a core set of indicators for national reports and proposed a listing of current approaches to indicator development to be tabled at the next meeting of the SBSTTA and recommendations for a preliminary core set of indicators of biological diversity, particularly those related to threats. SBSTTA established a liaison group on biological diversity indicators which is reporting at this meeting.

- UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/9 Recommendations for a Core Set of Indicators on Biological Diversity
- UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/Inf. 11 Implementation of Article 7: Report of the Meeting of a Liaison Group on Biological Diversity Indicators
- UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/Inf. 13 Recommendations on a Core Set of Indicators of Biological Diversity: background document prepared by the liaison group

15. The Global Biodiversity Forum meeting Dialogue on Biodiversity Indicators and Implementation Targets (UN Headquarters, April 1997) was organized to discuss and

exchange information on the wide range of national-level biodiversity indicators and targets that Contracting Parties could use as tools for setting goals and measuring progress. The report of this meeting is available as:

- UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/Inf. 14 Exploring Biodiversity Indicators and Targets under the CBD

16. Following the GBF meeting, four of the organizers have worked further on identifying more specifically how Contracting Parties could use indicators and targets in reviewing implementation of Article 6 of the Convention in particular. This paper is intended to aid Contracting Parties in preparation of the first set of national reports.

- UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/Inf. 15 Strengthening the First Set of National Reports under the Convention on Biological Diversity: a discussion paper on indicators, targets and other types of information

VI. GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY OUTLOOK

17. Decision II/1 endorses SBSTTA Recommendation I/6 on the preparation of a Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO). It is anticipated that the GBO, which would be compiled by the Secretariat, would be instrumental in dissemination of information and the results of scientific and technical research relevant to the conservation and the sustainable use of biological diversity.

18. Given the potential size of the task implied, the Secretariat has decided that the most efficient approach is to produce thematic editions of the GBO on a periodic basis to coincide with meetings of the CoP.

19. One of the primary sources of information for each GBO will be the material contained in the national reports. It therefore seems appropriate that Contracting Parties should be informed in advance of the proposed coverage of forthcoming GBOs, and asked to include appropriate information in their national reports.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 6

20. Decision II/17 of the CoP concerning the form and interval of national reports by Parties, specifies that the first national reports "will focus ... on the measures taken for the implementation of Article 6 of the Convention". Decision II/7 of the CoP encourages Contracting Parties in implementing Article 6 of the Convention to "take into account existing guidelines such as 'National Biodiversity Planning' published by" UNEP, WRI and IUCN.

21. According to National Biodiversity Planning the following are essential elements to be included in a monitoring and evaluation programme (and hence form the basis for reporting at national and international levels):

- status and trends of the nation's biodiversity, use of biodiversity resources and functions, and threats to these resources and services
- shifts in selected social, political and economic factors

- shifts in human, institutional, facility and funding capacity
- changes in the policy and legal framework for natural resources
- changes in the use of biological resources and their sustainability
- trends in the monetary and non-monetary values of biodiversity and current expenditure and investments
- impacts of implementing activities and policies of the biodiversity plan(s) vis-a vis conservation, sustainability, and equity.

VIII. GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN DRAFTING NATIONAL REPORTS

22. Given that Contracting Parties vary considerably in size, biodiversity, capacity and capability, it is difficult to provide a precise definition of exactly what each Contracting Party should provide in its national report. The following ten Guiding Principles are intended to assist Contracting Parties in interpreting the guidelines that are provided in the following sections.

- a) Base the report on information that is required already by the national focal point to ensure that the country is meeting the commitments made in acceding to the Convention.
- b) Ensure that the report covers the priority areas identified by the CoP in its decisions, and as interpreted by SBSTTA and the Secretariat.
- c) Cover what is relevant to implementation of the Convention, not just what is being done because the Convention has been acceded to.
- d) Emphasise progress in development and implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and/or National Biodiversity Action Plan.
- e) Summarise the current status and trends in biodiversity, biodiversity "services", use and threats, and progress in development of programmes to evaluate and monitor these.
- f) Avoid repeating information from national biodiversity strategies and action plans, or national country studies and state of environment reports (they can be appended).
- g) Concentrate on measurable progress since the last report, and identify the progress that is expected before the next report is due.
- h) Use indicators to show progress in achieving targets set in the National Biodiversity Strategy and/or National Biodiversity Action Plan, and in previous reports.
- i) Emphasise information that will help other Contracting Parties in their implementation of the Convention, in particular both good practice and bad experience.
- j) Design reports that are useful for multiple purposes with minimal modification, for example as material for journalists, or education.

IX. CURRENT EXPERIENCE IN DRAFTING NATIONAL REPORTS

23. Guidelines for national reporting on the implementation of Article 6 already exist as an annex to Decision II/17 of the CoP. Attempts to use these guidelines by national focal points in several countries have highlighted various difficulties, including:

- how long the report should be, and how much depth it should go into
- the period of time the first report should cover
- apparent duplication between sections
- unnecessary duplication between the report and other existing documents
- provision of meaningful budget figures
- whether the report should only cover activities which are a direct result of CBD adherence, or also cover other relevant activities
- how to report on implementation of CoP decisions
- what to report on sustainable use, and on fair and equitable sharing of resources

X. REVISION OF STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF NATIONAL REPORTS PROPOSED IN DECISION II/17

24. Given that the CoP have already provided suggested guidelines for national reporting (Annex to Decision II/17), and given that a number of Contracting Parties will already be developing national reports based on these guidelines, a sensible approach to providing revised guidelines is to adjust the existing guidelines based on experience to date and the guiding principles identified above.

a) Executive Summary

- Identify the key elements of the national report that are going to be of interest to the Secretariat and to other Contracting Parties

SUBSEQUENT REPORTS WOULD HIGHLIGHT SIGNIFICANT CHANGE

b) Goals and Objectives

- Summarise national goals and objectives in conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and relate these to the objective of the Convention (Article 1)
- Relate this to other international agreements and programmes which the nation participates in

c) Background

- Assessment of the status and trends in biodiversity, including agricultural biological diversity
- Assessment of the value of biodiversity, in terms of both conservation and sustainable use
- Assessment of the legal and policy framework for biodiversity conservation and use, and the extent to which biodiversity concerns are addressed in national planning
- Assessment of institutional responsibilities and capacity
- Assessment of threats to biodiversity and its management, both direct and indirect
- Annex copies of relevant country studies, state of environment reports, etc.

SUBSEQUENT REPORTS WOULD CONCENTRATE ON CHANGES IN STATUS, THE FIRST REPORT PROVIDING A BENCHMARK AGAINST WHICH SUCH CHANGE CAN BE ASSESSED

d) Strategy

- Status of development and implementation of the national biodiversity strategy and other relevant strategies, and details of how they relate
- Constraints anticipated and encountered in implementation of the strategy, and experience in dealing with these
- Annex copies of relevant strategy documents

e) Action Plan [combined with previous section if this is more appropriate]

- Status of development and implementation of the national biodiversity action plan and other relevant action plans and programmes, and details of how they relate
- Constraints anticipated and encountered in implementation of plans, and experience in dealing with these
- Annex copy of relevant action plans

f) Collaboration and Partnership

- Report on progress in ensuring the involvement and acceptance of all sectors in the implementation of biodiversity objectives into national planning and development
- Report on the levels of involvement of different organizations in implementation of the Convention at the national level
- Report of the degree of collaboration with international organizations, and national organizations from other countries
- Report on progress in raising public awareness of the benefits and importance of biological diversity

g) Resource availability

- Summary analysis of the budget required for implementation of the strategies and action plans discussed, and the available funds for achieving implementation
- Summary analysis of the manpower and skills required for implementation of the strategies and action plans, compared with the available resources
- Summary analysis of international technical and financial cooperation given and/or received relevant to implementation of the strategies and action plans

h) Schedule

- Assess the extent to which the timetables specified by the action plan and by CoP Decision are being met, and the reasons for any difference.

i) Monitoring and Evaluation

- Assess the status of national efforts to monitor and evaluate status and trends in the nations biodiversity (including the services it provides), and in use of and threats to that biodiversity
- Identify key targets and indicators used in assessing status, performance and need
- Outline methods used in tracking implementation of the national action plan, and the effectiveness of the action in achieving its objectives

j) Sharing national experience

- Status of national implementation of the Clearing House Mechanism, including thematic contributions, and access to national metadatabases
- Case studies on national experience (both bad and good) in implementation of the Convention, concentrating on experiences of potential value to other Contracting Parties

XI. ADDITIONAL CONTENT FOR FUTURE REPORTS

25. At present the national report concentrates on the conservation of biological diversity, and begins to look at sustainable use of its components. There is no real attempt in the current approach to report on the third objective of the Convention, the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from utilization of genetic resources.

26. It has been recommended (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/Inf. 15) that reporting on these issues is approached through the development of a text and tables of targets and indicators responding to the following two questions:

- What are the most important measures contained in national biodiversity strategies and action plans to stimulate and promote sustainable uses of biological resources?
- What are the most important specific measures contained in national biodiversity strategies and action plans to stimulate and promote the equitable sharing of benefits of biodiversity use?

27. At present the national reports concentrate on development and implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans. Future reports will need to cover action taken to implement all articles of the Convention and the decisions taken by the Conferences of the Parties. The implications for Contracting Parties of the:

- articles of the Convention are identified in Annex 1
- decisions taken by the CoP are identified in Annex 2

XII. OTHER RELATED INTERNATIONAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

28. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora: Article VIII, paragraph 7 of the Convention obliges each Party to prepare periodic reports on its implementation of the Convention and to transmit to the Secretariat an annual report containing a summary of trade in specimens of species included in Appendices I, II and III to the Convention; and a biennial report on legislative, regulatory and administrative measures taken to enforce the provisions of the present Convention. The Secretariat produces Guidelines for the Preparation and Submission of CITES Annual Reports which can be

amended with the concurrence of the Standing Committee. No summary or overview report is compiled.

29. Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals: Article VI, paragraph 3 of the Convention calls upon parties that are range states of listed species to inform the Conference of the Parties on their implementation of the Convention, and Resolution 4.1 provides an agreed format for those reports (there are in fact two formats, one for an initial comprehensive report, and one for updating reports). Not all countries report, and there is currently no summary or overview report based on the national reports. The reporting system of the Convention and its related agreements is currently under review.

30. Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage: There is no periodic reporting requirement placed on States Party, although there is an expectation that the World Heritage Committee and Secretariat will be kept informed on a number of issues (Convention text and Operational Guidelines).

31. Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat: There are no specific provisions for submission of national reports in the text of the Convention. Recommendation 2.1 of the Conference of the Parties gave authority to the common practice established by the Bureau of submission of national reports prior to the Conference of the Parties. Prior to each Conference of the Parties, the Bureau officially requests submission of a report, and provides an outline for national reports to be followed. Summary reports are prepared for the Conference based on the national reports.

32. WCMC is currently working on a feasibility study on the harmonisation of reporting and information requirements for the five major international biodiversity-related treaties, with the support of the five treaty secretariats and UNEP.

XIII. SOURCES OF SUPPORT

33. Currently every Contracting Party should be preparing a national report for submission to the Secretariat by the end of the year. There is therefore clear potential for Contracting Parties to discuss amongst themselves difficulties they are having in completing reports, and to share experience. The SBSTTA meeting is an obvious opportunity for doing this, and it may be profitable to convene a workshop at CoP IV to share experience.

34. The Secretariat has the broadest possible overview of the Convention and the progress being made by Contracting Parties in developing strategies, action plans and national reports. The Secretariat is currently not fully staffed, but must be in the best place to provide advice on the form and content of national reports.

35. The Global Environment Facility, through its three implementing agencies the World Bank, UNEP and UNDP is currently supporting the development of national strategies and action plans in a substantial number of countries. There is potential for sharing of experience on development of national reports within the context of this programme.

36. There are a number of other international organizations with experience of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its implementation. Several of these are closely involved with issues directly relevant to the first round of national reports, including

development of strategies and action plans (IUCN, WRI), development and use of indicators (BIONET, Worldwatch Institute, WCMC, WRI), and information collection, management and use (WCMC).

XV. QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED

37. Resources are available to develop revised guidelines for national reporting based on advice received from Contracting Parties and others attending the SBSTTA meeting. In order to facilitate development of these revised guidelines, discussion on the following questions would be valuable:

- a) Are the "guiding principles" useful in directing those responsible for the drafting and compilation of national reports (Section VIII).
- b) What other lessons can be learnt from those who have already been involved in the process of drafting national reports (Section IX).
- c) Is the proposed structure and content a useful revision of the originally recommended format, and what further revisions are required (Section X).
- d) How should national reports tackle the second and third objectives of the Convention, and also reporting on specific Convention Articles and CoP Decisions relating to national responsibilities (Section XI)?
- e) How should targets and indicators be built into national reports, taking account of the various papers available at the SBSTTA meeting?
- f) How do we ensure that Contracting Parties are able to provide the necessary information within national reports without repeating what is available in other documents (and hence potentially duplicating effort)?
- g) What further information and guidance do Contracting Parties need now and in the future to assist them in the process on national reporting in a consistent and meaningful manner?

This paper has been compiled by Jeremy Harrison of the World Conservation Monitoring Centre as a basis for discussion at the third meeting of SBSTTA. Support in writing it has been provided by the Commonwealth Secretariat with the aim of providing improved guidelines for national governments in drafting their national reports.

Jeremy Harrison, World Conservation Monitoring Centre, 11 August 1997

APPENDIX 3, PART III

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN NATIONAL REPORTS

Note by the CBD Secretariat

1. Introduction

Article 26 of the Convention on Biological Diversity provides that "Each Contracting Party shall, at intervals to be determined by the Conference of the Parties, present to the Conference of the Parties (CoP) reports on measures which it has taken for the implementation of the provisions of this Convention and their effectiveness in meeting the objectives of this Convention".

Article 23.4 (a) of the Convention calls upon the CoP to "establish the form and the intervals for transmitting the information to be submitted in accordance with Article 26 and consider such information as well as reports submitted by any subsidiary body". Accordingly, at its first meeting held in Nassau, The Bahamas, the CoP agreed to consider the form and intervals of national reports at its second meeting (see decision I/9, item 5.8, UNEP/CBD/CoP/1/17).

In decision I/7 concerning the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), the CoP at its first meeting requested the SBSTTA at its first meeting to consider as a matter of priority "What kind of scientific and technical information should be contained in national reports on measures taken for the implementation of the provisions of the Convention and their effectiveness in meeting the objectives of the Convention".

The present note has been prepared by the Secretariat of the Convention to assist the first meeting of the SBSTTA in preparing its recommendations on the type of technical and scientific information that needs to be contained in national reports. The note first recalls the options to be considered by the second meeting of the CoP on the form and intervals of reporting and their possible implications for the kind of scientific and technical information to be contained in national reports. It then identifies a number of documents that might be helpful in deciding what kind of data could be most usefully included in national reports. Finally, it underscores the importance of the biological diversity data-gathering process and in doing so, discusses methodological issues relevant to national reports. The note's orientation is to put forward basic principles which could guide the SBSTTA in addressing these various issues.

2. Relevance of form and intervals of reporting

The scientific and technical information to be contained in national reports will depend to a certain extent on the expected decisions of the second meeting of the CoP on the form and intervals of reporting. This means that some of the recommendations of the SBSTTA to the second meeting of the CoP may have to be re-evaluated after the requisite form and intervals for reporting have been established.

To assist the second meeting of the CoP in deciding on the form and intervals of reporting, the SBSTTA may advise, from a technical and scientific perspective, on the advantages and disadvantages of the two following options: (i) focused and subject-oriented reports related to the items identified in the medium-term programme of work of the CoP or (ii) reports containing an overall assessment of the measures taken by Parties on the implementation of the Convention. The most appropriate and feasible intervals for reporting will depend on which option the CoP chooses to adopt. For example, the comprehensive scope of the Convention means that national reports which concern the implementation of the Convention's provisions in general will require extensive information covering a wide variety of disciplines. Such information could not be realistically provided in a short time frame.

The success of the reporting system decided upon by the CoP will in large part depend on the national capacity to fulfill reporting obligations. The gathering of scientific and technical information about biological diversity is a complex, costly, and time-consuming process. The human, technical and financial needs will vary according to the socio-economic situation of each Party. Countries that have already undertaken national country studies or prepared national strategies, plans or programmes related to biological diversity may be in a better position to prepare national reports. The possible constraints facing developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition may warrant the development of a simplified form of reporting which could be used by all Parties, regardless of socio-economic levels of development. In addition, the SBSTTA may wish to reflect on the technical and financial assistance to be provided to assist developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition in the preparation of their national reports. The development of capacity building at an early stage of the preparation of national reports also needs to be addressed, as well as the financial implications of such activities on the Budget of the Convention for 1996 and 1997.

3. Possible technical and scientific content of national reports

In order to determine what kind of scientific and technical information should be included in national reports, the SBSTTA may find it useful to consult the articles of the Convention that relate most directly to scientific and technical matters. A possible list of areas of activities under the Convention for which scientific and technical information may be required is contained in Annex I. This list was prepared on the basis of: (i) the measures identified by experts from Panel I, established by UNEP in 1992, on priorities for action for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity (UNEP/Bio.Div./Panels/Inf.1) and (ii) the Agenda for scientific and technological research recommended by the Open-ended Intergovernmental Meeting of Scientific Experts on Biological Diversity held in Mexico City, from 11 to 15 April 1995 (UNEP/CBD/CoP/1/16). It may be important to note that unless otherwise indicated by Parties, all the scientific and technical information provided by Parties is assumed to be public.

In considering the kind of scientific and technical information to be included in national reports, the first meeting of the SBSTTA may also wish to draw upon the following documents adopted by intergovernmental meetings convened during the preparatory process of the first meeting of the CoP:

(a) the reports of the Intergovernmental Committee on the Convention on Biological Diversity on the work of its first and second session (UNEP/CBD/CoP/1/3 and UNEP/CBD/CoP/1/4);

(b) the report of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Meeting of Scientific Experts on Biological Diversity, including the agenda for scientific and technological research (UNEP/CBD/CoP/1/16);

(c) the reports of the four Experts Panels established by UNEP to follow-up on the Convention on Biological Diversity and in particular:

- Panel I: Priorities for action for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and agenda for scientific and technical research (UNEP/Bio.Div/Panels/ Inf.1);

- Panel II: Evaluation of potential economic implications of conservation of biological diversity and its sustainable use and evaluation of biological and genetic resources (UNEP/Bio.Div/Panels/Inf.2);

- Panel III: Technology transfer and financial issues: Issues and options from Panel III (UNEP/Bio.Div/Panels/Inf.3).

As noted in paragraph 6 above, the data of relevance to the Convention is potentially vast. Some data, however, may be more valuable than others. In order to make the reporting procedures manageable, certain areas or types of information may therefore be prioritized from a scientific perspective. The UNEP Guidelines for Country Studies for Biological Diversity (hereinafter "UNEP Guidelines", UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/Inf.3) identified a range of measures required by the Convention for which data are necessary. The SBSTTA may wish to refer to the following rather comprehensive list in considering what types of scientific and technical information could be focussed on initially:

- biological surveying and monitoring;
- biodiversity research and evaluation;
- data management and analysis;
- monitoring and assessment;
- education and training;
- public awareness and participation;
- in situ management;
- restoration and rehabilitation;
- ex situ conservation measures;
- capacity building of institutions;
- networking and information exchange;
- environment impact assessment;
- policy coordination and development;
- assessing economic benefits;
- estimating conservation costs;
- institutional collaboration; legal instruments;
- technology transfer;
- socio-economic studies and surveys.

With respect to prioritizing information, the SBSTTA might, for example, recommend to the CoP that the first report of Parties could concentrate on presenting the measures taken for the implementation of Article 6 of the Convention. Article 6 would be particularly relevant to a first national report because it covers national plans and programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and, as such, forms the basis for the implementation of the Convention.

Prioritizing types of information requires data gathering priorities which generate the relevant information. Among the twenty guiding principles recommended by the UNEP Guidelines, the following are directly relevant for biological data gathering and may therefore be useful to the SBSTTA in discussing data gathering:

- (a) The first iteration should aim at including only those data that can be readily compiled from existing in-country and external sources;
- (b) Data gathering is a tool for decision-making and not an end in itself. The agenda for data acquisition must be constituent-driven and issue-based;
- (c) Data-gathering must focus on the interaction of social factors, economic sectors and biological systems;
- (d) Data on processes or activities that are likely to have an adverse impact on biological diversity must be compiled;
- (e) The process of gathering and managing the data must contribute to building capacity for national biodiversity planning;
- (f) Priorities aimed at filling gaps in data coverage must be based on the needs of senior decision-makers to improve their management of biological diversity;
- (g) Biodiversity data gathering must not be confined to national parks and protected areas but must cover the whole landscape; data on protected areas should seek to emphasize their relationship with other components of the landscape;
- (h) Data gathering should include an assessment of the current capacity of the country to conserve, study and sustainably use its biological diversity.

The following list of priorities, also suggested by the UNEP Guidelines, could serve as a starting point for the SBSTTA in formulating its advice to the CoP on data gathering priorities:

- (a) data that will provide a practical baseline for monitoring the effectiveness of action;
- (b) data identified by biodiversity managers as being important for decision-making;
- (c) species of actual or potential economic value;
- (d) plant and animal genetic resources, including medicinal plants, land races and wild ancestors of domestic breeds and cultivars;

- (e) species that could serve as indicators of ecosystem health, particularly predators at the top of the food-chain or invasive colonizing species that may indicate ecosystem disturbance;
- (f) "flagship" species, the conservation of which will also protect the diversity of other species and habitats;
- (g) alien or exotic species, the spread of which could threaten indigenous biological diversity;
- (h) threatened species at the national and regional level;
- (i) species already protected within conservation areas;
- (g) data on threats to species and habitats;
- (k) time-interval data on rates of loss or endangerment of species and habitats;
- (l) geographical information, particularly data that can be mapped on species and habitat distributions;
- (m) data on biodiversity function and benefits, particularly the service functions of ecosystems and protected areas;
- (n) data on species and sites of special significance for the conservation of biological diversity outside existing protected areas;
- (o) status and distribution of protected areas, including the species and habitats they contain;
- (p) data on the socio-economic values of protected areas;
- (q) policy, conservation programmes, legislative and institution-related information.

In view of the heavy demand on Governments for the submission of reports and information in the field of environment, the SBSTTA may consider how the scientific and technical information to be provided by Parties under Article 26 of the Convention can be used for other reporting purposes such as the report of Member States to the Commission on Sustainable Development on the implementation of Chapter 15 on Biological Diversity of Agenda 21. In addition, the SBSTTA may also wish to examine how to avoid duplication of efforts and overlapping scientific and technical information with the reporting requirements of other biological diversity-related conventions and legal instruments.

4. The need for agreed methodologies for data gathering

Up-to-date quantitative data underpin most activities related to the implementation of the Convention. The development of an agreed methodology for gathering data on the conservation, sustainable use of biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of its benefits will assist both the Parties in preparing their national reports and the CoP in considering these reports. Such an agreed methodology for data gathering will also help the SBSTTA in making best use of the available scientific and technical information to fulfill its

mandate. Therefore, in addition to determining the substantive areas that will require scientific and technical inputs into the national reports, the SBSTTA may wish to advise the Conference of the Parties on what needs to be done to develop an agreed methodology for data gathering and presentation.

In addressing these methodological issues, the SBSTTA may wish to refer to the methodology for data gathering suggested in the UNEP Guidelines. The SBSTTA may also wish to draw upon the illustrative table of contents of a National Biodiversity Action Plan Report contained in National Biodiversity Planning: Guidelines based on early country experience around the world prepared in 1995 by the World Resources Institute in collaboration with UNEP and IUCN (see Annex II). Focusing on its implications for scientific and technical input, this document may help the SBSTTA draw up suggestions for the presentation of national reports. A standard format would greatly facilitate consideration of national reports by the CoP and the SBSTTA.

Comparability will also be enhanced by the identification and documentation of the sources of information on the status and trends in biological diversity. The SBSTTA may wish to consider advising the CoP that the information contained in national reports should note:

- (a) the source;
- (b) the method of collection;
- (c) the date of collection;
- (d) the quality/reliability of the data;
- (e) the scale of collection (for mapped data).

Finally, the reliability of data will be critical to the value of the information contained in national reports. The SBSTTA may therefore wish to consider the desirability of recommending a reliability classification system to the CoP. The UNEP Guidelines suggest a simple four-category reliability classification which could form the basis for the consideration of this issue. The categories defined include:

- Category A: high reliability -- data derived from systematic scientific survey or sampling;
- Category B: medium reliability -- data derived from extrapolation, approximation or other imprecise methods;
- Category C: low reliability -- anecdotal data or "guesstimates";
- Category D: unknown reliability -- derivation of unknown data.

5. The national preparatory process

The effective preparation of national reports implies an open, participatory process involving all relevant actors, including industry, non-governmental organizations and indigenous communities. The gathering of scientific and technical information to be contained in

national reports would also benefit from an open, participatory approach. Accordingly, the scientific community as a whole, including the non-governmental sector and holders of traditional knowledge, would need to be adequately represented in whatever national institutional mechanism is established by Parties for the preparation of national reports. In addition, scientific and technical information will need to be reviewed, assessed and updated on a regular basis in the light of changing circumstances and processes.

The comprehensive scope of the Convention requires a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach to the preparation of national reports and the gathering of scientific and technical information. In this regard, the SBSTTA may wish to refer to the disciplines required for the implementation of the provisions of the Convention as identified by the Open-ended Intergovernmental Meeting of Scientific Experts on Biological Diversity (see document UNEP/CBD/CoP/1/16, Annexes II to IX).

6. Conclusion

The CoP will consider the form for reports and intervals for reporting at its second meeting in November 1995. In preparation for that meeting, the CoP requested the SBSTTA to provide advice on the kind of scientific and technical information that should be contained in national reports. This note raises some of the critical considerations surrounding the question of what scientific and technical information should be contained in national reports. More specifically, the note highlights the issues that the SBSTTA should consider in drawing up its recommendations for the CoP on the desirable scientific and technical content of national reports. These issues fall into four principal categories: form and interval, scientific and technical content, data gathering and reporting methodologies, and the process of preparing national reports.

6.1 Form and interval

The SBSTTA may first wish to consider and advise the CoP on how the decision on the form and intervals for reports potentially affects the quality and quantity of information that can be realistically provided. In addition, the SBSTTA may wish to consider informing the CoP in general terms about the process of gathering and presenting scientific and technical data in order to lend an appreciation of its implications for human and financial resources. Any decision on form and intervals for reports must take into account the need for adequate capacity to follow-through.

6.2 Scientific and technical content

The scientific and technical information of relevance to the Convention is potentially vast. Prioritizing the types of information and hence data gathering needs will therefore be critical. It is difficult to provide conclusive advice on the kinds of scientific and technical information that should be contained in national reports prior to a CoP decision on the forms those reports will take and the time available between reports. Using relevant work and documents, the note attempts to provide the necessary background for SBSTTA to begin formulating its advice on the types of scientific and technical information that should be in national reports.

6.3 Data gathering and reporting methodologies

Article 25, paragraph 2(b) of the Convention calls upon SBSTTA to prepare scientific and technical assessments of the effects of the types of measures taken in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. Any assessment of the effectiveness of types of measures in general will require the ability to compare experiences. Improving implementation of the Convention will therefore depend upon an agreed methodology for data gathering and presentation. This note highlights the issues and principles which may guide the SBSTTA's discussion of possible methodologies for data gathering and reporting.

6.4 The national preparatory process

Finally, the SBSTTA may wish to note that the scientific and technical content desirable in national reports is multi-disciplinary. The implications of such a conclusion in the process of preparing national reports must also be multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral. The most effective means of achieving a meaningful national report will benefit from a participatory process open to all relevant actors.

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