

Rio Conventions' Ecosystems and Climate Change Pavilion – Achieving synergies between biodiversity, land management and climate change

Concept Note

updated 17 February, 2010

Introduction

It is now widely recognized that climate change and biodiversity are interconnected, not only through the effects of climate change on biodiversity, but also through changes in biodiversity and ecosystem functioning that affect climate change. The carbon cycle and the water cycle, arguably the two most important large-scale processes for life on Earth, both depend on biodiversity—at genetic, species and ecosystem levels. The prospect of irreversible climate change adds to the urgency of achieving the objectives of the CBD, UNFCCC and the UNCCD (refer Appendix 1), noting the additional challenge climate change also poses to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs; refer Appendix 2). The growing threats from climate change will mainly affect populations that are already challenged by multiple vulnerabilities associated with low levels of economic and human development. Climate change is already multiplying vulnerabilities in developing countries by heightening livelihood risks and further weakening adaptive capacities¹.

Parties to the Rio Conventions will increasingly be seeking to apply the broadest range of options to deal with climate change. Ecosystem-based approaches are ready for use, easily accessible, cost effective and they often bring multiple benefits including improvement of livelihoods and poverty alleviation. These approaches involve people and share responsibility for a future built in welfare, equity, security, human development and wellbeing. □ Protecting and enhancing ecosystem resilience through biodiversity and ecosystem service conservation, are amongst the best and most cost effective ways of tackling both the causes and consequences of climate change.

The International Year of Biodiversity presents a unique opportunity to:

- promote the importance of biodiversity and its contributions to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
- raise awareness of the economics of biodiversity and ecosystems, including of marine biodiversity and marine ecosystems,
- strengthen the biodiversity and ecosystems science policy interface, and
- enhance co-operation and coordination amongst the biodiversity-related Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements.

With these opportunities in mind, and to further enhance the synergies and joint activities of the Rio Conventions, the SCBD, working with the UNFCCC and UNCCD secretariats under the auspice

¹ World Economic and Social Survey 2009: Promoting Development, Saving the Planet, p. 18.

of the Joint Liaison Group, proposes to convene an Ecosystems and Climate Change Pavilion to be held at the forthcoming COPs of the Rio Conventions (CBD COP 10 in Nagoya, Japan, 18-29 October 2010; UNFCCC COP 16 in Cancun, Mexico, 29 November-10 December 2010; and UNCCD COP10 in Autumn 2011 in South Korea). It is also anticipated that the Pavilion will be convened at the Rio+20 Summit to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012.

More specifically, the Ecosystems and Climate Change Pavilion would advance both the UN General Assembly Resolution 64/203 of 21 December 2009 which calls for enhanced collaboration between the Rio Conventions and the CBD COP9 Decision IX/16 on enhanced awareness-raising and outreach in the framework of the Rio Conventions. The SCBD is already exploring collaboration with a number of key partners, including the UNFCCC and UNCCD Secretariats, UNEP, UNDP, the World Bank, IUCN, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, and WWF.

The Pavilion would be an important opportunity for the Rio Conventions secretariats to highlight, in the International Year of Biodiversity and ahead of the International Year on Forests in 2011, the potential of ecosystem-based approaches for adaptation and mitigation and their social, environmental and economic benefits in the context of development planning. Ready for implementation, cost-efficient and easily accessible, they should be amongst those supported by emerging international climate finance arrangements.

Objective and Rationale

The main objective of the Ecosystems and Climate Change Pavilion will provide an enhanced, coordinated platform for awareness-raising and capacity-building about the latest findings from science and practice on the linkages between ecosystem management, landscape restoration and climate change. A particular focus will be on ecosystem-based approaches in climate change mitigation and adaptation responses. Consideration of the challenges facing biodiversity and land managers due to the unavoidable impacts of climate change will also be highlighted. A particular emphasis will be on regions of the world which:

- are highly vulnerable to climate change,
- are highly reliant on services provided by biodiversity and ecosystems for their livelihoods and
- do not have the economic means to adapt quickly or comprehensively.

The Pavilion would: ☐

- stress the importance of tackling climate change and biodiversity loss in an integrated manner,
- encourage working with nature ☐
- enable implementation of ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation and mitigation.

The Pavilion, which would run in parallel to the side event programme of each COP, will provide an opportunity for collaboration amongst a diverse range of players. The SCBD, in consultation

with the UNFCCC and UNCCD secretariats, will develop a partnership structure to allow for the participation of UN agencies and other relevant international organizations as co-hosts of the pavilion, or as organizers of individual sessions, similar to the organization of thematic days and pavilions at UNFCCC COP 15.

In addition, the pavilion could facilitate partnerships and brokering by bringing together country leaders and delegates, planners, scientists, representatives from local governments, civil society, multilateral agencies, regional and financial institutions and the private sector. The Ecosystems and Climate Change Pavilion will be a vehicle to:

- recognise past and current work and announce significant commitments for building resilient communities and ecosystems
- highlight lessons learned from ongoing projects with the aim to replicate and scale-up success stories
- demonstrate activities ready for implementation that can be advanced through partnerships ☒
- encourage partnerships, and
- inform ongoing negotiations about latest scientific findings.

A steering committee chaired by the SCBD will be established to oversight planning and coordinate preparations for the Pavilion to be held at the three COPs. Initially this committee will comprise the SCBD, the UNFCCC and UNCCD secretariats, UNEP, and UNDP. Additional members will be drawn from UN agencies and other relevant international organizations that have volunteered to be the lead co-hosts of thematic days in response to a call for submissions. A similar process will be convened by the SCBD in 2011 in preparation for the UNCCD COP10 to be held in autumn in South Korea. The involvement of Parties to the Rio Conventions in Pavilion events will be highly encouraged, including at a high level.

Proposed Format - Thematic Days

The two-week period of the Pavilion will group side events and workshops under key themes (i.e. a theme per day) key relevant to implementation of the Rio Conventions. While the final list of thematic will be determined in consultation with the Rio Convention secretariats and other key partners, it is anticipated that thematic days will cover (but not necessarily limited to):

- Marine biodiversity/ecosystems
- Water-dependent ecosystems
- Dry and sub-humid lands
- Forest biodiversity
- Mountain biodiversity
- Coastal ecosystem-based approaches, including on small islands

The Pavilion will include a **Francophonie Day** and a **Latin America Day** in Spanish to present relevant insights and information about ecosystem-based approaches in climate change action in languages other than English. French and Spanish translation would also be provided (subject to funding) for the remaining thematic days for events anticipating over 100 participants.

Cross-cutting aspects relevant to themes will also be promoted including, for example;

- The role of biodiversity in poverty alleviation
- The role of protected areas and networks (terrestrial and marine) in climate change
- Consideration of national/strategic planning, local planning and project level planning for including ecosystem-based approaches in climate change action
- Ensuring consideration of multiple benefits, how to identify and assess trade offs - perhaps using disaster risk reduction and REDD plus as focal contexts for exploring these issues
- Linkages to gender and rural livelihood opportunities, the role of traditional knowledge and rights of indigenous and local communities
- Avenues for South-South cooperation and strategic trans-boundary approaches
- Incentives, finance and governance of ecosystem-based approaches, including links to business
- Monitoring, indicators and assessment

Indicative planning timetable - 2010²

February	SCBD convenes 1st meeting with Rio Convention secretariats, UNEP, UNDP and European Commission – teleconference (main items: finalisation thematic priorities; work plan, EOI process for CBD COP10 and UNFCCC COP16, communication and media strategy)
March	SCBD calls for expressions of interest (EOIs) of international organisations to host thematic days. EOIs to include outline of proposed events and activities for the thematic day of interest and criteria for selection for CBD COP10 and UNFCCC COP16.
April	SCBD circulates thematic day co-hosts EOI proposals to Steering Committee for selection process
May	Steering Committee confirms thematic day co-hosts and holds meeting with successful organisations
June-July	thematic day co-hosts conduct speaker selection and finalise all aspects their day
August	thematic day co-hosts provide draft programme of day(s) at CBD COP10 and UNFCCC COP16 to Steering Committee
September	thematic day co-hosts provide final programme of day(s) at CBD COP10 and UNFCCC COP16 to Steering Committee for inclusion in Pavilion brochure etc
October	SCBD coordinates publication of Pavilion brochure and placement of Ecosystems and Climate Change Pavilion event information on CBD COP10 and UNFCCC COP16 event website

² A similar approach will be developed in 2011 in preparation for the Pavilion to be held at the UNCCD COP 10 and the Rio +20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in June 2012.

Objectives and relevant decisions of the Rio Conventions

Table 1: Objectives of the Rio conventions³

UNFCCC	UNCCD	CBD
(...) achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.	(...) combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification , particularly in Africa, through effective action at all levels, supported by international cooperation and partnership arrangements, in the framework of an integrated approach which is consistent with Agenda 21, with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in affected areas.	(...) the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and to technologies, and by appropriate funding.

Table 2: Relevant decisions of the Rio conventions regarding synergies⁴

UNFCCC secretariat	UNCCD secretariat	CBD secretariat
<p>Article 8(2) of the Convention – Ensuring coordination;</p> <p>Dec. 2/CP.13 – Consistency with Sustainable Forest Management and UNFF/UNCCD/CBD provisions;</p> <p>Dec. 13/CP.8 – Need for coordination and support to the mandate of the Liaison Group;</p> <p>SBSTA 14 conclusion 42 (d(ii)) – Reference to a joint work plan.</p>	<p>Article 23(2) – Coordination with other secretariats;</p> <p>Dec. 1/COP9 – Multi-year work plan, cooperation (annex IV);</p> <p>Dec. 8/COP9 (3) – Coordination through the Liaison Group;</p> <p>Dec. 4/COP8 – Cooperation on dry/sub-humid lands (6), strengthening the links between NAPs, NBSAPs, NAPAs (8).</p>	<p>Article 24 of the Convention – Coordination / administrative and contractual arrangements;</p> <p>Dec. IX/5 – Collaboration with CPF members on REDD;</p> <p>Dec. IX/6 – REDD, biodiversity, indigenous Peoples and local communities (Art. 8(j));</p> <p>Dec. IX/16 (A-3, B-1/2/7/11) – Detailed collaboration with Rio Convention Secretariats, Liaison Group, CPF;</p> <p>Dec. IX/17 – Cooperation on dry/sub-humid lands and biodiversity (8, 11) and climate change (10);</p> <p>Dec. VIII/30 (9) – Enhancing cooperation through the Joint Liaison Group.</p>

³ This list is an excerpt from the Convention texts. See annex II for a more extensive list.

⁴ This list is not exhaustive, but provides an overview of existing mandates from the three Conferences of Parties to the Secretariats for cooperation and synergies. See <http://www.cbd.int/cooperation/artsdecs.shtml> for a more extensive list.

Overview of the Millennium Development Goals and the added challenge posed by climate change

From p.18, World Economic and Social Survey 2009: Promoting Development, Saving the Planet:

“Climate change will deepen inequalities, with least developed countries and small island States being the most affected

Climate change is already multiplying vulnerabilities in developing countries by heightening livelihood risks and further weakening adaptive capacities. Rising sea levels are considered a threat for people who live within 60 miles of a shoreline. They make up one third of the world's population and a large number of them live at low altitudes. The threat to people living in small islands and low-lying territories is unequivocal, while extended periods of drought in other areas have been generating a flow of environmental refugees and conflict with neighbouring countries and populations. Similarly, the outbreak of tropical diseases is expected to be larger in areas with increased incidence of heatwaves, thus extending drought-prone areas, while the prevalence of water-related diseases is likely to rise in areas with an increased incidence of floods (see chap. III).

The growing threats from climate change will mainly affect populations that are already challenged by multiple vulnerabilities associated with low levels of economic and human development. Poorer countries and communities with poor health care, lack of infra-structure, weakly diversified economies, missing institutions and soft governance structures may be exposed not just to potentially catastrophic large-scale disasters but also to a more permanent state of economic stress as a result of higher average temperatures, reduced availability of water sources, more frequent flooding and intensified windstorms.

By increasing vulnerability in developing countries, climate change will deepen inequalities, with least developed countries and small island States being the most affected. As Dodman, Ayers and Huq (2009, p. 152) puts it: “The uneven distribution of climate change risk mirrors the existing uneven distribution of natural disaster risk—in 2007, Asia was the region hardest hit and most affected by natural disasters, accounting for 37 per cent of reported disasters and 90 per cent of all the reported victims.” In other words, people with limited assets and resources and with less reliable access to decent jobs will continue to be the most affected by the adverse impacts of climate change.

The adaptation challenge is essentially a development challenge. It will require significant investments, not only to climate-proof existing projects and ensure effective responses to natural disasters, but also to diversify economic activity and address a range of interrelated vulnerabilities that are already exposing communities to threats from quite small changes in climate

The Millennium Development Goals 2010

With only six years until the 2015 deadline to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, the UN General Assembly took a decision in July 2009 to hold a high-level plenary meeting at the opening of its 65th session in September 2010. In the 2009 Millennium Development Goals Report, the UN Secretary-General noted: "We have made important progress in this effort, and have many successes on which to build. But we have been moving too slowly to meet our goals". The 2010 high-level meeting, he hopes, will not only result in a renewal of existing commitments but also can decisively galvanize coordinated action among all stakeholders and elicit the funding needed to ensure the achievement of the Goals by 2015. In December 2009, the United Nations General Assembly agreed to hold a World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2012 (Rio +20), to be hosted by Brazil.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be achieved by 2015 respond to the world's main development challenges. The MDGs are drawn from the actions and targets contained in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by 189 nations-and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000. The eight MDGs break down into 21 quantifiable targets that are measured by 60 indicators:

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

The MDGs:

- synthesise, in a single package, many of the most important commitments made separately at the international conferences and summits of the 1990s;
- recognise explicitly the interdependence between growth, poverty reduction and sustainable development;
- acknowledge that development rests on the foundations of democratic governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights and peace and security;
- are based on time-bound and measurable targets accompanied by indicators for monitoring progress; and
- bring together, in the eighth Goal, the responsibilities of developing countries with those of developed countries, founded on a global partnership endorsed at the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico in March 2002, and again at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development in August 2002.

