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OPTIONS FOR ENHANCED COOPERATION AMONG THE THREE RIO CONVENTIONS

Note by the Executive Secretary

1. At its sixth meeting, the Conference of the Parties, in its decision VI/20, welcomed the establishment of the joint liaison group among the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity and urged the joint liaison group to become fully operational in order to facilitate cooperation between the conventions both at national and international levels. At its seventh meeting, in its decision VII/26, the Conference of the Parties urged further enhanced cooperation between the Convention on Biological Diversity and all relevant international conventions, organizations and bodies, strengthening and building on existing cooperative arrangements to enhance synergies and reduce inefficiencies in a manner consistent with their respective mandates, governance arrangements and agreed programs, within existing resources.
2. At its fifth meeting, in January 2004, the joint liaison group agreed that a paper on options for enhanced cooperation among the three Rio Conventions would be prepared jointly by the three convention secretariats. Accordingly, the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change jointly prepared a paper on options for enhanced cooperation among the three Rio conventions for further consideration at the next meeting of the joint liaison group.
3. The Executive Secretary is making this paper available, as an annex to the present note, to the SBSTTA for its information. It may be noted that, further to a request of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) of the Convention on Climate Change, at its twentieth session, the paper was made available at the twenty-first session of the SBSTA, in December 2004. The paper will also be made available at a future meeting under the Convention to Combat Desertification.

* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/10/1.

Annex

OPTIONS FOR ENHANCED COOPERATION AMONG THE THREE RIO CONVENTIONS

Paper prepared by the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change for the joint liaison group

I. Introduction

1. Each of the Conferences of the Parties (COP) to the Rio Conventions – the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – has underlined the need for enhanced collaboration among the conventions.¹ For example, the UNFCCC COP has affirmed that there is a need for enhanced cooperation between the UNFCCC, the CBD and the UNCCD, with the aim of ensuring the environmental integrity of the conventions and promoting synergies under the common objective of sustainable development, in order to avoid duplication of efforts, strengthen joint efforts and use available resources more efficiently.²

2. A number of elements of the texts of the three conventions imply interlinkages with the objectives of the other conventions.³ In the case of the UNCCD, encouragement to coordinate activities among the three conventions is built in to the text of the Convention itself (Article 8.1). In addition, the three conventions share a number of cross-sectoral themes, such as those relating to research and monitoring, information exchange, technology transfer, capacity-building, financial resources, and public awareness.

3. The rationale for collaboration among the conventions stems from the interlinkages between the issues that they address. Climate change can be an important driver of desertification and biodiversity loss.⁴ Ecosystem dynamics can impact the earth's carbon, energy and water cycles and therefore affect climate. Further, measures undertaken under one convention to address climate change (including mitigation and adaptation activities), to combat desertification and land degradation, or for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, might have consequences for the objectives of the other conventions.

4. Underpinning the three conventions is the common objective of contributing to sustainable development. In this respect, the conventions contribute to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation⁵ and to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).^{6,7}

¹ CBD decisions VII/26, paragraph 1, VI/20, paragraph 9, V/21, paragraph 3, IV/15, paragraph 13 and III/21, paragraph 1; UNFCCC decision 1/CP.7, paragraph 3, and decision 13/CP.8, paragraph 1; UNCCD decision 12/COP.6.

² UNFCCC decision 13/CP.8, paragraph 1.

³ For example, the objective of the UNFCCC refers to the stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate systems, and further states that such a level should be achieved within a timeframe sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change (UNFCCC Article 2).

⁴ One of the goals adopted under the CBD is to “Address challenges to biodiversity from climate change” (decision VII/30 (annex II, goal 7)). The CBD programmes of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems (decision VII/4), marine and coastal biodiversity (decision VII/5), mountain biodiversity (decision VII/27), and protected areas (decision VII/28) all identify climate change as a threat to biological diversity that needs to be addressed in each programme of work, and each identifies the UNFCCC as a partner in this.

⁵ The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation encompasses actions under each of the Rio Conventions.

5. Noting the distinct mandates and independent status of each convention, the need for improved coordination and cooperation among the Rio Conventions has been recognized as a means to capture synergy, reduce areas of potential conflicts between activities taken by Parties to fulfil the provisions under each agreement, avoid duplication of efforts, and use resources more efficiently.

6. A Joint Liaison Group (JLG) between the secretariats of the CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC was established as an informal forum for exchanging information, and in order to enhance coordination between the three conventions and explore options for further cooperation; it comprises the Executive Secretaries of the respective secretariats, officers of the respective subsidiary bodies and other members of the convention secretariats.

7. Each of the COPs of the three conventions has encouraged the JLG to facilitate cooperation at the national and international levels, to identify possible areas of joint activities, and to enhance coordination.⁸ Further, the United Nations General Assembly, at its 57th and 58th sessions, took note of the ongoing work of the JLG and further encouraged continuing cooperation in order to promote complementarities among the secretariats while respecting their independent legal status.⁹

8. At the fifth meeting of the JLG, in Bonn, Germany, on 30 January 2004, it was agreed that a paper on options for further cooperation would be prepared jointly by the three secretariats with a view to making it available to the respective bodies to the conventions. In the light of the rationale and mandate outlined above, this paper summarizes options for collaboration that have been proposed by the established bodies of the three conventions and gives examples of cooperation to date (chapter II); and presents a number of other options and possible modalities for closer collaboration (chapter III). The options in this paper are presented solely for information purposes. They are not exhaustive, and their presentation does not imply any prioritization, or prejudice the consideration of other options or any decisions or conclusions by the COPs or subsidiary bodies to the respective conventions. Furthermore, the resource implications for implementing any of the presented options have not been assessed, nor have possible responsibilities for their implementation been identified.

II. Background

A. Options for enhanced collaboration so far identified by the convention bodies¹⁰

9. The COPs and their subsidiary bodies of the Rio Conventions have already identified a number of elements of and modalities for cooperation, namely:

- (a) Promotion of complementarity among the national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) under the CBD, the national action programmes (NAPs) of the UNCCD, and the national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs) for least developed countries of the UNFCCC¹¹

⁶ In general the implementation of various aspects of the UNFCCC is expected to have an impact on the achievement of a number of the MDGs, and specific reference to the MDGs is made in the preambles to decision 5/CP.9 on the Special Climate Change Fund, and decision 6/CP.9 on the Least Developed Countries Fund.

⁷ Of particular relevance is MDG 7 which refers to ensuring “environmental sustainability”. The CBD COP has underlined the linkage between the MDGs and the 2015 targets, and the objectives of the Convention and its 2010 target.

⁸ CBD decision VI/20, paragraph 12; UNCCD decision 12/COP.6; UNFCCC decision 13/CP.8, paragraph 4, SBSTA 14 conclusions (FCCC/SBSTA/2001/2, para. 42 (d)); and SBSTA 19 conclusions (FCCC/SBSTA/2003/15, para. 44 (e)).

⁹ United Nations General Assembly Resolutions A/RES/57/257 (February 2003), A/RES/57/260 (January 2003), A/RES/58/243 (February 2004) and A/RES/58/212 (March 2004).

¹⁰ Modalities for cooperation are included in this section if identified by at least one of the Rio Convention bodies.

¹¹ UNFCCC decision 28/CP.7, annex; UNCCD CRIC 1 report: ICCD/CRIC(1) L 1; CBD decision VII/2, paragraphs 5 (c)(i) and 6.

- (b) Collaboration among national focal points¹²
- (c) Collaboration among the scientific subsidiary bodies to the conventions, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) to the CBD, the Committee for Science and Technology (CST) to the UNCCD, and the SBSTA to the UNFCCC¹³
- (d) The JLG¹⁴
- (e) Development of joint work programmes or plans¹⁵
- (f) Joint workshops (at the international level)¹⁶
- (g) Joint capacity-building activities, including training, and local, national and regional workshops to promote synergy in implementation¹⁷
- (h) Case studies on interlinkages¹⁸
- (i) Facilitation of exchange of information and experience,¹⁹ including improving inter-accessibility of available web-based data²⁰
- (j) Cooperation in communication, education and public awareness programmes²¹
- (k) Cooperation in the development of advice, methodologies and tools.²²

10. The convention bodies have frequently emphasized the importance of synergy at the national and local levels. For example, according to the SBSTTA to the CBD, “the primary motivation for cooperation is to promote synergies at the national and local levels, where conventions are implemented. Efforts to promote synergies should be designed in accordance with national circumstances and priorities with a view to achieving sustainable development”.²³ Similarly, the SBSTA to the UNFCCC reiterated the “importance of promoting synergy at the national and local levels where implementation of the various conventions occurs, recognizing that this can lead to increased efficiency and can help avoid duplication”.²⁴ The UNCCD COP, at its fifth session, underlined the need for action at the national and local levels, noting that concerted action makes a significant difference at those levels.²⁵

¹² UNFCCC SBSTA 19 conclusions (FCCC/SBSTTA/2003/15, para. 44 (d)); CBD decision VII/15, paragraph 3.

¹³ UNFCCC decision 13/CP.8, paragraph 2; UNCCD decision 7/COP.5, paragraph 5 and decision 15/COP.6, annex 2.

¹⁴ CBD decisions VI/20 and VII/2; UNFCCC decision 13/CP.8 and SBSTA 14 conclusions (FCCC/SBSTTA/2001/2, para. 42 (d)); UNCCD decision 12/COP.6, paragraph 3.

¹⁵ UNCCD Article 8.1; A joint work programme between CBD and UNCCD has been developed, see paragraph 12 of this note; UNFCCC SBSTA 14 conclusions (FCCC/SBSTTA/2001/2, para. 42 (d) (ii)).

¹⁶ UNFCCC SBSTA 14 conclusions (FCCC/SBSTTA/2001/2, para. 42 (d) (ii)).

¹⁷ CBD decision VII/2, paragraph 5 (c).

¹⁸ CBD decision VII/15, paragraph 10.

¹⁹ UNCCD decision 17/COP.3, paragraph 9.

²⁰ UNFCCC SBSTA 20 conclusions (FCCC/SBSTTA/2004/6, para. 130); CBD decision VII/23, paragraph 7 (e).

²¹ CBD decision VII/24, paragraph 4 (b).

²² CBD decision VII/15, paragraph 15.

²³ CBD SBSTTA recommendation IX/11.

²⁴ SBSTA 19 conclusion (FCCC/SBSTTA/2003/15, para. 44 (d)).

²⁵ UNCCD document ICCD/COP(5)/6.

B. Examples to date of cooperation²⁶

11. At the request of the UNFCCC SBSTA and Subsidiary Body for Implementation, the UNFCCC secretariat, in cooperation with other convention secretariats, organized two workshops²⁷ in Espoo, Finland, in July 2003, to examine synergy among the Rio Conventions.²⁸ Participants included national focal points from all three conventions. The Espoo workshop identified a number of options for cooperation on exchange of information, technology transfer, education and outreach, research and systematic observation, capacity-building, reporting, and climate change impacts and adaptation. The Espoo workshop also examined the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change and in this context highlighted other options, e.g. the use of the CBD's ecosystem approach as a framework for activities contributing to the objectives of the three Rio Conventions.

12. A joint programme of work on the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands has been developed jointly by the secretariats of the CBD and UNCCD highlighting specific areas of collaboration and joint action between these two secretariats, national focal points and other collaborating partners. It was welcomed by the COPs of both conventions.²⁹ An Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands, composed of delegates nominated under both conventions, has been established to carry out some of the work of the joint work programme.

13. The report *Inter-linkages between biological diversity and climate change: advice on the integration of biodiversity considerations into the implementation of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol*³⁰ was prepared by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biological Diversity and Climate Change, established by the COP of the CBD. The expert group comprised experts in both climate change and biodiversity, including scientists involved in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) process and experts from the UNFCCC process and its secretariat.³¹ The secretariat of the UNCCD also participated in the expert group. The report was welcomed not only by the SBSTTA, but also by the SBSTA of the UNFCCC at its nineteenth session, which encouraged Parties to the UNFCCC to make use of it for their national purposes.³²

14. The development of the CBD programme of work on technology transfer, with a similar structure to the UNFCCC framework for technology transfer, is an early result of JLG-facilitated cooperation. At the twentieth session of the SBSTA, the Expert Group on Technology Transfer (EGTT) under the UNFCCC was requested to explore possible ways to enhance synergy with other global conventions and processes where technology transfer and capacity-building for technology transfer are considered, in particular with the CBD on its programme of work and its expert group on technology transfer and technical and scientific cooperation, the UNCCD, and the Montreal Protocol. The EGTT was also requested to consider the outcomes of the work of the JLG, to encourage complementarity and avoid duplication of efforts, and to report on progress to the SBSTA at its twenty-second session.³³

²⁶ Examples given in this section include cooperation activities undertaken under at least two of the Rio Conventions.

²⁷ Two workshops were organized by the UNFCCC secretariat. One was held from 2 to 3 July 2003 in response to the mandate contained in decision 5/CP.7, paragraph 36, and the other from 3 to 4 July 2003 in response to the mandate by the SBSTA at its seventeenth session. For reasons of readability they are referred to as one workshop in this paper as the "Espoo workshop".

²⁸ The report of the Espoo workshop, "Workshops on possible synergy and joint action with the other multilateral environmental conventions and agreements, and on enhancing cooperation with other conventions", is contained in document FCCC/SB/2003/1.

²⁹ UNCCD decision 12/COP.6; CBD decision VII/2, paragraph 9.

³⁰ Published by the secretariat of the CBD as CBD Technical Series No. 10, October 2003.

³¹ The UNFCCC SBSTA encouraged Parties to promote the involvement of climate change expertise in the work on inter-linkages between climate change and biological diversity (SBSTA 14 conclusion (FCCC/SBSTA/2001/2, paragraph 42 (c)).

³² SBSTA 19 conclusions (FCCC/SBSTA/2003/15, para. 44 (c)).

³³ SBSTA 20 conclusions (FCCC/SBSTA/2004/6, para. 80 (b)).

15. The UNCCD secretariat, together with the CBD secretariat and in collaboration with the UNFCCC secretariat, organized a workshop, held in Viterbo, Italy, in April 2004, on promoting synergy among the three conventions with regard to forests and forest ecosystems. The workshop's goal was to encourage the implementation of specific actions at the local level relating to forests and forest ecosystems and their use and conservation, derived from the mandates and commitments under each convention, and to further develop synergistic processes in this sector that would contribute to more effective implementation of the Rio Conventions.

16. Additionally, the secretariat of the CBD, in collaboration with the secretariat of the UNCCD, facilitated the organization of a regional workshop on "practising synergy" for national focal points in Africa of the relevant conventions and of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), in September 2004 in Gaborone, Botswana. The purpose of the workshop was to document and share lessons learned from international initiatives regarding synergy in implementation of the three Rio Conventions, and to develop models of potential pilot initiatives on synergistic implementation of the conventions. The UNFCCC secretariat, at the invitation of the other convention secretariats, contributed to the preparation of the workshop.

17. The UNCCD secretariat has been facilitating a programme on national synergy workshops in order to strengthen cooperation among national focal points, where stakeholders relating to the three conventions are encouraged to maintain dialogue and seek the common threads for cooperation.

18. The three secretariats are working together on a number of outreach activities, including developing common web-based tools to facilitate access to national reports and communications and to information for national focal points. The three secretariats also maintain a joint web calendar of activities relevant to the three conventions and are developing a photo calendar for 2005 and a brochure.

19. On the margins of the fifth meeting of the JLG, a retreat with the Chairman/Chief Executive Officer and senior staff of the GEF was held to discuss common issues in relation to adaptation to climate change, the transfer of technology, and capacity-building and development. The meeting observed that it is important to encourage closer working relationships between the focal points of the Rio Conventions and the GEF focal point at the country level.

20. The three executive secretaries have written jointly to the Chair of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to express their appreciation for the work done so far on the "Rio markers"³⁴ and to request the integration of the markers in the regular creditor reporting system in order to facilitate the identification of official development assistance funding allocated to the implementation of each of the conventions.

21. The secretariats are also sharing information and providing input to the Group on Earth Observations.

III. Options for further enhancing cooperation

A. Options for cooperation at the national and international levels

22. Cooperation among the conventions may occur at various levels – between the respective convention bodies, between the convention secretariats, and at the national or local levels. Cooperation at the local level has frequently been highlighted as being particularly relevant for fostering synergy among the conventions, because it is at this level that implementation of the conventions occurs. It is also at this level that tangible and demonstrable benefits accrue from close collaboration and where cooperation in

³⁴ The "Rio markers" developed by the Development Assistance Committee permit the identification of specific activities targeting the objectives of the Rio Conventions, which, to a large extent, fall under the definition of aid to the environment.

pursuing synergy can make a considerable difference in implementing and supporting sustainable development.

1. Encouraging collaboration among national focal points

23. Cooperation among the national focal points to the three conventions has been identified as key to fostering collaboration at the national level. This was also underlined at the Espoo and the Viterbo workshops. In addition, the Viterbo workshop underlined that it will be increasingly important to facilitate country-level interaction between focal points of the conventions (as well as representatives of institutions, e.g. forest-related institutions in the case of the forestry sector), using existing policy and planning mechanisms at the national level.

24. Options identified at those workshops for pursuing collaboration among national focal points include:

- (a) Efficient communication between the national focal points of the three Rio Conventions and other relevant stakeholders, including the sharing of information and liaising on a regular basis to discuss issues relevant to all Rio Conventions
- (b) National-level operational institutional arrangements, which could facilitate harmonized planning and implementation of the three Rio Conventions at the national level
- (c) Methods and tools, such as checklists, to guide focal points. Responsibility for developing such lists could rest with the focal points themselves or be developed by the respective subsidiary bodies. Such lists should aim to identify opportunities and should not be prescriptive.

1. Collaboration at the level of the convention bodies and secretariats

25. There are many possibilities for collaboration among the secretariats, the subsidiary bodies and their respective expert groups, and many of these are currently being carried out or explored.

26. Cooperation at the level of the secretariats is already well-developed. Some examples to date are provided in chapter II above, and other examples include regular exchange of information; seeking comments on the preparation of documents where the subject matter is relevant to the other conventions;³⁵ participation in joint side events and similar activities; and cooperation through the JLG. Some options for further enhanced cooperation are provided in section III.C below.

27. Cooperation to date in the provision of scientific and technical expertise, including through the respective subsidiary bodies, has included:

- (a) Provision of expertise relating to one convention for the preparation of a report for another³⁶
- (b) Consideration of the product of one convention by the scientific subsidiary body of another
- (c) Preparation of a report for the CBD by the IPCC in addition to its regular inputs to the UNFCCC.

28. Options for further enhanced cooperation might include:

- (a) More systematic cross-participation, including through peer review

³⁵ UNCCD decision 17/COP.3, paragraph 5.

³⁶ This, as well as points (b) and (c), were part of the preparation of the CBD report on biodiversity and climate change (see paragraph 13 above).

- (b) Joint thematic workshops with the participation of representatives from the three Rio Conventions
- (c) Coordinated requests for scientific advice from external bodies.

29. As in all areas of cooperation, these proposals would need to be pursued while respecting the individual mandates and the independent legal status of each convention.

30. In addition to promoting policy coherence, cooperation among conventions can amount to simply recognizing the contribution one convention can make to the achievement of the objectives of another.³⁷ The CBD has called for enhanced cooperation to contribute to achieving the target of a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010, and has called for the examination of options for a flexible framework between all relevant actors, such as a global partnership on biodiversity.³⁸

B. Options for cooperation on issues addressing climate change impacts, adaptation, mitigation, land degradation and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity

31. There are opportunities for synergy among activities for climate change mitigation and adaptation, activities to combat land degradation and desertification, and activities for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.³⁹

32. Ensuring complementarity in the elaboration and implementation of the NBSAPS, NAPS, national communications and NAPAs (the last refers only to least developed countries) has been encouraged by the COPs of the conventions. It could be facilitated by incorporating the various strategies and plans into overall strategies for sustainable development, including poverty reduction strategy papers and the development assistance frameworks.

33. The following tools could assist countries in enhancing collaboration and capturing synergy in this area:

- (a) Wider use of the ecosystem approach⁴⁰
- (b) Training and capacity-building
- (c) Case studies on interlinkages between climate change mitigation and adaptation activities on the one hand and conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity on the other hand, as currently undertaken under the CBD
- (d) Pilot projects that promote synergy at the national level
- (e) Development of methodologies and tools that cut across the conventions, for example for assessing impacts and risks of climate change adaptation and mitigation activities for biodiversity and land degradation
- (f) Further advice and guidance developed under the conventions, separately or jointly.

³⁷ For example, the strategic plan of the CBD (decision VII/26) recognizes the following two aspects of cooperation: the Convention is promoting cooperation between all relevant international instruments and processes to enhance policy coherence; other international processes are actively supporting implementation of the Convention, in a manner consistent with their respective frameworks.

³⁸ CBD decision VII/26, paragraph 3.

³⁹ CBD decision VII/15, paragraph 7.

⁴⁰ The ecosystem approach is the integrated management of land, water and living resources, and has been adopted as the primary approach under the CBD. Participants at the Espoo workshop acknowledged that the ecosystem approach in the national implementation of the Rio Conventions has proven to be successful, and as such could serve as a model for future action (FCCC/SB/2003/1, para. 71).

C. Options for further collaboration in specific cross-cutting areas

34. A number of cross-cutting topics of relevance to all three conventions have been identified at various meetings. Among the topics were technology transfer, capacity-building, education and outreach, research and monitoring/systematic observation, and reporting, most of which were discussed at the Espoo workshop. The sections below lay out options for enhancing cooperation in some of those and other areas. This list of topics is not exhaustive; other areas of common interest may exist, and the relevance of those topics for cooperation at the national level may also differ among Parties.

1. Capacity-building

35. Capacity-building has been recognized as one of the key factors for the implementation of the Rio Conventions. Possibilities for further collaboration in this area may include:

- (a) Analysis of the frameworks and approaches for capacity-building under each of the conventions and exploration of the possibility of applying the elements from those approaches in the respective conventions; for example, the CBD and UNCCD may wish to examine the experience of the use of the capacity-building frameworks established under the UNFCCC (in order to further develop their approach to capacity-building and elaborate guidance to the GEF on this matter)
- (b) Sharing and learning from the experience gained in developing the capacity-building database and resource library
- (c) Exchanging experience and lessons learned from the national capacity self assessments (NCSA). Such exchange of experiences could be facilitated through the joint organization of side events during COPs and sessions of subsidiary bodies⁴¹
- (d) Identifying opportunities for synergy at the national level deriving from the NCSA. This should be geared towards demonstrating a cohesive approach to capacity-building through supporting the implementation of the relevant recommendations contained in the NCSA.

2. Technology transfer

36. Possibilities for further collaboration on the development and transfer of technology may include:

- (a) Analysis of the experience gained with the UNFCCC's technology information clearing house (TT:Clear) and the CBD's clearing house mechanism (CHM), and identifying opportunities for learning from each others experience

⁴¹ A side event to present the initial outcomes of the NCSAs is planned for the tenth session of the COP to the UNFCCC.

- (b) Exchange of information on activities and of expertise as appropriate between the UNFCCC's EGTT and the CBD's expert group on technology transfer and technical and scientific cooperation, which have similar mandates⁴²
- (c) Cooperation in the identification of technology of joint interest and relevance
- (d) Sharing experience gained from, inter alia, the work undertaken under the UNCCD's CST on traditional knowledge, early warning systems and benchmarks and indicators.

3. Research and Monitoring/Systematic observation

37. There is overlap in the information and data needs of the three conventions. The Group on Earth Observations (GEO), established at the Earth Observation Summit in 2003, is developing a 10-year plan for a global earth observing system of systems (GEOSS). The Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) is also developing a 10-year implementation plan. The CBD is developing its approach to monitoring progress towards the 2010 target set at the World Summit for Sustainable Development. Options for collaboration include:

- (a) Sharing of data among conventions⁴³
- (b) Enhanced collaboration in research and monitoring in specific areas of common interest⁴⁴
- (c) A coordinated approach with regard to the proposed GEOSS, including with regard to the conventions' reporting requirements and needs for monitoring, with the aim of ensuring that future systems are linked and responsive to the needs of the conventions.

4. Information exchange and outreach

38. The convention secretariats are collaborating on their outreach activities. They are exploring ways to improve the accessibility of related information and data available on their respective web sites by making these web sites interoperable. Such information might include: COP decisions, national focal points, national reports, case studies and library materials. This entails the development of certain data standards and protocols.

5. Reporting

39. Promoting complementarity between NBSAPS, NAPS, national communications and NAPAs, and improving information exchange, may also contribute to streamlining of reporting. Without compromising the different reporting requirements under each of the conventions, the following options may further contribute to facilitating reporting by Parties: Identifying common areas of reporting, including possible overlaps of information and data;

- (a) Encouraging the use of common terms and definitions;
- (b) Sharing lessons learned on reporting;
- (c) Facilitating access to information provided in reports and communications;

⁴² As per CBD decision VII/29, paragraph 7 (b).

⁴³ The CBD COP has invited related conventions, assessment processes and relevant organizations to contribute reports and information that assist the monitoring of progress towards the 2010 targets (decision VII/30, paragraph 9).

⁴⁴ For example, the CBD COP has invited the UNFCCC, the IPCC, the International Geosphere–Biosphere Programme (in the context of its global change and terrestrial ecosystems global transect programme), and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment to enhance collaboration in research and monitoring activities on forest biological diversity and climate change, and to explore possibilities of establishing an international network to monitor and assess the impact of climate change on forest biological diversity (decision VI/22, paragraph 40).

- (d) Facilitating coordinated reporting to the three conventions at the national level.

6. Financial resources

40. The GEF is providing support to countries for their NCSAs, which are intended to assess the capacity-building needs for the three conventions. This provides an opportunity for countries to identify synergy in the implementation of the three conventions.

41. The GEF has funded project activities under the biodiversity and sustainable land management focal areas that have climate change adaptation benefits. In future, it is expected that the GEF will fund climate change adaptation projects, and these may also contribute to the objectives of the CBD and the UNCCD.
