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FEATURE ARTICLE

Sharing the benefits from biodiversity

The Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity recognize that all States have sovereignty over their natural resources and that the authority to determine access to genetic resources rests with the national governments and is subject to national legislation. The Parties also agreed to take measures with a view to sharing in a fair and equitable way, and on mutually agreed terms, the results of research and development and the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources with the Contracting Party providing such resources.

Parties are committed to facilitating access to genetic resources on "mutually agreed terms" and on the basis of the country of origin's "prior informed consent". Benefits to the latter may take various forms, such as financial payments, samples of what is collected, the training of national researchers, the transfer of biotechnology equipment and know-how, or a share of any profits from the use of the resources.

Policy measures, including legislation addressing access to genetic resources and the equitable sharing of benefits, either have been adopted or are in the process of being developed in over 40 countries.

In 1998, a regionally balanced Panel of Experts on Access and Benefit-sharing was established by the Conference of the Parties. At its first meeting (Costa Rica, October 1999), the Panel reached broad conclusions for the consideration of the Parties on: prior informed consent, mutually agreed terms, information needs and capacity-building. However no conclusion was reached about the role of intellectual property rights in the implementation of access and benefit-sharing arrangements.

Having been reconvened by the Conference of the Parties in May 2000, the Panel of Experts met for a second time, in Montreal, in March 2001 to work on outstanding issues from its first meeting, assess user and

(Continued on page 3)

Focus

Exchange of information on biosafety

Article 20 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity establishes a Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) to facilitate the exchange of information on living modified organisms (LMOs) and to assist countries in the implementation of the Protocol.

In two of its decisions, the Conference of the Parties (COP) emphasized the importance of ensuring a functional BCH before the entry into force of the Protocol: in paragraph 13 of

decision EM-1/3 adopted in January 2000, the COP requested the Executive Secretary to commence preparatory work on the functioning of the BCH; in decision V/1 adopted in May 2000, the COP re-emphasized the priority of launching the BCH no later than the entry into force of the Protocol and requested the Executive Secretary to convene, prior to the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (ICCP), a meeting of technical experts on the BCH to consider issues relevant to information-sharing and the BCH as reflected in the work plan for the ICCP adopted by the COP.

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EDITORIAL

Three Months Hence

Since the inaugural issue of the CBD News, the Secretariat has organized and participated in several key events, which highlight the importance of biodiversity to the health of our planet and the connection between its sustainable use and eradicating poverty throughout the world. The Secretariat continues to link the need to conserve and use sustainably our living resources with the need to ensure the equitable sharing of wealth.

In March, the Convention's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) held its sixth meeting. The main focus of the meeting was on international action to reduce the threats posed by invasive alien species, which are currently responsible for billions of dollars of damage to ecosystems throughout the world. The meeting also addressed several issues, including the Global Taxonomy Initiative – an international effort to bridge the gap between scientific assessments for the Convention – the relationship between biological diversity and climate change, and migratory species. Participants were offered the opportunity to hear prominent scientists and researchers and to discuss possible solutions to some of these pressing problems, particularly with regard to invasive alien species. A more detailed account of the work of the meeting is contained in a separate article in this newsletter. The recommendations made at the meeting will be taken up by the Conference of the Parties, the supreme decision-making body of the Convention, when it meets in The Hague in April 2002.

The Secretariat also organized a meeting of the informal advisory committee (IAC) of the clearing-house mechanism (CHM), the vehicle for the international exchange of scientific and technical information and cooperation established under the Convention. Having completed successfully its information-exchange phase, the meeting

discussed the new direction of the CHM toward the development of initiatives in support of technical and scientific cooperation. This mandate has offered the CHM the opportunity to more fully participate in the work programme of the SBSTTA, particularly its work on invasive species, taxonomy and marine and coastal biodiversity.

Another key meeting held at the Secretariat on 19-20 March 2001, was the Liaison Group Meeting of Technical Experts on the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH). The Liaison Group offered direction on the implementation of the BCH, thus assisting the Secretariat to develop this important mechanism. Parallel to this was the work of the Panel of Experts on Access and Benefit-sharing, held on 19-22 March 2001. Again, the conclusions of this meeting will help advance efforts under the Convention to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources among all regions of the world. For further information, see the feature article in this newsletter.

In support of work pertaining to marine and coastal biodiversity, the Secretariat, together with the Co-ordinating Unit of the Mediterranean Action Plan, organized a Joint Consultation Meeting on the Harmonization of the Implementation of the SPA Protocol (Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean) and the CBD. The meeting, held on 20-21 April 2001, in Valencia, Spain, aimed at promoting integration and consistency in the implementation of these two complementary instruments at the national and the regional levels in the Mediterranean.

Finally, the Secretariat organized a meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Forest Biological Diversity, held in Edinburgh, United Kingdom, on 23-27 April 2001. Forest biological diversity will be the main issue for SBSTTA when it meets again

in Montreal in November this year. Forests account for the majority of the world's terrestrial biodiversity, and the Expert Group is to review the status of forest biodiversity and to identify options for its conservation and sustainable use. The advice received from the Technical Expert Group will assist the Secretariat in the development initiatives pertaining to forest biodiversity.

Parallel to these meetings, the Secretariat implemented and is developing a number of projects in support of its work. For example, the Convention's website was further improved by creating new categories of information and by updating existing ones. A number of information pamphlets in support of the public awareness and education are also being published, and discussions are under way with the Global Invasive Species Programme and the Global Taxonomy Initiative for the establishment of thematic focal points on these issues.

This brief and selective snapshot of the Secretariat's work illustrates some of the projects and initiatives undertaken for conservation and protection of biodiversity. However, the Secretariat does not work in a vacuum; it needs your participation and involvement to ensure successful implementation of its goals. We invite you to comment on our work and to send us suggestions for improvement. But equally important, we ask you to make the Convention better known and to share with others your knowledge of our work.

Hamdallah Zedan
Executive Secretary





Sharing the benefits from biodiversity

(Continued)

provider experience on access and benefit-sharing and identify approaches for the involvement of stakeholders in access and benefit-sharing arrangements.

The conclusions of the Panel will be considered by the Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing also established by the Conference of the Parties at its fifth meeting.

To facilitate the task of the Working Group, the Panel of Experts also tried to identify the types of guidelines and other approaches that would be best suited to achieve the objectives of the Convention with respect to arrangements for access and benefit-sharing.

The Panel recognized that guidelines should be seen as part of a package of measures or approaches that may be considered to address the different needs that have been expressed by Parties and stakeholders, such as the need for guidance, information and capacity-building. Complementary measures include codes of conduct, indicators and model agreements. In addition, existing legislative texts, policy decisions and thematic reports on access and benefit-sharing, as well as other relevant information could be made available through information-exchange mechanisms.

The Panel also emphasized that capacity-building should be an essential part of the

work on access and benefit-sharing and should aim at strengthening the ability of relevant stakeholders in a number of areas, including: the development of adequate legislation, administrative and policy measures, the protection of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities, technology transfer to enable countries to conserve and undertake sustainable use of their own biological resources.

The Panel stressed that awareness-raising of the importance of capacity building for ABS was required at all levels, from government to local communities. It suggested that the Working Group should consider the need to draw up action plans for capacity building on access and benefit-sharing with specific indicators, identified milestones, time-frames, roles of donors, drivers, etc. The progress in building capacity will also need to be monitored and evaluated.

The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group will hold its first meeting on 22-26 October 2001, in Bonn, Germany. It is composed of representatives nominated by Governments and regional integration organizations, and is open to the participation of indigenous and local communities, non-governmental organizations, industry and academic institutions, as well as intergovernmental organizations.

The mandate of the Working Group is to develop "guidelines and other approaches" for submission to the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting. These international guidelines and other approaches, such as model agreements, are meant to assist Parties and stakeholders in the implementation of access and benefit-sharing arrangements. They should serve as inputs when developing and drafting legislative, administrative and policy measures on access and benefit-sharing and contracts and other arrangements under mutually agreed terms.

The text of the Convention on Biological Diversity provides a framework but little guidance as to how to implement the concepts contained in its provisions. The development of international guidelines on access and benefit-sharing and of other approaches, which will assist Parties and stakeholders in the establishment of appropriate access and benefit-sharing regimes, will be an important step in the implementation of one of the three basic objectives of the Convention.

An important factor, which will contribute to the success of guidelines and approaches, is the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in their development in order to ensure that they meet the needs of a number of different actors involved in access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing. ■

Focus (Continued)

The ICCP - a subsidiary body established by the COP to undertake, with the support of the Executive Secretary, the necessary preparations for the first Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol - held its first meeting in Montpellier, France, from 11 to 15 December 2000, and recommended the development of a pilot phase of the BCH. The pilot phase objectives were defined as follows: to build experience and provide feedback for the development of a functional and accessible internet-based BCH, and to identify alternatives to the electronic system; to identify and address capacity needs of countries with respect to the BCH.

The ICCP-1 also highlighted the following characteristics for the pilot phase: i) amenable to rapid development; ii) user-friendly, searchable and understandable; iii) provide an efficient mechanism for implementation of the requirements of the Protocol; iv) incorporate on a priority basis information

to facilitate decision-making, information on paragraph 1 of Article 11 of the Protocol, and access to the roster of experts on biosafety following final decision on the operation of the roster.

Furthermore, the ICCP identified the elements required to implement the pilot phase: 1) A central portal; 2) Central database(s); 3) Linkage of central portal to national, regional and international databases/nodes; and 4) Common formats for information, which can incorporate linked information through appropriate search engines.

Pursuant to this recommendation and at the initiative of the Executive Secretary, a liaison group meeting of experts on the BCH was held in Montreal from 19 to 20 March 2001 to provide advice on technical issues associated with the implementation of the pilot phase of the BCH. At its meeting held

in Montreal on 21 March 2001, the Bureau of the ICCP endorsed the recommendations made by the liaison group meeting and mandated the Secretariat to proceed with the development of the pilot phase along those recommendations.

On 5 April 2001 the Secretariat launched the pilot phase as a test website.

Its implementation is continuing, particularly the development of the central portal, with a view to make it more comprehensive, user-friendly, understandable and searchable. A BCH tool-kit has been developed as an informative and instructional tool to assist interested users. Non-electronic based mechanisms for information sharing will also be developed, and their implementation will be based on countries' demands and needs. ■

Please send your comments to:
BCH@biodiv.org.



Celebrating the International Day for Biological Diversity

Parties to the Convention celebrated the International Day for Biological Diversity on 22 May by organizing various activities at national level. Media coverage, seminars, workshops, meetings and speeches, competitions, nature center inaugurations, visits to conservation sites, children shows, launching of books and websites, were among the events that marked the day.

Full details of the above events can be found at: www.biodiv.org/events/biodiv-day-events-2001.asp

If you would like to share some ideas for next year's celebration –which will focus on forests- please send us an e-mail.

In celebration of the day, the staff of the Secretariat planted a White Birch tree at the Montreal Botanical Garden, in an event that promoted the cooperation between the Convention and the Garden in raising public awareness.

At the same time, in cooperation with its Staff Association, the Secretariat organized a promotional stand in "La Ruelle des Fortifications" on Friday, 18 May 2001. CBD main publications, a theme poster and pins were handed out to the public.



INSIDE THE SECRETARIAT

Managing Biodiversity in Agricultural Ecosystems

How can farmers manage biodiversity? This and other questions will be addressed by an International Symposium on Managing Biodiversity in Agricultural Ecosystems to be held from 8 to 10 November 2001, in Montreal, Canada, prior to the seventh meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-7).

In addressing such questions, the symposium aims to advance understanding of the complex process and mechanisms for on-farm management of biodiversity and their relation with farmers' livelihoods. It will identify lessons learnt for policy and capacity building in order to contribute to the implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Agricultural Biodiversity.

Much has been written on loss of managed biodiversity under threat from commercial and intensified production, but only limited work has been done on how farmers manage their resources in order to sustain and enhance them. To develop practices and systems for sustaining this managed biodiversity, the Project on People, Land Management and Environmental Change

(UNU/PLEC) has been developed since 1993 by the United Nations University. It involves a collaborative effort between scientists and small farmers from across the developing world. In the same period, the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI) has developed a global project on "Strengthening the Scientific Basis of in situ Conservation of Agricultural Biodiversity", involving a similar range of collaboration.

The symposium will be open to all interested individuals and institutions willing to share their knowledge and experiences relating to the above themes. Selected posters for case studies and abstracts will be presented. For preparation of case studies, please refer to the CBD Programme of Work and Outline for Case Studies at: www.biodiv.org/areas/agro/case-studies.asp and more information regarding the symposium, can be found at: www.unu.edu/env/plec/cbd/bio-mtg.html

The Road to The Hague: eight recommendations to Parties from SBSTTA

The sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity met in Montreal, Canada, from 12 to 16 March 2001. Over 560 participants,

representing 143 countries, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations as well as other bodies attended the meeting.

SBSTTA adopted eight recommendations to be forwarded to the Conference of the Parties (COP) including three progress reports on: ad hoc technical expert groups- in particular on forests, inland water, marine and coastal biological diversity; the implementation of the programme of work, including the integration of coral reefs; alien species; scientific assessments of the Global Taxonomy Initiative; biological diversity and climate change; migratory species and cooperation with the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and the Global Biodiversity Outlook.

Alien species, the second major threat to biodiversity after habitat destruction, was the main theme of the meeting. They represent an increasing global problem linked to transport, trade, tourism and globalization in general and have major economic consequences.

Delegates noted that there are many instruments already in place to limit the impact of alien species on biodiversity. In its recommendation to the Conference of the Parties, SBSTTA included Invasive Alien Species strategies and actions plans,



international cooperation, and assessment information and tools. It also urged Parties to decide on, promote and implement the Guiding Principles, as recommended by the meeting. Presenters illustrated some of the issues in a poster session and abstracts were published in the CBD Technical Series no. 1.

Prof. Harold Mooney of Stanford University (USA), as keynote speaker, stated that while society depends on the movement of biological material, a wide range of ecological and economic damage is caused by Invasive Alien Species, such as depleting water supplies; disrupting fire cycles; transmitting diseases; degrading forest, inland water, coastal and marine biological diversity, including by taking over natural species that become threatened, rangelands and agricultural systems; and impeding navigation. He noted that problems include: their self-replication; alteration of biological systems; ability to evolve quickly; lag times in identifying their effects; and inadequacies in existing information. He concluded by noting the need to develop prediction models, environmentally benign and cost-effective control methods, and means to regulate their flow.

Another speaker was Jeff Waage, Chair of the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP), coordinated by the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment in collaboration with IUCN and CAB International. GISP focuses on assembling and disseminating best management practices and stimulating new tools' development in science, information management, education and policy. Mr. Waage referenced its components, namely: education, pathways and risk assessment, human dimensions, ecology of alien species, early warning systems, economic consequences, current status and assessment, global change, legal and institutional frameworks, and best management practices. He highlighted the need to improve access to information and extend information exchange systems; identify pathways of invasion; priorities and gaps in research; develop a terminology guide; support activities at national level; emphasize taxonomy; and raise public awareness.

One of the main outcomes of SBSTTA-6 was the discussion about climate change and its importance as a major cause of biodiversity loss. It agreed to establish a mechanism to improve scientific assessments of climate

change, such as peer reviews and ad hoc expert groups in order to develop high quality scientific input. There was much concern on the issue of forests and their potential function as carbon sinks as stipulated in the Kyoto Protocol which, if not carefully implemented, could be harmful to biological diversity. It was recognized that much work could be done by the CBD to assist the Climate Change Convention in that regard.

Coral bleaching and its socio-economic consequences was also part of discussions and SBSTTA recommended the urgent need to take prompt action to address the impact of climate change on these ecosystems. Coral reefs were therefore integrated into the programme of work of marine and coastal biological diversity, which will concentrate on two issues considered to be the major causes of coral reef mortality worldwide: coral bleaching and the physical degradation and destruction of the reefs. Coral bleaching is primarily caused by elevated water temperatures, but also by other stress factors, such as ultraviolet radiation. Climate change has the potential to cause more frequent and severe episodes of coral bleaching, and may result in serious loss of the world's coral reef resources.

Robert Watson, Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), discussed climate and biodiversity interactions and presented scientific data relevant to climate change. He highlighted: interlinkages among food production and global environmental issues; synergies between environmental science and policy; causes of climate change, including population increase, inefficient resource use, inappropriate technologies and lack of economic incentives. He stated that most global warming is attributable to humans, noting that increasing surface temperatures and climatic changes result in: changes in precipitation patterns and sea levels; effects on hydrological, agricultural, physical and ecological systems; runoff; crop yield changes; species composition; and habitat fragmentation. He further identified coral bleaching, emergence of pests and fires, loss of coastal wetlands and shifting composition of forest systems as directly related to climate change. He concluded by noting potential mitigation options and the reality of adverse consequences for biodiversity at the ecosystem, species, and genetic levels.

SBSTTA-6 also addressed the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI) and adopted a programme of work. The recommendation on GTI requests COP-6 to: endorse the draft work programme; urge governments, international and regional organizations to promote and carry out the work programme; encourage involvement of global, regional and sub-regional networks and partnerships to its implementation; and examine the financial need for activities and capacity-building. The work programme's operational objectives are to: assess taxonomic needs and capacities; provide focus in building and maintaining infrastructure for obtaining biological specimens; facilitate infrastructure for access to taxonomic information; and generate information needed for decision-making regarding the CBD's thematic work programmes and cross-cutting issues.

On the issue of collaboration, SBSTTA welcomed the cooperation between the Secretariats of the CBD and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) in identifying activities that could be jointly implemented. In developing such activities, the Secretariats ensure that migratory species concerns are integrated into the work programmes of the CBD, and that the work undertaken by the CMS helps implement the CBD. The two Secretariats will finalize a joint work programme based on the elements presented to SBSTTA.

Marine and coastal protected areas

The first meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas is tentatively scheduled to take place on October 22-26 in Leigh, New Zealand. The group of 15-20 international experts will discuss the value and effects of marine and coastal protected areas; linkages between protected areas and sustainable use; pilot research and monitoring projects; and criteria for selection of marine and coastal protected areas. The deliberations of the expert group will provide valuable input to the work of the Convention.

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Inside the secretariat (Continued)

MEETING OF THE INFORMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM

A meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee (IAC) of the Clearing-House Mechanism was convened by the Executive Secretary on 11 March 2001 in Montreal. The purpose of the meeting was to review the objectives of the IAC as identified by the Conference of the Parties (COP) and to discuss its operation and structure. Held on the margins of the Sixth Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-6) and immediately before the first meeting of the governing board of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), the meeting offered the Secretariat and the IAC an opportunity to review past accomplishments, discuss future initiatives, and plan for more effective facilitation of technical and scientific cooperation.

The IAC unanimously agreed that, having completed successfully its information exchange phase, the CHM should now focus on the facilitation of technical and scientific cooperation. Indeed, the IAC recommended that the Executive Secretary: focus on the use of the CHM to promote technical and scientific cooperation, particularly within the work programme of invasive alien species, the Global Taxonomy Initiative, coastal and marine biodiversity and the ecosystem approach; seek advice from SBSTTA on the development of new CHM initiatives to promote technical and scientific cooperation; seek close links with the Global Invasive Species Program, and discussing joint work initiatives; study joint work programmes with the GISP and other similar initiatives in the creation of thematic focal points; emphasize capacity building, particularly education and training; constitute a core group to examine metadata and common formats, and to report to the next IAC meeting.

The IAC also requested the Executive Secretary to review current membership, with a view to establish a core IAC assisted by a range of expertise in order to help the CHM in developing new mechanisms for information-sharing and technical and scientific cooperation.

Finally, it emphasized the need to promote collaboration develop mechanisms to

encourage interaction and active participation from and between all regions and Parties.

On 14 March 2001, the Executive Secretary and IAC members met with SBSTTA and CHM focal points to present the meeting's recommendations and to receive suggestions and comments on the new direction of the CHM. Delegates voiced support for new CHM initiatives to facilitate technical and scientific cooperation. More information can be found at: www.biodiv.org/chm/iac-2001-03-11.asp

CBD/UNESCO Working Group on Education and Public Awareness

On 14 March on the margins of SBSTTA-6, a side event on education and public awareness (EPA), was organized by the Secretariat in collaboration with UNESCO. Participants were briefed on progress made on implementation of decision V/17, and feedback was received on: communication of biodiversity issues; promotion and profile of the CBD and its Secretariat; education through the CBD-mechanisms, programmes of work and national strategies.

In addition, a presentation was given on the outcome of an "International Workshop on Internet-based Nature Observation Projects". For details please visit: www.biodiv.org/doc/ref/edu-ws-en.pdf.

Another side-event on the issue will be organized at the next SBSTTA meeting to be held in Montreal from 12 to 17 November 2001.

The draft of a concise report on education and communication strategy for COP-6 will be discussed at the third meeting of the CBD/UNESCO Consultative Working Group of Experts on Biological Diversity Education and Public Awareness to be held in Bilbao, Spain, in November 2001.

Experts' Meeting on LMOs

The Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (ICCP) considered, at its first meeting, Article 18 of the Protocol on handling, transport, packaging and identification of living modified organisms (LMOs).

At the end of its deliberations, ICCP invited Parties to the Convention, Governments and relevant international organizations to provide information on their existing practices, rules and standards. It also requested the Executive Secretary to prepare, based on the information provided by Parties, Governments and relevant international organizations, for its consideration at its second meeting: (a) a synthesis of the existing practices, rules and standards; and (b) options for coordinating the work under Article 18 with the work of other relevant international bodies.

ICCP further requested the Executive Secretary to convene a meeting of Government-nominated technical experts in the field that considers the needs and modalities for developing measures for Parties to meet their obligations under paragraphs 2 (b) and (c) of Article 18, which concern LMOs destined for contained use and those intended for intentional introduction into the environment, and to prepare a report on their deliberations and recommendations for its consideration at its second meeting.

Accordingly, the Meeting of Technical Experts on Handling, Transport, Packaging and Identification of Living Modified Organisms was convened in Paris from 13 to 15 June, following the offer made by the Government of France to host and Canada to co-host the meeting and with the financial support provided by the two countries, and the United Kingdom. The meeting brought together approximately 40 Government-nominated experts as well as experts from relevant international organizations and other observers.

The Technical Experts' Meeting discussed issues relating to documentation accompanying the transboundary movements of living modified organisms destined for contained use and those intended for intentional introduction into the environment. The meeting identified three major options that would possibly address the requirements of the above: (i) existing documentation practices supplied by the originator of the shipment; (ii) existing international documentation systems; and (iii) a new documentation mechanism tailored on existing systems. The meeting adopted recommendations for ICCP to consider the use of the first two options with



a view to fulfill obligations and to keep under review and discuss the need for developing a new system of documentation. The meeting has also recommended that international organizations that administer the International Plant Protection Convention, the Seed Certification Schemes of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and division 6.2 and class 9 of the United Nations Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, and other relevant organizations be invited to provide advice on their ability to assist Parties to meet these requirements, as well as on their capacity to adjust their systems, should this be necessary.

The ICCP is expected to consider the report of the meeting and the recommendations during its upcoming second meeting, scheduled for 1-5 October 2001 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Sustainable Tourism Workshop

The International Workshop on Biological Diversity and Tourism was held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, between 4 and 7 June 2001. It was sponsored by the Governments of Germany and Belgium. Approximately fifty government nominated experts, as well as experts from international organizations, NGOs and representatives of indigenous and local communities developed guidelines for activities related to sustainable tourism development in vulnerable ecosystems and habitats of major importance for biological diversity.

The workshop was opened by the President of the Dominican Republic, His Excellency Hipolito Mejia, and a statement was made by the Minister of Environment, Mr. Moya Pons. There was extensive coverage of the event in the national press.

Guidelines prepared during the workshop should assist Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, public authorities and stakeholders, to apply the provisions of the Convention to the sustainable development and management of tourism. They will provide technical guidance to policy and decision makers, tourism and/or biodiversity managers, whether in national or local government, private sector, indigenous and local communities, NGOs or other organizations, on ways of working together with key stakeholders. The aims are to

contribute to: functioning ecosystems; sustainable tourism in functioning ecosystems; fair and equitable sharing of benefits; information and capacity building; restoration of past damage.

The proposed guidelines are structured along the following elements: Scope; Management Process Steps; Notification process and outline of information requirements; Public education and awareness.

At its next meeting in November 2001, the SBSTTA will consider these guidelines, which afterwards will eventually be integrated in the international work programme on sustainable tourism development under the Commission on Sustainable Development process with regard to biological diversity.

Furthermore, the guidelines will be transmitted to other international forums, including the tenth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (January 2002) and the preparatory process for the World Summit on Ecotourism (Quebec City, May 2002).

African regional meeting on the Biosafety Clearing-House and the Clearing-House Mechanism

At its first meeting (Montpellier 11-15 December 2000) the Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (ICCP), requested the Executive Secretary to analyze the capacity-building and financial requirements of developing countries, in particular the least developed and small island developing states among them, and countries with economies in transition, as well as those that are centers of origin and centers of genetic diversity, to enable their active participation and collaboration in the pilot phase of the Biosafety Clearing-House (<http://bch.biodiv.org>).

The African Regional Meeting on the Biosafety Clearing-House and the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) was held in Nairobi from 26 to 28 February 2001 in support of this objective. The meeting provided African countries an opportunity to express their needs and expectations with regard to the establishment of the pilot phase.

Another objective of the meeting was to support decision V/14, annex II, item (d), of

the Conference of the Parties, under which the Executive Secretary was requested to convene regional workshops to support capacity-building activities, training and awareness, so as to enable and further strengthen their participation and collaboration in the use and future development of the clearing-house mechanism.

Each African country Party to the Convention was invited to nominate one participant, preferably qualified in the fields of management of biosafety-related issues (such as notifications for decision-making); information-sharing systems and database-management; and/or experience with the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention. The meeting was attended by 53 participants representing 33 African countries, and a number of bilateral donors, inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and industry.

The issues discussed included: information exchange under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Cartagena Protocol, existing biosafety and biodiversity information exchange mechanisms in Africa and how they can be harnessed in support of the Biosafety Clearing-House and the CHM, how to foster capacity for information exchange under the Protocol and Convention, and the synergies and differences in the implementation of the above. The meeting concluded with a preparation of regional needs assessments and priorities for actions and final recommendations as outlined in document UNEP/CBD/BCH/Afr.Reg/1/2 (available at: www.bch.biodiv.org/bch-rm-01.asp)

LIABILITY AND REDRESS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CBD - AN ISSUE ON THE AGENDA

During the negotiation of the Convention of Biological Diversity it was not possible to reach a consensus on the issue of liability and redress with regard to transboundary damage to biological diversity. Consideration of the issue was consequently postponed to some future date providing further study. In decisions taken at its fourth and fifth meetings, the Conference of the Parties put in motion mechanisms for generating the necessary information for informed examination of the issue. In addition, the Conference of the Parties also decided to

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Inside the secretariat (Continued)

consider, at its sixth meeting, a process for reviewing the relevant provision of the Convention, including the possibility of establishing an ad hoc technical expert group. The Government of France offered to organize an inter-sessional workshop on the issue whose outcome would be fed into the decision-making process of the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

The Workshop on Liability and Redress in the Context of the Convention on Biological Diversity took place in Paris between 18 and 20 June 2001. Government nominated experts and representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations participated in the workshop. The broad and diverse

representation at the workshop demonstrated the importance that Governments and other stakeholders attach to the issue.

The Workshop had before it two working documents: a review of existing international legal regimes dealing with liability and redress for transboundary harm and a synthesis report of submissions from Parties regarding national and regional legal frameworks relating to liability and redress for damage to biological diversity. The workshop made a number of recommendations regarding further information gathering and analysis; the establishment of a legal and technical experts group to review the information gathered and to continue the technical

analysis of pertinent issues, including examining the appropriateness of a liability and redress regime under the Convention; and the enhancement of capacities at the national level with respect to measures for the prevention of damage to biological diversity, the establishment and implementation of national policy and legislative regimes on liability and redress, including through the elaboration of guidelines. The report of the workshop including its recommendations will be submitted to the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in April 2002. ■

More information at: www.biodiv.org/socio-eco/impact/wslr-01.asp

INSIGHT

GEF Council

During its Council meeting (9-11 May 2001), the GEF took several decisions on: guidelines for initial enabling activities related to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; options for enhancing GEF support in assisting affected countries to implement the Convention to Combat Desertification; elements of a strategic collaboration and a framework for GEF action for capacity building; a Work Program with 16 projects worth more than one-half billion dollars; the 2000 Project Performance Report by the monitoring and evaluation team; the CEO note on GEF activities related to the World Summit on Sustainable Development; a note on the Second GEF Assembly; the FY02 Corporate Budget; mechanisms and arrangements for expediting disbursements of GEF funds to small projects, and criteria for expanding opportunities for executing agencies. The Joint Summary of the decision text can be found at: www.gefweb.org/Joint_Summary_of_the_Chairs.pdf.

Workshop on Financing for Biological Diversity

In response to decision V/11, a workshop on financing for biological diversity was jointly organized by the two secretariats of the Convention and the Global Environment Facility (16-17 July, Havana, Cuba). Representatives from donors and

institutions involved in financing for biological diversity were invited for the meeting.

According to the participants, the workshop provided a useful forum for institutions to exchange information and experience on financing for biological diversity. A wide range of issues were identified for further discussion, including how to phrase and mainstream biodiversity into various policy documents of donor institutions, effective use of linkage between biological diversity development themes, addressing of biodiversity concerns in the major international development initiatives, demand-driven approach, innovative financial instruments and private sector investment, financing biodiversity through borrowing, effectiveness of financial support for the participation of developing country Parties in the CBD meetings, better information about funding needs, need for guidelines, criteria and indicators on financing for biodiversity, information sharing as a means for achieving donor coordination, development-oriented methods, common elements of requirements for biodiversity-related project proposals, fitting into donors frameworks.

The workshop also explored the role of the Global Environment Facility as a funding catalyst, and the need for standardization of reporting on financing for biological diversity.

Open-ended expert meeting on capacity-building for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

At the first meeting of the ICCP, the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with UNEP, was requested to convene an open-ended meeting of experts to develop proposals on the implementation of capacity-building provisions of the Biosafety Protocol for consideration and review by the ICCP at its second meeting in Nairobi, 1-5 October 2001.

This open-ended meeting was held from 11 to 13 July 2001 in Havana, Cuba. Attended by 178 participants representing over 120 governments, inter-governmental organizations, NGOs and industry, the meeting concluded with the adoption of a draft plan of action for building capacities for the effective implementation of the Protocol. The draft Action Plan, to be considered at ICCP2, aims at identifying country needs, priorities, mechanisms of implementation and sources of funding. It also highlights key elements requiring concrete action, processes and steps to be undertaken within specific timeframes and mechanisms of implementation at the national, sub-regional/regional and international levels.

The meeting report is available at: www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/bs-cb/bs-em-cb-01/emcb-01-03-en.pdf



SYNERGY

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NACEC STRATEGY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY IN NORTH AMERICA

by
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Introduction

The Need

North America hosts a wealth of spiritually cherished, economically important, and ecologically essential landscapes and seascapes. The quality of life, access to ecological services, and sustainable use of natural resources, however, are at stake and North Americans are seeking new means to protect the richness of life on our continent. New initiatives are being implemented at national and local levels. Migratory species such as the gray whale and the monarch butterfly, and transboundary ecoregions, such as the Great Plains, however, are affected by action or inaction in each of the three countries. It is becoming clearer that regional and continental action is not only a potentially effective approach but also an essential one, and the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (NACEC) is in a unique position to tackle this challenge.

The NACEC Strategy for the Conservation of Biodiversity in North America seeks to help address these challenges through a trinational approach. By integrating, building on and enhancing individual initiatives found in the three countries of North America that could complement each other, the Strategy seeks to move the conservation agenda of North America forward. This will be done when:

- the conservation of migratory and transboundary species is addressed through initiatives that attend to their whole range, and a North American perspective is adopted;

- critical habitats of North America are conserved and managed in a holistic, integrated and intricately linked manner;
- issues pertaining to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are internalized by social and economic sectors of North American society;
- all potential mechanisms, including those related to trade, economy and finance, bilateral and multilateral funds, law and policy, as well as outreach and education are used to successfully conserve and sustainably use North American biodiversity; and
- all stakeholders, including those from the economic sectors, private landowners, government, academia, indigenous peoples, and non-governmental organizations are involved in, and linked through initiatives for the conservation and sustainable use of North American biodiversity.

In 1997, the Council of NACEC initiated a review of the North American Agreement for Environmental Cooperation and the effectiveness of the Commission in its implementation of the Agreement. As a result of this review, the Council decided that a strategic approach for NACEC was needed.

Being aware that conservation is a complex issue being dealt with by a number of organizations, and that the Secretariat required a new and strategic approach which would address key issues and threats to North American biodiversity, the Council requested the Secretariat to produce a Strategy tailored to NACEC's unique features. Subsequently, a project to define the focus and long-term agenda of NACEC's Conservation of Biodiversity Program was approved by Council in late 1999.

The Process

In keeping with NACEC's belief in an open, participatory approach, the development of the Strategy incorporates the views of stakeholders from a wide range of North American society. The development of the Strategy is divided into three components: 1) Diagnosis, 2) Stakeholder Input; and 3) Priority Setting.

Diagnosis

The first step of Strategy development was the creation of the status report *Securing the Continent's Biological Wealth: Towards Effective Biodiversity Conservation in North America - Working Draft of a Status Report for Stakeholder Input*, hereafter referred to as the *Integrated Baseline Report*¹. This report is a tour through the complexities of issues affecting biodiversity conservation in the three North American countries. In reviewing the many challenges, threats and trends affecting the biological wealth of the continent, the document identifies concrete opportunities NACEC could undertake in its Strategy to deal with these issues. The document was a starting point in the development of the Strategy, subsequently enriched by comments and input from the various stakeholders.

Stakeholder Input

The second stage of the development of the Strategy was to trigger and capture the thinking of members in different sectors of society concerning critical issues and topics related to the conservation of North American biodiversity. The *Integrated Baseline Report* assisted in prompting valuable feedback from Canadian, Mexican and US stakeholders from governmental and non-governmental organizations, indigenous groups, academia, the private sector and the general public.

The methods used for the stakeholder consultation process were diverse. The *Integrated Baseline Report* was distributed to key North American stakeholders with follow-up interviews by the authors. In the spring of 2000, a workshop was held with indigenous people to seek their guidance on North American priority issues facing marine and terrestrial biodiversity. In addition, through a questionnaire and the dissemination of the *Integrated Baseline Report* via NACEC's website, and on the US Federal Register, other North American citizens were invited to provide comments and input. Also, official responses were received through direct interviews with organizations, institutions and groups offering their guidance on the development of the Strategy. Integrated,

(Continued on page 10)



Synrgy (Continued)

interagency, governmental reactions to the Strategy were also obtained via specified internal country processes.

Priority Setting

The third stage of development of the Strategy involved geographic priority setting. For this purpose, in 2000 NACEC convened a workshop with twenty-one leading ecologists to identify important regions for biodiversity conservation. The workshop identified fourteen regions² of prime candidacy for focused North American attention based on biological continental significance and high level of threat.

The final stage of the Strategy development was to compile a list of thematic priorities that deserve prime attention for North American cooperation via efforts of NACEC. These priorities were derived from the stakeholders feedback and selected based on their continental significance, binational and trinational relevance, high level of urgency, parties coincidence, the degree of stakeholder consensus about their importance, and appropriateness within NACEC's mandate. The Strategy is an attempt to bring together the various pieces collected to date to provide NACEC with a clear sense of direction, a long-

term agenda, and the manner in which to catalyze conservation action at the North American level.

¹Prepared for NACEC in 1999 by Agardy, T.S, Hanson, A.J, and Perez Gil Salcido, R

²The regions include: 1. Arctic Tundra/Archipelago; 2. Arctic Coastal Tundra/North Slope; 3. Bering Sea to Baja California/Gulf of California Coastal/Marine Systems; 4. Yukon/Yellowstone/Sierra Madre Corridor; 5. Prairies/Chihuahuan Desert Corridor; 6. Northern Forests/Softwood Shield; 7. Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Lowlands; 8. Greater Gulf of Maine/Coastal/Marine System (Nova Scotia to New England), Gulf of St. Lawrence/Grand Banks; 9. Chesapeake Bay; 10. Southern Appalachians; 11. Rio Bravo/Laguna Madre Corridor; 12. Transverse Neovolcanic Belt; 13. Maya Reef and Southern Florida Coastal/Marine Systems; and 14. "Selva Maya", Tropical Dry and Humid Forests.

VIEWS

ISLANDS: A CASE APART?

By John Nevill, Director of Conservation, Ministry of Environment and Transport, Seychelles

(This article is personal and does not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the Government of Seychelles and of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity)

One of the Convention on Biological Diversity's great virtues is that it recognizes that the burden of biodiversity conservation is not equally spread throughout the world and attempts through financial mechanisms, certain provisions in the Convention itself and through Conference of the Parties (COP) decisions to redress somewhat this imbalance. In general, the trend of biodiversity concentration decreases as one moves North or South from the tropics, but of course there are other factors affecting this trend, notably - to paraphrase language already occurring in certain COP decisions - geographically / evolutionarily isolated ecosystems of which islands are arguably the definitive example.

Such ecosystems are significant as they have a tendency to harbour high concentrations of endemic biodiversity. This trend is reflected in various attempts by international organizations (eg. Conservation International) to identify and demarcate what are often called "biodiversity hotspots".

So in addition to high endemic biodiversity, what other characteristics make island ecosystems so important as a focus for conservation action? Island ecosystems can be considered, to have defined geographic and functional integrity. They tend to be small and confined and hence are more prone to species extinction arising from specific/localized events - alien species introduction, for example, has been recorded in many cases to result in extinctions. However the other side of this is that island ecosystems can often be treated and managed holistically (ecosystem approach) in an effective manner e.g. alien species can be eradicated; ecosystems can be rehabilitated. Perhaps most importantly islands offer a self-contained ecosystem with well-defined geographic limits that encapsulate fundamental ecological processes and interactions in an often more simple structure. As such islands offer perfect natural laboratories - *qv.* Charles Darwin "Origin of the species" - which allow: the testing of theories, the implementation of management approaches and for lessons to be learned which could be extrapolated for implementation in any location.

So islands have much to offer in terms of targeted attainable conservation goals and development of strategies for broader implementation, all at relatively low cost. As such the question now is whether the CBD is effectively addressing the specifics of island ecosystems and the opportunities for biodiversity conservation they offer.

There are various thematic programmes that can be applied to islands: Forest, Inland waters, Drylands and perhaps most pertinently Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity. But in fact none of these embody the combination of factors that make up an island ecosystem.

It is this realization that logically leads to the conclusion that the unique combination of circumstances that comprise an island ecosystem in fact requires a thematic programme in its own right. This is particularly underlined in light of the recent proposal to develop a thematic programme for mountain ranges, which are in many respects a metaphor for "island" ecosystems, yet without the same conclusiveness of true isolation or functional integrity.

The same line of reasoning can be applied to the geopolitical concept of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). SIDS by definition encompass the characteristics of island ecosystems discussed above, but face further strictures, salient amongst which are: very high infrastructure per capita requirement; very high per capita qualified human resource requirement; limited land and natural resources for development and utilization; high dependence on import of commodities, which tends to create a skewed balance-of-trade and consequent economic difficulties.

These factors conspire to: limit resources available for environmental management, and heighten the direct impact of development upon biodiversity.



Often relatively high per capita GDPs of SIDS give a false impression of their true financial situation.

So, do the geopolitical groups operating within the auspices of the CBD effectively represent the concerns of SIDS? Most SIDS are currently associated with the GRULAC, Africa or Asia groupings. Apart from the biodiversity, ecosystem and infrastructure / resource differences already discussed, there are some other stark contrasts between continental parties and their island

counterparts. The overwhelming social, health and economic imperatives that many continental developing countries face, are not generally reflected to the same degree in SIDS.

These differences can lead to divergent perceptions of priority within the context of the CBD. Recent topics addressed by the Convention eg: the Biosafety negotiations, the development of the ecosystem approach, the finalization of decision V/8 on Alien Species and the further development of its guiding principles served to highlight this.

These ongoing difficulties have left many SIDS delegations feeling marginalized within their groups and frustrated at what they perceive as a dilution of action on biodiversity in order to cover broader environmental and socio-economic concerns.

Is it then perhaps time for a SIDS grouping to evolve within the forum of the CBD to the benefit of SIDS, island ecosystems, biodiversity conservation and the goals of the CBD as a whole? ■

IN BRIEF

Secretariat signs MOC with the GISP

The SCBD signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) with the Global Invasive Species Program (GISP) on 8 June 2001. The purpose is to assist the development of a pilot initiative on invasive alien species within the work programme of

the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA). In addition, the GISP will act as an international thematic focal point under the Clearing-House Mechanism. Specific activities agreed upon include: dissemination of information on invasive alien species to Parties, governments and the general public;

collaboration in the elaboration and development of programs pertaining to the prevention, elimination and management of invasive alien species; and participation in GISP activities, particularly those of the GISP Information Management Group.

HIGHLIGHT

On 12 March the Executive Secretary of the SCBD, Mr. Hamdallah Zedan, and Mrs. Louise Beaudoin, Minister of State for International Relations of Quebec, signed a Memorandum of Understanding concerning exemptions, fiscal advantages and courtesies granted to the Secretariat by the Government of Quebec—a complement to the Headquarters Agreement already in place between the Government of Canada and the Secretariat. The event coincided with the opening of the sixth meeting of the SBSTTA.



NEWCOMERS TO THE SECRETARIAT

Heikki Toivonen joined in March as the Senior Programme Officer on forest biological diversity. He is a specialist in biodiversity research, especially in conservation biology and plant systematics. Heikki has earlier worked in the Finnish Environment Institute, the universities of Helsinki and Turku, and in the Finnish environmental administration. He can be contacted at: heikki.toivonen@biodiv.org.

Cristina Stricker started to work as Information Officer for the Secretariat in June. While serving in information divisions of other international organizations she acquired experience in the field of communication and publishing. Cristina is an economics and international relations graduate with a keen interest in public relations, international affairs, and languages. You can contact her at: cristina.stricker@biodiv.org.

Erie Tamale joined the Secretariat in July as Environmental Affairs Officer in the Biosafety unit. Previously, he worked with WWF International in Gland, Switzerland, as CBD Policy Adviser and earlier with the Government of Uganda in the Department of Environment. His background is in environmental planning and forestry. Erie can be reached at: erie.tamale@biodiv.org. ■



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For a complete list please visit our website at: www.biodiv.org/events/default.asp?lg=0&org=unep/scbd

Date & Venue	Title of Meeting	Status
October 2001		
1 - 5 October 2001 Nairobi, Kenya	Second Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (ICCP-2)	Confirmed
6 October 2001 Nairobi, Kenya	Joint COP5/ICCP Bureaux Meeting	Confirmed
9 October 2001 Montreal, Canada	Liaison Group on Article 8(j)	Confirmed
10 - 12 October 2001 Montreal, Canada	Workshop on Incentive Measures	Confirmed
22 - 26 October 2001 Leigh, New Zealand	Technical Expert Group on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas	Confirmed
22 - 26 October 2001 Bonn, Germany	Ad-Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing	Confirmed
November 2001		
5 - 7 November 2001 Bilbao, Spain	Third Meeting of the SCBD/UNESCO Consultative Working Group of Experts on Biodiversity Education and Public Awareness	Confirmed
12 - 16 November 2001 Montreal, Canada	Seventh Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-7)	Confirmed
19 - 21 November 2001 Montreal, Canada	Open-ended intersessional meeting on the Strategic Plan, National Reports and the implementation of the Convention	Confirmed
26 - 30 November 2001 Helsinki, Finland	Ad-Hoc Working Group on The Interlinkages between Biological Diversity and Climate Change	Tentative

Obituary

It is with great sadness that we record the death of Ebbe Schmidt Nielsen (7 June 1950 - 7 March 2001). Ebbe was a tireless supporter of the CBD and, in particular, the Global Taxonomy Initiative. He had participated as Australia's delegate at virtually every COP and SBSTTA meeting. His death from a heart attack as he traveled to Montreal to attend SBSTTA-6 was a great shock to all his friends and colleagues, and he will be sadly missed.

Editorial Board:

Hamdallah Zedan, Arthur Nogueira, Cristina Stricker, Marcos Silva, Alexander Heydendael, Zoumana Bamba, Ione Anderson, Johanne Huppé.

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