Draft Report of the Sixth Meeting of the Joint Liaison Group of the CBD, UNFCCC and UNCCD

Bonn, 5th October 2005

Opening of the meeting

1. The sixth meeting of the Joint Liaison Group (JLG) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was held on 5 October 2005, at the UN premises in Bonn, Germany. The participants are listed in annex I. The Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, Mr. Hama Arba Diallo chaired the meeting.

2. The chair welcomed participants to the meeting. He welcomed the presence of the chairs of the subsidiary bodies of the conventions and thanked them for bringing their knowledge and experience to the Group.

Adoption of the agenda

3. The agenda was adopted as presented in annex II.

Update on activities since the last JLG meeting

4. The chair gave the floor to participants for presentation of the activities that have taken place since the last JLG meeting:

a) A workshop on “Forests and Forest Ecosystems: Promoting synergy in the implementation of the three Rio conventions” was held from 5 to 7 April 2004 in Viterbo, Italy. The report is available and underlines the importance of interactions between the Rio Conventions focal points for collaborative efforts toward local level action. It identifies forests and forest ecosystems as a vehicle to demonstrate that synergies at the local level can actually happen. It calls for better collaboration at the various levels including through financial support, and calls upon the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to promote coordination in the context of its capacity building initiatives. It also encouraged the JLG to discuss ways and means of facilitating the sharing of information on synergies on forests and forest ecosystem issues, including case studies, success stories, methodologies, experiences and lessons learned.
b) The “Regional Workshop for Africa on Synergy Among the Rio Conventions and Other Biodiversity-related Conventions in Implementing the Programmes of Work on the Biodiversity of Dry and Sub-humid Lands and Agricultural Biodiversity” was held in Gaborone, from 13-17 September 2004. Its objectives were: i). To develop and/or strengthen cooperation in the implementation of the biodiversity related conventions at the national level by enhancing cooperation amongst relevant stakeholders working at the national level; and ii). To exchange views on potential initiatives related to the programmes or joint programmes of work under or between the conventions. Constraints and possible solutions were identified, lessons learned were reviewed, projects concepts designed and a strategy for harmonisation of action plans and programmes proposed.

c) During the third session of the UNCCD Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 3), the review of the reports submitted to the Committee showed that there was a clear recognition by African countries of the need for developing synergies, however this call for synergy still needs to be heeded through practical initiatives, particularly at the local level. Parties observed that there is a transaction cost for synergies which can be reduced by working closely together, particularly by enjoining the active involvement of the GEF. They had a coherent willingness for more integration such as mainstreaming NAPs in other national development endeavours as PRSPs. It was recalled that the UNCCD process through the Bonn declaration identified priority areas on which synergies may be focused.

d) The Joint Work Programme between UNCCD and CBD on the Biodiversity of Dry and Sub-humid Lands is under implementation. The connectivity of the rosters of experts between the two Conventions is being tested in order to encourage experts to assist in JWP, for instance in undertaking the work of identifying areas of specific value and/or under threat, and criteria to define these areas.

e) Following UNCCD COP decision 12/COP.6, requesting the Secretariat of the UNCCD in collaboration with UNFF, UNFCCC and CBD to promote activities with Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs), the Secretariat developed a draft “Joint Approach on Forests: an Initiative for LFCCs”. This initiative is aimed at also supporting the Teheran process, which Parties observed should be given more attention. The Joint Approach for LFCCs could be a vehicle for dialogue.

f) The Working Group for the Review of Implementation of the CBD had addressed: Implementation of the Convention, its Strategic Plan and the 2010 target; Review of Effectiveness of the Bodies and processes of the Convention; Cooperation with other Conventions and Organizations and engagement of stakeholders; and Monitoring of Implementation and National Reporting. Under the discussion on cooperation, the Working Group explored the development of a global partnership on biodiversity that should bring organisations together to facilitate implementation of the Convention and the
2010 target. Under the discussion on processes and resources, it was proposed that an in depth review of financial mechanisms be carried out before COP-9, including consideration of collaboration among the Rio Conventions.

g) Work to facilitate the interoperability of relevant databases of the Rio Conventions has been initiated. Technical specifications for connecting databases of the Conventions were published and a first test has been successfully made. Common up-to-date information on meetings and focal points related to all three Conventions should be available soon on the three respective websites.

h) The Options Paper has been presented to the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) of UNFCCC and to the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of CBD. The SBSTA of the UNFCCC is awaiting the formal consideration of the paper by the JLG, in order to take the necessary action. The JLG was informed that the Options Paper would be presented to the UNCCD COP7 in Nairobi later this month, and to CBD COP-8 in 2006.

Options for Further Enhancing Cooperation Identified in the Options Paper

5. The importance of coordination at the national level was underscored by the JLG. Opportunities and success stories do exist and could be disseminated. Coordination between the focal points is fundamental for synergistic implementation.

6. The JLG emphasized that the GEF and its Implementing as well as Executing Agencies could play an important role in promoting coordination at the national level through project formulation and execution being carried out in ways that encourage the national focal points to work more closely together. The JLG encourages the GEF to use opportunities such as the NCSA to catalyse synergy at the country level.

7. It was observed that the GEF has been responding to some of the issues raised in the Options Paper, and that GEF could become a strong pivotal institution in spearheading synergy approaches at the country level. The GEF has already implemented a series of measures for better synergistic implementation and could go further. Synergies could be promoted in the capacity building programme.

8. The challenge of achieving integration of the issues covered by the Rio Conventions was addressed. It was recalled that some countries might have cautious attitude with regard to synergies even if they agree on the principles. Furthermore, some countries may be anxious on the possible implications of synergies on their funding programmes. Further work to explain synergies and demonstrate why they are really advantageous is still needed.

9. The synergy workshops that have been facilitated by the UNCCD secretariat, as well as the AHTEG report of the CBD and the report of the Espoo Workshops facilitated by the UNFCCC, provide practical examples that demonstrate that synergy really
works for the benefit of country Parties. Initiatives on Adaptation for LDCs in the Climate Change process, the Joint Low Forest Cover Countries’ Initiative, are all areas where the value added in practicing synergy can be demonstrated.

10. Mr. Diallo suggested looking at how the secretariats can operationalise these options and the necessary cooperation at the local level. He emphasised the necessity to demonstrate that synergies are possible and to alleviate doubts by presenting success stories and lessons learnt. During several workshops countries did report on good experiences. It is important to identify short-term and long-term activities when exploring options for cooperation by Parties.

11. The cross cutting areas reflected in the options paper form very important avenues for collaboration, and they need to be pursued. It was agreed that after the respective COPs or other appropriate Convention bodies have considered the Options Paper, the next steps need to be outlined based on this consideration.

12. At COP 11 of the UNFCCC in Montreal in November 2005, a 5 years programme of work on adaptation to climate change will be adopted. Within the UNFCCC framework, it could be a good entry point and opportunity to discuss synergies. Many initiatives of synergies can come under adaptation. An example of Small Island States was seen as possible, where synergy could be considered to deliver the needed results under adaptation.

Conclusions on the Options Paper

13. The JLG agreed that the Options Paper provides a good basis for considering relevant options for enhancing cooperation. It should be presented to the relevant bodies of the three Rio Conventions for consideration, together with an update on progress made in relevant cooperative activities. In order to demonstrate effective collaboration, it was suggested that the Executive Secretary of the CBD would present the Options Paper during UNCCD COP7 and vice versa during next CBD COP. A common language should be used for the presentation to the three Conventions. Efforts will be made to regularly update information on progress made in the cooperation.

14. Following consideration of the Options Paper by the three conventions, at subsequent meetings the JLG would further consider the options contained within the paper, in light of the outcome of its consideration by the relevant bodies of the three conventions, with a view to identify further steps to enhance cooperation of the three conventions.

15. The secretariats of the three conventions will collaborate on the follow-up/development of pertinent ongoing initiatives such as:

(i). Formulation of shared approaches on capacity building in follow up to the National Capacity Self Assessment (NCSA) process;
(ii). Joint paper on synergy in the implementation of the three conventions in Least Developed Countries/Small Island Developing States (LDC/SIDS).

16. The JLG further encourages the GEF to fund regional approaches for education, training and public awareness covering the three conventions.

Other Business

17. Mr Diallo invited the JLG members to the UNCCD COP7 which is scheduled to take place in Nairobi, Kenya from 17 – 28 October 2005. He also informed the JLG about the designation by the UN General Assembly of 2006 as the International Year of Deserts and Desertification (IYDD), and called for collaboration during this important event for the UNCCD.

18. The next meeting of the JLG, whose venue is yet to be decided, will be held in 2006, and will be chaired by the UNFCCC.
Annex I

List of Participants

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Annex II

UNCCD/UNFCCC/CBD
Joint Liaison Group
- Sixth meeting -

5th October 2005, 9.30 - 17.00
Bonn, Haus Carstanjen, Marshall Room

Draft Provisional Agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Update on activities since the last JLG meeting including the following:
   a) Outcome of the Viterbo Workshop
   b) Outcome of the Gaborone Workshop
   c) UNCCD CRIC3 highlights
   d) Roster of Experts (merging of database)
   e) Low Forest Cover Countries – proposed initiative
4. Options for cooperation:
   a) at the national level – collaboration among national focal points
   b) at international level – convention bodies and secretariats
5. Options for cooperation on specific issues identified in the Options Paper
6. Options for further collaboration in specific cross-cutting areas:
   a) capacity-building
   b) technology transfer
   c) research and monitoring/systematic observation
   d) information exchange and outreach
   e) financial resources
7. Conclusion on the Options Paper
8. A. O. B
   a) UNCCD perspective: COP7; the IYDD

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