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**REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE PROMOTION AND STRENGTHENING OF  
RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER RELEVANT CONVENTIONS AND RELEVANT  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES, IN  
ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 8 AND ARTICLE 22, PARAGRAPH 2(i)  
OF THE CONVENTION**

Note by the secretariat\*

**SUMMARY**

The strategy adopted by the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) towards promotion and strengthening of synergies among the conventions and other relevant organizations relies on four main pillars:

(a) Strengthening institutional linkages. Towards this end, partnership and cooperation agreements have been concluded with the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The UNCCD secretariat follows the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to these conventions closely, as well as of their subsidiary bodies;

(b) Testing operational options, including capacity building initiatives, as part of the joint work programme (JWP) with CBD, while incorporating the objectives of the other conventions;

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\* The submission of this document was delayed in order to provide the Conference of the Parties with the most updated information on the matter, notably on the outcome of the fourth meeting of the UNCCD/CBD/UNFCCC Joint Liaison Group.

(c) Developing common policies and strategies. A Joint Liaison Group (JLG) at the secretariats' Executive Direction and Management level has been established, in order to promote synergistic cooperation among the secretariats;

(d) Supporting country-driven initiatives: in this regard, a programme of national workshops on synergy approaches at the local level was launched at the end of 2000 and is being implemented.

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## I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. By decision 7/COP.5, the Conference of the Parties (COP) invited the UNCCD secretariat to submit a report to the sixth session of the COP on its activities relating to enhanced collaboration between the UNCCD, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).
2. For the first session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) (Rome, Italy, November 2002), the secretariat prepared a comprehensive review of activities for the promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions,<sup>1</sup> as well as a detailed report containing information on collaboration with relevant international organizations, institutions and agencies, and funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as with other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations on their activities in support of the preparation and implementation of action programmes under the Convention.<sup>2</sup> Additional information provided by the African Union (the former Organization of African Unity) was also presented.<sup>3</sup>
3. The present report contains the latest developments with respect to collaboration and synergies with other conventions and relevant institutions and organizations.

## II. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER RELEVANT CONVENTIONS AND STRENGTHENING OF RELATIONSHIPS

### A. Convention on Biological Diversity

4. The COP at its third session, by decision 17/COP.3, requested the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD to continue his consultations with the executive secretaries of other relevant conventions, particularly the UNFCCC, the CBD and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, on arrangements for liaison modalities at the Headquarters of the United Nations, with which they are institutionally linked, or with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and/or any other relevant location.
5. Pursuant to that decision, the Executive Secretary of the CBD has designated a liaison officer to join the UNCCD liaison office in New York so as to strengthen collaboration between these two conventions and United Nations Headquarters.
6. The JWP between the CBD and the UNCCD on the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands was presented for discussion at the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), which met in Montreal, Canada, from 10 to 14 March 2003. The UNCCD secretariat participated actively in this meeting. SBSTTA made

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<sup>1</sup> ICCD/CRIC (1)/9, available on the UNCCD Web site: <http://www.unccd.int>.

<sup>2</sup> ICCD/CRIC (1)/7, available on the UNCCD Web site: <http://www.unccd.int>.

<sup>3</sup> ICCD/CRIC (1)/7/Add.1, available on the UNCCD Web site: <http://www.unccd.int>.

important recommendations for effective implementation of this JWP, key among them being the following:

(a) A process for the periodic assessment of the status and trends of biological diversity in dry and sub-humid lands should be adopted, taking into account national laws, policies and programmes and recognizing the urgency for action in those countries severely affected by land degradation, focusing on strengthening the capacities of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to conduct assessments at the national level and to build on the knowledge and structures of ongoing global assessments, as well as national assessments;

(b) The CBD Executive Secretary was requested, in consultation with Parties, to develop targets for the implementation of the programme of work, especially taking into account national action programmes to combat desertification (NAPs) and the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, among others;

(c) The CBD Executive Secretary was requested, in collaboration with the secretariats of the other Rio conventions and other biodiversity-related conventions, to develop further mechanisms for facilitating the synergistic implementation of these conventions, especially at the national level. Such mechanisms could include:

- (i) Joint work programmes,
- (ii) The activities of the JLG of the three Rio conventions and potential additional members, and
- (iii) Joint activities with a focus on several elements, *inter alia*:
  - a. Integration of activities relating to national biodiversity strategies and action plans with NAPs for the UNCCD, national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs) under the UNFCCC, Ramsar wetland policies and other relevant programmes, including national strategies for sustainable development and poverty reduction;
  - b. Capacity building, information systems, institutional collaboration and joint planning activities between the coordinating bodies and focal points of the conventions;
  - c. Consultative preparation, formulation of objectives, organization and follow-up of national and regional synergy workshops;
  - d. Training courses and awareness raising among relevant stakeholders.

SBSTTA recommended that this process should take into account existing experience, as documented by, *inter alia*, the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), and the “Operational Guidelines for Expedited Funding of National Self Assessment of Capacity-building Needs” of the Global Environment Facility (GEF);

(d) The CBD Executive Secretary was further requested, in collaboration with the other Rio and biodiversity-related conventions, to facilitate the review of the national biodiversity strategies and action plans under the CBD, in order to harmonize them with the NAPs under the UNCCD, with a focus on poverty alleviation and inter-sectoral integration;

(e) Recognizing that the effective implementation of this programme of work is subject to the availability of financial, technological and human resources, SBSTTA urged those Parties, countries and international organizations in a position to do so, to provide the necessary support.

7. Through this JWP, the secretariats of the CBD and the UNCCD agreed to encourage the strengthening, enactment and coordination of policies and instruments that would promote the development of synergistic and complementary approaches in the implementation of the environmental conventions at the country level through, *inter alia*, demonstrable cases of convergence of objectives. The CBD and UNCCD will also encourage and support the development of policies promoting participatory decision-making practices, as well as the best mix of scientific and traditional knowledge, in the sustainable and multiple use of the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands, as well as those promoting the diversification of means of production.

8. The JWP is annexed to this document, for consideration and formal approval by the sixth session of the COP. The COP may also wish to provide further direction on how effectively to implement the JWP.

9. The secretariat has also been facilitating training and capacity building activities of affected developing country Parties based on the theme of the JWP, and including the objectives of the other environment-related conventions. The training programme uses a module developed for assisting countries to prepare projects that can attract funding from the GEF, as well as from any other sources. The ongoing collaboration with the *Istituto Agronomico per l'Oltremare* (IAO) of Florence, Italy, has been instrumental in realizing the objectives of this training programme. A number of experts from Asian countries undertook the training in May 2003, and it is planned that another session involving Latin American and Caribbean countries will be organized shortly. The UNCCD secretariat has been holding consultations with other potential collaborating institutions from Europe and Africa which could assist in the training programme.

#### B. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

10. The COP has made several policy recommendations and directions geared to further enhancing collaboration between the UNCCD and the UNFCCC. Pursuant to these directives, the two secretariats have been actively engaged in consultations in order better to articulate the key areas of possible joint activities for the benefit of their respective conventions. Towards this end, the UNCCD secretariat was invited to participate in the eighth session of the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP 8) and the seventeenth sessions of its subsidiary bodies, the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), which took place in New Delhi, India, from 23 October to 1 November 2002.

11. Under the agenda item on cooperation with relevant international organizations and other conventions, the COP adopted a decision requesting the UNFCCC SBSTA to continue to enhance cooperation with the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) of the UNCCD. The COP

supported the mandate of the JLG between the three Rio conventions, and urged it to continue its efforts to enhance coordination between the three conventions and their secretariats.

12. The SBSTA considered a scoping paper which identified cross-cutting thematic areas and activities under the UNFCCC, the UNCCD and the CBD, which had been prepared in cooperation with the three convention secretariats. The SBSTA emphasized the need to strengthen coordination between national focal points of the three Rio conventions. The SBSTA requested the UNFCCC secretariat, in cooperation with the UNCCD and the CBD, to organize a workshop before its eighteenth session. The workshop should identify options for increasing cooperation and capturing synergies among the conventions in existing channels, particularly the exchange of information, in areas such as technology transfer, education and outreach, research and systematic observation, capacity building, reporting, and impacts and adaptation. The workshop is scheduled to take place in Finland in July 2003, and the UNCCD secretariat has been invited to participate and to make a presentation on the experience of the UNCCD in promoting synergies at the national level.

13. As part of its presentation, the secretariat had proposed a number of areas where future collaboration with the UNFCCC could be beneficial; for instance, identifying how the ongoing process of the development of NAPAs under the UNFCCC could take place in close collaboration with development of the UNCCD NAPs. It is stressed that NAPAs should be based on existing plans, programmes of action and studies. Given that many NAPs for the UNCCD have been providing an opportunity for various stakeholders to identify their priorities during public consultations, it is suggested that the UNCCD NAP could be used as a basis for prioritizing adaptive measures within the NAPA, where relevant. The following are outlined as possible areas of cooperation:

(a) Fulfilling the objectives of the UNCCD and the UNFCCC as they relate to areas affected by drought and/or desertification in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas of developing countries;

(b) Identifying and developing synergies among the two conventions, particularly at the local level, where the benefits are demonstrable and where it makes a significant difference to pursue the implementation of the two sustainable development-related treaties jointly;

(c) Identifying ways and means of incorporating NAPAs for arid, semi-arid, dry and sub-humid regions in the NAPs to combat desertification;

(d) Encouraging coordination and effective collaboration among local communities in the implementation of relevant aspects of the two conventions, with a view to avoiding duplication of effort and rationalizing available resources.

14. The secretariat is also in the process of testing pilot initiatives for integrating the UNFCCC dimension, in particular as it relates to carbon sequestration activities, in UNCCD sustainable development projects through afforestation and reforestation schemes. A number of country Parties have already expressed their interest in participating in these initiatives, and the secretariat has entered into consultations with possible donors and recipient countries in order to facilitate this process.

### C. The UNCCD/CBD/UNFCCC Joint Liaison Group

15. The three secretariats continue to reinforce their collaboration through the JLG. The fourth meeting of the JLG took place in Bonn, Germany, on 19 May 2003, and was chaired by the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC. The participants included the Executive Secretaries of the three conventions, officers of the subsidiary bodies and members of the secretariats. Also present at the meeting was the Secretary General Designate of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The purpose of the meeting was to exchange information from recent meetings of the three conventions and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, to share information on plans for the forthcoming year and to explore opportunities to further enhance cohesion between the three secretariats and their respective subsidiary bodies.

16. The chairpersons of the subsidiary bodies of the three conventions reported on activities, conclusions and decisions relevant to the JLG. The participants agreed to explore options relating to technology transfer, incentive measures and observational networks. The next JLG meeting will take place at the end of 2003 or the beginning of 2004, the date and location to be determined. The meeting will be chaired by the Executive Secretary of the CBD.

17. Both the UNCCD and the UNFCCC Executive Secretaries continue to pursue the modalities for common administrative services, while maintaining contacts with United Nations Headquarters and the United Nations Office at Geneva on this subject, with a view to reaching a mutually beneficial agreement.

18. The secretariats of both the UNCCD and the CBD are in the process of organizing, in collaboration with the UNFCCC secretariat and other partners, a workshop with the theme "Identifying and promoting synergies through forests and forest ecosystems". The workshop is tentatively scheduled to take place in March 2004, in Viterbo, Italy, at the kind invitation of the Government of Italy. The objectives of the workshop will be focused on forests and forest ecosystems, including:

- Assessing the inter-linkages between the three Rio conventions relating to forest ecosystems; and
- Identifying options for promoting implementation of activities relating to forests and forest ecosystems and their use and conservation, derived from the mandates and commitments under each convention.

19. The workshop is expected to have the following possible output and their potential use:

- A common assessment of the constraints of the forests and forest ecosystems in the respective agendas/strategies of the conventions;
- Advice on possible tools for decision makers and stakeholders involved in the conventions to help in formulating appropriate decisions and programmes;
- Options for increasing public awareness, particularly at the appropriate policy making levels in order to support better integration of biodiversity, climate change and desertification and drought issues in a holistic and coordinated manner into national forestry policy-making processes; and

- Increased interaction among national Party representatives with the objective of bringing a sharper focus onto activities at the national level.

#### D. Convention on Migratory Species

20. By its decision 17/COP.3, the COP at its third session requested the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD to continue to take steps to implement the memoranda of understanding (MOU), signed with other secretariats and institutions, and to develop similar MOU with other institutional partners.

21. Pursuant to this decision, the secretariats of CMS and the UNCCD have prepared a draft memorandum which outlines modalities for their cooperation, and highlights key areas for developing joint initiatives. The MOU will be signed shortly.

22. Moreover, the two secretariats have identified fields for possible cooperation and critical sites where joint activities could be developed. Towards this end, they have already prepared a draft joint programme of work, which is in the process of finalization.

#### E. Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

23. The secretariats of the UNCCD and the Ramsar Convention continue to hold periodic consultations with a view to operationalizing their joint MOU, through possible collaborative ventures, particularly at the national and local levels.

24. Areas such as capacity building, outreach, encouraging joint activities in promoting science and technology, sharing of experiences through early warning systems, have featured as entry points for closer collaboration. Designation of more wetlands in arid and semi-arid lands as sites that merit more attention is also encouraged, with an initial focus on Africa, where an increase in the number of designated wetlands is deemed particularly important for rational management and use. It has also been observed that the information already developed by the UNCCD CST, can be made available for use by Parties to the Ramsar Convention. It has also been agreed that the experience gained by UNCCD Parties through CST work on benchmarks and indicators, as well as traditional knowledge, should be exchanged with the Ramsar Convention.

25. Parties are encouraged to hold consultations, particularly when preparing national reports, in order to foster coordination with the work of the Ramsar Convention. Parties are also encouraged to provide copies of strategies/action programmes or plans of work regarding the two conventions.

26. Some key areas have already been identified where development of joint activities could take place; these include the Okavango Ecosystem, which is the largest Ramsar site globally and is important to Angola, Botswana and Namibia, where synergy between the two conventions is being pursued and encouraged at the local level, the Lake Chad Basin where it is expected that the activities undertaken by interested parties at the local level, particularly member states of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), would be linked with the UNCCD Thematic Programme Network (TPN) on the integrated management of international river, lake and hydro-geological basins for the regional action programme (RAP) to combat desertification in Africa.

### III. NATIONAL SYNERGIES WORKSHOPS PROGRAMME

#### A. Background

27. Country Parties to the UNCCD have on many occasions emphasized the need to develop and promote synergies among the Rio conventions as a means of fostering their implementation, in particular at the country level. They have emphasized the need to integrate action programmes of environmental conventions with national sustainable development strategies, in particular in such areas as poverty reduction, science and education, agriculture, forestry, energy and water supply.

28. The UNCCD secretariat, at the request of a number of Parties, has been facilitating the organization of national workshops in selected developing countries in order to stimulate the discussion of modalities of collaboration by various stakeholders in the implementation of the three conventions.

#### B. Rationale and objectives of the programme

29. The main rationale behind this exercise is to integrate the UNCCD process into national development strategies through linkages between existing relevant sustainable development policies. The programme also assists the conventions' secretariats in preparing and/or updating joint work plans to meet the expectations of countries, particularly in capacity building, information systems and innovative options for cooperation and assistance. Among the broad objectives of the programme are the following:

(a) To strengthen current coordination at local level, including the exchange of information, in order to achieve optimal use of domestically available resources;

(b) To facilitate policy dialogue with the key stakeholders, in particular with the donor community, in order to attract financial resources in support of concrete actions for effectively addressing common objectives of the sustainable development conventions;

(c) To catalyze local level approaches to synergy among the stakeholders, and to help in identifying the common threads in the issue areas covered under the environment-related treaties to which the individual country is a signatory.

#### C. Progress made in the programme<sup>4</sup>

30. The national synergy workshop programme was launched in late 2000. Workshops have been held in Algeria, Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cuba, El Salvador, Kenya, Mali, Mongolia, Tanzania, Uganda and Venezuela. Additional national workshops are under preparation in Argentina, Colombia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Namibia, Nicaragua, Niger, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Yemen. Subregional level workshops are also taking place, and one was held for the Arab Maghreb Union in Marrakesh, Morocco, in January 2003, while another one is planned for Mesoamerica.

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<sup>4</sup> The lessons learned in the programme were reported to the first session of the CRIC, and are contained in document ICCD/CRIC(1)/9, which is available on the UNCCD Web site: <http://www.unccd.int>.

#### **IV. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS AND STRENGTHENING OF RELATIONSHIPS**

##### **A. United Nations Environment Programme**

31. UNEP has been supporting implementation of the UNCCD in various activities, and on quite a number of fronts, as was highlighted in the report to CRIC 1 in November 2002. The key areas and activities include the project on the survey and evaluation of networks, institutions, agencies and bodies relevant to the implementation of the Convention, support to the UNCCD regional coordination units, and support to the implementation frameworks (NAPs, subregional action programmes (SRAPs) and TPNs) through UNEP Regional Offices.

32. Recognizing that capacity building to enable country Parties to access GEF funding remains both a challenge and a critical need, UNEP has joined the UNCCD secretariat in supporting the ongoing training programme, which is aimed at enabling affected developing country Parties to acquire the necessary methodological tools for project preparation. This programme targets officials from developing country Parties, upon request, and is being facilitated by the UNCCD secretariat with the support of partners which include Italy, the Netherlands and Norway.

33. Within the context of the GEF, UNEP has distinguished itself as a partner ready to assist developing country Parties to understand the intricacies of GEF project funding processes and operations. UNEP joined the UNCCD secretariat in a workshop in Parakou, Benin, early in 2003, at the kind invitation of the Government of Benin, to help both in creating awareness with regard to the new GEF Operational Programme on land degradation, and in expounding the role of the GEF Implementing Agencies in helping recipient country Parties to respond to the needs for GEF funds.

34. With regard to the implementation of the new GEF Operational Programme on Sustainable Land Management,<sup>5</sup> UNEP has indicated its willingness to make use of its comparative advantage in addressing transboundary issues, and support countries in awareness raising and the requisite capacity strengthening.

35. UNEP has been involved in the development and implementation of the environment component of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Within this context, UNEP invited the UNCCD secretariat to participate in the thematic workshop on desertification under the environment initiative of NEPAD, which was held in Algiers, Algeria, in January 2003. During this workshop, participants undertook further elaboration of the activities on desertification contained in the framework, and reviewed existing and planned projects, as well as potential proposals for combating land degradation, drought and desertification. UNEP also organized a thematic workshop on poverty and environment, within the NEPAD framework, at the kind invitation of the Government of Mali, in Bamako, in January 2003. Participants discussed, among other issues, the multi-dimensional linkages between poverty and environment, and developed an action plan to combat poverty and environmental degradation. The thematic area is of crucial

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<sup>5</sup> The new GEF Operational Programme on Sustainable Land Management (OP 15) was approved by the GEF Council in May 2003, as a framework to operationalize the land degradation focal area, and is available on the GEF Web site: <http://www.gefweb.org>.

importance to the UNCCD, as it is worthwhile recalling that the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 clearly recognized the Convention as an important tool for poverty eradication. The UNCCD secretariat participated in this workshop.

36. The UNCCD secretariat participated in the 22<sup>nd</sup> UNEP Governing Council in February 2003. During that session, the Governing Council, decided to adopt amendments to the Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured GEF, which include land degradation (desertification and deforestation) as a new focal area of the GEF.

37. Other collaborative initiatives with UNEP include the Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA), as well as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.<sup>6</sup>

#### B. World Meteorological Organization

38. The UNCCD secretariats and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) have a long tradition of cooperation, which has given rise to the development of numerous joint activities. WMO continues to provide financial and technical assistance to support UNCCD-related activities; the last Congress of the WMO, held in Geneva in May 2003, reaffirmed the high level priority given to the UNCCD process, and pledged additional support.

39. WMO is a member of the CST ad hoc panel on early warning systems (EWSs), appointed to further examine EWSs performance, methods for analysing vulnerability, exchange of information between institutions, and measures for preparedness.

40. WMO continues to assist the UNCCD secretariat in a wide range of activities, amongst which the following are the most important: preparation of national reports, assessment of transboundary and pilot projects, assessment of SRAPs and RAPs, and the provision of financial and technical assistance to the UNCCD secretariat to help in meeting staffing needs.

#### C. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

41. The UNCCD secretariat and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) continue to collaborate closely in the key areas of capacity building, education and public awareness in efforts to support the effective implementation of the Convention. UNESCO does have a comparative advantage in outreach, and this would be at the disposal of country Parties, particularly through education at the primary school level in areas affected by drought and desertification.

#### D. United Nations Development Programme

42. Following their long-standing collaboration in support of implementation of the Convention, the UNCCD secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA) have signed a MOU, and the two organizations are working out ways and means of operationalization.

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<sup>6</sup> Reports on the LADA project and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment are contained in ICCD/COP(6)/CST/7.

43. The MOU covers the following key areas of activity, among others: strengthening of cooperation to provide support to affected country Parties in Africa at national level, and cooperation for the development of joint initiatives and synergistic programmes dealing with desertification, drought, biodiversity, climate change and wetlands protection in dryland areas.

44. In order to facilitate the implementation of the Convention in other affected regions, the UNCCD secretariat and the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNDP have also engaged in consultations with a view to adopting a MOU. Likewise, the UNCCD secretariat will pursue its contacts with UNDP and its other regional bureaux (Asia and Europe) in order to identify concrete opportunities for strengthening collaboration in support of implementation of the UNCCD in the countries concerned.

45. UNDP joined the UNCCD secretariat at a workshop in Parakou, Benin, early in 2003, at the kind invitation of the Government of Benin, to help in creating awareness with regard to the new GEF Operational Programme on land degradation, and in expounding the role of the GEF Implementing Agencies in supporting recipient countries to respond to the needs for GEF funds. It is expected that UNDP will make use of its comparative advantage in having many country offices in developing countries, and its newly-created network of Sub-Regional Resource Facilities, to support countries in awareness raising and capacity building, as well as in their efforts to access GEF funds to enable them to meet their obligations under the Convention.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

46. It has been underscored not only by the COP of the UNCCD, but also by the COPs of the other Rio conventions, that collaboration among the environment-related conventions is desirable and essential in order to foster their effective implementation.

47. Collaboration at the global level has been commended as a good and necessary starting point. At the same time Parties, particularly those to the UNCCD, have also pointed out clearly that in order for the ventures to make a significant difference, it is important for more collaboration to take place at the local level, where it is likely to be most beneficial and where tangible results are easily demonstrable.

48. The challenges that each developing country Party faces while trying to implement the various environmental conventions has been echoed at several forums. Consequently, country Parties have been making efforts to attain reasonable levels of coordination at policy and strategy development levels, as well as institutional arrangements.

49. The problems of effectively coordinated implementation have also been compounded by a lack of awareness, and by inadequate capacity at the various levels to address the key issues at stake. Training in the specialized areas, with a view to building the requisite capacity, has been called for.

50. The development of joint programmes of work has been seen as a critical step in helping to identifying the areas for closer cooperation among the conventions. The formation of a JLG among the secretariats of the Rio conventions, which will help to crystallize the key activities for possible collaboration, has also been commended. The COP may wish to give guidance on the way forward for these and other collaborative initiatives being undertaken by the UNCCD secretariat together with the other organizations.

51. The COP may wish to underline the urgent need for capacity building, particularly in the areas of development of viable projects, in order to assist Parties in need. This undertaking will become more pertinent to developing country Parties now that the GEF has opened a new focal area for land degradation.

52. The JWP between the CBD and the UNCCD on the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands has been approved by the CBD governing bodies as an essential tool for addressing the plight of this particular sector. The UNCCD COP may also wish to formally endorse this JWP as an important initiative for the development of joint activities between the two conventions.

Annex**JOINT WORK PROGRAMME BETWEEN THE SECRETARIAT OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND THE SECRETARIAT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION ON THE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF DRY AND SUB-HUMID LANDS****I. BACKGROUND**

The Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in its decision IV/16, decided that dryland, Mediterranean, arid, semi-arid, grassland and savannah ecosystems will be one of the three items for in-depth consideration at its fifth meeting. At its fifth meeting COP adopted the draft work programme for dry and sub-humid lands (decision V/23).

At its fifth meeting, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), prepared a programme of work on the biological diversity of dryland, Mediterranean, arid, semi-arid, grassland and savannah ecosystems for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties at its fifth meeting (recommendation V/8, annex) and recommended that the Conference of the Parties should request the Executive Secretary to collaborate with the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in the implementation of the programme of work, including through the development of a joint work programme between the two conventions. This was emphasized by the Conference of the Parties in its decision VI/4.

In compliance with the decisions mentioned above and, in particular with decision IV/15 of the Conference of the Parties, the secretariats of the two conventions signed a Memorandum of Cooperation in July 1998, which addresses institutional cooperation, exchange of information and experiences, coordination of programmes of work, joint actions, liaison arrangements and consultation, reporting and further guidance.

Further to this, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in its decision 13/COP.1 and decision 8/COP.2 requested the secretariat of the UNCCD to pursue the development of synergies and collaboration with the other Rio conventions, in particular the Convention on Biological Diversity, in support of the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The secretariat of the UNCCD presented to its Conference of the Parties at its third session details on ways and means of exploring further existing synergies in implementation between the environmental conventions, in particular the Convention on Biological Diversity, while addressing the scientific and technical linkages between desertification and biodiversity, climate change, forests and wetlands. The Conference of the Parties, at its third session, through decision 17/COP.3 requested the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to continue consultations with the executive secretaries of other relevant conventions, in particular the Convention on Biological Diversity, and to give special attention to the ongoing initiatives with the Convention on Biological Diversity in the programme of work on the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands.

Within the framework of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the two conventions, in particular its article 3, which provides that the two secretariats will exchange their annual work programmes to identify those areas where collaboration and coordination would be advantageous, and develop a joint work programme for these activities, the two secretariats prepared elements for a joint work programme (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/15), which the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity endorsed at its fifth meeting.

The two secretariats organized a meeting of a Liaison Group in Bonn, Germany, from 30 April to 3 May 2001 for additional guidance in the areas of priority which the joint work programme form. At the end of that meeting, the two secretariats agreed on elements listed under four headings, based upon the suggested elements identified in document UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/15:

- (a) Assessments;
- (b) Targeted actions for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity; and enabling activities; and
- (c) Joint reporting.

The joint work programme will benefit from ongoing activities under both conventions as well as from other agreements and programmes. Not all activities of the programme of work as prepared by SBSTTA will necessarily be addressed in this first phase (2001–2005). The activities selected are those in which maximum synergy might be expected by joint or shared action of the two secretariats.

## **II. DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF DRY AND SUB-HUMID LANDS**

At its fifth meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya in 2000, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD adopted the draft Programme of Work on Biological Diversity of Dry and Sub-humid Lands. In the programme of work, Drylands, Mediterranean, Arid, Semi-arid, Grassland, and Savanna ecosystems are considered as dry and sub-humid lands. The programme addresses biodiversity and natural resource management issues relevant to both the CBD and the UNCCD.

In response to identified needs, the programme of work was developed into two programme elements: part A - "Assessments" and part B - "Targeted Actions". These two components should be implemented in parallel. Knowledge gained through the assessments will help guide the responses needed, while lessons learnt from activities will feed back into the assessment.

### **A. Assessments**

In the draft programme of work on dry and sub-humid lands as developed by SBSTTA, six activities are proposed under the heading of assessments addressing:

- Activity 1: Assessment of the status and trends of biodiversity in dry and sub-humid lands and the effectiveness of conservation measures;
- Activity 2: Identification of specific areas of value and/or under threat;

- Activity 3: Further development of indicators of the biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands and its loss, for use in the assessment of status and trends;
- Activity 4: Building knowledge on ecosystem functioning;
- Activity 5: Identification of local and global benefits of biodiversity and socio-economic impacts of its loss; and
- Activity 6: Identification and dissemination of best management practices.

#### B. Targeted actions

In the draft programme of work as developed by SBSTTA, three activities are proposed under the heading of targeted actions:

- Activity 7: Promotion of specific measures for the conservation and sustainable use of the biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands;
- Activity 8: Promotion of responsible resource management, at appropriate levels, applying the ecosystem approach, through an enabling policy environment; and
- Activity 9: Support for sustainable livelihoods.

Each activity has a number of sub-activities. In the first phase of the joint work programme, the secretariats would give emphasis on sub-activities 7 (f) (Economic valuation), 7 (i) (Facilitation and improvement of the availability, accessibility and exchange of information), and 8 (d) (Promotion of responsible resource management, applying the ecosystem approach, taking advantage of existing and relevant sectoral plans and policies), and activity 9 (Support for sustainable livelihoods).

Most of these activities, which should be implemented in parallel with the assessment activities, fall in the remit of Party responsibilities with regard to their implementation. Coordination of implementation of the multilateral environmental conventions is essential at the national and local levels, where it is possible to make a significant difference, and where tangible benefits are demonstrable. The elements proposed in this section of the joint work programme include joint or shared activities of the two secretariats that aim to facilitate national and local action.

### **III. JOINT WORK PROGRAMME**

For the first phase of the joint work programme (2001-2005), it has been agreed to place greater emphasis on activities 1, 2 and 3, as, to a certain extent, progress on these activities is required to facilitate work on activities 4, 5 and 6.

The following specific elements were agreed for the joint work programme:

## A. Assessments

### *Element A1: First assessment*

- A1.1: Review past and on-going activities of both the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in these areas, and through jointly agreed procedures, assess them and identify overlaps and/or gaps;
- A1.2: Compile from existing relevant sources including national reports, national biological diversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), and country studies prepared in the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, as well as from case-studies, and other material provided by focal points (see activities under section B), including information on: the status and trends of biodiversity in dry and sub-humid lands; the effectiveness of existing conservation measures; areas considered to be of particular value or under threat; the benefits derived from biodiversity in dry and sub-humid lands, and the socio-economic consequences of its loss; and on best management practices including innovation, knowledge and practices of indigenous and local communities; refine the identified areas of value.
- A1.3: Disseminate this information to national focal points and other stakeholders at all levels, including other institutions also on regional and sub-regional levels, inter alia, through the clearing-house mechanism.

### *Element A2: Development of assessment tools*

- A2.1: With the assistance of a liaison group of experts drawn from the rosters of experts under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, identify, drawing upon, inter alia, the information compiled through element A1 above:
- a. Develop criteria to facilitate the identification of lands of particular value or under threat;
  - b. Develop indicators of the status and trends of the biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands and indicators of effectiveness of practices for A 1.2.

## B. Targeted actions for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and enabling activities

The following specific elements are proposed for the joint work programme (not necessarily in order of priority for implementation):

### *Element B1: Facilitating consultation, coordination and information sharing, within countries, to promote concerted action*

- B1.1: Inform both conventions' focal points and other stakeholders of the objectives of the programme of work on the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands under the Convention on Biological Diversity, and of opportunities for synergies in the implementation of the two Conventions, and encourage the respective focal points and other stakeholders to identify further opportunities for synergies, and to document such cases;

- B1.2: Prepare guidelines for national focal points and other stakeholders, to integrate, as appropriate, the objectives of the programme of work on biodiversity in dry and sub-humid lands into national action programmes and country level implementation frameworks under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification;

*Element B2: Promoting regional and international networks*

- B2.1: Integrate, as appropriate, the objectives of the programme of work on biodiversity in dry and sub-humid lands into the existing sub-regional action programme frameworks under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification;
- B2.2: Inform national, sub-regional, regional and international organizations (such as the Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)) of the objectives of the programme of work under the Convention on Biological Diversity on the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands, and seek opportunities for synergies in the implementation of the two conventions, and invite them to identify further opportunities for synergies, and to document such cases;
- B2.3: Invite national, sub-regional, regional and international organizations to assist in the establishment of an international network of designated demonstration sites, to facilitate the sharing of information and experience in the implementation of the Programme of work on biodiversity in dry and sub-humid lands. This should be flagged as a priority action to be done soon after gathering the relevant information;
- B2.4: CBD to link with the thematic programme networks of the UNCCD.

*Element B3: Encourage and support the development of adequate policies that promote participatory decision making practices, as well as the best combination of scientific and traditional knowledge, in the sustainable and multiple use of biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands, as well as the diversification of means of production, in support of local livelihoods*

- B3.1: Prepare methodological tools to facilitate the programming of local level initiatives that contribute to the implementation of both conventions, enrich existing ones;
- B3.2: Prepare guidelines for the application of the ecosystem approach in support of sustainable livelihoods in dry and sub-humid lands;

*Element B4: Information exchange*

- B4.1: Develop an outline for joint case-studies on successful management of biodiversity in dry and sub-humid lands, and solicit such case-studies from national focal points, relevant networks and organizations, including those referred to above; prepare compilations of case-studies and lessons learned;
- B4.2: Establish links between and, as appropriate, develop joint pages for, the websites of the two conventions.

C. Joint reporting

The programme of work under the Convention on Biological Diversity on the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands includes a reporting framework that makes provision for joint reporting. Therefore, the following activity is proposed:

*Element C: Harmonized formats of reporting*

- C1: The two secretariats will seek to identify harmonized formats of reporting in compliance with their respective obligations. Joint reporting will be in line with the provisions in the programme of work under the Convention on Biological Diversity on the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands, as well as the ongoing work to harmonize reporting under the Convention with that of the other biodiversity-related conventions.

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