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Item 9 of the provisional agenda

Cooperation with relevant international organizations

Report of the fifth meeting of the Joint Liaison Group

The Joint Liaison Group (JLG) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held its fifth meeting on 30 January 2004, in Bonn, Germany. The report of the meeting is attached in the annex to this document.

Annex

Report of the fifth meeting of the Joint Liaison Group

Opening of the meeting

1. The fifth meeting of the Joint Liaison Group (JLG) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was held on 30 January 2004, at the offices of the secretariats of these conventions in Bonn, Germany. The participants are listed in appendix I. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Hamdallah Zedan, Executive Secretary of the CBD.
2. The Chair welcomed participants to the meeting and thanked the UNFCCC and UNCCD secretariats for hosting the meeting and for assisting with its preparation. 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. Ms. Joke Waller Hunter, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, and Mr. Hama Arba Diallo, Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, welcomed participants to Bonn, and added their opening comments, reiterating the importance of regular exchange of views among the representatives of the three conventions in order to forge closer cooperation.

Adoption of the agenda

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

Adaptation, capacity-building and technology transfer: discussion of priority issues in preparation for the meeting with the Chief Executive Officer of the Global Environment Facility

4. The Chair recalled that the Executive Secretaries of the three conventions, at their informal meeting on the margins of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council in November 2004, had invited the Chief Executive Officer of the GEF to meet them in an informal retreat to discuss matters of common interest, and had identified the issues of adaptation, capacity-building and technology transfer as priorities for discussion. The Group conducted a wide ranging discussion on these issues. The Chair summed up the discussion as follows:

General points

- (a) The CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC have each developed a number of work programmes, policies and guidelines, and have provided much guidance to GEF. All three conventions are now increasingly putting emphasis on implementation, which has to occur primarily at the national level.
- (b) The objectives of the three conventions are interlinked and it has been recognized by the Conferences of the Parties (COPs) of all three conventions that realizing synergy is important to achieve these objectives, and to use resources efficiently.
- (c) The GEF should support synergy by promoting implementation in a coordinated and cooperative manner. This requires a bottom-up, participatory approach, and flexibility on the part of the implementing agencies. The needs of countries, for example, as expressed in national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) of the CBD, national action programmes (NAPs) of the UNCCD, and the national communications and national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs) of the UNFCCC, should be foremost.

- (d) As has been emphasized by the COPs of each of the conventions, realizing synergy is most important at the national level. To achieve this, greater collaboration is needed among the national focal points of the three conventions as well as between these and the GEF focal points. The GEF, together with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), should promote this collaboration through the national focal points for the GEF and the three conventions, and through the implementation of projects, in particular, the national capacity self assessments (NCSAs) and the development of NAPAs.
- (e) There is a need for a mechanism to ensure enhanced feedback from GEF implementation to the convention bodies to allow for “learning by doing” and, thereby, to allow for progressively improved guidance to the GEF. This might be done, inter alia, by reviewing selected projects (as case studies) as well as through improved reports from the GEF to the respective COPs.

Adaptation

- (f) Adaptation to climate change is an important area for all three conventions, as has been recognized by the respective COPs. There are important opportunities for synergy but these will not be realized through “business as usual”. A common understanding of the terminology relating to adaptation used in the three conventions is necessary.
- (g) Activities that promote adaptation to climate change can also contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and sustainable land management. Whereas there are possibilities to promote the efficient use of resources through such synergy, there is also a need for additional financial resources, given the expected and projected impacts of climate change on biodiversity and land degradation, in order to avoid a diversion of resources from other priorities under the biodiversity and land management focal areas.
- (h) Because the benefits of adaptation activities are largely local, while the GEF addresses primarily global benefits, the “cost paradigm” of funding needs to be reviewed. At present, except for enabling activities which are implemented on a “full costs” basis, the GEF instrument allows only for “incremental costs” relating to global benefits to be addressed. The new climate change funds are distinct from the GEF trust fund; the cost basis to be used for adaptation activities in the new funds will need to be further discussed, subject to present and future guidance to the GEF from the UNFCCC COP.
- (i) Adaptation activities should be identified and developed as part of the broader framework for sustainable development, and reflected in strategies for sustainable development and poverty reduction (including poverty reduction strategy papers). Adaptation activities must be country-driven, in order to respond to local needs – to be respected by the implementing agencies.
- (j) The ecosystem approach can offer a useful framework for adaptation activities in some cases, and for realizing synergy among the three conventions. The approach acknowledges the inevitability of change and thus the framework can accommodate consideration of climate change and the need for adaptive responses. Its application requires analysis at several spatial and temporal scales as well as interactions among drivers of change at the various scales. This multi-scale approach can be useful in analysing the relationship between costs and benefits and local and global scales.

- (k) As noted in the report of the CBD's Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change¹, conservation of biodiversity and maintenance of ecosystem structure and function can contribute to climate change adaptation strategies by maintaining ecosystem resilience and thereby minimizing vulnerability to climate change. Thus the reduction of other pressures on biodiversity can constitute important climate change adaptation measures.
- (l) Synergy among the objectives of the three conventions in adaptation activities can be promoted through collaboration among national focal points at the national level, and through consistent guidance from the respective COPs. The latter can be facilitated – though not guaranteed – by the JLG. Synergy could also be promoted through meetings between the Executive Secretaries of three conventions, the GEF and the implementing agencies, and further supported through cooperation between the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) of the GEF, and the respective scientific and technical subsidiary bodies of the conventions.
- (m) There are opportunities for identifying synergy through the NAPAs. Following existing guidelines from the UNFCCC COP, these should draw upon the existing NBSAPs of the CBD and NAPs of the UNCCD. The involvement of the CBD and UNCCD focal points in the development of NAPAs should be facilitated by the GEF as well as by the conventions. The piloting of adaptation projects under the GEF climate change focal area, the Country Dialogue Workshops of the GEF, and the second round of national communications of non-Annex I Parties under the UNFCCC, also offer opportunities to demonstrate and/or identify synergy among the three conventions.
- (n) The GEF should facilitate the provision of case studies on its projects relating to adaptation to facilitate learning from this experience.

Capacity-building

- (o) Capacity-building is essential to facilitate implementation of the three conventions. First, capacity-building is necessary to allow Parties to participate fully in the convention processes, through, for example, provision of national reports and communications, elaboration of plans, programmes and strategies, and development of national nodes of clearing house mechanisms. Second, capacity-building is needed in a broader sense to allow Parties to achieve the objectives of the conventions. The GEF has provided resources through enabling activities for the first category, and as components of full projects for the second category. There is also a need for increased capacity in countries in the area of project formulation in order to allow the development of truly country-driven projects.
- (p) Capacity-building must be country-driven and meet the specific needs of the three conventions. GEF support to capacity-building should focus on the frameworks developed in the respective conventions. In the case of the UNFCCC, overall frameworks for capacity-building have been developed by the COP, in addition to specific guidance on an issue-by-issue basis. In the case of the CBD, guidance on capacity-building has been developed on an issue-by-issue basis; specific guidance is provided in the case of biosafety, access and benefit sharing, the Global Taxonomy Initiative and the Clearing House Mechanism. Additionally, capacity-building is

¹ *Interlinkages between Biological Diversity and Climate Change: Advice on the Integration of Biodiversity Considerations into the Implementation of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol.*

provided for in each of the thematic programmes of work. As for the UNCCD, capacity-building is reflected as a cross-cutting theme for which attention should be given at each thematic programme area under the respective implementation frameworks.

- (q) There have been many activities on capacity-building in recent years, including “Capacity 21” and the Capacity Development Initiative. These initiatives, and the present NCSAs, have been developed largely independently of specific guidance from the COPs to the conventions. It is important that existing efforts under the conventions be reconciled with capacity-building frameworks being developed for the Millennium Development Goals.
- (r) The primary goal of NCSAs funded by the GEF is to identify, through a country-driven consultative process, the needs and priorities for capacity-building in the global environmental issue areas within the country. These have had little linkage with the respective convention processes and appear to have had little impact on promoting effective synergy. Most of these NCSAs are ongoing and they offer an opportunity for promoting genuine collaboration among national focal points at country level, particularly if the guidelines already suggested for the process of undertaking the needs assessment are adhered to. In these guidelines for NCSAs, the countries are expected to articulate their own capacity-building needs and priorities with respect to the global environment, taking into account the three Rio Conventions.
- (s) There is a need for enhanced feedback on the experiences of GEF capacity-building including those that are part of larger projects.
- (t) The three conventions need to provide inputs to the development of the GEF strategic approach to capacity-building, including the elaboration of criteria and indicators.
- (u) There may be opportunities for mutual learning among the convention processes. The UNFCCC has established an informal group, with the GEF secretariat, the three implementing agencies, and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), to develop common approaches to capacity-building for climate change, including a shared resource library for materials developed by the agencies on capacity-building for climate change. There may be merit in establishing an informal group between the conventions, the GEF and the implementing agencies along the lines of this group.

Technology transfer

- (v) Technology transfer and cooperation is important to all three conventions. The transfer of technology has been a major focus of GEF support under the climate change focal area (e.g. to reduce net emissions). In the other two conventions, technology transfer is regarded more as a cross-cutting issue and has occupied a much smaller proportion of the GEF biodiversity portfolio. The UNFCCC has a framework for technology transfer, and a similar framework is being considered under the CBD.²
- (w) Additional financial resources are needed for technology transfer and for training activities.

² Adopted as decision VII/29, annex: “Programme of work on technology transfer and technological and scientific cooperation”.

- (x) The GEF is currently funding the assessment of UNFCCC-related technology needs and it could be explored whether a similar approach might be employed for the CBD and UNCCD.
- (y) Clearing house mechanisms have a very important role to play in technology transfer and cooperation. There may be opportunities for the clearing house mechanism of the CBD to learn from the experience of the UNFCCC TT:CLEAR.
- (z) Similarly there may be opportunities to learn from the experience of the UNFCCC Expert Group on Technology Transfer (EGTT) (for the proposed expert group on technology transfer and technological and scientific cooperation of the CBD, for example).³
- (aa) The UNFCCC is starting to undertake work on adaptation technologies. A technical scoping study is under preparation and will be considered during the next EGTT meeting. The potential overlap/synergy with CBD and UNCCD technologies is much higher here than for mitigation technologies (which mostly relate to energy efficiency). The extent of this overlap/synergy should be further explored. The three conventions should provide input to the work of identifying technologies for adaptation, including the work of the UNFCCC EGTT.

5. These conclusions formed the basis for a discussion with the GEF secretariat during a retreat that followed the meeting of the JLG.

Status of ongoing collaborative activities

6. The secretariats of the three conventions are exploring possibilities for cooperation and sharing information on a range of activities:
- (a) Common approaches to adaptation
 - (b) Common approaches to technology transfer
 - (c) Joint activities on information, education and awareness
 - (i) Possible development of a joint information strategy
 - (ii) Development of a portal for accessing national communications and reports
 - (iii) Improving the web-based joint calendar
 - (iv) Preparation of a 2005 joint calendar for distribution
 - (d) Research and systematic observation
 - (e) Capacity-building

7. Brief updates were provided on these issues, focusing on the information strategies. The Executive Secretaries agreed to focus discussion on the main strategic points, leaving detailed considerations to the appropriate staff of the respective secretariats.

8. It was agreed to proceed with the 2005 calendar, and with the portal for accessing national communications and reports. It was stressed that this would be concerned with the sharing of information and mutual learning, and would not involve the standardization of reporting or reporting formats.

³ Adopted as decision VII/29, paragraph 7.

9. Regarding the issue of incentive measures, which at earlier occasions had been identified as an area where possibilities for cooperation and sharing information might be explored, it was recognized that there is a need to clarify the scope of cooperation, noting that there are many activities relating to incentive measures in the various conventions. It was agreed that relevant staff of the secretariats would prepare a note to clarify the possible scope. The Executive Secretaries would then decide on whether to move forward, including whether or not to conduct an analysis of the possible synergy in this area.

Joint Workshop on Forests and Forest Ecosystems

10. Mr. Diallo outlined proposals for the Joint Workshop on Strengthening Synergy among the Rio Conventions through Forests and Forest Ecosystems, which is scheduled to take place in Viterbo, Italy, from 5 to 7 April 2004. Mr. Ricardo Valentini, Chair of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), extended an invitation to Viterbo, Italy, on behalf of the University of Viterbo.

11. It was agreed that the workshop would be organized by the UNCCD and the CBD, in cooperation with the UNFCCC. The Government of Italy is supporting the workshop including the participation of the national focal points of the three conventions from selected developing countries.

12. The group agreed on the timing for finalization of the agenda and invitation letters as well as on other preparatory arrangements.

Elaboration of options for enhanced collaboration

13. Each of the respective COPs of the Rio Conventions has called for enhanced collaboration among the conventions⁴ and the JLG has been called upon to explore options for further cooperation.⁵

14. It was agreed that a paper on options for enhanced collaboration should be prepared jointly by the three secretariats with a view to making it available to the respective COPs and/or the subsidiary bodies.

15. It was agreed that the paper would be elaborated on an iterative basis, building upon preparations for the present meeting. The focal points for this work would be Mr. David Cooper (CBD), Mr. Ndegwa Ndiangui (UNCCD) and Ms. Rocio Lichte (UNFCCC).

16. It was noted that some decisions of the conventions may require follow-up involving the other conventions. It was agreed that this matter be further considered at a future meeting of the JLG.

⁴ CBD decision VI/20; UNFCCC decision 13/CP.8; UNCCD decision 12/COP.6

⁵ FCCC/SBSTA/2001/2 paragraph 42(d); SBSTA 19 report, FCCC/SBSTA/2003/15, paragraph 44(e)). Similarly, the UNCCD COP encouraged the JLG to identify possible areas for developing joint activities (decision 12/COP.6)

Date and place of the next meeting

17. It was agreed that the Executive Secretaries would meet informally on the margins of the Viterbo workshop (tentatively on April 8), in order to take stock of progress.
18. The next formal meeting would take place in about one year's time (November/December 2004 or January 2005). Mr. Diallo proposed that the meeting take place in Mauritania on the margins of another meeting. A second retreat with the Chief Executive Officer and officers could take place back to back with the JLG meeting.
19. The following work would be carried out intersessionally:
 - (a) Ongoing work as set out in the matrix of activities and as discussed above (paragraphs 9 and 10), including clarification of the scope of any work on incentive measures
 - (b) Elaboration of the paper on options for enhanced collaboration (paragraphs 15 and 16)
 - (c) Organization, by UNCCD and CBD, of the Workshops on Forests and Forest Ecosystems in Italy, and on Practicing Synergy, in Botswana.
20. Items for the next meeting would include:
 - (a) Review of ongoing collaborative activities
 - (b) Options for enhanced collaboration
 - (c) Contribution of the three conventions to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) targets, including the 2010 biodiversity target.
21. It was agreed that, given these agenda items, it would not be necessary to request the participation of other conventions and international organizations at this stage.

Other business

22. It was agreed that the report of the JLG meeting could be made available to the meeting of the secretariats of the multilateral environment agreements (MEAs) in March 2004. Mr Zedan could present the report on behalf of the JLG.
23. It was suggested that the secondment and exchange of staff among the convention secretariats be explored in order to promote collaboration among staff and to contribute to staff development. It was agreed that this could be pursued on the basis of no net costs to the receiving organization.
24. Plans for the sub-regional workshop on "practising synergy" were outlined.
25. Following the JLG meeting, the JLG met with the Chief Executive Officer and senior colleagues of the GEF secretariat to exchange views and discuss issues of common concern, focusing on adaptation, capacity-building and technology transfer which had been identified as priority issues for discussion (see paragraphs 4-6 above).

Appendix I

List of participants

UNFCCC:

- Ms. Joke Waller-Hunter, Executive Secretary
- Ms. Daniela Stoycheva, Chair of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI)
- Mr. Dennis Tirpak, Coordinator, Methods, Inventories and Science Programme
- Mr. Luis Gomez-Echeverri, Coordinator, Implementation Programme
- Mr. Janos Pasztor, Coordinator, Sustainable Development Programme
- Mr. Kevin Grose, Manager, Information Services
- Ms. Rocio Lichte, Programme Officer, Methods, Inventories and Science Programme

UNCCD:

- Mr. Hama Arba Diallo, Executive Secretary
- Mr. Riccardo Valentini, Chair of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST)
- Mr. Mohamed Mahmoud El Ghaouth, Chair of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC)
- Mr. Grégoire De Kalbermatten, Deputy Executive Secretary
- Mr. Ndegwa Ndiang'ui, Senior Programme Officer, Global Issues
- Mr. Ahmed Cissoko, Senior Scientific Adviser

CBD:

- Mr. Hamdallah Zedan, Executive Secretary
- Mr. Alfred Oteng-Yeboah, Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBTTA)
- Mr. David Cooper, Senior Programme Officer, Interagency and Programme Coordination

Appendix II

Draft provisional agenda

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Preparation of meeting with the Chief Executive Officer of the GEF
 - a) Adaptation
 - b) Capacity-building
 - c) Technology transfer
 - d) Any other matters for discussion with GEF
4. Review of ongoing work on joint activities identified at JLG 4
(According to the matrix of ongoing activities)
5. Development of options for enhanced cooperation
(In line with decisions of the respective COPs and recommendations of the respective subsidiary bodies)
6. Workshop on forest synergies, Viterbo, Italy, April 2004
7. Next meeting(s) of the JLG:
 - a) Scope of meeting(s)
 - b) Date(s) and venue(s)
 - c) Other conventions/organizations to be invited (if any).
 - d) Inter-sessional work
8. Any other business
