



***PAN-EUROPEAN BIOLOGICAL AND LANDSCAPE
DIVERSITY STRATEGY***

STRA-CO (2002) 45
Item 2.5 of the provisional agenda

28 January 2002

**SECOND INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE
“BIODIVERSITY IN EUROPE”**

**Sixth meeting of the Council
for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy
Budapest, 24-28 February 2002**

**STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

*Prepared by the Government of the United Kingdom
in co-operation with UNEP/ROE*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The draft Strategic Plan for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will be among the main issues for discussion at the Sixth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to be held on 7-19 April 2002 in The Hague, the Netherlands. Once adopted, the Strategic Plan will set the agenda for the next decade of biodiversity action, both within and outside the framework of the CBD. All Parties will need to play their part in ensuring implementation of the Strategic Plan by ensuring it feeds into planning and activity at national and regional levels. It will also form part of the CBD input to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. (26 August - 4 September 2002, Johannesburg, South Africa).

This paper outlines relevant global and regional developments and processes as well as national actions and makes recommendations for the Pan-European input in deliberations at the CBD/COP-6. In particular, it suggests stressing the importance of regional cooperation for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and exploring the possibility of region-to-region co-operation.

INTRODUCTION

1. This paper deals primarily with the Strategic Plan for the Convention on Biological Diversity, due to be adopted at COP6 and to form part of the CBD input to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). It also looks at experience in implementing the Convention, including lessons learnt at national and regional levels.
2. The CBD is maturing as an agreement, now that over 8 years have passed since it entered into force, and it has been ratified by over 180 Parties. After early attention on elaborating the Convention's requirements and preparing a range of work programmes, the emphasis of activity is increasingly shifting to implementation. A review of operations, concluded at COP5, has led to various improvements in the way the Convention conducts its affairs. For example agendas have been prioritised, SBSTTA's role and procedures have been progressed, and more activities are planned in support of implementation at both national and regional levels.
3. COP4 agreed a long-term programme of work until COP7 (2004), with for example alien species, forest biodiversity, and access and benefit-sharing chosen as the priority issues for COP6. But the Convention has not conducted any other, longer-term planning, and there is growing recognition that this situation is unsatisfactory. Parties and the many partners collaborating in CBD implementation, not to mention the CBD Secretariat itself, would all benefit from the ability to plan their work over a longer time scale. There has also been a recognition that such planning would benefit from the sort of prioritisation now brought to the COP agendas.

4. COP5 therefore decided on preparation of a Strategic Plan for the Convention, for adoption at COP6, covering 2002-2010. A workshop in the Seychelles, in May 2001, identified the main elements the plan might incorporate, and an open-ended inter-sessional meeting was held in November 2001 to work these up into a draft plan. This consists of a 6-page draft, comprising an introduction to the issue, a mission statement based on the Convention's 3 objectives, a long-term vision (with two alternative texts), a list of constraints on implementation, and a number of operational goals. Sections are also planned on monitoring and reporting, periodic assessment and review, and communication. Some of the draft plan is in square brackets, and much requires further work (by the Executive Secretary, but drawing on input from Parties and others), particularly the fleshing out of the proposed operational goals (to encompass activities, products, timing, actors, mechanisms and resources) and preparation of a multi-year programme of work.

5. The November 2001 meeting also addressed issues concerning national reporting and implementation of the Convention, and made recommendations covering *inter alia* the format and preparation of the next round of national reports (due in 2005); various means of supporting national implementation; and several operational issues including "pruning" the CBD's growing body of decisions and assessing SBSTTA's recommendations.

6. A number of issues remain for resolution at COP6. In particular, much work is needed to flesh out the draft Strategic Plan, while at the same time preventing it becoming an un-prioritised shopping list of action plans as opposed to a real Strategic Planning tool. And one crucial issue remains unresolved: Parties have to decide whether the plan's "vision" should be restricted to 2010 (and therefore be less ambitious), or not be time-limited (and therefore be more demanding and aspirational), or find some other compromise on this issue. In addition, it is essential for COP-6 to adopt a multi-year programme of work, preferably in conjunction with the Strategic Plan.

INTERNATIONAL ACTION: GLOBAL LEVEL

7. Notwithstanding the central role of the CBD, it is important to recognise fully that many relevant developments taking place outside the framework of the Convention itself offer excellent opportunities to assist in achieving the objectives of the Convention. A good example is the implementation of the vast majority of the elements of the work programme on agro-biodiversity by the FAO, which is fully in line with the conclusions of the previous Biodiversity for Europe meeting in Riga and of COP5 in Nairobi. It is a challenge for COP6 to reinforce such co-operation with other international processes, in particular on forest biodiversity (with UNFF), climate change (with UNFCCC), and last but not least on the inter-relationship between biodiversity and sustainable development in the run-up WSSD. While the agenda for the Summit is still being finalised, it is likely to include issues such as sustainable livelihoods and poverty reduction, and the way in which biodiversity conservation and sustainable use can both suffer from adverse economic and social pressures and help provide a means to escape them. The Summit's outcome on these and related issues will be a major influence on the Convention's implementation over the coming years.

8. Another area of debate in the preparations for the Summit concerns international environmental governance. This starts from the premise that it should be possible to make the international environmental institutional architecture more coherent and integrated, both to make it easier for all countries fully to participate and to help it address more effectively the wide range of environmental threats. Precise outcomes are as yet unclear, but some sort of “clustering” of related agreements seems likely to be attempted. For example better integration of the work of the CBD and the various other biodiversity-related agreements could improve their effectiveness and efficiency, and ultimately increase the chances of their being fully implemented.

9. Another relevant global activity is the recent publication of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, a comprehensive stock-taking of action to safeguard the world’s biodiversity, that will help guide activity under the Convention and beyond over the coming years.

10. In summary, the message for COP6 is that the CBD should strategically set an ambitious agenda for biodiversity priorities for the next decade, while at the same time being open to, and relying as much as possible on, other international processes, which are increasingly willing to share the implementation of such an agenda.

INTERNATIONAL ACTION: REGIONAL LEVEL

11. Regional level activity is proving an increasingly important means of helping to implement the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Biodiversity does not recognise national boundaries, and many problems can only be truly overcome by means of collaboration across borders and geographic regions. The PEBLDS process, and the EU’s various biodiversity activities, are two relevant examples of such approaches. As with national implementation, it remains important for any regional activity to be prioritised and focused in response to a region’s needs and capacities.

12. The COP5 preparatory meeting, held in Riga in March 2000, reached agreement on a number of issues on the COP’s agenda. This not only helped inform European participation at the COP, which undoubtedly helped achieve some productive outcomes, but also acted as a stimulus to further collaboration within Europe. Within the EU, the Biodiversity Strategy is now complemented by action plans, which set out the means of delivering the Strategy’s objectives in four policy areas (development co-operation, fisheries, agriculture and natural resources). The EU action plans have been adopted in the course of 2001 and a new Biodiversity Expert Committee will meet in early February to give guidance on their implementation. Similar actions in other relevant fields (e.g. trade, transport) are foreseen in the future.

13. In its regional co-operation Europe can rely upon a number of advantages compared to other regions in the world. These include the long history of biodiversity conservation (and unfortunately an even longer history of biodiversity loss); the availability of sound institutions, resources and information mechanisms; and many civil society organisations committed to

biodiversity. It is therefore essential that the Pan-European process is not only directed towards Europe itself: it should also contribute to the global process, by a clear message from Budapest to The Hague and by recognition of the importance of regional co-operation in other parts of the world. The Budapest meeting may also wish to consider possibilities to increase co-operation with regions adjacent to Europe, in particular the African region (eg via the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement) and North America (eg via OSPAR).

14. Other important European actions include the ongoing development of the Pan-European Ecological Network, the European Biodiversity Monitoring and Indicators Framework and the European Biodiversity Resourcing Initiative. These activities all have a broad Pan-European scope, and can be seen as tools to help make the CBD operational on a regional level. As such they can contribute to the co-operation between different regions (e.g. PEEN as part of any global ecological network) and give guidance to similar needs in other regions.

NATIONAL ACTION

15. Implementing an agreement as ambitious and wide-ranging as the CBD takes time and relies above all on sustained and concerted national action by each Party. The prime vehicle for this has tended to become national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), adopted under Article 6(a). Each Party's experience is different, but in many cases NBSAPs set a framework within which action can be planned and steered towards stated objectives, covering principally conservation and sustainable use. The implementation of NBSAPs in countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States now benefits from the Biodiversity Implementation Service, jointly operated by UNEP Regional Office for Europe, IUCN, the European Centre for Nature Conservation and the Regional Environmental Centre. This Service brokers needs in CEE/NIS countries with expertise and resources to help meet them. National reports (now submitted every four years, with the second round due to be submitted in May 2001) catalogue progress in implementing all the Convention's obligations including progress with NBSAPs.

16. The growing emphasis on implementation of the Convention noted above is leading some Parties to consider setting targets and using indicators to measure trends in biodiversity, as well as the effectiveness of policy and measures put in place. Many European countries are well advanced in defining and using biodiversity indicators, and this offers a good basis for further exchange of views and co-operation in Budapest (see separate paper). This might also address obstacles to implementation and how they can be overcome, particularly via regional level action.

17. Another matter which may be discussed is the way in which European countries are involving civil society in the implementation of the CBD. Most European countries have already developed their national biodiversity strategies and plans and in this process most have actively engaged civil society organisations. The challenge is now to continue to work on the basis of public-private partnerships and other experiences with public involvement in the implementation

phase of national policies. It may be useful to exchange views on this, preferably also by reference to national case studies.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EUROPE

18. Agreeing a focussed, prioritised Strategic Plan for the Convention would be a significant output from COP6, and all European Governments will wish to work closely together to ensure a successful outcome. It is important to keep in mind that the Strategic Plan will set the agenda for the next decade of biodiversity action, both within and outside the framework of the CBD. Such action is also dependent on making people aware that the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are essential for achieving sustainable development. Once adopted, all Parties will need to play their part in ensuring implementation of the Strategic Plan, by ensuring it feeds into planning and activity at national and regional levels.

19. Participants at the Budapest meeting may wish to consider drawing attention to the importance of regional co-operation, including in terms of its potential to add value to implementation of the Convention. Para 32 of COP decision V/20 recognises the role of regional level activity in relation to the CBD. This will be reinforced by sharing Parties' positive experiences, starting with a clear signal from Budapest to The Hague. Europe may furthermore consider possibilities for increasing region-to-region co-operation, in particular with our African colleagues.

INPUT TO THE CBD/COP-6

20. In addition to providing COP-6 with a clear message on the achievements and conclusions of Pan-European co-operation, the following suggestions are proposed:

- clearly urge COP-6 to finalise and adopt the Strategic Plan, and state our strong commitment to helping ensure its implementation;
- identify a coherent set of issues for the CBD multi-year programme of work 2002-2010. For each issue the meeting could indicate expected outcomes and partners;
- emphasise the importance of regional collaboration, including to other regions of the world, and raise the possibility of region-to-region co-operation.

REFERENCES

Documents:

- UNEP/CBD/MSP/2 Strategic Plan for the Convention on Biological Diversity
- UNEP/CBD/MSP/3 National reports
- UNEP/CBD/MSP/4 Implementation of the Convention, in particular, implementation of priority actions in national biodiversity strategies and action plans
- UNEP/CBD/MSP/5 Operations of the Convention
- UNEP/CBD/COP/6/5 Report of the open-ended inter-sessional meeting on the strategic plan, national reports and implementation of the convention on biological diversity

Web sites:

<http://www.biodiv.org/meetings/msp-01.asp>

<http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/>

<http://www.unep.org/IEG/>

<http://www.ecnc.nl>

<http://www.strateguguide.org/bioserve>