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**Expert meeting on  
sustainability beyond 2010:  
perspectives from experiences**  
Nairobi, 15 February 2009

## **Report of the expert meeting on sustainability beyond 2010: perspectives from experiences**

### **Introduction**

1. In 2002, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted a strategic plan that included the target of achieving by 2010 a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national levels as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth. It also decided that at its tenth meeting, to be held in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010, it would review progress made in implementing the strategic plan and achieving the 2010 biodiversity target and would identify future biodiversity targets. The 2010 target was subsequently endorsed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the United Nations General Assembly and incorporated into the Millennium Development Goals. In 2006, by resolution 61/203 of 20 December, the General Assembly declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity and decided that it would hold a high-level segment at its sixty-fifth session, in 2010.
2. Concluding that there was a need for a series of dialogues and discussions on the strategic plan, the 2010 target and other targets, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) called upon stakeholders to be realistic, responsive and strategic to make the best possible use of the global attention that is being called for in 2010 to reshape the biodiversity agenda.
3. To that end UNEP organized the current meeting. The meeting had two purposes: to foment discussion of issues related to conservation action, sustainability and equity from perspectives beyond those of the Convention on Biological Diversity and environment per se; and to ensure that stakeholders reassessed the ways and means of achieving inclusive and responsive human development and the building blocks for the post-2010 targets.

### **I. Opening of the meeting**

4. The meeting was opened by Mr. Bakary Kante, Director, UNEP Division of Environmental Law and Conventions, at 9.20 a.m. on Sunday, 15 February 2009. Mr. Kante welcomed the meeting participants and thanked them for gathering at short notice to discuss such an important issue. He reiterated the need for high-quality thinkers in discussions related to the 2010 targets and beyond. During 2009 there would be many activities geared toward achieving the 2010 targets and the upcoming tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties placed Germany and Japan firmly in the driving seat for that process. The meeting was not intended to replace any other current initiatives or activities but rather to complement them. The Environment Management Group, having met the previous day and set the tone for discussion of the issues, itself complemented the current meeting.

5. UNEP was uniquely placed to play a catalytic role by bringing thinkers together to discuss issues regarding not only post-2010 targets, but also those affecting the environment in general. He noted the need for a paradigm shift that would link sustainability and biodiversity conservation with key ecosystem services and recognize the role of biodiversity as the cornerstone of human life.

## **II. Organizational matters**

### **A. Attendance**

6. The meeting was attended by 45 participants, a complete list of whom is set out in annex II to the present report.

### **B. Officers**

7. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Carlos Martin-Novella, Special Advisor to the German presidency of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Mr. Bradnee Chambers and Mr. Balakrishna Pisupati, UNEP Division of Environmental Law and Conventions, acted as rapporteurs. Mr Ibrahim Thiaw, Director, Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, facilitated the panel discussions.

### **C. Agenda and programme of work**

8. Participants adopted the agenda and programme of work as set out in annex I to the present report. The meeting featured panel discussions, followed by further discussion and wrap-up in plenary session.

#### **Item 1: Getting started: sustainability agenda beyond 2010**

9. Participants thanked UNEP and the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity for moving the agenda on post-2010 targets forward. They also thanked the members of the bureau of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention for their support and guidance in the run-up to the tenth meeting. In that regard, the secretariat faced a significant challenge and would require support from all sectors, including Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, if the event was to be successful.

10. It was reiterated that, in spite of commitments by the international community to achieving the biodiversity targets set at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 and endorsed at the United Nations World Summit in 2005 by heads of State and Government, there had been little success. In fact, the 2005 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment demonstrated that two-thirds of ecosystems were in decline. The 192 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity were preparing their fourth national reports. It was hoped that the reports would all be submitted by the deadline of March 2009 and would provide information on the status of and trends in biodiversity and Parties' implementation of the 2010 targets. That information would also provide statistics on the status of global biodiversity. To date, however, only two Parties had submitted their fourth national reports to the Convention secretariat.

11. It was noted that Parties were expected to devise short-, medium- and long-term targets commensurate with current and emerging environmental problems and to present them at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in Nagoya.

12. It was highlighted that, given that 2010 was the International Year of Biodiversity, there was a need for further commitments from the international community for that landmark year so that Parties could raise awareness of biodiversity as an integral part of life on earth. Discussions on the post-2010 situation were expected to come to a conclusion in that year.

#### **Item 2: 360 days to 2010: envisaged process and timelines**

13. As the deadline for the 2010 target was fast approaching, the time was ripe to take stock, particularly as the greatest challenges lay beyond 2010. The issue of the targets was a priority subject for Germany as the country holding the presidency of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. A suggestion that the current meeting be

conducted according to Chatham House rules to enable participants to express their views freely in their personal capacities to foster free and constructive discussions was welcomed.

14. Participants were informed that the current process, as preceded by the Environment Management Group meeting the previous day, would build into the high-level meeting to be organized by Germany in Bonn in March 2009. Participants were further informed that there was a series of other discussion platforms, including the Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity, through which participants would discuss the issue of the post-2010 targets, in addition to other stakeholder forums organized by the Convention secretariat.

15. The issues discussed at the current meeting would also be discussed at the fourteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Nairobi in 2010, and at the special session of the General Assembly in September 2010; both were ideal platforms to introduce the issue to the global stage and to heads of State. Participants were informed that, although the 2010 targets might not be reached, they were effective in placing biodiversity at the top of the global political agenda. When developing other targets, some pertinent questions therefore needed to be addressed, including how the current scenario could be improved, what process might be put in place for gaining access to what we had achieved and what roles existed and who might play them, i.e., what the game plan was the stakeholders and roles being played.

**Item 3: Lessons learned from the 2010 target: what has worked and what needs fixing?**

16. During the panel discussion participants discussed key points regarding the relevance of biodiversity from conservation, economic and development perspectives with a view to ensuring that future targets were better designed, science-based, relevant to the global community and easy to implement. It was emphasized that many tools, instruments and platforms were already available to assess and implement those targets, including the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and the proposed intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

17. Coordination of all efforts by the various stakeholders had been lacking, however, creating a gap. Coordination and concerted efforts towards a common goal by all stakeholders involved therefore needed to be considered in the 2010 discussions. In addition, in developing new targets, consolidated efforts by various stakeholders, including the scientific community, were necessary to ensure scientific credibility. Targets were political in nature and could be translated into science.

18. It was noted that future indicators needed to take into account that significant biodiversity changes required much time and that while targets were being implemented it was necessary to bear in mind activities and lessons learned at the national level.

19. Participants were provided with insight on the role of science and policy in attaining the 2010 targets. Those targets focused mainly on the Convention on Biological Diversity, with countries having developed various implementation strategies, including the use of specific sub-targets. The General Assembly had incorporated those targets into the Millennium Development Goals to ensure that countries mainstreamed them into their national development plans and strategies.

20. It was noted that the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment report highlighted how much more needed to be done to attain the targets. The challenge lay in how to make progress in some ecosystems while continuing to ensure that other biodiversity targets were attained. There was a need to revise the biodiversity targets to build upon scientific indicators. Participants called for the creation of an intergovernmental panel to fulfil a similar role to that of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as targets would increasingly be revised within the political realm and public support for multilateral environmental agreements was important. Participants' attention was drawn to adaptation to climate change as an area in which the links were clear and where biodiversity targets could be mainstreamed into development. It was stressed that revised targets needed to be simple, clear and relevant to other international targets, including the Millennium Development Goals, the post-Kyoto climate change regime and other similar processes and goals. It was emphasized that interim targets to 2020 could also be a way forward and that such an approach would coincide with the review of the programme of work of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Ways to meet the challenges enumerated included:

(a) Promoting the mainstreaming of biodiversity targets into national development processes;

- (b) Promoting and refining existing tools for implementing targets;
- (c) Improving the science-policy interface and ensuring that the process for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services was successful;
- (d) Supporting the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, which constituted the main mechanism for implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- (e) Developing access and benefit-sharing mechanisms, including by implementing relevant provisions at the national level, and discussing an international regime to serve as the basis for revising biodiversity targets;
- (f) Ensuring clear communication and public awareness;
- (g) Ensuring links between culture, traditional knowledge and biodiversity;
- (h) Repeating a model of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment every 5–10 years, not only to give an accurate analysis of the state of the ecosystem, but also to inform decision makers of progress in that regard.

21. It was noted that while the Convention on Biological Diversity required Parties to prepare national biodiversity strategies and action plans and, in many cases, to integrate or streamline biodiversity into development plans limited progress had been achieved in that area. It was noted too that scant resources had been dedicated to awareness-raising even though it was an important tool for combating biodiversity loss, particularly for stakeholders on the ground. It was suggested that the focus for a post-2010 strategy should be on raising awareness.

22. With regard to the key challenges to the adoption of the 2010 targets, it was reiterated that the targets should be linked to other global targets to ensure their effective implementation. It was noted that the “significant reduction” in biodiversity loss called for at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 could not readily be quantified, leaving it open to interpretation by various stakeholders and Governments and making its measurement haphazard.

23. It was suggested that data on species decline should take into consideration the various species levels: for example, global, regional and national data on current intraspecific decline were lacking. Since the effects of human activities on the environment were well known, data on such activities could be extrapolated to estimate the status of speciation levels. Since all living beings were interconnected, such information could assist in early warning of potential disasters and massive decline of species that might lead to human conflict and war.

24. It was noted that countries had to make a deliberate effort to maximize and optimize the conservation and sustainable use of species that were crucial for human well-being. Such actions needed to aim at assisting countries to meet their climate change adaptation and mitigation obligations, since climate change had contributed greatly to environmental decline in such forms as land degradation, soil erosion and habitat loss.

25. It was stressed that systems needed to be put in place urgently to ensure that no further destruction was wrought by envisaged activities, including those developed through such technologies as biotechnology and nanotechnology. The world had to examine the effects of the products of such modern technologies. Countries needed to meet their obligations by fully implementing international treaties such as, among others, the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which governed the transboundary movements of organisms.

26. Participants were warned that, in the absence of effective regulatory frameworks in countries, pollution from genetically modified crops could pose great danger to nature. Cross-pollution did not respect boundaries, rendering the need for action urgent.

27. There was a need for countries to empower communities to combat land degradation and to develop a system based upon the precautionary principle to control the release of new chemicals into the atmosphere. There was also a need to stabilize the biosphere to prevent extinction, as the alternative, the “business as usual” scenario, would inevitably lead to further environmental deterioration and could plunge the world into chaos.

### **Plenary discussion**

28. In the plenary discussion that followed the panel discussion, it was noted that coordination at all levels was key and that some activities intended to improve ecosystems actually destroyed others.

29. Many considered that the challenge of sound science was vast and had often been sidelined. The issue needed to be tackled as it was the basis for identifying and developing sound intervention strategies and measures for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Efforts to make the most science had to be linked to human well-being to enable biodiversity to gain political recognition from Governments. Biodiversity needed to be mainstreamed urgently into poverty reduction strategies and plans and other national development plans.

30. Lessons learned from the 2010 target could be considered in four ways:

(a) Scientific achievement had been impressive but the knowledge gained thereby had not been adequately used and instead created confusion and uncertainties for decision makers. Some countries had prioritized protected areas as a tool for measuring the 2010 target and conserving biodiversity, while others had used other ecosystems. It was stressed that it was evident and useful to ensure that future interventions were based on sound science. Only when science was prioritized could countries enjoy low-cost and high-impact strategies;

(b) On metrics and the time frame, there was a need for a quantifiable post-2010 target. Even if it were imperfect, it needed to be a proxy by which progress could be measured and gaps and needs indicated. A target without explicit time frames and milestones would be uninteresting to politicians, meaning that a high conceptual and brutally pragmatic vision had to be adopted;

(c) Any future target needed to have not only realistic timelines but also definite milestones with built-in indicators of achievement. That was what politicians would understand as they could use the targets to mobilize constituencies;

(d) The importance of linking interventions to livelihoods, including human well-being, and the related economic impact of action or inaction in conserving biodiversity was emphasized. Governments understood such an approach as it illustrated the impact on the lives of people.

31. It was further stressed that an economic dimension ought to be mainstreamed into environmental interventions, including those relating to biodiversity. Evidence clearly indicated that there was a direct linkage between investments in biodiversity and human well-being. Although biodiversity had been overshadowed by climate change discussions, the emergence of the "REDD" (reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation) approach, particularly in the United Nations system, had clearly illustrated how biodiversity interventions could be directly linked to climate change.

32. The need to translate and indicate existing direct links, including between biodiversity and climate change, to other processes such as land degradation, with a view to forging synergies on all related areas, was also highlighted. It was stressed that 2010 was the time to highlight the cross-cutting relationship between biodiversity targets and many global multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, to ensure optimal contributions for all stakeholders.

#### **Item 4: Convention on Biological Diversity and beyond 2010**

33. It was highlighted that in the short term concerted efforts would be needed to ensure that future biodiversity targets took into consideration the national implementation plans of other conventions, notably the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa. An example of how sustainable land management could be used in part to implement the 2010 targets at the national level was given and it was underscored that climate change national adaptation programmes of action would be effective in that regard.

34. The need for increased information for sustainable land management and its link to biodiversity conservation was also mentioned. Such information would be useful for national economic management and investment opportunities. The significance of multilateral environmental agreements for a common national reporting process was highlighted. Capacity-building was regarded as critical for adequately equipping populations to understand their obligations.

35. It was noted that, in comparison to 2002, indigenous communities, local communities and young people were currently more aware of biodiversity conservation issues and were able to

participate effectively in discussions in international forums. Participants were warned, however, that most national Governments failed to involve such sectors of society in national decision-making processes for environmental interventions; given that local communities were custodians of biodiversity the failure to involve them was a hindrance.

36. It was stressed that communication with communities was key to their ability to understand how multilateral environmental agreements were linked and how targets were met. It was necessary to mainstream the issue of traditional knowledge in any future targets. As there were too many targets for communities to comprehend it was pertinent for Governments to clarify communities' roles to avoid unsustainable practices.

37. It was noted that the Convention on Biological Diversity had provided tools for intervention such as guidelines and programmes but that the decline in biodiversity had continued. Given that degradation was a result of human activities and attitudes, targets should consider the human dimension and make possible for people to associate their livelihoods directly with biodiversity. On the post-2010 scenario, it was underscored that future targets should be action-oriented and measurable through an ecosystem approach.

38. Participants were informed about the upcoming Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity scheduled for 2010, which was a platform that countries could use to deliberate on post-2010 activities. The need to mainstream biodiversity at the national level was highlighted and it was stressed that communication was key and that communication, education and public awareness needed to be implemented more effectively at the national level.

39. The concept of ecosystem services had facilitated understanding of the cost of inaction. That cost, however, needed to be quantified and communicated to those at the decision-making level. The current global financial crisis presented an opportunity to make the case for a green economy.

40. The importance of emulating conservation efforts made prior to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity was highlighted. In India, for example, some species had been conserved through cultural methods and enshrined both in constitutions and local traditions. In 1992, however, when conservation had fallen within the purview of the Convention, the Government of India developed and adopted an all-inclusive national biodiversity strategy and action plan to ensure synergies and avoid duplication of efforts by stakeholders in implementing its obligations. Under the Indian Biological Diversity Act, indigenous communities were recognized and biodiversity management communities were established at the grass-roots level. It was, however, noted that challenges hindering biodiversity conservation remained. Those included:

- (a) Providing incentives for conservation;
- (b) Providing capacity-building for all stakeholders;
- (c) Harmonizing various national processes;
- (d) Tackling the food crisis, as people would not protect biodiversity unless they had food to eat;
- (e) Reconciling the varying commitments required at the regional and global levels. Some areas required a regional approach to conservation, for example with regard to access and benefit sharing. The private sector wanted access to genetic material whereas local communities were more interested in benefits accrued;
- (f) Tackling the need for a regional approach to conservation;
- (g) Making the Convention on Biological Diversity the main driver of the processes for the post-2010 targets.

#### **Item 5: Beyond the Convention on Biological Diversity: sustainability and human well-being**

41. A slide presentation was given. It was noted that there was need to ensure that indicators for future targets were focused, simple, clear and relevant. It was also important to build in sustainability criteria, as doing so would ensure that systems for determining environmental accounts were mainstreamed into future targets. The United Nations Statistics Division was currently revising its records of national accounts, creating an opportunity to upgrade economic and environmental accounts. It was emphasized that the scientific community should be included in any process for the post-2010 scenario.

### III. Chair's summary

42. The significance of the 2010 target could not be underscored enough. Current targets were imperfect but helped to keep biodiversity high on the agenda. The current targets paved the way to focus on the following:

- (a) There was a need for broader stakeholder involvement;
- (b) There was a need for an improved science-policy interface (e.g., Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services);
- (c) The targets had improved the understanding of the value of biodiversity (*The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity* report, akin to the Stern Review);<sup>1</sup>
- (d) The targets had generated many success stories;
- (e) The targets had produced a unifying message with one objective but a multitude of approaches.

43. In spite of a wealth of achievements, the targets had been developed through a political process without engaging the scientific community and without setting a baseline from which to measure progress in achieving the targets. In addition, the targets had not been directly linked to sustainability and thus were not sufficiently relevant to current national agendas (such as poverty alleviation and energy efficiency) to be taken into by policy makers and managers.

44. The deadline for meeting the targets was fast approaching and there was an opportunity to revisit the targets in a more systematic manner.

#### A. Building blocks for the post-2010 scenario

45. It was crucial for the post-2010 agenda to be based on several key building blocks. Those should be constructed with the involvement of all stakeholders, including indigenous communities and the private sector. The scale (i.e., the regional level) would also remain an overarching factor. The communication strategy for engaging those sectors and harmonizing vernacular terms would also be significant. Some key building blocks, as identified by participants, are described in the following paragraphs.

##### 1. Science

46. The science of biodiversity ecosystems, being complex and incomplete and therefore subject to attempts at rationalization, sometimes confused or left decision makers at a loss. The scientific basis of policy was, however, important, meaning that there needed to be a stronger interface science and policy. Such an interface needed to be based on the links between human well-being and livelihoods, the natural capital base and biodiversity. In other words, from the perspective of sustainability, the capital base required to support biodiversity needed to be ensured so that key ecosystem services were sustainably maintained, at the current time and in the years and generations to come. It was necessary that a scientific rationale that combined those components in a coherent framework formed the conceptual basis for understanding how the biodiversity post-2010 targets would be constructed.

##### 2. Metrics and time frame

47. There was a need for a quantifiable post-2010 target. Even if it was imperfect, it needed to be a proxy by which to measure progress and to indicate gaps and needs. A target without explicit time frames and milestones was uninteresting to politicians. A high conceptual and brutally pragmatic vision had to be articulated.

##### 3. Economics

48. The point at which hard decisions were taken was based on financial terms. If it could be demonstrated to ministers that millions were being lost as a result of unsustainable use, then action would be taken because it made financial sense.

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Nicholas Stern et al, "Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change" (Stern Review).

#### **4. Coordination**

49. Coordination at all levels was a key issue. There needed to be coordination with current processes such as national biodiversity strategies and action plans, United Nations agencies and grass-roots activities. Alignment with other existing targets was also necessary. There needed to be a convergence of plans and implementation measures to be effective. Climate change was one of the major issues that any post-2010 target would need to incorporate. That included its links with adaptation and reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation.

50. The year 2010 was strategic for the targets and there was a series of key meetings that would take place, including the Trondheim and Bonn meetings and a meeting in Italy that might feed into the Group of Eight meeting). As the International Year of Biodiversity came closer, along with the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly and the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, among others, those building blocks could be carried forward and form a basis for discussion at those strategic meetings.

#### **IV. Closure of the meeting**

51. Mr. Kante, on behalf of Mr. Achim Steiner, the Executive Director of UNEP, thanked the meeting participants. Noting that all of them had participated in their personal capacities, he said that they had demonstrated an extremely strong will to show what should be done, and he thanked them for helping to provide a better understanding of what was at stake. The final conclusions would be circulated in due course and the presentations made available on the website of the Division of Environmental Law and Conventions.

52. The extremely interesting ideas put forward during the meeting would help to steer the post-2010 process. UNEP was determined to maintain transparency and cooperation and would continue to play its facilitative role in multilateral environmental agreement processes such as the current process and would make all efforts to be as specific in its support as possible.

53. UNEP would always engage all stakeholders, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations in processes such as the current process, given their interests in the issue. He expressed the hope that the current meeting would mark the beginning of discussions on the post-2010 scenario and that other processes could build upon the momentum that they had generated.

54. He declared the meeting closed at 3.15 pm.

## Annex I

### Agenda

9–9.10 a.m.	<b>Welcome remarks on behalf of UNEP</b> – Bakary Kante
9.10–9.20 a.m.	<i>Tour de table</i> of self-introductions
9.20–9.30 a.m.	<b>1. Getting started: the sustainability agenda beyond 2010</b> – Ahmed Djoghlaif Purpose: Providing a vision for the post-2010 framework
9.30–9.45 a.m.	<b>2. 360 days to 2010: the envisaged process and timelines</b> – Carlos M. Novella Purpose: Overview of the planned events and important milestones for reaching agreement on a post-2010 framework
9.45–10.45 a.m.	<b>3. Lessons learned from the 2010 target: what has worked and what needs fixing? – a panel discussion</b> Panellists: Tewolde Egzhiaber, A H Zakri, Sebastian Winkler Purpose: A quick analysis of the current status of 2010 targets
10.45–11 a.m.	<b>Coffee</b>
11 a.m.–12.15 p.m.	<b>4. The Convention on Biological Diversity beyond 2010 – a panel discussion</b> Panellists: Lucy Mullenkei, Tone Solhaug, P. L. Gautam, Sergio Zeyala, M. Mizuno Purpose: Addressing the 2010 targets on biodiversity in a wider context, having the Convention on Biological Diversity CBD as a delivery mechanism and focusing on how to ensure that approaches to developing the post-2010 scenario are inclusive, learning from the past on gaps in such approaches.
12.15–1.15 p.m.	<b>5. Beyond the Convention on Biological Diversity: sustainability and human well-being</b> Anantha Duraiappah
1.15–2.15 p.m.	<b>Lunch</b> (Venue: Fountain Room, lobby-level restaurant )
2.15–3.15 p.m.	<b>Wrap-up discussions</b>

## Annex II

## Sustainability beyond 2010: perspectives from experiences

## List of participants

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