

High-level working group on the future of global targets for biodiversity

9-10 March 2009 (Bonn, Germany)

A. Introduction

From the 9-10 March 2009 some 50 distinguished participants, at the invitation of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety as the current Presidency of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), gathered in Bonn to provide clear and bold direction for future international commitments on biodiversity.

The meeting provided a timely opportunity to discuss the framework for the post 2010 biodiversity target and to prepare the ground for the discussion and action on the global biodiversity agenda. The outcome of the rich discussions at this meeting is a set of suggestions to the UN for further discussions on the future biodiversity targets of the United Nations.

B. Main messages emanating from the meeting

1. State and importance of biological diversity

- **Biodiversity and Ecosystems:** *All life on Earth, including human society, depends upon a variety of services provided by nature, the values of which need wider recognition. Maintaining these services is vital, especially in a world facing massive environmental and economical pressures. This requires that any post 2010 framework ensures the conservation and sustainable use of healthy ecosystems and of the biodiversity upon which their continued functioning depends, as well as the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.*

- **Biodiversity, Ecosystem Services and Poverty Eradication:** *The 2010 target provided a valuable framework for biodiversity actions, but missed the opportunity to mobilize significant public support and harness adequate political commitment. This could potentially have happened if the critical role of nature and its ecosystem services in supporting human wellbeing had been more clearly incorporated into the 2010 target. For instance, freshwaters, forests, and fisheries are forms of natural capital from which we draw ecosystem services such as clean water, fresh air, carbon storage, food, fiber, and fuel. Nature's services are valuable to the rich and they are irreplaceable and critical for the survival of the poor. Nature is the Treasury of all human beings, especially the Poor. There is no chance for success in poverty eradication and implementing the Millennium Development Goals without well functioning ecosystems at all levels.*

- **Biodiversity and Climate Change:** *Healthy ecosystems store carbon but if degraded or destroyed release this as carbon dioxide, one of the principal causes of climate change. Transforming industrial production, energy supply, heating of houses, traffic and transport in a sustainable climate-friendly way is already a tough challenge! Without reducing greenhouse gas emissions originating from the degradation and destruction of ecosystems the challenges of climate change will be hard to achieve. At the same time, climate change is an increasing threat to the maintenance of biodiversity, directly through its potential to accelerate species extinction and indirectly through potentially*

negative impacts of mitigation measures. Not using synergies between climate change and biodiversity policies would be a double failure - a lose-lose-situation!

• Drivers of Biodiversity loss: *Land-use change, eutrophication, the unsustainable use of biological resources, overexploitation of marine ecosystems and invasive alien species continue to be the main drivers of biodiversity loss, but are increasingly exacerbated by climate change. All these drivers of biodiversity loss must be addressed within any post 2010 framework.*

• Guidance for a living planet: *Any post 2010 target should provide a sense of urgency and be ambitious, simple but meaningful, politically relevant, scientifically credible, inclusive, inspiring, user-friendly and implementable. The new target should consider the key drivers of biodiversity loss and comprise the three objectives of the CBD (conservation, sustainable use, access and benefit sharing)*

2. Leadership for biodiversity and ecosystems!

The global biodiversity target will not be reached by 2010! But there are a number of success stories at sectoral, regional, national and local level. Post 2010 targets should build upon the current 2010 target and the lessons learned from this process. For instance, the target has been useful in introducing biodiversity to the international political agenda, raising political and public awareness, building partnerships among institutions and promoting integration of biodiversity in key political processes.

Both medium- and long-term target dates (i.e. 2020 and 2050) should be considered, taking into account existing and other relevant targets, such as those of the Millennium Development Goals. Establishing links between biodiversity and climate change agendas, and other multilateral environmental agreements, should be a priority for any post 2010 framework. In order to ensure measurability, monitoring and assessment of any post 2010 framework, the establishment of baselines, clear milestones and sub-targets, and of an agreed set of indicators to measure performance, is important. Key policy makers of different sectors should be involved in the process of defining sub-targets and special targets for the local, regional and national levels.

3. Using the crisis for a planet deal!

The world is facing an economic crisis that may offer opportunities for reforms favoring biodiversity. The valuation of ecosystem services can provide the trigger for change and can serve as a starting point for moving towards a green and sustainable economy. This process can include increased investment in biodiversity as a utility in ecological infrastructure such as bio-diverse, natural carbon sinks and water-purifying wetlands. In this respect, addressing current consumption and production patterns which have a negative impact on the status of biodiversity is also essential. Maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem services also through trade-related agreements could provide a key turning point for any post 2010 biodiversity agenda and for an overall global new deal for our planet.

In addition, the ongoing discussions on the post Kyoto climate regime provide a unique opportunity to further advance the post 2010 biodiversity agenda. At the same time the negotiation of an international regime on Access and Benefit Sharing is to be concluded

by 2010 as a key element for any post 2010 target. This achievement should be considered in the development of the post 2010 target.

Finally, to achieve the necessary paradigm shift it will be essential that the biodiversity community speaks the language of other constituencies, in order to promote synergies among agendas. Building strategic partnerships, including between countries and across different sectors, will assist in enhancing these synergies.

4. Creating broad ownership for the planet deal!

The post 2010 biodiversity target as part of a global green new deal for our planet has to be adopted at the highest level – the Heads of Government and State - thus providing a mechanism for mainstreaming and policy integration, including horizontal cooperation between ministries. Achieving the target must be incorporated into the mandates of ministries responsible for key sectors – including finance, agriculture, fisheries and forests – with sub-targets specific to those sectors. Any future targets should be integrated into relevant national policy instruments such as national biodiversity action plans, national development plans, etc.

While Governments should be taking the lead support of stakeholders such as civil society, scientists, indigenous peoples, local communities, and the private sector is vital to obtain broad ownership of all stakeholders in the definition and implementation of any post 2010 target.

Defining and implementing future targets and related indicators should be a knowledge driven process informed by science. Instruments that allow for a stronger interface between science and policy, such as the International Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), should support the implementation of any post 2010 target. “Biodiversity” champions and the mass media are essential to engage present and future generations in order to ensure a broader involvement of society.

C. The roadmap for 2010

All relevant events in the run up to 2010 should be used to further develop the messages for 2010. The coming 18 months will provide several opportunities to carry forward the discussions around the post 2010 target within and outside biodiversity-related fora, including events such as those related to the climate change negotiations, the fifth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility and other high-level meetings such as the United Nations General Assembly, G8 and G20 meetings.

2010 as the UN ‘International Year for Biodiversity’ will be a crucial year for biodiversity in many respects. A sequence of high level conferences allow for an inclusive roadmap leading to a new biodiversity target: in February the global biodiversity community will convene in Trondheim, Norway, to discuss further the elements for a post 2010 target; in February UNEP’s Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum will re-convene; and in May the subsidiary bodies of the CBD (SBSTTA and WGRI) will take stock and advance the post 2010 negotiations, which will feed into the Heads of State Summit that will gather at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September for a special session devoted to biodiversity; finally, in October the 10th Conference of the Parties to the CBD will meet in Nagoya, Japan. Strong commitments of participants in all these meetings are needed. There is a need to make the difference!