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CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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Agenda item 4.3 (b)

DECISION ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AT ITS TENTH MEETING

X/10. National reporting: review of experience and proposals for the fifth national report

The Conference of the Parties,

Re-emphasizing that national reporting is the obligation for all Parties under Article 26 of the Convention, and that timely submission of national reports by all Parties is essential for reviewing the implementation of the Convention as required in Article 23,

1. *Adopts* the guidelines for the fifth national report as contained in the annex to this decision, *noting* that these may be supplemented by additional guidance from its eleventh meeting;
2. *Decides* that all Parties should submit their fifth national report by 31 March 2014;
3. *Encourages* all Parties to prioritize the preparation of their fifth national report to enable its submission by the deadline established in paragraph 2 above, irrespective of the status of submission of reports requested at previous meetings of the Conference of the Parties;
4. *Requests* those Parties that expect difficulty in meeting the deadline set in paragraph 2 above to initiate the preparation of the report as early as possible to ensure that the report will be submitted by the deadline;
5. *Requests* the Global Environment Facility to provide adequate and timely financial support for the preparation of the fifth and future national reports, and further *requests* the Global Environment Facility and its implementing agencies to ensure that procedures are in place to ensure an early and expeditious disbursement of funds;
6. *Invites* other donors, Governments and multilateral and bilateral agencies to provide financial and technical support to developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition, for preparing their national reports;

7. *Decides* that the fifth national report should:
 - (a) Focus on the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and progress toward the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, using indicators where possible and feasible, including application, as appropriate, of global headline indicators contained in decision VIII/15 and additional indicators that may be adopted at its eleventh meeting for measuring progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets;
 - (b) Include, as appropriate, information concerning contributions of the implementation of the Strategic Plan towards the achievement of relevant Millennium Development Goals;
 - (c) Allow countries to provide updates on the revision, updating and implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and similar strategies, plans and programmes;
 - (d) Provide an update on the national status and trends of, and threats to, biodiversity, using national biodiversity indicators;
 - (e) Provide an overall assessment of the national implementation of the Convention, and include suggestions for future priorities at the national and international levels;
8. *Requests* Parties, in preparing their fifth national report, to elaborate on:
 - (a) Outcomes and impacts of actions taken to implement the Convention at various levels;
 - (b) Successful experiences and lessons learned from implementation;
 - (c) Obstacles encountered in implementation;
9. *Also requests* Parties to provide:
 - (a) An updated account of information provided in the last national report, to reflect changes that have occurred since then;
 - (b) Quantitative analysis and synthesis on the status of implementation of the Convention in particular the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and national biodiversity strategies and action plans;
10. *Decides* that the fifth national report will use a narrative format where appropriate, combined with use of suggested tools, including tables, charts and questionnaires for statistical analysis, and that the format for the fifth and sixth national reports should be consistent to allow for long-term tracking of progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets;
11. *Encourages* Parties to continue to involve all relevant stakeholders, including indigenous and local communities, in the process of national reporting, and to use the report as a tool for further planning and communication to the public to mobilize additional support for and participation in activities related to implementation of the Convention;
12. *Encourages* Parties to increase synergies in national reporting under biodiversity-related conventions to ensure that national reports comprehensively reflect the national situation and status of implementation, and to avoid unnecessary reporting burdens;
13. *Welcomes* the pilot project supported by the Global Environment Facility, and other relevant projects and initiatives, such as the project developed by the Australian Government in collaboration with the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, to facilitate integrated reporting

processes and approaches in the least developed countries and small island developing States, which may provide important lessons for enhancing the reporting capacities of these countries;

14. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme and other partners, to continue facilitating the provision of support to countries, especially the developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition, for the preparation of their fifth national reports;

15. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to prepare a resource manual providing further suggestions for the preparation of the fifth national reports, drawing upon, *inter alia*, experience and examples from the fourth national reports, other relevant international work including the outcome of the ad hoc technical expert group on indicators. The resource manual should include suggestions for common formats, tables and charts to aid reporting. A first edition should be available before the end of 2011, and the manual should be maintained up to date in the light of new information that may become available. The manual should be made available in the six official United Nations languages.

*Annex***GUIDELINES FOR THE FIFTH NATIONAL REPORT¹****I. INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDELINES****Purposes of reporting and intended use of information from national reports**

1. In accordance with Article 26 of the Convention and decision X/10 of the Conference of the Parties, Parties are required to submit their fifth national report by **31 March 2014**.

2. National reports are essential tools in allowing the Conference of the Parties to keep the implementation of the Convention under review, *inter alia*, by providing material for the preparation of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*. The fifth national report provides a key source of information for a mid-term review of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, which will be undertaken at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Perhaps, more importantly, they are important tools for biodiversity planning at the national level, providing the analysis and monitoring necessary to inform decisions on implementation. Finally, they are important communication tools.

Structure of the report

3. The guidelines propose that the fifth national report be composed of three main parts:

Part I - An update on biodiversity status, trends, and threats and implications for human well-being.

Part II - The national biodiversity strategy and action plan (NBSAP), its implementation, and the mainstreaming of biodiversity.

Part III - Progress towards the 2015 and 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets and contributions to the relevant 2015 Targets of the Millennium Development Goals.

4. Part III draws upon the information in the first two parts of the report to analyse how national actions taken to implement the Convention are contributing to relevant strategic goals and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the updated Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including, as appropriate, how the implementation of the Strategic Plan has contributed and is contributing to the achievement of relevant goals and targets included in the Millennium Development Goals. Together, the three parts form the main body of the report, and should be drawn upon as a whole in preparing the executive summary. The executive summary should highlight the most important findings and conclusions from the report, and will serve as an important communication tool. In addition, Parties may submit annexes or appendices as part of their national report.

5. Throughout the report, Parties are requested to report on the latest developments (i.e., developments that have occurred since the last national report was prepared), including progress achieved towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets with reference to relevant baselines (e.g., 2010). Where possible, Parties are also requested to use indicators and to avoid repeating in detail what has been already covered in earlier national reports. Additionally, Parties should provide more analysis and synthesis than description in their report, supported by evidence and cases of outcomes from the implementation of the

¹ These guidelines may be supplemented by additional guidance from the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (decision X/10, paragraph 1).

Convention and, in particular, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, national biodiversity strategies and action plans and revisions thereon.

How to use the guidelines

6. In the fifth national report, Parties are requested to report on national implementation of the Convention in narrative form, where appropriate, structured as substantive and concise answers to a number of key questions. In addition, Parties are encouraged to complement narrative reporting with any tables, charts, figures, graphics and indicators that might help support or better communicate the information presented. A resource manual with detailed suggestions for each part of the report will include some suggested tables or matrices, charts, figures, and indicators for use by Parties.² The length of the fifth national report is expected to be at least 40 pages and no more than 100 pages, including appendices I to III. If the report must exceed this limit, Parties are encouraged to append additional information as supplementary material.

7. Parties are requested to adhere to the headings of the main parts of the reports and also to structure the sub-sections of each part according to the questions set out in the guidelines. The structure of each section is flexible. In cases where there are overlaps in the information provided within and among parts or sections, Parties are encouraged to make cross-references in order to avoid repetition.

8. Parties are invited to contact the Secretariat for any clarification on the use of the guidelines or the preparation of the fifth national report. The Secretariat would also welcome feedback on any difficulties encountered in using the guidelines, as well as ideas for improvements. Such information will be used in the development of the supporting tools and also contribute to future reporting cycles.

Processes of preparation

9. Guidance provided in various decisions of the Conference of the Parties requests Parties to involve stakeholders in the preparation of their national reports, including NGOs, civil society, indigenous and local communities, business, and the media. In addition, the national focal point responsible for preparing national reports is encouraged to work closely with national counterparts responsible for implementation of other related conventions. By coordinating report preparation, the focal points for the various conventions can share data and analysis, ensuring consistency among reports and reducing the overall reporting burden for the country. Such coordination could furthermore enhance opportunities for synergy in the national implementation of related conventions. Parties are invited to provide, in Appendix I of their report, a brief summary on the participatory process followed in preparing the report.

Outreach and communication

10. The preparation of national reports is an important opportunity for communicating achievements made in meeting the Convention objectives to the general public and involving them in national implementation. To this end, in addition to involving stakeholders in the preparation of national reports, it is particularly important for Parties, after having submitted their national report, to communicate to the general public the positive outcomes for biodiversity identified in the report, as well as the obstacles and challenges that remain. Various means of communication could be used, including: publicly launching national reports on International Day for Biological Diversity; making national reports accessible to a wider audience through national clearing-house mechanisms or other media; developing and disseminating by-products of national reports.

² The resource manual will be developed and made available to Parties in the course of 2011, and will incorporate ongoing and inter-sessional developments particularly with regard to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, the multi-year programme of work and the AHTEG on indicators.

11. At the international level, the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, which will draw upon information provided in the fifth national reports, will also serve as a communication tool.

Submission of the fifth national report

12. Parties are required to submit their fifth national report to the Executive Secretary by **31 March 2014**, using the format outlined in these guidelines. The submission of the fifth national report ahead of this deadline is encouraged as this would facilitate the preparation of the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, and of other analyses and syntheses that will be made available to the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies.

13. Parties are requested to submit an original signed copy by post and an electronic copy on diskette/CD-ROM, or by electronic mail, to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Electronic copies should be available in a word-processing software and graphic elements provided in separate files to facilitate the electronic publication of the reports.

14. Parties that anticipate any difficulty in submitting the report by the deadline mentioned above are encouraged to initiate the process of the preparation of the report as early as possible to ensure that the report shall be submitted by the deadline.

II. THE GUIDELINES

The executive summary

15. For the purposes of communicating to stakeholders at various levels, Parties should prepare an executive summary of the fifth national report that provides the main messages and key findings of the report. These might be derived from answers to the Questions listed under each Part of the main report. The executive summary should be short and concise, preferably between 6 to 10 pages in length. For example, there could be one (or two) paragraph(s) for each question, with each paragraph containing a “bold” statement about the findings of the report. It should ideally serve as a useful “stand-alone” tool to communicate, educate and raise awareness of biodiversity among the general public, relevant decision-makers and other key stakeholder groups. To this end, Parties are encouraged to include illustrative tables, figures and images. While the executive summary can only be finalized after the three main chapters of this report have been completed, an early draft of the executive summary may serve as a useful outline for the development of the report, helping to clarify the main messages.

The main parts of the report

Part I: An update on biodiversity status, trends, and threats and implications for human well-being

16. This part should answer the following questions:

Q1: Why is biodiversity important for your country? Please elaborate on the importance of biodiversity by highlighting contributions of biodiversity and related ecosystem services to human well-being and socio-economic development, using information from completed and ongoing biodiversity assessments or studies. Where possible provide estimates of economic, social and cultural values (the economic value can be presented in monetary terms or, for example, in numbers of people supported). Also highlight a few examples of exceptional biodiversity and ecosystems in the country.

Q2: What major changes have taken place in the status and trends of biodiversity in your country? Focus on changes that have occurred, or that have become known, since the fourth or last national report was prepared. The analysis or synthesis should provide a succinct overview of biodiversity status, trends and threats sufficient to inform decision-makers, rather than an exhaustive assessment of these issues.

There is no need to repeat detailed descriptions of your country's biodiversity that were provided in the fourth or previous national reports. However, countries that have not presented a comprehensive analysis of the status and trends of biodiversity in their previous reports could do so in this report. Where possible, show changes in biodiversity or other trends over time and use quantitative indicators (with technical details of the indicators provided in an annex). Also draw upon expert qualitative assessments. Illustrate trends with charts, graphs, figures and tables. Where possible, analyse how actions taken (i.e., actions described in part II) have resulted in changes in biodiversity. Use case-studies to illustrate general points. The case-studies should demonstrate significant reductions in the loss of biodiversity (or a specific component) within a defined scale, and a clear rationale of how this is linked to the actions taken. The case will be most useful if it contains lessons that are more widely applicable.

Q3: What are the main threats to biodiversity? (Or, what are the main causes of the negative changes described in the answer to question two?). For the main biomes and/or components of biodiversity, describe the main direct drivers of biodiversity loss (pressures) and the main indirect drivers (underlying causes) and relate these to the relevant economic sectors. Be specific about the direct drivers (e.g., “dynamite fishing”, “coastal development”), but also categorize them (habitat change, climate change, overexploitation, invasive species, pollution), with some detailed analysis.

Q4: What are the impacts of the changes in biodiversity for ecosystem services and the socio-economic and cultural implications of these impacts? Describe the impacts of declining biodiversity and ecosystems on human well-being, livelihoods, poverty reduction, etc. Consider all relevant and significant ecosystem goods and services.

Optional question: What are possible future changes for biodiversity and their impacts? Describe plausible future scenarios for biodiversity in terms of underlying causes, pressures, impacts on biodiversity and implications for human well-being. For example, compare what might happen under “business as usual” policies with what might happen with greater investment in biodiversity and ecosystems. Such scenarios may be simple “what if?” narratives, or based on models if such models are available. Any presentation of future scenarios should describe scientific uncertainties.

Part II: The national biodiversity strategy and action plan, its implementation, and the mainstreaming of biodiversity

17. This part should answer the following questions:

Q5: What are the biodiversity targets set by your country? Describe the measurable targets (for example, for 2020) that have been developed in line with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. Please provide further updates on the targets if your country has submitted a report to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Q6: How has your national biodiversity strategy and action plan been updated to incorporate these targets and to serve as an effective instrument to mainstream biodiversity? Provide a brief description of your national biodiversity strategy and action plan. If the national biodiversity strategy and action plan has been updated, how does it differ from the previous national biodiversity strategy and action plan? Describe: (i) how the actions contained therein will achieve the targets outlined in the answer to question five; (ii) how it will contribute to the achievement of Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020; (iii) how it will address the threats to biodiversity identified in the answer to question three; and (iv) how it addresses the guidance provided in decision IX/8. Describe in particular how the biodiversity strategy and action plan will achieve the integration of biodiversity considerations into broader national plans, programmes and policies, economic and social sectors and levels of government.

Q7: What actions has your country taken to implement the Convention since the fourth report and what have been the outcomes of these actions? Describe relevant legislation, policies, institutional and cooperative mechanisms, and funding. Where relevant, link these actions to outcomes in terms of the

status and trends of biodiversity and implications for human well-being. Use case studies and, as appropriate, cross-reference to the answer to question two. Indicate how the actions relate to the various programmes of work and cross-cutting issues of the Convention (with details provided in appendix III), particularly those selected in the multi-year programme of work of the Conference of the Parties for in-depth review at the eleventh and twelfth meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. Highlight any obstacles to implementation (including lack of capacity, human and financial resources). Note that if your biodiversity strategy and action plan has been recently updated, most of the actions reported may relate to the previous version.

Q8: How effectively has biodiversity been mainstreamed into relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies, plans and programmes? Describe how biodiversity is reflected in poverty reduction strategies and other key cross-cutting policy instruments, and into the various economic sectors (which sectors (and ministries) integrate biodiversity well and which do not?). Describe also how biodiversity is integrated into planning mechanisms. Describe actions taken and outcomes achieved by each sector to implement biodiversity actions included in their respective strategies, plans and programmes. Which tools are used (e.g., ecosystem approach, biodiversity-inclusive environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment, spatial planning, etc.)? Describe also how synergies are achieved at the national level in the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and other relevant conventions. Describe also how biodiversity is considered in international and/or transboundary cooperation, including South-South cooperation.

Q9. How fully has your national biodiversity strategy and action plan been implemented? Analyse the extent to which the national biodiversity strategy and action plan has been implemented. For example, what proportion of the planned activities has been carried out and to what extent have the objectives been met. Identify the remaining challenges for implementation. (Note that if your national biodiversity strategy and action plan has been recently updated, this analysis will relate primarily to the previous version of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan).

Part III: Progress towards the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets and contributions to the relevant 2015 Targets of the Millennium Development Goals

18. This part should draw upon parts I and II to answer the following questions:

Q10: What progress has been made by your country towards the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets? Drawing upon information in parts I and II, analyse the progress towards each of the 2020 targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, as well as towards the overall mission of the Plan. Also indicate progress towards the national targets referred to in the answer to question five (i.e., national actions taken to achieve each target and outcomes achieved). Where possible, use quantitative indicators including the application, as appropriate, of global headline indicators contained in decision VIII/15, as well as additional indicators for measuring progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets that may be adopted at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Technical details of the indicators may provided in an appendix. Also draw upon expert qualitative assessments. You may wish to use a simple “traffic-light” scheme or similar illustrative tool to give an overall assessment of progress.

Q11: What has been the contribution of actions to implement the Convention towards the achievement of the relevant 2015 targets of the Millennium Development Goals in your country? In order to highlight the importance of biodiversity for achieving broader national objectives, and drawing upon, as appropriate, information in parts I and II, analyse how the actions taken to implement the Convention, particularly the implementation of the 2015 milestones and Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, have contributed or are contributing to the achievement of relevant 2015 targets of the Millennium Development Goals, as well as to the Millennium Development Goals overall.

Q12: What lessons have been learned from the implementation of the Convention in your country?

Provide an analysis of lessons learned from implementation, highlighting examples of successful and less successful actions taken, including remaining challenges. Also provide suggestions for actions that need to be taken at the national, regional and global levels to further enhance implementation of the Convention at the national level and, in particular, to achieve the strategic goals and targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

Annexes and appendices

19. Use annexes and appendices to provide detailed or supporting information that is not necessary in the main report. Annexes and appendices may be bound separately to limit the size of the main report. Suggested appendices are listed here:

Appendix I - Information concerning the reporting Party and preparation of the fifth national report.

Please provide information on the process used to prepare this report, including information on stakeholders involved and material used as a basis for the report.

Appendix II - Further sources of information. Parties should provide sources of information on national implementation, such as website addresses, publications, databases and national reports submitted to other related conventions, forums and organizations.

Appendix III - National implementation of the thematic programmes of work and plans under the Convention on Biological Diversity or decisions of the Conference of the Parties related to cross-cutting issues. Parties could use a table or matrix³ to highlight how national actions taken to implement the national biodiversity strategy and action plan, activities related to mainstreaming and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets have contributed or are contributing to goals, targets and activities suggested in the thematic programmes of work and plans or decisions related to cross-cutting issues, particularly those selected in the post-2010 multi-year programme of work of the Convention for in-depth review at the eleventh and twelfth meetings of the Conference of the Parties. Parties could focus on those thematic areas and cross-cutting issues that are nationally-relevant and important.

³ The table or matrix will be developed and provided to Parties in the reference manual for the fifth national report referred to in paragraph 6 above..