



CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Sixth meeting

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Item 18.3 of the provisional agenda*

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

Implementation of the Global Initiative on Biological Diversity Education and Public Awareness

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its fourth meeting, the Conference of the Parties invited “the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to consider launching a global initiative on biological diversity education, training and public awareness” and requested “the Executive Secretary to explore the feasibility of such an initiative and to report to the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the progress of such an initiative”(decision IV/10 B).

2. The report from the Executive Secretary to the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties is contained in document UNEP/CBD/COP/5/13. Following consultations between the Secretariat and UNESCO, the latter developed a proposal for a Global Initiative (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/5). The proposed initiative was a joint undertaking by the Convention and UNESCO, and also involved other relevant international organizations as partners. It was proposed to establish a consultative working group of experts from United Nations and other organizations to further develop the initiative and to provide advice and support in its implementation.

3. At its fifth meeting, in decision V/17, the Conference of the Parties requested “the Executive Secretary, in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, to convene a consultative working group of experts, including the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Bank, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the Commission for Education and Communication of IUCN, the World-Wide Fund for Nature, representatives of Parties and other relevant bodies to further advance and, in particular, to identify priority activities for the proposed global initiative on biological diversity education and public awareness”. The Conference of the Parties further decided that “the working group should take into account priorities developed by the Conference of the Parties for its work programme, and, when approved by the Conference of the Parties, priorities identified in the strategic plan for the Convention”.

4. Section II of the present document outlines developments since the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in response to the requests of the Conference of the Parties. Section III suggests

* UNEP/CBD/COP/6/1 and Corr.1/Rev.1.

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a draft decision based on the results of the work of the Consultative Working Group of Experts on Biological Diversity Education and Public Awareness.

II. DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

5. In accordance with decision V/17, the Executive Secretary, in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, convened a Consultative Working Group of Experts on Biological Diversity Education and Public Awareness that met in Paris from 11 to 13 July 2000. Twenty-five experts from Parties and representatives of the main institutions and organizations involved in education and public awareness participated. The report of the meeting is contained in document UNEP/CBD/GEEPA/1/1.

6. The Working Group focused its deliberation mainly on the non-formal—or informal—sector, as the Conference of the Parties, at its fifth meeting, had invited UNESCO to develop advice for the formal education sector. Participants also agreed that the main objective of the meeting should be to produce an action plan for education and public-awareness activities within the strategy for implementation of the Convention, in order to be of practical help to the Parties—the main target group of the initiative.

7. When analysing the background of the issue, the Group concurred that the public in general lack basic ecological knowledge. Biological-diversity knowledge requires understanding of the hierarchical nature of biological diversity, i.e., at the levels of genetic, species and ecosystems diversity. That need should be addressed through formal education approaches. The need for knowledge on biological diversity as a solution was one paradigm. Student-oriented approaches were emphasized, with skills being developed in experiential learning by measuring the state of the environment and contact with living things and nature as a means of developing care. The economic aspects of public awareness of biodiversity issues were also stressed as a motivating factor, mainly when considering the move from *knowledge* to *action*, in which there is a need to change the behaviour of the productive sectors. For biological diversity to become a part of human life, it was agreed that there is a need to act on the system, and deal with its complexity, rather than focusing on individual species.

8. The Global Initiative should, therefore, focus on obstacles that confront people and limit their ability to change harmful practices. A participatory process involving key stakeholders in the development of policy and strategy for national solutions is required. Another dimension to be taken into consideration is instrumental communication in which targets, messages and means are planned to influence and inform. Characteristics of this approach include campaigns, the use of meaningful symbols to attract media interest, and the use of celebrities. Messages must be based on common perceptions and be culture- and context-specific.

9. The Working Group agreed that the responsibility for implementing future activities related to the initiative lies with the Parties to the Convention. Therefore, the initiative should be geared to supporting the Parties in undertaking those activities rather than going into the content of what has to be taught. A survey would be needed to assess where the demand for support lies. Existing initiatives should form the basis for assistance to countries in their implementation of a programme of work on the initiative. Cooperative efforts should focus on:

- (a) Reorganizing the information already available (using existing networks);
- (b) Adapting information to a level appropriate to identified user needs;
- (c) Identifying data (and their sources) needed for generating educational and public awareness products (through partnerships with scientists);
- (d) Ensuring a close iterative interaction of supply and demand in developing information resources through partnerships with stakeholders/users;
- (e) Coordinating effective networks for the distribution and marketing of relevant information and materials;

- (f) Assisting in strengthening effective synergies among the Rio conventions.

10. The Working Group agreed that decision V/13 of the Conference of the Parties, on further guidance to the financial mechanism, clearly addresses funding aspects of the initiative by instructing the Global Environment Facility, as the institutional structure operating the financial mechanism, to provide support for capacity development for education, public awareness and communication in biological diversity at the national and regional levels, in accordance with decision V/17.

11. The Working Group also agreed that clear guidelines are needed for the successful further implementation of the initiative. These guiding principles should, *inter alia*, clarify the nature and contents of messages and products related to the initiative. They should also encompass indigenous perspectives on biological diversity education and public awareness. The following guidelines should be used by Parties and other Governments, as well as by any institution active in this field, in their further advancement of the initiative:

(a) The questions asked and concepts used should be relevant to the thematic and crosscutting issues dealt with by the Convention. The focus should initially be on crosscutting issues such as sustainable use, the ecosystem approach, and alien invasive species;

(b) It is preferable to use simple messages that emphasize the importance of biological diversity, including its economic and social value, and stress the urgency of reversing the loss biological diversity;

(c) If single-topic messages are used (such as single species in the case of the “Adopt A Butterfly” project), they should be used in a way that exemplifies the complex issue of biological diversity. The message should however be kept simple and, in order to communicate it, information should be kept to a minimum;

(d) Cultural and indigenous sensitivities to different species need to be considered when using icons;

(e) The sources of the information should be referenced and readily accessible;

(f) Ultimately, educational and public-awareness initiatives should promote appropriate behaviour that ensures the maintenance of habitats and the sustainable use of biological diversity, thus conserving the latter and allowing for proper ecosystem functioning. In this regard, some of the actions proposed should facilitate the development of core knowledge on how to manage stakeholder processes, e.g., how to deal with conflicts between rural and urban society;

(g) Actions proposed should lead to practical products that will mean something to people and have immediate results;

(h) The often considerable amount of information on biological diversity already prepared (e.g., materials for decision makers, teaching manuals, posters) should be made available;

(i) The actions proposed, messages and products must always consider humans as part of the process (human dimension), in accordance with the ecosystem approach.

12. The Working Group concluded that both short-term and long-term strategies for the implementation of the initiative were required and recommended the launching of the following programme of work initially comprising four programme elements in support of the initiative, namely:

- (a) The management of education and communication networks;
- (b) The management of knowledge on education and communication;
- (c) Capacity-building through stakeholder approaches;
- (d) Demonstration projects.

13. A second meeting of the group of experts was convened in Bergen, Norway, on 16-17 November 2000, with financial support from Norway and the Netherlands. The report of the second meeting is contained in document UNEP/CBD/GEEPA/2/3.

14. At this meeting, the Group agreed to develop the strategy related to the further design and implementation of the initiative and to identify action-oriented elements of the strategy. Another objective of the meeting was to identify examples and projects that illustrate the priorities for action.

15. One of the main challenges related to the education and public awareness initiative is to find a balance within Article 13 (i.e. between paragraphs (a) and (b) of the Article 13) of the Convention, as well as between the provisions in the Article and the way in which the Convention can be promoted. For this purpose, the group of experts agreed on a set of strategic recommendations for the implementation of the initiative, which also contain operational elements and options for action.

16. The group recommended that a side event should be organized in the margins of the sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), held in Montreal, from 12 to 16 March 2001. This event took place on 14 March 2001.

17. A third meeting of the Working Group took place in Bilbao, Spain, from 5 to 7 November 2001. The report of this meeting is contained in document UNEP/CBD/GEEPA/3/3. The reports of the three meetings are posted on the Secretariat's website at www.biodiv.org.

18. In reviewing the main issues identified by the Group in the course of its previous meetings, three distinct "clusters" were identified: strategic issues surrounding the rationale for the establishment of the global initiative on education and public awareness; issues related to the draft programme of work; and communication for the marketing of the global initiative. The first two clusters were dealt with in the context of break-out groups, while communication for marketing were tackled in the subsequent plenary session.

19. The Group recommended that a side event should be organized in the margins of the seventh meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, held in Montreal, from 12 to 16 November 2001. This event took place on 14 November 2001.

20. The final recommendations adopted by the group are contained in the annex to the draft decision below and are entitled Programme of Work for the Global Initiative on Communication, Education and Public Awareness.

III. RECOMMENDATION

21. The Conference of the Parties may wish to consider the following draft decision, which is based on the results of the work of the expert group on education and public awareness:

"The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling the provisions of Article 13 of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its decisions IV/10 B, paragraph 6, and V/17,

Taking note of the information provided by the Executive Secretary with regard to education and public awareness (UNEP/CBD/COP/6/13, section V, and UNEP/CBD/COP/6/13/Add.2),

Noting with appreciation the work done by the Consultative Working Group of Experts convened according to decision V/17,

Recognizing that communication, education and public awareness are essential elements for the successful and effective implementation of the Convention,

Emphasizing that communication and education are two distinct yet complementary disciplines,

Noting that key actors in the implementation of the Convention need effective instruments on communication, education and public awareness to engage major stakeholders and to convey the appropriate messages to mainstream biodiversity,

Recognizing the complementary nature of a global initiative on education and public awareness and the corporate communication of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity,

1. *Decides* to adopt the programme of work for a global initiative on communication, education and public awareness contained in the annex to the present decision;
2. *Requests* the Parties to the Convention and other Governments
 - (a) To support the national, regional and international activities prioritized by a global initiative on education and public awareness;
 - (b) To develop adequate capacity to deliver initiatives on communication, education and public awareness;
3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the IUCN Commission for Education and Communication, and other members of the Consultative Working Group of Experts established by decision V/17, to:
 - (a) Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Global Initiative according to the conditions established in the annex to the present decision for its start-up phase;
 - (b) Review the communication, education and public-awareness dimensions of existing and new cross-cutting issues and thematic areas, and specifically those priorities and action plans established in the Strategic Plan for the Convention;
 - (c) To establish a roster of experts on communication, education and public awareness;
 - (d) To explore, in collaboration with the relevant agencies, the feasibility of demonstration projects that can serve as models to initiate similar projects that can be adopted by Parties, and to report thereon to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting;
 - (e) To develop and implement a corporate communication strategy for the Secretariat.
4. *Invites* the Global Environment Facility to include expertise relating to communication, education and public awareness when evaluating projects for funding approval;
5. *Invites* the United Nations Environment Programme:
 - (a) To promote biodiversity-related communication, education and public-awareness activities across multilateral environmental agreements and programmes;
 - (b) To promote capacity-building for communication, education and public awareness at the regional level in cooperation with IUCN and others;
 - (c) To develop international mechanisms that facilitate: access to environmental information, environmental justice and public participation;
6. *Urges* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to develop a plan to integrate biodiversity into all levels of formal education;
7. *Invites* other agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, and development banks:
 - (a) To reflect in their funding policies the Global Initiative on Education and Public Awareness according to the conditions established in the annex to the present decision;
 - (b) To include expertise on communication, education and public awareness when evaluating projects for funding approval;

8. *Invites* indigenous peoples organizations, community-based organizations and non-governmental organizations to include communication, education and public awareness in their relevant activities and to support the global initiative on education and public awareness according to the conditions established in the annex to the present decision.

Annex

**PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE ON COMMUNICATION,
EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS (CEPA)**

It is recognized that:

(a) The concept of biodiversity poses particular communication and education challenges due to its comprehensiveness, complexity and ill-defined nature;

(b) Key actors in the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity need effective technical instruments to engage major stakeholders and to convey the appropriate messages to mainstream biodiversity;

(c) Despite repeated stated support for education and public awareness, education and communication instruments fail to be effectively utilised in the processes of the Convention. Education and communication instruments lack appropriate funding and are inadequately advised by relevant professional expertise;

(d) Education and communication, as social instruments, work best when part of an instrument mix designed to formulate, implement and manage the national biodiversity strategy and action plans;

(e) Biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing call for social change. Education and public awareness are long-term investments towards this change. At the same time, biodiversity issues need to be communicated effectively to ensure the participation of major stakeholders from different sectors. A distinction must therefore be established between communication strategies, on the one hand, and education ^{1/} and public awareness on the other. For this reason, the expression communication, education and public awareness is used to refer to both disciplines;

(f) The three programme elements contained below represent two strategic priorities: (i) institutional arrangements; and (ii) programmatic priority areas.

PROGRAMME ELEMENT 1

Towards a global communication, education and public awareness network

Operational objectives

1. To establish and manage a global communication, education and public awareness network;
2. To stimulate the creation of national, sub-regional and regional communication, education and public awareness networks;
3. To create synergy between existing networks relevant to communication, education and public awareness.

Proposed actions

1. Set up the structure or portal for a global network on communication, education and public awareness building on existing such initiatives as the Biodiversity Education and Public Awareness website (BEPA Online). This will be an active up-to-date new generation Internet site

^{1/} See relevant UNESCO documentation on terminology.

(and CD-ROM) that facilitates sharing of learning and know-how on biodiversity education and communication based on demand. It will:

- (a) Make visible the expertise in biodiversity communication and education including communication, education and public awareness training database;
 - (b) Stimulate and provide means for people to find those working on similar projects, problems or issues;
 - (c) Draw out knowledge and synthesise it through a moderated discussion on an issue for professional dialogue;
 - (d) Identify and create a portal to other networks and web addresses on communication and education, for example, those of the Convention on Wetlands, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, etc.;
 - (e) Provide a portal to excellent projects and publications;
 - (f) Ensure quality of products listed;
 - (g) Create access to standards of good practice;
 - (h) Provide translated abstracts for listed products;
 - (i) Ensure that the proposed networks are service and demand oriented with regular prompts;
2. Identify potential partners and stakeholders and set up of information systems:
- Create a list of education and communications experts, organizations and networks (governmental; non-governmental; indigenous; religious; sectoral – business and industry, agriculture, fisheries, forests, tourism; media); develop network structures and communication mechanisms;

Beneficiaries

Parties, coordinators of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, educators, communicators, non-governmental organizations and governmental implementing agencies.

Expected results

1. The communication, education and public awareness portal for networking in operation and linked to the clearing-house mechanism;
2. Lists of networks and contact addresses including CD-ROM;
3. Enhanced communication and knowledge exchange nationally and regionally.

Lead organization

Secretariat of the Convention, in cooperation with IUCN.

Partners

Parties, UNESCO, UNEP, the Commission for Education and Communication of IUCN (CEC), the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS), the Convention on Wetlands.

Time frame

Three years.

Budget

Phase 1: \$250,00 first year; \$100,000 each subsequent year;

Phase 2: Establish phase 2 budget as part of the review process by the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting.

PROGRAMME ELEMENT 2

Exchange of knowledge and expertise

Operational objectives

1. To enhance exchange of knowledge and expertise among professionals, enhancing development and innovation on communication, education and public awareness;
2. To meet knowledge needs of Parties and other stakeholders for Article 13.

Proposed actions

1. Document and analyse national reports from the Parties on communication, education and public awareness to develop needs for communication, education and public awareness support;
2. Identify links and provide searchable means to access biodiversity knowledge through the clearing-house mechanism;
3. Research, collect and exchange communication, education and public awareness projects and case studies through the web, workshops, CD-ROMs, and publications;
4. Sharing knowledge about tools and criteria for good practice;
5. Provide copyright free graphics and materials for adaptation;
6. Develop the global network in program element 1 to facilitate actions in program element 2.

Beneficiaries

Parties, coordinators of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, governmental implementing agencies, educators, communicators, non-governmental organizations.

Expected results

1. Biodiversity communication and education solutions for practitioners and parties and stakeholders;
2. Professional exchange of expertise made more accessible.

Lead organization

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in cooperation with UNESCO and IUCN.

Partners

Parties, UNEP, GEF, IUBS.

Time frame

Three years.

Budget

\$400,000 per annum (\$1.2 million total).

PROGRAMME ELEMENT 3

Capacity building for communication, education and public awareness

Operational objectives

1. Develop capacity of the Parties to market biodiversity to other sectors, and mainstream biodiversity into the work of other sectors;
2. Develop professional capacity of educators and communicators;

3. Enhance stakeholder participation and community development through communication, education and public awareness.

Proposed actions

1. Create and deliver training programmes including: courses help desks, coaching, manuals, check lists, exchange on application of methods to work with stakeholders;
2. Establish system for professional exchanges;
3. Promote twinning programmes;
4. Establish a distance learning programme on communication, education and public awareness;
5. Improve synergies between communication, education and public awareness research and practice;
6. Build capacity to evaluate and define principles for the evaluation of good communication, education and public awareness practice;
7. Develop appropriate sets of tools for communicators on biodiversity;
8. Establish partnerships with journalists and broadcasters engaged in communicating biodiversity related issues through the mass media;
9. Build capacity for fund-raising.

Beneficiaries

Parties, coordinators of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, educators, communicators, non-governmental organizations, governmental implementing agencies.

Expected results

A range of individuals and institutions with an enhanced understanding of the needs, methods and mechanisms of stakeholder participation;

A range of individuals and institutions with capacity to plan and manage biodiversity communication and education;

Communicators pack – set of tools (among others);

Online training course in communication (among others).

Lead organization

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, with the cooperation of UNEP, UNESCO, UNDP, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), IUCN and WWF.

Partners

Parties.

Time frame

Three years.

Budget

\$1.5 million annually;

\$15million for three years from other sources.”
