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Submission from CEEweb for Biodiversity on the Post 2010 Strategic Plan of the CBD

INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Plan (SP) for the CBD and the global 2010 biodiversity target to "significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth" was adopted by governments in 2002 at the 6th Conference of the Parties (COP 6) to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Strategic Plan aims to provide strategic and operation guidance for the implementation of the Convention between 2002-2010, thus it shall be revised and updated at the 10th meeting of the COP in 2010.

The revision of the SP shall take due account of the shortcomings of the current document, the lessons learned in this period and the emerging challenges, and it shall be based on the current state of knowledge.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE 2002-2010 SP

The Strategic Plan shall provide a strategic framework for the effective implementation of all provisions, decisions and programmes of work under the CBD and thus identify horizontal issues, which could provide the socio-economic preconditions for that. However, the current SP could not fulfil its role for several reasons:

1. it lacks an understanding of the socio-economic drivers behind biodiversity loss and thus the most fundamental impediments of CBD implementation,
2. it has not defined clearly the target groups, which are responsible to bring it forward,
3. it has not identified, how the Parties shall develop the tools that would be necessary to change the course of the drivers,
4. it lacks appropriate monitoring and review.

1. The SP lists the impediments of implementation in the Annex. However, this is not an appropriate and useful analysis for revealing the socio-economic drivers and thus finding ways for changing their course. On one hand it is not explored what causes the lack of political will, the lack or proactive measures or the unsustainable production and consumption patterns just to name a few (these cultural, institutional and structural drivers are ultimately rooted in the boundary conditions of the current economic model and in the values of the society). Consequently it cannot identify appropriate measures to change them either. In this way a huge gap remains between the strategic goals and objectives identified and the reality of the social, economic and environment, which generates inconsistency. (Since 2002 there has been some progress in this field, e.g. through the TEEB study and the MA, but they do not aim to explore the ultimate causes and identify appropriate tools either.)

2. It is not clear, who are responsible and through what actions to realise the goals and objectives. This is especially true when we consider the issue of mainstreaming, where the involvement of other sectors is the key. The SP is well justified and formulated towards the conservation sector, however, it does not provide sufficient guidance for the other sectors on their necessary involvement. It lacks the framework, where the various sectors could find their role in reducing the various pressures on biodiversity (through natural resource use, use of space and pollution, release of GMOs, IAS).

3. Clearly the SP is not an action plan, which lists the clearly defined tasks of the various actors. However, the SP is very vague on how the necessary actions would be identified, especially when it comes to changing the socio-economic drivers. There shall be clear mechanisms identified, which can result in the necessary actions.

4. The SP does not have a review mechanism with indicators to measure progress towards the goals and objectives.

Missing the goals and objectives of the SP has proved that all currently applied measures remain to be end-of-pipe solutions without tackling the most deeply underlying socio-economic drivers. The sectoral conflicts, which also influence the approach and values of the society and decision-makers, are rooted in the flawed boundary conditions of the economy. These boundary conditions do not value natural resources, including species and ecosystems, and lead to the continuous increase of the input of natural resources and land into the economy. However, the SP does not aim to apply fundamental changes, which could prevent these sectoral conflicts and make the implementation of the goals and objectives possible.

Building upon the conceptual framework of the DPSIR model

In order to provide effective policy responses to biodiversity loss it is crucial to carry out an in-depth analysis of the causes behind the problem. The list of impediments contained in the annex to the SP proved to be insufficient, because it lacked an understanding of the complex relationships of the various factors and could not provide sound basis for the necessary actions. Thus instead the DPSIR (drivers-pressures-state-impact-response) model adopted from the European Environment Agency model could provide a useful causal framework (figure 1.).

The model describes the interactions between society and environment. For the issue of the SP the state of environment is the biotic condition, i.e. biodiversity at genetic, species and ecosystem level. *Pressures* exerted by the society change the *state* of environment. They include the release of substances (emissions), physical and biological agents, the use of resources and the use of space. *Drivers* are the social, demographic and economic developments in societies, which manifest themselves in the exerted pressures. *Impacts* on human and ecosystem health, as well as resource availability result from the adverse changes of the state of environment. *Responses* are the measures taken to address drivers, pressures, state or impacts by the society.

It is important to stress that – as the Brundtland report pointed out – the issues of environment and development are inherently interlinked. It means that in a thorough analysis the pressures, drivers and impacts will be the same in the case of all environmental problems, let they be biodiversity loss, climate change, waste or air pollution. The same drivers are behind these environmental problems, and the pressures, responses and impacts interlink the various environmental issues.

Taking a closer look at the driving forces, they have different roles and characteristics in the socio-economic framework. Structural drivers (e.g. consumption and production patterns, infrastructures, urban structures) are rather static, which are hard to change in the short term and require continuous investment for maintaining their function in the society and economy. Institutional drivers (e.g. economic and legal regulations, sectoralisation in institutions, the education system) determine the structural drivers through setting the framework for

economic and social activities. Cultural drivers (the knowledge, approach, values of the people) are the most deeply underlying root causes, which determine the institutional drivers and indirectly the structures and environmental pressures in each case. However, failing to recognise these root causes behind environmental problems policy responses remain to be end-of-pipe solutions. This also leads to the further sectoralisation of the environment sector and often results in incoherent and contradictory policies.

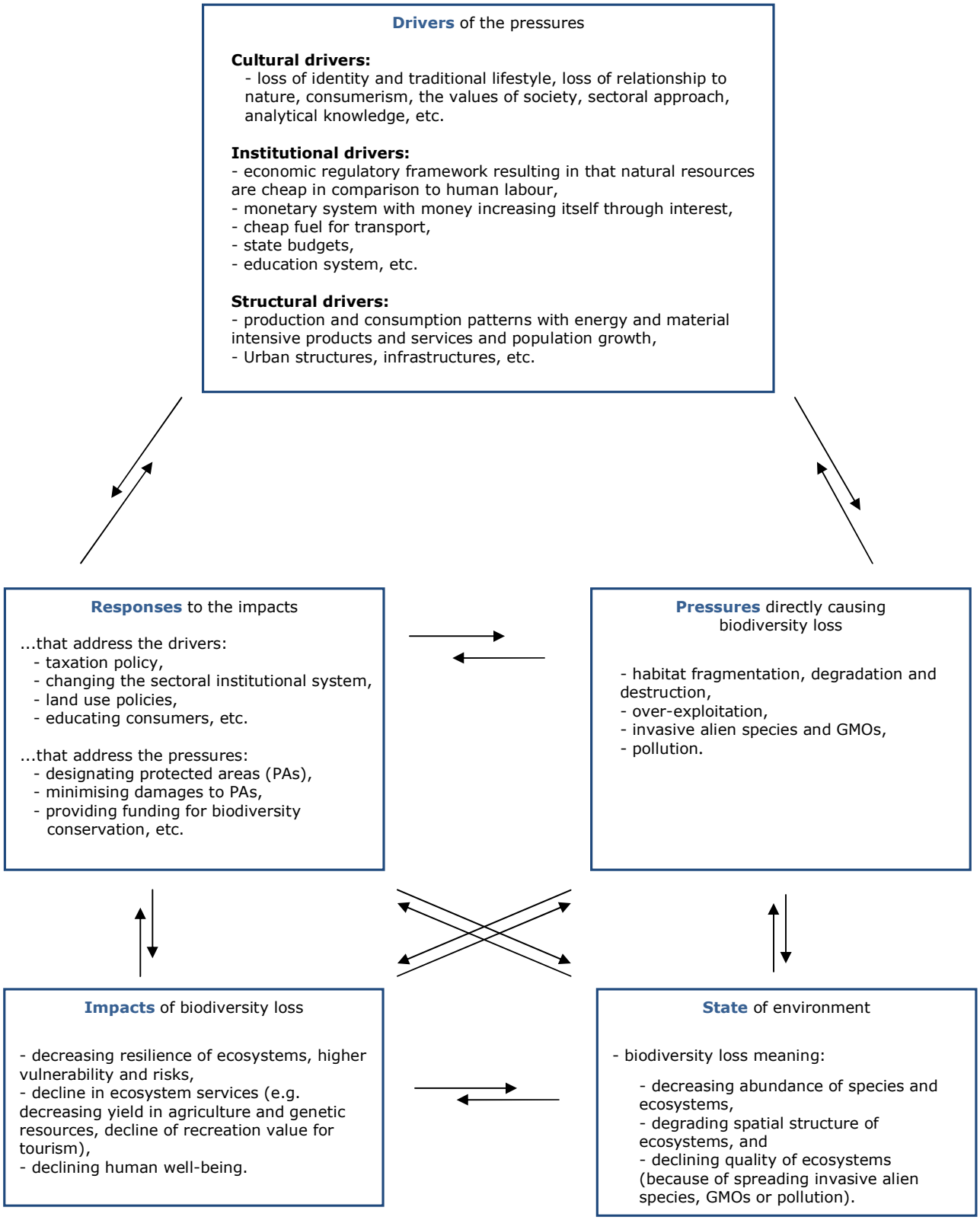

Figure 1. Biodiversity loss in the DPSIR (driver-pressure-state-impact-response) model

Lacking a holistic approach, the SP includes four goals and several objectives, which, however, cannot influence the drivers substantially. The complex nexus of cause-effect relationships which connect biodiversity changes and socio-economic trends is not sufficiently revealed and the underlying problems remain untouched by global and national efforts. The revised SP provides an important opportunity to fill this gap and make CBD implementation much more successful through supporting better understanding and initiating actions towards fundamental changes in the drivers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REVISED SP

Possible elements of a revised SP

The revised document, partly building on the current SP, shall include:

- A **positive vision**, which reflects both on the state of biodiversity and its positive contribution to human wellbeing.

- A **justification** of the urgency and importance of the whole issue for the whole society, There is good evidence available from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the GBOs and the ongoing TEEB study on biodiversity loss and its impact on human wellbeing, as well as the causes behind biodiversity loss. Special attention shall be devoted to the underlying socio-economic drivers, which clearly justifies the responsibility of the whole society and the different sectors. A more elaborated analysis shall be attached in the Annex in order to provide clear understanding while keeping the SP streamlined and concise. Ecosystem tipping points and their possible consequences could be considered and provide justification for ambitious targets and effective policy responses through applying the precautionary principle.

- **Targets related to biodiversity** reflecting on all three attributes of environment in order to prevent shifting of environmental pressure.

- **Fields of action, where sectoral subtargets need to be set** and implemented for reducing the overall environmental pressure. The sectoral subtargets shall be elaborated by the sectors themselves on regional level, and their implementation shall be followed up with the help of appropriate indicators and a review mechanism.

- Ways and means of **review and monitoring** including indicators. Indicators shall not only reflect on the state and pressures on biodiversity, but also on the underlying drivers. This is the only way to receive appropriate feedback on the drivers, which generate environmental pressures.

- **Annex on the socio-economic drivers** of biodiversity loss in order to provide a conceptual basis for holistic policy responses. It shall explore the complex relationships among drivers and pressures, and the trade-off relationships between the various measures targeting the different environmental pressures. This concise, but comprehensive analysis of the drivers will help the decision makers from all sectors to find the appropriate tools for achieving the targets and subtargets and thus avoid the mistakes of the current SP.

Holistic approach for designing the targets

Targets shall be set between 2020 and 2050 that are ambitious, meaningful, inspiring and equally reflect on all three attributes of the state of environment and thus avoid trade-offs among them. They shall relate to:

- The abundance of natural resources on genetic, species and ecosystem level,
- The spatial structure, reflecting on the coherence and connectivity among ecosystems,
- The quality of environment, determined by pollution, the spreading of IAS and GMOs.

Without taking this holistic approach to environment and the pressures on biodiversity, actions might lead to the shifting of environmental pressure in space or time (as it has been also proved in the case of biofuel production).

In order to address the different environmental pressures in a holistic way, the socio-economic drivers need to be tackled themselves. A most effective way, which can horizontally limit the environmental pressures is changing the boundary conditions of the economy through limiting the total input into it. This shall include a global and absolute limitation of the use of natural resources, including species and ecosystems, as well as the use of space by humans. For achieving this economic measures shall be applied for natural resources use, while effective spatial planning policies shall be applied for limiting the use of space and ensuring coherence and connectivity. It must be clear from the revised SP that without an absolute limitation of environmental pressures halting the loss of biodiversity is not possible.

Limiting natural resource use would mean making them more scarce globally. A horizontal and fundamental change like this would have, however, positive social consequences and contribute to poverty alleviation in various ways:

- Limiting resource use also means limiting the use of energy. This inevitably results in the “glocalisation” of the economy, where production and consumption is based much more on local resources. This benefits local economies and poor, marginalised areas, which are now under great pressure within the globalised economy for their natural resources.
- Limiting natural resources also increases the competitiveness of human labour, as labour intensive, but material and energy poor products and services become relatively cheaper on the market. This has a positive impact on employment, while also spur innovation for higher resource efficiency and recycling.
- Limiting the total environmental pressure and by that stopping further environmental degradation ensures the maintenance of ecosystem services, which is the basis of local livelihood.

Mobilizing other sectors for the SP implementation

Both the responsibility of the various sectors and the consequences of biodiversity loss for their operation have become more and more well known. Clearly there is a need for making the business case for the sectors even more convincing based on the TEEB study and other evidence. However, there are some fundamental conflicts that need to be tackled as well, because awareness raising, voluntary commitments and even the possible development of schemes for the payment for ecosystem services cannot ensure genuine involvement of the sectors alone.

Currently there is an inherent conflict between biodiversity conservation and the other sectors, which cannot be resolved through sectoral integration efforts alone. In the current socio-economic framework there is an ever increasing demand and use of land and natural resources

(i.e. for the input into the economy), which results in an ever increasing environmental pressure. Without changing these boundary conditions of the economy (e.g. by absolutely limiting the energy use of the society), the success of any awareness raising and sectoral integration efforts will be extremely limited, as it is also shown by the recent experience. This fundamental driver behind biodiversity loss needs to be changed through economic measures, if biodiversity loss is to be halted. This problem needs to be clearly explored in the revised SP and there needs to be a strategic approach how these boundary conditions of the economy can be changed for the aim of limiting total environmental pressure. In an economy, where there is no inherent conflict between conservation and other sectors related to the use of resources and land, additional measures aimed at awareness raising and sectoral integration could have significantly higher effectiveness and open up the possibility for ownership by the other sectors for biodiversity targets and measures.

If these boundary conditions are changed for the benefit of biodiversity (and environment in general), that would also reduce the resource demand for CBD implementation. At the same time the increased competitiveness of human labour to the use of natural resources would also help increasing the human capacities in understaffed fields of conservation activities.

Process for developing sectoral subtargets and stimulating regional and national action

The revised SP shall determine biodiversity targets and subtargets reflecting on the state of biodiversity at global level. However, in order to achieve them, there need to be commitments made from the various sectors. These commitments can be best facilitated through changing the boundary conditions of the economy, which resolves their fundamental conflict with biodiversity conservation.

The sectoral subtargets shall be developed on regional level, which can reflect on the different environmental, economic and social conditions. While biodiversity and other environmental experts can provide important input into the process through providing biodiversity expertise and making the links to the global biodiversity targets, the ownership of the sectors can be best generated if the sectoral subtargets are truly developed by the sectoral representatives. A regular review mechanism shall provide feedback on the contribution of the subtargets to the biodiversity targets as well as on their implementation.

The use of existing policy platforms shall be preferred in the regional processes, with the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) and the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) being such examples. The Regional Commissions of the UN Economic and Social Council could also play a role in this process.

The achievement of the biodiversity targets and the sectoral subtargets shall be integrated into national plans and programmes dealing with both horizontal policies (e.g. national sustainable development strategies) for changing the boundary conditions of the economy and sectoral issues (e.g. energy policies, forestry strategies, NBSAPs).

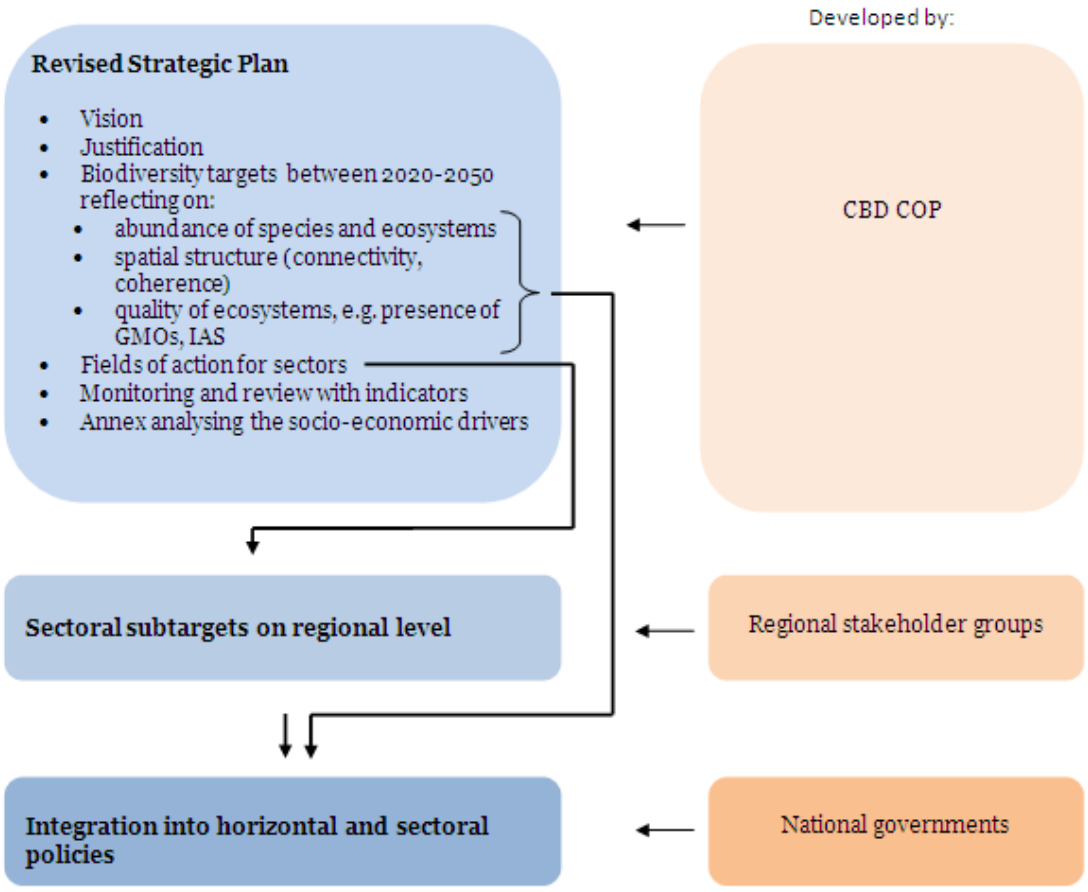

Figure 2. Global, regional and national actions related to the revision of the SP

Review and monitoring

The implementation of the SP shall be monitored and reviewed regularly, where regular feedbacks (e.g. in every four or five years) are provided at global regional and national levels to the whole society and the various sectors on their performance.

The regular review shall be based on appropriate indicators using both the currently available CBD indicators, but also complemented with additional ones reflecting on the socio-economic drivers. The success of the SP implementation can be measured how much global, regional and national efforts can change the course of drivers, which generate environmental pressures and lead to biodiversity loss.

If progress is insufficient in changing the drivers, then necessary horizontal measures need to be revised with a view to improve their effectiveness.