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Dear Ahmed,

I am pleased to send you, on behalf of IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, our inputs to the updating and revision of the Strategic Plan of the Convention. We have tried to be as comprehensive and clear as possible in following the guidance provided by the questions presented in the e-forum and hope our contribution to this process will be useful for the Secretariat when preparing the first draft of the revised Strategic Plan.

Let me also emphasize IUCN's interest in the development of a strong, realistic and scientifically based updated Strategic Plan. We will make every effort to contribute to this endeavor from now until the tenth Conference of the Parties in Nagoya, Japan, next year.

Last but not least, let me wish you and the Secretariat a very productive 2009.

Best wishes,

William J. Jackson
Deputy Director General

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IUCN's contribution to the updating and revision of the Strategic Plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Introduction

With the adoption of the Strategic Plan in 2002 through Decision VI/26, the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity agreed to "commit themselves to a more effective and coherent implementation of the three objectives of the Convention, to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth". The adoption of the 2010 target triggered action at all levels that has contributed to several achievements that the international community can be proud of including:

- a larger and widespread body of knowledge and information about biodiversity and its status;
- increased awareness of the meaning of biodiversity and its role in underpinning ecosystem services; and
- adoption of national and international policy frameworks and laws for biodiversity conservation.

Nevertheless, biodiversity continues to be lost at an alarming pace indicating that there is still a long way to go before we achieve the ambitious target we have set for ourselves. A revised framework is needed to build upon the successes achieved and the lessons learnt so far.

The update and revision of the Strategic Plan (SP) will influence the context for the planning and development of a longer-term post-2010 framework, which is why these two planning processes have to be developed hand in hand. IUCN suggests considering the post-2010 framework first.

A post 2010 target framework

A target-based approach for the 2010 biodiversity target has proven beneficial to promote biodiversity conservation, even if the target itself may not be achieved. IUCN feels strongly that the revised Strategic Plan should include a post 2010 framework that integrates the successes and lessons from the last decade. There could be even more benefits from "localizing" the development and consequent adoption of (a) target(s). In other words, adopting (a) target(s) that is/are linked to national realities as opposed to the adoption of a broad and all-encompassing global (set of) target(s). Allowing some degree of flexibility for different countries to adapt the Strategic Plan goals according to their national contexts could greatly facilitate achievement and successful implementation.

Because measurable changes in biodiversity status do not always happen over short periods of time, realistic timeframes are needed to understand the impact of conservation actions. Therefore, the goals and targets in a post-2010 framework should not be so long-termed as to mask shorter term impacts of action nor should they be so short-termed that they do not identify progress in action.

With that in mind, we suggest that a post 2010 target framework should include the following elements:

- A chronological hierarchy of goals, including:
 - A long term vision/goal (longer than the timeframe set within the framework, e.g. a 50-year goal)
 - A short term global goal that is simple, measurable, and adaptable (similar to the Mission statement in the SP)
 - A discrete number of simple, measurable and short-term goals/targets, set within national contexts, which contribute to the global goal/target;

- A review of the scientific knowledge and information gathered from the "2010 target era" which assesses what worked and what did not;
- A communications strategy that highlights an overarching and simple message that can be used to promote public engagement in biodiversity conservation;
- A monitoring and evaluation mechanism that includes clear milestones; and
- A finance mechanism to support implementation.

Strengths and weaknesses of the existing Strategic Plan (Decision VI/26)

The Strategic Plan is short, concise and yet very broad and ambitious. The strategic goals and objectives are a mix of means and ends, some of which are too broad and mostly difficult to measure (1.3, 2.4, 3.4, 4.3) others too evident (1.1) and unclear (1.3, 2.5). Both goals and objectives would benefit from monitoring and evaluation. Discussions already undertaken, specifically under the Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention, along with adoption of Decisions IX/8 and IX/9, are a very good start of this process.

IUCN feels more attention in a revised Plan should be placed on the practical implementation of the Convention and how implementation will be effectively monitored. While recent decisions (see Decision XII/10) have tried to streamline CBD processes in order to ease the negotiation cycle – there is still a concern that too much time is spent negotiating and adopting more decisions without allowing enough space for Parties, especially Developing Country Parties, to implement those decisions. Implementation and relevant enabling mechanisms need to be the focus in any revision of the Strategic Plan.

One thing that we have learned over the years is that the biggest constraint for the CBD has been its failure to develop a strong financing mechanism that secures adequate and predictable sources for implementation of commitments made by Parties. The adoption of Decision IX/11 and its "*Strategy for resource mobilization in support of the achievement of the three objectives of the Convention*" is encouraging but not enough. A new plan must include endorsement of mechanisms for resourcing.

The contrast with the United Nations Framework Convention of Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) is instructive: over the 5 years from 2004-08, the CDM generated over US\$ 22 billion for investments in developing countries in a range of climate change mitigation activities, such as renewable energy supply, energy efficiency, fuel-switching, landfill gas capture, and controlled destruction of the most potent industrial greenhouse gases (based on figures from New Carbon Finance).

The Global Environment Facility (GEF), development aid finance and charitable contributions have proven insufficient. The CBD needs the equivalent of a "Green Development Mechanism" to mobilize financial resources, on an on-going basis, from countries that benefit from biodiversity conservation and channel these resources to countries and resource managers who conserve biodiversity and/or restore habitat. One novel aspect of the UNFCCC CDM is that it generates new and additional finance from the private sector and IUCN believes that the same is needed for biodiversity conservation.

A revised Strategic Plan

With respect to the details of a revised Strategic Plan, IUCN believes that several components should be included, namely:

- A small set of clear, time bound and measurable goals (a division between short-term and long-term ones could be envisaged) accompanied by a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan for the goals and objectives set forth. This set of goals and M&E plan would form integral part of the post-2010 framework that Parties will seek to adopt at COP10.

- **Tools and mechanisms to advance the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention.** While the Strategic Plan should continue to be the all encompassing framework of the Convention's goals and objectives, setting clear milestones and targets for implementation of its decisions through existing Programs of Work, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, and other plans and initiatives, a complementary document or section should focus on means for achievement. In particular, a revised Strategic Plan should be accompanied by a process to develop one or more new financing mechanism(s). Building on the experience of the CDM that was mentioned before, any such mechanisms should:
 - reward positive contributions to biodiversity conservation but also penalize biodiversity loss;
 - be self-financing (requiring little/no government funding or voluntary donations); and
 - help reduce the gap between rich and poor countries.

In addition, key issues that need to be addressed include acknowledgement and better understanding of the direct drivers of changes in biodiversity including, habitat change and degradation, natural resource use and over-exploitation, species introductions and removals (invasive species) and probably other external inputs such as pollution and genetic manipulation and engineering. Specifically, the Plan should recognize the links between climate change and biodiversity (not only as an obstacle to implementation but also as one opportunity to support implementation).

IUCN suggests that the current structure of the Strategic Plan (the issue, Mission, Strategic Goals and Objectives, and Review) remains valid but perhaps the review section could be replaced by a section on the monitoring and evaluation plan and a new section could be added that deals with the issue of finance. The information in the appendix does not seem to be articulated with the rest of the SP, and should be incorporated into the Strategic Plan directly.

The updated Strategic Plan could also be made more relevant to other constituencies if it would make explicit links between its goals and those of other international instruments and biodiversity-related conventions, capitalizing on synergies and possible joint work plans and initiatives. Better identifying the links between human well being and ecosystems well being is also needed in order to raise awareness in the development community about the value of biodiversity. Existing synergies work under the Biodiversity Liaison Group could support this process.

A nationally relevant revised Strategic Plan

As mentioned above, the updated Strategic Plan should include a monitoring and assessment plan that allows for a global and periodic assessment of progress in the implementation of its goals and objectives. Nevertheless, there should be some harmonization between what individual countries submit in their national reports and the global and periodic assessment of the SP. National sub-targets could be developed and measured against global goals and targets, linking their achievement to the achievement of the overarching Plan. Nevertheless, Parties should not be tasked with additional reporting processes but existing requirements should be adapted to contribute to assessing progress made in terms of the global goals of the SP.

In sum

A revised Strategic Plan that provides a new overarching framework of action through a discrete number of simple and measurable goals, that sets a clear timeline with specific milestones, that presents a clear monitoring and evaluation plan and that is flexible enough to allow for Parties to adapt their national goals, programmes and plans to the Strategic Plan's, provides an effective framework for national action. This exercise of revision and updating of the Strategic Plan should in as much as possible take into consideration national views and realities in the preparation of the draft Strategic Plan for discussion and further adoption at the tenth Conference of the Parties in Nagoya.

The road from now until COP10 and discussion of a post-2010 framework and updated Strategic Plan is full of opportunities that support biodiversity conservation. These need to be capitalized by emphasizing biodiversity's links with today's global issues:

- Enhancing the message and communication about biodiversity's value and contribution to global concerns especially climate change adaptation and mitigation;
- Better integrating (and embedding) biodiversity into development targets under the Millennium Development Goals framework and other development targets;
- Taking stock of the emergence of innovative financing mechanisms for biodiversity as we improve our understanding of the value of biodiversity;
- Strengthening the science-policy links through processes such as the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and studies such as The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB).