

**REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA ON THE  
UPDATING AND REVISION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE CONVENTION  
FOR THE POST-2010 PERIOD**

**Cairo, 10-11 January 2010**

**ADVANCE UNEDITED NOTE**

The workshop was held at the headquarters of the League of Arab States in Cairo, Egypt, from 10 to 11 January 2010. The workshop was organized with the support of the Regional Office for West Asia of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) of the League of Arab States. Financial support for the workshop was generously provided by UNEP.

The following countries sent government officials or experts to the workshop: Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. The League of Arab States, UNEP, the Arab Centre for Agricultural Research (ACSAD), the Arab Organization of Agricultural Development (AOAD) and IUCN also sent representatives to this workshop. Participants from the media participated in some sessions.

The report of the workshop is in preparation. This advance note has been prepared to provide inputs to the process of revising and updating the Strategic Plan of the Convention for the post-2010 period.

General points

Participants in the Regional Workshop for the Middle East and North Africa on the updating and revision of the Strategic Plan of the Convention for the post-2010 period:

Acknowledged the opportunities for promoting the objectives of the Convention in the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity.

Welcomed the opportunity to discuss the new Strategic Plan among Arab countries as well as the opportunity to develop a unified Arab position.

Requested the Technical Team of the Committee of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment of the League of Arab States to bring these conclusions to the attention of the Ministers of the Environment, Education and Media and to call upon them to contribute proactively to the International Year of Biodiversity

Expressed a desire to develop a regional strategy for the Arab region in line with the new global strategy once adopted.

Highlighted the need for particular attention to be given to the distinctive qualities and needs of the arid, semi-arid and marine ecosystems of the Arab region, noting the vulnerability of these ecosystems and importance in terms of genetic resources.

Stressed that it is important to understand the reasons why we failed to reach the 2010 target despite the many efforts made. (These reasons include: lack of sufficient scale of activities to address biodiversity loss; lack of efforts to address the underlying drivers of biodiversity loss;

insufficient capacity and funds; lack of awareness at all levels; and inadequate enforcement of existing policies.)

Highlighted the importance of biodiversity for human well-being.

Stressed the importance of concluding negotiations on an international regime on access and benefit sharing, for adoption at COP-10, and for strengthening the integration of access and benefit sharing in the new strategic plan.

Noted the importance of ecosystem restoration. While noting the seriousness of the actual and projected impacts of climate change on biodiversity and ecosystems, highlighted the ability of resilient ecosystems to adapt and stressed the need for proactive biodiversity-based solutions to strengthen adaptation and contribute to mitigation.

Highlighted the importance of incorporating biodiversity in new policies and investments using: “Green Growth” (switching to a greener economy); biodiversity valuation (strong need to change the behaviour of the individual and adopt a positive attitude towards the environment); new biodiversity-based markets. These issues are in their infancy in the Arab region and need to be reflected in the new plan.

Highlighted the importance of mainstreaming biodiversity in other sectors of development.

Stressed the need to assist countries under occupation and least developed countries with implementation of the Convention, and provide sufficient funds to enable their participation in international conferences related to biodiversity and ABS.

#### Comments on existing document

Participants noted that the Arabic translation needs to be improved in numerous places. They made the following comments/suggestions on the text provided in document UNEP/CBD/SP/PREP/2 (more detailed and individual comments/suggestions will be annexed to the full report).

*Vision* (English version)

***“Co-exist with nature -- Biodiversity is conserved, restored and sustainably used, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering equitable benefits essential for all people.”***

*Mission* (English version)

***“To have taken by 2020 the necessary urgent and concerted measures to reduce biodiversity loss and to restore it to an ecologically sustainable level, ensuring the continued provision of ecosystem services, while equitably sharing the benefits of genetic resources. To ensure that all countries have the means to achieve this.”***

## *Targets*

Generally, the goals and targets are considered to provide a good framework although there are numerous suggestions for improvements.

It was noted that the plan and the individual targets represent global aspirations and also act as a framework for national targets but do not prescribe binding national targets.

Some general comments in relation to specific goals and targets:

- Goal A - Target 3: Need to ensure that the target does not restrict subsidies that are necessary for poverty reduction and sustainable development.
- Goal B - Target 10: Add reference to desertification, note the need to address major causes of marine biodiversity loss in the Arab region, need to assess risks of GMOs.
- Goal C, Target 15: Highlight the importance of expanding marine protected areas.
- Goal D, Target 17: Need to highlight technology transfer and the need to develop national capacity.

The need for monitoring and evaluation of implementation and for the preparation of indicators was noted.

## Implementation

Participants expressed a clear desire for the Arab region to contribute, not only to the development of the new strategy, but also to its implementation on the ground, while highlighting the need:

- To explore mechanisms to ensure implementation;
- To update and revise NBSAPs in line with the new plan (inter alia to incorporate new national targets in line with the new global strategy);
- For capacity building to assist countries in these tasks, including regional capacity development workshops, strengthening of the CHM to ensure information-sharing and technology transfer, strengthening of in-country capacity;
- For periodic evaluation of progress during the implementation of the strategy;
- To promote the role of regional organizations and enhance cooperation with SCBD;
- For enhanced cooperation and synergy in activities related to the implementation of the MEAs.