



Convention on
Biological Diversity



**Guide to the Global Biodiversity Outlook (third edition)
for Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**

**On the Occasion of SIDS Day, 10 May 2010, During the 18th Session of the
Commission on Sustainable Development**

1. What is the GBO-3 and why is it relevant to SIDS?

Today, May 10th, in addition to being SIDS Day, coincides with the release, in Nairobi, Kenya, of the third edition of *Global Biodiversity Outlook* (GBO-3). This major new assessment of the current state of biodiversity and the implications of its continued loss for human well-being was produced by the *Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD), the broadest international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits from the utilization of genetic resources. The Convention has been ratified by 193 Parties, including all SIDS. The report concludes that the world has failed to meet its target to achieve a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010 and that natural systems that support economies, lives, livelihoods and poverty eradication across the planet are at risk of rapid degradation and collapse, unless there is swift, radical and creative action to conserve and sustainably use the variety of life on Earth.

This message will likely come as no surprise to small island developing States (SIDS), whose populations are increasingly aware of the role of biodiversity in their economies. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 40% of the world's economy is based on biodiversity. This figure is arguably much higher in SIDS, where livelihoods are particularly dependant on the goods and services provided by biodiversity.

Biodiversity is a crucial component of food security and income in SIDS. Small islands comprise a high proportion of marine and coastal areas, which are of major economic significance for fisheries and tourism, two major economic activities on SIDS. Marine fisheries, which provide the principal protein source for many island populations, especially amongst SIDS, are largely dependent on the biodiversity of coral reefs. Tourism, which accounts for more than 50% of the economy of many SIDS, similarly depends to a large degree on island biodiversity.

2. Information of relevance to SIDS

The current status and trends of biodiversity described in GBO-3 provide an indication of progress made in addressing the CBD programme of work on island biodiversity (<http://www.cbd.int/island/pow.shtml>). Adopted in 2006, the island biodiversity programme of work is one of the tools developed by the CBD to reduce significantly the rate of island biodiversity loss by 2010 and beyond and was strongly advocated by



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SIDS. Following are some examples of the focal areas of the programme of work, accompanied by a selection of the relevant findings of GBO-3 for SIDS:

Protect the components of biodiversity

- Coastal habitats, such as mangroves, seagrass beds, salt marshes and shellfish reefs, continue to decline in extent, threatening highly valuable ecosystem services, including the removal of significant quantities of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere; About 80 percent of the world's marine fish stocks for which assessment information is available are fully exploited or overexploited.
- In various coastal and island regions, the use of community-based protected areas, in which local and indigenous peoples play a lead role in managing and conserving marine resources, are becoming increasingly widespread, and have shown promising results. Genetic diversity is being lost in natural ecosystems and in systems of crop and livestock production. Important progress is being made to conserve plant genetic diversity, especially using ex situ seedbanks.

Promote sustainable use

- Overexploitation is the major pressure being exerted on marine ecosystems, with marine capture fisheries having quadrupled in size from the early 1950s to the mid 1990s. Total catches have fallen since then despite increased fishing effort, an indication that many stocks have been pushed beyond their capacity to replenish. The FAO estimates that more than a quarter of marine fish stocks are overexploited (19%), depleted (8%) or recovering from depletion (1%) while more than half are fully exploited. Although there have been some recent signs that fishing authorities are imposing more realistic expectations on the size of catches that can safely be taken out of the oceans, some 63% of assessed fish stocks worldwide require rebuilding. Innovative approaches to the management of fisheries, such as those that give fishers a stake in maintaining healthy stocks, are proving to be effective where they are applied.

Address threats to biodiversity

- Invasive alien species continue to be a major threat to all types of ecosystems and species, with devastating effects on communities and livelihoods. There are no signs of a significant reduction of this pressure on biodiversity, and some indications that it is increasing. Intervention to control alien invasive species has been successful in particular cases, but it is outweighed by the threat to biodiversity from new invasions.
- In coastal ecosystems, habitat loss is driven by a range of factors including some forms of mariculture, especially shrimp farms in the tropics where they have often replaced mangroves.

3. Opportunities for involvement and action

There are ample resources to support action and implementation of the island biodiversity programme of work, including tools and guidelines, websites, reviews, and partnerships that enable collaboration and sharing of experience. Following are some examples.

Mauritius Strategy Review: The review ongoing through 2010 offers the opportunity for SIDS to express their priority needs and issues related to increasing implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. It links to other initiatives, such as the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) and the upcoming in-depth

review of the island biodiversity programme of work, outlined below. More information is available at: http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd_aofw_sids/sids_milemajomeetmsi5.shtml

Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD): Partnerships are an important aspect of implementation as they offer opportunities for collaboration and coordination and add value to country and organization activities. Within the CSD process there is a range of registered CSD partnerships around SIDS issues that relate to GBO-3, with the full range of these found on the CSD Partnerships Database: http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd_aofw_par/par_index.shtml.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): The UNFCCC Secretariat has published a series of guidelines and fact sheets, including examples of national and local actions related to climate change adaptation and mitigation: http://unfccc.int/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/items/2625.php.

Global Island Database (GID): Developed by UNEP-WCMC, the GID seeks to improve the participation and role of islands in international decision-making through identifying and bringing together existing sources of data and information relevant to island systems, and presenting new analyses to aid resource managers and decision-making at the island, national, regional, and global level. Link to beta phase of the database: <http://gid.unep-wcmc.org/>

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA): The formulation and adoption of the CBD island biodiversity programme of work (which is included in the Mauritius Strategy) has led to greater global attention and focus on island issues and the dependence on biodiversity for island sustainable development and island livelihoods. GLISPA, a mechanism to implement the programme of work on island biodiversity, arose out of this process and has as its mission to promote action for island conservation and sustainable livelihoods by inspiring leadership, catalyzing commitments and facilitating collaboration among all islands. The partnership has supported countries and organizations to demonstrate island leadership through making commitments to action, such as the Micronesia Challenge and the Caribbean Challenge. GLISPA arose out of the Mauritius International Meeting in 2005, as it was requested by the Presidents of the Seychelles and of Palau when they called for greater collaboration through an international partnership for island conservation and sustainable livelihoods. They are now the co-chairs of GLISPA. More information on GLISPA as well as island-specific case studies and tools are available from www.cbd.int/island/. Importantly another opportunity exists to refocus attention on island issues and strengthen implementation through the upcoming in-depth review of the island biodiversity programme of work, which will take place between 2010 and 2012.

Other tools, programmes and initiatives developed by the CBD include:

Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines on the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity: (<http://www.cbd.int/sustainable/addis.shtml>).

Biological Diversity and Tourism: Information on the CBD's activities on biodiversity and tourism can be found at: <http://www.cbd.int/tourism/>, including *CBD Guidelines on Tourism Development in Sensitive Ecosystems*, <http://www.cbd.int/tourism/guidelines.shtml>, an issue of importance to SIDS, and *User's Manual on the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development*, <http://tourism.cbd.int/manual.shtml>

South-South Cooperation: The Multi-Year Plan of Action for South-South Cooperation on Biodiversity for Development is available at <http://www.cbd.int/cooperation/SouthSouthcooperation.shtml> and

specifically the draft plan as part of the Report of the Steering Committee, at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/ssc/ssc-sc-01/official/ssc-sc-01-03-en.pdf>

LifeWeb Initiative: Strengthens financing for protected areas to conserve biodiversity, secure livelihoods and address climate change, through implementation of the CBD programme of work on protected areas – this is a unique donor/recipient matchmaking mechanism. Information on submitting expressions of interest: <http://www.cbd.int/lifeweb/>

Invasive Alien Species: A recent global workshop in New Zealand involved SIDS regions and focussed on how to improve regional coordination, cooperation and sharing experiences between regions on the management of invasive species. More information on this workshop is available at <http://www.cbd.int/invasive/>

Climate Change and Biodiversity: Case studies related to biodiversity and climate change—specifically adaptation and mitigation activities and an adaptation database—are available at: <http://www.cbd.int/climate/> (also programme of work)

Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Programme of Work: Tools, guidelines and case studies are available at: <http://www.cbd.int/marine/>

The Biodiversity for Development Initiative: Information materials: <http://www.cbd.int/development/implementation/tools.shtml> training tools (<http://www.cbd.int/development/implementation/training.shtml> and guides <http://www.cbd.int/development/training/guides/>)

Communication, education and public awareness and the International Year of Biodiversity: A toolkit offers fact sheets, checklists and practical examples from all over the world: <http://www.cbd.int/cepa/>. The United Nations has declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity; to help parties to celebrate, the CBD Secretariat has developed a set of resources, including posters, logos and materials, which can be accessed at: <http://www.cbd.int/2010/resources/>
