



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente

Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде

برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

联合国环境规划署



Our Ref: DRC/ROA/MG/dm

22 March 2010

Dear Mr. Djoghlaif,

We acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 19 February 2010 of which you inform us of the launch of the third Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-3). We are pleased to receive continuous information streaming in from the Secretariat.

As requested, we are delighted to share with you our planned activities in recognition of the International year of Biodiversity (IYB).

Please find enclosed a detailed IYB action plan.

Yours Sincerely,

Mounkaila Goumandakoye
Director and Regional Representative
Regional Office for Africa

Ahmed Djoghlaif
Executive Secretary
Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
United Nations Environment Programme
413 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 800, Montreal, QC, H2Y 1N9, Canada

Email: secretariat@cbd.int.

THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY (2010) IN AFRICA

Draft Concept

1. Background

The Year 2010 was designated by the United Nations General Assembly as the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) in order to increase awareness of the importance of biodiversity for sustainable development, and to bring global attention to the causes and consequences of biodiversity loss. The theme of the Year is "Biodiversity is Life, Biodiversity is our life".

The IYB provides a great occasion to move the biodiversity agenda further and stronger in Africa. It is important to give biodiversity the highest political leadership and strategic focus by including it into the policy debates and decision making processes in Africa.

It is critical to highlight that Africa still possesses a significant amount of biodiversity, despite considerable environmental changes.

The UNEP Regional Office for Africa will undertake activities to enhance public awareness on the importance of conserving the diversity of animals, plants, ecosystems and genes to livelihood. These activities will also raise the political profile of biodiversity by emphasizing its contribution to human well-being. Activities will be organized in selected locations in Africa involving policy-makers, major groups of the civil society including academia, journalists, NGOs, youth and private sector in policy and technical dialogue, public information, advocacy and outreach campaigns on IYB.

2. Africa's Biodiversity

Biodiversity offers multiple opportunities for development and improving human well-being. It has significant value for the different services that it provides such as food, medicine, building and craft materials spiritual, cultural, and etc. The imperative to improve human well being places multiple and often competing demands on ecosystems. Thus, its conservation and sustainable use are of critical importance as it has been recognized that the link between the conservation of natural resources and economic development in Africa is particularly close.

Biodiversity is in need of sustainable management, not simply to satisfy international pressures and obligations, but because it is the basis of most rural livelihoods in Africa and is the foundation of major new economic sectors that offer the prospect of better, more sustainable lives. As the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) has recognized, development cannot be achieved through dependence on outside resources, but must rely on the best use of local resources. Biodiversity is one of these, and represents a formidable natural asset. For example, the international trade in flowers bred from a large number of plant species originating in Africa is worth billions of dollars annually, almost all of which accrues outside Africa. For the opportunities offered by biodiversity to be realized, new strategies, which go beyond a focus on a few species and parks, will need to be adopted. New links need to be made between protecting biodiversity and human needs. There is a need for more function-oriented conservation of ecosystem services essential for human livelihood and a need for increased awareness among major stakeholders on the challenges and opportunities from biodiversity.

3. Sub-Themes for the IYB

In line with the theme for IYB, the following sub-themes will guide the activities to be held in Africa:

- a) Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) of biological/genetic resources

- b) Biodiversity and poverty
- c) Nexus between Biodiversity and Climate change
- d) Biodiversity and entrepreneurial development
- e) Biodiversity and Gender
- f) Biodiversity and Cultural diversity
- g) Biodiversity and Health

4. Highlights of Core Activities

The three categories of the proposed activities for IYB are:

a) Political/Policy Level

The 13th regular session of AMCEN- May/June 2010 in Mali will provide excellent opportunity and platform to raise the issue of Biodiversity high at the political agenda in Africa through ministerial policy dialogue. It is expected that a specific decision will be made by the African ministers and would feed into the AU process as a contribution to the meeting of the Heads of State on 20 September 2010 at the UN General Assembly session on biodiversity in preparation for the tenth Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Nagoya, Japan in October 2010.

b) Technical Level

Activities include the following:

- Biodiversity-related demonstration projects at the grassroots level in selected African Countries to be implemented in collaboration with regional Centers of Excellence. These projects will motivate inspiring and success stories that will feature in a database to show case activities/projects that contributed to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

Side Events during major conferences

- Organize Conferences or symposiums capturing some of the different sub-themes mentioned above at the margins or as side events of important meetings in the region throughout the year. This would provide opportunities to showcase a number of achievements including biodiversity-related technologies related that have changed the lives of people in other continents or even in Africa (South-South Cooperation). These side events will be opened to a broad range of stakeholders including policy makers, environmentalists, youth organizations, women groups, and media etc. who will act as multipliers of the information on biodiversity.

c) Communication, Education and Public Awareness Level

Media

De-mystify the concept of "biodiversity" and demonstrate its benefits it to local communities and the public at large in a non-abstract language by highlighting the economic importance of biodiversity, as well as the threat of large scale biodiversity loss; and Communicate why biodiversity loss matters for people is essential for reversing the loss will be the objectives of a multimedia approach involving TV, radio, Internet and print media.

- **Multi-media campaign** (including in local languages where possible) on the issue of access and benefit-sharing of biological/genetic resources, as well as traditional knowledge associated with these resources. It will involve major environmental personalities to talk about biodiversity.

Examples could be Prof Wangari Maathai to give such messages in Kikuyu, Swahili and English, Prof Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Desmond Tutu, and etc. as well and other reknown African personalities. TV programmes will also involve children in kids shows to talk about biodiversity and learn more on it through these channels.

Training Workshop for Journalists

- Organize at least two training courses for journalist on issues related to biodiversity, such as ABS, Traditional knowledge, etc (in cooperation with the African Network of Environment Journalists, the African Editors Forum, and the Press Freedom Group that funds training programs in Universities.
- Organize a **Regional Media Competition** that will award the best stories and hold an exhibition of the best Biodiversity stories related to the IYB to wrap up the IYB in Africa

Youth

- Organize the Tunza African Youth Conference (AYEN) for 2010 in Rwanda as part of the broad range of activities to mark the celebration of World Environment Day. This year's conference is slated for June 2-4 under the theme "*African Youth Standing up for Biodiversity*" to concretely link IYB with the WED celebrations. The conference is organized with the view to build the capacity of the African youth in matters of environmental conservation focusing on issues related to threats to biodiversity (including climate change) and responses. This conference is entrenched in the overall IYB agenda of creating awareness for conservation action at regional level; regaining momentum on conservation action and ensuring that long term actions related to conservation are clearly articulated, financed and implemented with full participation of all major stakeholders.
- Children biodiversity spelling competition. The aim of this activity would be to ensure that children read widely on biodiversity issues especially the basic information on biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. This activity will not only be fun for the children, but educative and creative. This competition can be recorded and aired in several TV stations across Africa and even published in other local dailies. The winners would then be treated to a tour at a rich biodiversity location such as the Maasai Mara and given a Biodiversity King or Queen medal!
- Music festivals in schools in Kenya start in April. This will provide a good opportunity to for children to compose poems both in Swahili and English and dances rich in a biodiversity message such as "stop biodiversity loss", "our biodiversity our pride" "rich biodiversity, rich culture". Winners could be invited to perform at UNEP major meetings in Nairobi throughout the IYB. The themes can also be structured as to suit the different biodiversity need in other African Countries where similar activities could be carried out.

Universities

ROA, in collaboration with DEPI's Environmental Education and Training Unit and UNESCOO to organize the following educational activities targeting academia and university students:

- Public lectures in major Universities in Africa on biodiversity, focusing on conservation and sustainable use, as well as ABS.

Publication/Outreach materials

- The third edition of Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-3) will be launched on 10 May 2010 in Nairobi during the during the SBSTTA/WGRI meetings of CBD. Launch GBP-3 in at least one other country on 10 May 2010 and a wide distribution in Universities. Possibilities of unpackaging the

information to fit various audiences including the youth and community based actors will be explored.

Bio-Cultural events

- Organize a Biodiversity Concert targeting young adults in select countries (Kenya and Egypt are strong candidates) during school holidays. Invite famous national Artists to entertain and capture any sub-theme as much as possible.
- Engage Artists and creators from selected countries to display their creativity and support the IYB, as well as International Biodiversity Day.

Traditional Medicine Fairs

- Assist local communities to show case their traditional herbal medicine for variety of health problems. These Fairs would convey the message that biodiversity is linked to human health in a number of distinct ways. This will be done during the International Day of Biodiversity on 22 May 2010 in Kenya

Role of the Private Sector

- Involve the private sector, such as telecommunication companies, by making an arrangement with telephone service providers to give tips on/promote the IYB through their various products e.g. with balance notification messages, etc.

5. Proposed locations to implement the IYB activities

Due to resources constraint, UNEP can support the commemoration of the IYB in the following five select countries from the sub-regions:

- a) Egypt (Northern Africa)
- b) Mali (Western Africa)
- c) Tunisia (Northern Africa)
- d) Cameroon (Central Africa)
- e) Rwanda and Kenya (Eastern Africa)

The IYB in Africa will be supported by a full comprehensive communication involving the media, outreach and awareness activities/materials, the internet/website and online social networks.

Some of the internet activities will include links to UNEP divisions (i.e DCPI, DELC, etc) to feature some of Africa's richest biodiversity; Establishing a webpage with Africa's biodiversity gallery; Creating groups on Facebook and Twitter.