

## **MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY IN THE POST-2015 UN DEVELOPMENT AGENDA AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS PROCESSES**

*Briefing note by the Executive Secretary*

This document provides an introduction to the processes and activities being undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations towards developing (a) a post-2015 UN Development Agenda and (b) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and highlights efforts being undertaken by the Executive Secretary to encourage the integration of biodiversity considerations into these processes. The Bureau may wish to consider potential additional actions that could contribute further towards these efforts and that at the same time will contribute to the attainment of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the three objectives of the Convention.

### ***1. Mandate from the Conference of the Parties***

At its eleventh meeting, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) encouraged “Parties and all partners, institutions, organizations and processes concerned to consider the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in developing the post-2015 development agenda and in the process of establishing Sustainable Development Goals under the United Nations General Assembly” (Decision XI/22, paragraph 7).

The COP also requested the Executive Secretary to “collaborate, taking into account the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference, in the process of developing sustainable development goals, as appropriate, with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the secretariats of the two other Rio conventions and multilateral environmental agreements, and international organizations, and specialized agencies involved in poverty eradication, human health, food security and gender issues<sup>1</sup>, in the process of developing Sustainable Development Goals” (Decision XI/22, para.11c).

### ***2. Background***

*Post-2015 development agenda:* In adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the outcome of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in 2010, Member States reaffirmed their commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and requested the Secretary-General to make recommendations to advance the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 (General Assembly resolution 65/1). Initial recommendations in this regard were presented in the Report of the Secretary-General on accelerating progress towards the MDGs of August 2011, with special reference to the need for an open and inclusive process of consultations on the agenda. With this in mind, the Secretary-General established the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, launched in January 2012, to coordinate system-wide preparations for the agenda, in consultation with all stakeholders (see below).

*Sustainable Development Goals:* In the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, Rio+20), Member States resolved “to establish an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process on sustainable development goals that is open to all stakeholders, with a view to developing global sustainable development goals to be agreed by the General Assembly” (paragraph 248, “The future we want”). Member States further resolved that for

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<sup>1</sup> Such as the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

this purpose “an open working group shall be constituted no later than at the opening of the sixty seventh session of the Assembly and shall comprise 30 representatives, nominated by Member States from the five United Nations regional groups”. They further resolved that “the process needs to be coordinated and coherent with the processes to consider the post-2015 development agenda” (paragraph 249).

## **Responsibilities**

The delivery of a new framework for post-2015, including SDGs, is the prerogative of the Member States, building on agreed norms and principles, while the UN System’s responsibility will be to support Member States in accomplishing this task with evidence-based analysis and field experience. Authoritative information on the processes is provided on the website of the United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform maintained by the Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) (<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/>).

## **3. Description of the ongoing processes and initiatives**

### **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Process**

#### ***(i) Intergovernmental Process***

**Open Working Group (OWG) on SDGs:** At Rio+20, Member States agreed to establish a 30-member intergovernmental Open Working Group (OWG) on SDGs tasked to present a report containing a proposal for SDGs to the 68<sup>th</sup> session of the UNGA, that will commence in September 2013, for consideration and appropriate action<sup>2</sup>. The OWG was formed in January 2013 by the 67<sup>th</sup> UNGA<sup>3</sup>. The Rio+20 Outcome Document tasked the SG to provide the initial input to the OWG in consultation with national Governments. The first session of the OWG took place 14-15 March, the second, 17-19 April and the third will take place 22-24 May of 2013.

#### ***(ii) Secretariat Support***

Technical support (analytical input, background material and expert panelists) to the OWG is provided by an inter-agency Technical Support Team (TST), consisting of 40 UN entities and functioning under the aegis of the UN System Task Team (UNTT)<sup>4</sup> on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, co-chaired by UNDESA and UNDP.

**The UN System Task Team (UNTT):** UNTT was established by the UN Secretary-General to support system-wide preparations for the post 2015 UN development agenda, in consultation with all stakeholders. It brings together over 60 UN entities, including CBD and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The UNTT supports the multi-stakeholder consultations being led by Member States on the post-2015 development agenda, through the provision of expertise, analytical inputs, and outreach.<sup>5</sup> UNTT submitted a report ‘Realizing the Future We Want for All’ to the Secretary-General in June 2012. The terms of reference of the Task Team include: assessing ongoing efforts within the UN system; consulting external stakeholders, such as civil society, academia and the private sector; and defining a system-wide vision and road map on the post-2015 UN development agenda.

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<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 248 of the outcome document from the United Nations Sustainability Conference (Rio+20) “The Future We Want”

<sup>3</sup> See decision 67/555 (A/67/L.48/rev.1): [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/L.48/Rev.1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/L.48/Rev.1&Lang=E)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/unttaskteam\\_undf/](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/unttaskteam_undf/)

<sup>5</sup> Work to develop the post-2015 development agenda is ongoing in several processes and activities within the UN system Task Team (UNTT, 2013)<sup>5</sup>. In addition to providing support to the OWG in the preparation of a report on SDGs to be submitted to the 68<sup>th</sup> GA, UNTT, also provides analytical inputs and recommendations that will be used to shape the Post - 2015 UN Development Agenda, including those regarding monitoring and accountability, reconfiguration of the global partnership for development in the Post-2015 period. This will be used also as inputs to the annual SG reports on the progress of MDGs as well as the vision for the post-2015, as mandated by the 2010 MDG Summit.

## **Post-2015 UN Development Agenda Process**

With the current timeline of the MDGs due to expire in 2015, the UN is also gearing up to prepare a post-2015 development agenda.

### ***(i) Intergovernmental Process***

No intergovernmental process has yet been mandated to consider the post-2015 development agenda.

### ***(ii) Secretariat Support***

***High-level Panel of Eminent Person on the Post-2015 Development Agenda:*** To initiate secretariat preparations, the Secretary-General, in July 2012, appointed a high level panel of eminent persons to reflect on the new development challenges, while drawing on the experience gained in implementing the MDGs both in terms of results achieved and areas for improvement and submit recommendations for his consideration. The panel comprises 27 eminent persons drawn from all sectors and is Co-Chaired by the Presidents of Liberia and Indonesia and the Prime Minister of the UK. The Secretary General's special adviser on Post-2015 Development Planning represents him as an ex-officio member of Panel. The Panel is expected to submit a report to the Secretary-General on 31 May 2013.

***UNTT:*** A second component in the secretariat support is provided by the UN Task Team that has been constituted to assist both the SDG and post 2015 development agenda processes. To support the post 2015 development agenda process, the UNTT has constituted two working groups:

- a) Working Group on Monitoring and Indicators. Its mandate is to focus on lessons learnt from MDGs, options for designing targets and indicators, national data and statistical capabilities, cross cutting issues and prepare think pieces.
- b) Working Group on Global Partnerships. Its mandate is to further elaborate on the characteristics of the global partnership for development and broaden understanding of the means of implementation.

### ***(iii) Civil Society Consultations***

***National and Global Thematic Consultations, and Citizen's Outreach under the UN Development Group (UNDG):*** The UNDG is supporting the consultations on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda as part of its post-2015 project. There are three main components to the consultations: a) Facilitating of national dialogues and consultations on post-2015 in more than 55 countries<sup>6</sup>; b) Convening eleven multi-stakeholder thematic consultations<sup>7</sup>; c) Launching an outreach process to citizens and stakeholders in all countries, utilizing all available social media technologies. Regional consultations are also being conducted by Regional Economic Commissions to evaluate progress on MDGs, broaden consensus and formulate regional positions on the Post-2015 Development Agenda<sup>8</sup>

***The UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN):*** The SDSN<sup>9</sup> will prepare background papers for the High Level Panel (<http://unsdsn.org>) and the outcomes will

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/sitemap>

<sup>7</sup> [Conflict and Fragility](#), [Education](#), [Environmental Sustainability](#), [Governance](#), [Growth and employment](#), [Health](#), [Food Security and Nutrition](#), [Inequalities](#), [Population Dynamics](#), [Energy](#), and [Water](#);

<sup>8</sup> Regional post-2015 Consultation Organized for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Africa-Wide Consultation on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Review of Africa's Progress towards the MDGs.

<sup>9</sup> This is an independent global network of research centres, universities and technical institutions. The UN SDSN will mobilize scientific and technical expertise in support of sustainable-development problem solving (on the social, environmental and economic front) at local, national and global scales.

also inform the SG's report to the 2013 General Assembly. A number of civil society organizations are engaged in global coalitions such as the Independent Research Forum.

**Civil Society processes:** This is accomplished through different approaches: a) A process by which any one can submit a response to the "Framing Questions" of the HLP to the secretariat of the HLP is put in place<sup>10</sup>; b) The website <http://www.myworld2015.org/> has been launched<sup>11</sup>; c) Participating countries are also requested to submit a concept note on the post-2015 consultation(s) through an online platform by August 17<sup>th</sup> 2013: a) identifying stakeholders to be engaged, and b) describing technical challenges and specific support needed.

The outcomes of the consultations, SDSN, and from other processes not mentioned here are intended to be made available to the High-level Panel and to inform the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly in the fall of 2013.

#### **4. Importance and Relevance of Biodiversity to the Post-2015 Development and SDGs**

The 2010 Biodiversity Target was endorsed by 2002 Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development and incorporated into the framework of 2015 Targets for the Millennium Goals as "reduce biodiversity loss, achieving a significant reduction by 2010". Furthermore, in the MDG discussion, the biodiversity target has very often been understood by the development community and others as a proxy for environmental sustainability. It went largely unrecognized in the MDG process that biodiversity and the ecosystem goods and services it underpins are critical to each of the issues which the MDGs aim to address (UNDP, 2006; UNDG, 2010; UNTT, 2012; UNDG, 2013), including ending poverty, hunger and disease, and improving the health of children and mothers (CBD 2009).

It will be crucial to promote an understanding that maintaining biodiversity is not a *problem* to be solved but rather that it provides *opportunity* to help achieve broader social and economic goals. On the one hand, biodiversity and the ecosystem services that it underpins are essential for continued human development; and on the other hand, *sustainable* pathways for human development are needed to ensure that these life support renewable natural resources and ecosystem services continue to be maintained. Indeed, the role of biodiversity in development was recognized and its importance highlighted in the Rio+20 Outcome, "The future we want" (paragraphs 49, 61, 111, 197, 198, 237, etc.). Hence, the development of the SDGs should consider the relevance of biodiversity and ecosystem services for each single goal and target and ensure the inclusion of relevant elements since without the integration of biodiversity and ecosystem good and services, it would be impossible to achieve SDGs.

#### **5. Efforts by CBD Secretariat towards mainstreaming biodiversity**

Each of the processes and initiatives of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and SDGs provides opportunities for the CBD Secretariat to mainstream biodiversity and for the biodiversity community to actively engage in the discussions, in particular those at the national level.

In doing so, the Secretariat, Parties and partners, may emphasize the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets that provide an existing agreed intergovernmental framework relevant to the processes and their objectives.

##### **I. Staffing and structure**

###### **i. CBD Secretariat Division for Mainstreaming, Partnerships and Outreach**

In the context of action to strengthen the Secretariat's support towards implementation of the Convention, effective 1 April 2013 the Executive Secretary has established a new Division for Mainstreaming, Partnerships and Outreach. An important element of the Division's responsibility

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<sup>10</sup> ([secretariat@post2015hlp.org](mailto:secretariat@post2015hlp.org))

<sup>11</sup> MY World asks individuals which six of sixteen possible issues they think would make the most difference to their lives. Results from the website, mobile phone and offline surveys will be submitted to the Secretary General's High Level Panel on Post-2015

is to promote the inclusion of biodiversity in the sustainable development agenda and in mainstream sectoral policies and action.

ii. *CBD Secretariat Task Force on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda*

The Executive Secretary has established on 15 March 2013 a Secretariat Task Force to support efforts to mainstream biodiversity in the on-going processes and initiatives and implementation of the relevant decisions of COP-11.

iii. *CBD Secretariat Staffing*

Of particular significance within the Secretariat's efforts towards partnerships and towards supporting elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals, are its Liaison Officer at the UN Headquarters, New York (shared 50% with the UNCCD Secretariat) and its senior staff secondment from the Government of France addressing Biodiversity for Development and Poverty Alleviation. Accordingly, the Executive Secretary has emphasised the post-2015 development agenda and SDG within the current responsibilities of these positions and places high priority to maintaining each position.

## II. Activities

- i. *Information to Parties*: A notification has been sent to CBD National Focal Points in February 2013 to encourage their participation in the consultations of the post-2015 development agenda and SDGs processes. Further notifications will be issued as and when relevant.
- ii. *Web portal dedicated to the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Biodiversity* is being developed on the CBD website and will soon be launched. It is designed to serve as an easy and fast access to information to Parties and stakeholders, as well as the interested public.
- iii. *Informative materials* such as a newsletter prepared by the CBD Secretariat "Biodiversity for Sustainable Development", containing a collection of facts, among other, are strategically made available in New York permanent missions and through other means to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity<sup>12</sup>.
- iv. *Strategic Participation at Meetings*: the Executive Secretary participated at the High-level Forum in Netherlands in March 2013. A representative of the Executive Secretary participated at the UNDP-UNEP Leadership Meeting on Post-2015 Thematic Consultation on Environmental Sustainability in San Jose, Costa Rica, in March 2013. A representative of the Executive Secretary participated at the 18<sup>th</sup> Poverty Environment Partnership (PEP) meeting held in Berlin, Germany from 14-16 May 2013.
- v. *Support to UNTT activities*: The CBD Secretariat is participating actively in the activities of the UN Task Team by preparing inputs for Issues Briefs being prepared by UN entities for the themes that are and will be taken up by the OWG on SDGs, with a view to mainstreaming biodiversity, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Targets. The Secretariat has already provided numerous inputs<sup>13</sup>. These and other information on upcoming meeting, documents etc. are communicated to the CBD Secretariat and its sustainable development Task Force through the CBD Liaison Officer in New York to allow effective and timely participation;
- vi. *Contribution to the Sustainable Development Report*: following request by UNDESA, the Secretariat has sent input and designated a focal point.
- vii. *Contribution to UNEP White Paper: "Embedding the environment in sustainable development goals"*. This Paper is being prepared as a contribution of UNEP to the processes concerned with developing SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda.

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<sup>12</sup> Upcoming issues may include biodiversity for food and nutrition security, biodiversity for water, ecosystem services in cities and slums, gender and biodiversity, indigenous and local communities' knowledge for sustainable development and will be prepared with the collaboration of other relevant UN organizations and networks including, for example, FAO and UN-Water.

<sup>13</sup> The Secretariat has already contributed inputs for the Issues Briefs on the themes that were taken up in the second session of the OWG, i.e. a) Conceptual issues, MDGs and way forward towards SDGs and b) Poverty eradication; and has contributed to the preparation of the Issues Briefs for the third session of the OWG on SDGs on the themes of a) Food security and nutrition (b) Sustainable agriculture (c) Desertification, land degradation and drought.

- viii. *Document prepared for the Trondheim Biodiversity Conference, Norway: “Biodiversity in the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – Ecosystem goods and services for human wellbeing (Draft):* This document illustrates how biodiversity is cross-cutting to the themes being discussed in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and how a focus on biodiversity can provide added value to economic development, environmental sustainability, and poverty reduction. Examples are provided that reflect these inter-linkages, illustrating examples of win-win outcomes and solutions for sustainable development.

### **III. Future steps**

- i. *UNEP 2015 Strategic Group:* CBD Secretariat will contribute actively to UNEP-led inter-agency and MEA consultation and contributions to the processes concerned with developing SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda.
- ii. *Information from Parties and National Focal Points:* A questionnaire is being prepared to obtain feedback on their participation in national and other on-going consultations and to identify their needs.
- iii. *Involvement of Biodiversity community:* This includes strengthening contacts with the biodiversity community to encourage them to engage more and be involved in the processes.
- iv. *Follow-up at the UN Level:* Request for contribution on financing for sustainable development is received from UNTT and is in process. Ways are being sought to work with various UN organization (e.g. consultation with UNDP and NBSAP forum).
- v. *Decisions on the future programme of work of the OWG on SDGs:* These are expected at the third session of the OWG to be held from 22-24 May, 2013. Based on these decisions the CBD secretariat would initiate work to prepare briefs on biodiversity and prepare substantive inputs for the other themes identified for consideration by the OWG for which the mainstreaming of biodiversity would be relevant.