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UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

Fifteenth session

Marrakesh, 29 October – 6 November

Agenda item 7

COOPERATION WITH RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Submissions from Parties

Note by the secretariat

1. At its fourteenth session, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) endorsed the formation of a joint liaison group between the secretariats of the UNFCCC and the Convention on Biological Diversity and requested the secretariat of the UNFCCC to invite the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to participate in this liaison group in order to enhance coordination between the three conventions, including the exchange of relevant information. The SBSTA invited Parties to submit their further views on cooperation between the three conventions by 15 October 2001 for inclusion in a miscellaneous document (FCCC/SBSTA/2001/2, para. 42 (d) - (f)).
2. One additional submission^{*} has been received from Belgium, on behalf of the European Community and its member States. In accordance with the procedure for miscellaneous documents, this submission is attached and reproduced in the language in which it was received and without formal editing.

* In order to make this submission available on electronic systems, including the World Wide Web, it has been electronically imported. The secretariat has made every effort to ensure the correct reproduction of the text as submitted.

SUBMISSION BY BELGIUM ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS MEMBER STATES

UN FCCC Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice

15th Session, Cooperation between UNFCCC – CBD – CCD

This submission aims to ensure the environmental integrity of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol, as already detailed in the EU Submissions of 28 February and 18 July 2001. The EU's specific views on the cooperation between UNFCCC and CBD can be found in these two earlier submissions.

This submission highlights the importance of extending this coordination to the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), as the implementation of and the cooperation between the three Rio Conventions is a necessary condition for sustainable development.

Introduction

At SBSTA14 of the UNFCCC, the co-ordination between Conventions received good support from Parties, many of which made strong interventions emphasising the importance of the cooperation between Climate, Biodiversity and Desertification Conventions. This was reflected in the SBSTA Conclusion doc. FCCC/SBSTA/2001/L3.

With the endorsement of the liaison group by the SBSTA, the cooperation and co-ordination at the level of the Secretariats has taken an important step and as it is important to have an integrated approach, the EU would like to stress the importance for the Secretariat of the CCD to accept the invitation.

The EU sees this exercise in the context of the ongoing ministerial process on International Environmental Governance (IEG), which is part of the preparations towards the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, September 2002. The IEG process aims at a more coherent and integrated international institutional environmental architecture where all countries can participate on an equal basis and that has the capacity, authority and credibility to effectively address wide-ranging environmental threats.

The EU recognises that climate change is a major threat to biodiversity and notes that changes in biodiversity are not only an ecological problem, but may have many socio-economic consequences and are closely related to food security and sustainable development world-wide. During its statement at SBSTA14, the EU therefore stressed the importance of the proper implementation of the CBD, CCD and other related conventions when mitigating and adapting to climate change, with attention to conflicting interests of different forms of land-use. Equally, the proper implementation of UNFCCC is necessary to reduce stresses on biodiversity and land-use.

While further elaborating on the ideas present in the previous EU submissions, the EU would like to present suggestions to operationalise those ideas within the different processes. This submission therefore suggests ways to contribute to concrete co-ordination & cooperation between the three Conventions.

Objective

When examining options for improving co-ordination and cooperation it is important not to duplicate existing efforts and to duly take into consideration other processes such as the IEG, initiatives from UNEP & UNDP, streamlining exercises, the newly established Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), etc.

This exercise is a learning progress. Some interactions are unknown, not all problems have been identified and only few tools are already available. However, a clear sense of purpose is needed and without prejudging the outcome of the ongoing consultations and efforts, the EU sees two main reasons for improving co-ordination and cooperation between conventions.

1. Promote compatibility and mutual supportiveness between actions undertaken in the context of the UNFCCC, the CBD, the CCD, and other relevant agreements and processes, on all levels to ensure environmental integrity, avoid duplication & contradictions and optimise benefits & synergies.

The EU believes that the necessity for climate change mitigation and adaptation gives new urgency for implementing the CBD and CCD and other related international agreements or recommendations. Improved implementation would create synergies and help to underline mutual supportiveness of the major global environmental agreements.

Strengthening of synergies and cooperation between the Conventions should aim at a more coherent institutional system, using the existing resources in a more efficient way and making the reporting and implementation pressures of countries as manageable as possible. Cooperation at the operational level as well as on the functional level must be emphasised, e.g. with joint panels of experts.

As it is up to the Parties to decide whether or not projects for CO₂ credits can be accepted, and for host Parties to determine whether proposed projects are consistent with their strategies for sustainable development, all Parties involved share the responsibility to ensure compatibility and mutual supportiveness. In general, to improve the positive interactions, it is important to evaluate any project or activity with regard to its overall environmental integrity and contribution to sustainable development. To assist Parties in evaluating this impact, environmental screening plays an important role and this should take the precautionary principle into consideration.

Reporting is a very important instrument and should be streamlined to increase comparability and include considerations on the other conventions in order to evaluate impact. The reporting requirements of any of the three Conventions could include a separate part on how the projects deal with the objectives of the others, as is now already suggested in the Joint Workplan between CBD and CCD.

The eligibility to participate to the mechanisms depends on its compliance with methodological and reporting requirements. When evaluating a project proposal for financing, the considerations given towards the objectives of the other conventions should be taken into account.

More scientific information is necessary to help improve positive connections between climate change and biodiversity while avoiding negative impacts. In this regard the EU welcomes the many initiatives of the climate and biodiversity bodies such as Technical Paper of the IPCC as well as the CBD workshop planned later this year, and would like to see this expanded to also incorporate desertification issues.

Although it is important that the different Conventions stay within their own mandates, horizontal clustering of common instruments that facilitate the proper implementation such as information sharing, capacity building (CB) and technology transfer (TT), could be helpful to improve the synergies between the three conventions, as well as with related bodies and processes such as the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).

2. Contribute to sustainable development and provide more possibilities for Developing Countries by facilitating the correct implementation of the conventions, promoting capacity building and technology transfer and by making the requirements more cost-efficient & effective. Especially developing countries have scarce capacities to deal with all the requirements relating to the different Conventions and it is therefore important that the capacity needs for implementation of the Conventions is taken into account during bilateral aid dialogues.

To contribute to sustainable development, it is important to look at socio-economic and ecological aspects. In this regard the EU would emphasize the opportunities offered by the ecosystem approach, as defined by the CBD. Also the horizontal clustering of instruments such as CB, TT, incentives, education and reporting increases the possibility for the Developing Countries to effectively implement and use the conventions, thus contributing to their sustainable development.

Proper implementation of the Conventions is highly dependent on the integration in other sectors. Better co-ordination between the Conventions could improve integration efforts.

National level is crucial

The lack of national co-ordination both at the international fora as at implementation level is a major problem and the EU is convinced that the national level holds the key to success.

Better co-ordination and communication between National Focal Points as well as with other institutions involved in the national implementation of the Conventions must be emphasised. A more horizontal approach could improve stakeholder participation and local consultation.

Two processes can be identified, namely the 'top down' where the Conventions facilitate the national coordination and the 'bottom-up' where national coordination is based on locally identified needs and possibilities. Both processes are complementary and deserve equal attention.

Joint Workplans between CBD-CCD and CCD-UNFCCC are already being considered by the Secretariats. In order to improve the overall cooperation, a Joint Workplan between UNFCCC-CBD-CCD could therefore facilitate a more coherent and coordinated implementation at the national level and contribute towards sustainable development.

Well coordinated and complementary National Action Plans and/or Strategies could result in better national awareness building, improve the implementation of the three Conventions as well as provide direct input into the National Strategy on Sustainable Development. The national forest program, as defined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, could also contribute to this.

On the other hand, certain possibilities for synergies strongly depend on the national context and should be identified locally. Pilot projects could be used to explore ways to identify and promote synergies on a local and national level.

Recommendations

The EU stresses the importance of the agreement reached at the resumed session of COP6 in Bonn, July 2001, and reiterates its commitment to honour it. The following recommendations are therefore not meant to reopen the negotiations but to contribute to the practical implementation of the co-ordination between the 3 Conventions.

As it is important to encourage actions at the national level, National Focal Points and other relevant institutions and stakeholders should:

- *collaborate to identify actions related to the coordination and cooperation between the Action Programmes of the different Conventions,*
- *formulate and launch pilot projects as soon as possible to explore ways to identify and promote synergies on a local and national level, and*
- *analyse the lessons learned and develop good practices.*

This bottom-up approach should be supported by the Conventions. As the Joint Liaison Group brings the three Secretariats together, it seems most appropriate to ask the Joint Liaison Group to develop several proposals on the practical co-ordination and cooperation between all three.

The EU suggests that the Joint Liaison Group be asked to develop the following proposals for submission to the respective COP's of the three Conventions:

- *a joint Workplan for the 3 Conventions, taking into account their specific mandates as well as the interactions with other relevant fora & processes;*
- *for the development and coordination of the relevant National Strategies and Action Plans so they contribute together to the National Strategy for Sustainable Development;*
- *to support pilot projects, followed by a joint workshop to bring together experiences of national coordination and awareness building, especially with regard to contribution towards the National Strategy for Sustainable Development;*
- *to develop a road map to facilitate the coordination at the national level between National Focal Points and other relevant institutions and stakeholders; inter alia to encourage the prior assessment of project proposals to avoid counteractions and optimise synergies;*
- *to include a chapter in the different reporting requirements of the three Conventions on the impact of projects on the objectives of the three conventions;*
- *to encourage Parties to use policy tools to evaluate environmental and sustainability impact and promote the capacity building to improve the capacity for impact assessments;*

- *to facilitate horizontal clustering between the three Conventions of common instruments such as capacity building and technology transfer.*
- *to investigate how the relevant provisions for information exchange in the different processes could effectively enhance the information capacities between the three Conventions, through means such as newsletters or the clearing house mechanism, to facilitate the information flow between the three conventions, on all levels.*

As stated in its previous submissions, the EU would like to request the joint liaison group of the 3 Secretariats to convene a joint workshop subsequent to the 15th Session of SBSTA, which should further explore adequate means for extended cooperation and collaborative action between the three Conventions. This Workshop should specifically look at the implementation on the national level and exchange views and practical experience on how the national Strategies can be coordinated and how this can contribute to sustainable development.

The Joint Liaison Group should present its proposals to the next session of the COP.
