



9th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

“Wetlands and water: supporting life, sustaining livelihoods”

Kampala, Uganda, 8-15 November 2005

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Key issues for harmonizing national reporting

**Workshop: Towards the harmonization of national reporting to biodiversity-related treaties
(22-23 September 2004, Haasrode, Belgium)**

- i) **Purpose of reporting:** In the interests of increasing the efficiency of reporting, conventions and agreements should clarify and refine the information they need in order to assess implementation and outcomes. They should also address the balance between reporting on implementation and reporting on outcomes, particularly in the light of the 2010 target. When requesting reports, conventions and agreements should also explain clearly what the information will be used for and how it will be analyzed.
- ii) **Focus of reporting:** Reporting should relate to the actions taken by the governing bodies, both providing information to support the decision-making process and reporting on actions taken to implement decisions and their effect.
- iii) **Coordination at international levels:** The Biodiversity Liaison Group should consider establishing a technical task force to develop and promote a streamlined reporting agenda across conventions and agreements, taking account of the issues raised in the pilot projects, developments requested by governing bodies, and issues discussed during the EMG review of harmonization of reporting. The task force would comprise technical officers from the secretariats, supported as necessary by other appropriate experts. It is anticipated that the group and task force would work inter-sessionally to develop proposals which would be considered and adopted by governing bodies.
- iv) **Action by individual conventions:** Conventions and agreements should also explore opportunities for taking concrete actions to reduce the reporting burden that they themselves control, for example by not adding new requests for information without removing existing requests in parallel, by reducing the amount of information requested, by linking reporting more closely to strategic planning, by exploring new mechanisms for reporting, and so on. This can be done within existing mandates given to most secretariats.
- v) **Thematic issues:** Active consideration should be given to focusing on specific themes that are relevant across several conventions and agreements, and identifying means to harmonize approaches to information management and reporting, learning lessons from the CPF Task Force on Forest-related Reporting. Consideration might also be given to thematic reports on specific issues which would be relevant to all conventions and agreements which consider the issue. This may also be a matter for consideration by the Biodiversity Liaison Group.

- vi) **Web portal on reporting:** The convention secretariats and UNEP-WCMC should work together to develop and maintain a single, multilingual website (and perhaps also a CD-ROM) that links to existing questionnaires, guidelines and other instructions that secretariats have provided for national reporting, as well as results of the work on streamlining and harmonization. This might also incorporate discussion fora and opportunities for sharing of experience. The Joint Web Site of the Biodiversity Related Conventions (currently hosted by CBD) should be investigated as a possible home for this.
- vii) **Capacity building:** Capacity building activities for information management and reporting among local, national, regional and multilateral applications should focus on all three levels of capacity development: individual, institutional and systemic. It is also recommended that steps should be taken to ensure that the Global Environment Facility and the GEF Implementing Agencies take fully into account the coordination and information management required to support both implementation and reporting for the various MEAs when financing and implementing programmes.