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## **JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**

### **PREPARATIONS FOR THE NINTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

#### **Paper by Paul Rose**

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 The 9<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 9) will take place from 19-30 May 2008 in Bonn, Germany. A draft provisional agenda for the meeting is provided at Annex 1.

1.2 This paper focuses on the main issues JNCC wants to address and outcomes we want to work towards at COP 9. The issues have been grouped according to the priority themes for JNCC's international work proposed to Committee in June 2007 (paper JNCC 07 D07) and further elaborated since. These thematic priorities are:

- avoiding over-exploitation by improving the governance of global resources (especially in the areas of fisheries and forestry);
- enhancing the integration of biodiversity considerations into other sectors and promoting sustainable production and consumption;
- integrating more effectively biodiversity considerations into policies and actions dealing with adaptation to, and mitigation of, climate change;
- strengthening the evidence base to promote and support the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;
- preventing or mitigating damage to biodiversity caused by invasive alien species<sup>1</sup>.

#### **2. Avoiding over-exploitation by improving the governance of global resources (especially in the areas of fisheries and forestry)**

2.1 The CBD cross-cutting issue on sustainable use of biodiversity, and its associated Addis Ababa principles, is directly relevant to this theme but is not on the COP 9 agenda. However, the principles are largely implemented through the thematic work programmes of which the forest and marine and coastal work programmes are most relevant.

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<sup>1</sup> Invasive alien species has been added as a fifth priority theme for international advice subsequent to the June Committee meeting.

- 2.2 A major review of the forest work programme at COP 9 is an opportunity to reduce over-exploitation of forest resources. The UK is likely to maintain its positions on promoting the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) process, prioritising the work programme on activities most helpful in achieving the 2010 target, and promoting more integrated working between the CBD and other international forest processes; these form the core of the conclusions from the EU Council with regard to forest issues. The EU Council conclusions also want to achieve improvements to the financing of forest conservation and sustainable use through the plans being developed by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to address deforestation.
- 2.3 There will probably be relatively few other chances to address over-exploitation at COP 9, but JNCC delegates should remain alert to opportunities, particularly in the inland water, protected areas and agriculture items.

### *Thematic conclusion*

- 2.4 Over-exploitation is a key driver of biodiversity loss and failure to address it will contribute to failure to achieve the 2010 target and the Millennium Development Goals. JNCC will focus on the review of the CBD's forest work programme, and will use this as an opportunity to scope our future engagement in this key area.

## **3. Enhancing the integration of biodiversity considerations into other sectors and promoting sustainable production and consumption**

- 3.1 This theme is very close to the CBD concept of mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into the work of other sectors and as such is a cross-cutting priority across all CBD work. It is one of the largest blockages to implementation of the CBD, especially at national level, and so will feature quite highly when COP 9 considers the work of the second meeting of the Working Group on Review of Implementation on consolidated guidance on implementation of national implementation plans. The UK position is to focus on practical guidance, tools and access to expertise that can really assist on-the-ground implementation but it might prove difficult to get away from the more obvious financial and technological capacity issues which are also very important.
- 3.2 This theme has also been discussed as part of the in-depth review on the ecosystem approach at the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 12). There is recognition that the ecosystem approach has an important role to play in integrating biodiversity considerations into the actions and plans of other sectors. At SBSTTA 12 a number of recommendations were put forward, including providing communication tools on the value, use and implications of unsustainable use of ecosystem goods and services to other sectors. JNCC is supporting the CBD secretariat in fulfilling recommendations from the in-depth review, which will be reported at COP 9.

- 3.3 Sustainable consumption and production is relevant to JNCC's Global Impacts programme (e.g. work on the impacts of biofuel production in tropical countries). JNCC will focus on channelling evidence into policy where it makes a tangible difference, particularly with reference to a set of priority countries where biodiversity value is high and where threats are linked to sustainable consumption and production with an EU/UK dimension. The EU are likely to insist that the biodiversity impacts of bioenergy more widely are assessed and acted upon at COP 9, and JNCC should attempt to support these arguments with evidence as best we can. At present it is impossible to predict what nature of debate there will be on agricultural biodiversity or incentives but potentially JNCC could promote arguments and evidence to promote sustainable production within these agenda items as well.

#### *Thematic conclusion*

- 3.4 The potential role for JNCC within such a wide theme needs to be carefully defined. A useful role for JNCC will lie in its ability to acquire and manage relevant evidence and promote its use across appropriate organisations (government or otherwise) with the objective of making the value of such evidence clear in the context of policy formulation and decision making. We believe that this is not currently being achieved effectively by any other organisation. A complimentary role will be for JNCC to use such evidence to develop policy advice of its own on a narrower set of biodiversity themes.

#### **4. Integrating more effectively biodiversity considerations into policies and actions dealing with adaptation to, and mitigation of, climate change**

- 4.1 JNCC, Defra and the EU all want biodiversity considerations to feature prominently in climate change debate. It will be important to maintain a role for the CBD in assessing and agreeing the biodiversity impacts of climate change adaptation and mitigation activities, recognising that these will be both positive and negative. SBSTTA 12 helpfully agreed a number of considerations that need to be made to effectively incorporate climate change issues when reviewing CBD work programmes and when undertaking national implementation of the CBD. However, many parties felt the evidence was too weak for the CBD to make an assessment of impacts on biodiversity. At COP 9 it will be necessary to counter claims about weak evidence with the precautionary approach, and to defend the SBSTTA recommendations for addressing climate change within programmes of work.
- 4.2 At SBSTTA 13 in February 2008, discussion on climate change will relate mainly to improving co-operation and joint working between the three Rio conventions (biodiversity, climate change and desertification). It is important that JNCC continues to promote joint working as strongly as it can, which means substantially strengthening the currently proposed draft SBSTTA recommendation to COP 9. JNCC is increasing its engagement with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and will be part of the official UK delegation to the Conference of the Parties and associated meetings in December 2007.

*Thematic conclusion*

4.3 Through the CBD and other fora JNCC is well placed to provide advice on the links between biodiversity and climate change (positive and negative) and to stress that the precautionary approach should be applied. JNCC will continue to develop its relationship with Defra and others working on the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

**5. Strengthening the evidence base to promote and support the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity**

5.1 In order to make SBSTTA more effective, it is essential that science can be made more prominent and that some of the political debates that dominate are not rehearsed at SBSTTA. One piece of work that will contribute to this is the development of the flexible framework of indicators for measuring progress towards the 2010 target. The UK has been very influential on this issue, and is the first country to have published national indicators developed under the CBD framework. In order to capitalise on the success of the indicators work it is necessary to keep the strategic goals and objectives of the convention topical and outcome-oriented and to improve the processes and evidence available for biodiversity assessments.

5.2 Improving the evidence and processes for assessment will require some kind of overarching expert body (perhaps the proposed International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity), changes to the working of SBSTTA, clarity of respective roles for key components of the assessment process (such as the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, the Global Earth Observation System of Systems, the Global Taxonomy Initiative, and the CBD Clearing House Mechanism), and high-quality, high-profile outputs that build on the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and Global Biodiversity Outlook. All of this can be substantially assisted if national reporting to CBD takes an indicator-based approach and focuses on biodiversity outcomes.

5.3 Varying degrees of progress are being made on all of the above fronts but the work area is made particularly difficult because of the breadth of the topic and the many separate but related strands of work. The UK has been remarkably successful in influencing this area of work to date, largely because of the strong leadership shown by Defra and the consequent ability of the UK to track all the strands of work simultaneously and keep them co-ordinated.

*Thematic conclusion*

5.4 Every opportunity should be taken to develop, and improve the availability and use of, evidence in informing the work of the CBD and its contracting parties, including through review of CBD science bodies, assessment procedures, assessment reports, scientific peer review processes and better outcome-oriented reporting processes.

## **6. Preventing or mitigating damage to biodiversity caused by invasive alien species**

- 6.1 COP 8 identified gaps in the various international regulatory mechanisms that, either directly or indirectly, help to prevent the spread of alien invasive species. SBSTTA 13 and then COP 9 will consider suggestions for addressing these gaps and make recommendations on how best to deal with them. JNCC should aim to make these discussions as productive as possible given the importance of alien invasive species as a global driver of biodiversity loss, especially within the UK Overseas Territories.
- 6.2 Addressing the main vectors of spread by improving regulatory mechanisms is one of the most effective means of dealing with invasive species, particularly when coupled with developing regional partnerships to share information and intelligence to prevent the spread of the most damaging alien species. In many countries there is also a need to build the capacity and infrastructure to prevent future invasions and to tackle the most damaging species already present. Thus, support for strengthening local responses to invasive alien species is highly desirable.
- 6.3 In-depth review of the invasive alien species cross-cutting issue has been scheduled for COP 9 for a number of years but to date no material has yet been made available. The CBD secretariat is currently working through the Global Invasive Species Programme to collect information from parties on how they implement invasive alien species action. JNCC will develop its thinking and objectives in anticipation of SBSTTA 13, reviewing invasive alien species work in terms of key technical capacity needs, priority areas for new guidance, and areas that need new or re-invigorated political commitment.
- 6.4 Several invasive alien species issues are relevant to COP 9 agenda items on climate change and, to a lesser extent, forest biodiversity. For example, a basic principle should be established that it is not appropriate to plant invasive non-native species (whether genetically). There is also a need to raise awareness of the real damage and costs of invasive alien species within the organisations that have governance over world and regional trade. If reasonable preventive measures can be embedded within trading relations and systems, then both economies and the environment will benefit immensely. A suggestion would be for CBD and the World Trade Organisation to work together to improve the environment and the economies of priority countries (particularly those trapped in poverty and debt).

### ***Thematic conclusion***

- 6.5 Globally the most significant challenge for tackling invasive alien species more effectively is to increase efforts to prevent introductions of the most damaging species in the first place. In all regions and all ecosystems rising numbers of invasive alien species are damaging biodiversity, economies and the health of plants, animals and people. In the long term, prevention will be cheaper and more effective, but it is proving hard to change the thinking and the spend to achieve this.

## **7. Other items on the COP 9 agenda**

- 7.1 The Working Group on Protected Areas will meet immediately before SBSTTA 13 in February 2008. It is anticipated that the substantive technical items, which almost exclusively deal with selection criteria for marine protected areas, will be dealt with at SBSTTA 13. This leaves only capacity building and financial mechanisms for protected areas establishment. It will be important for JNCC to ensure that any selection criteria for marine protected areas that CBD proposes are compatible with those being used in the UK. JNCC has also developed unique global expertise in the processes needed to establish marine protected areas in offshore areas and this expertise should be used constructively to assist implementation of the CBD Protected Areas programme of work.
  
- 7.2 COP 9 is quite unique in having a number of substantive agenda items that have not been the subject of any global preparatory meetings. Most notable is the consideration of incentive measures which is scheduled for in-depth review at COP 9 and has always been controversial. It is quite critical to avoid incentive measures issues spilling over into review of the agricultural work programme which is one of the least addressed and most incoherent of the CBD thematic work areas. It will also be particularly important to identify the nature of the Island debate planned for COP 9 as this work programme has enormous relevance for the UK Overseas Territories and has traditionally been a major focus of UK attention through a lead from Scottish Government.

## **ANNEX 1**

### **Draft provisional agenda for the 9<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity**

#### **COP-9 - DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

##### **1. Organisational matters**

- 1.1 Opening of the meeting
- 1.2 Election of officers
- 1.3 Adoption of the agenda
- 1.4 Organisation of work
- 1.5 Report on the credentials of representatives to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
- 1.6 Pending issues
- 1.7 Date and venue of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties

##### **2. Consideration of reports**

- 2.1 Reports of inter-sessional and regional preparatory meetings
- 2.2 Report of the Global Environment Facility
- 2.3 Report of the Executive Secretary on the administration of the Convention and the budget for the Trust Fund of the Convention

##### **3. Issues for in-depth consideration**

- 3.1 Agricultural biodiversity
- 3.2 Global strategy for plant conservation
- 3.3 Invasive alien species
- 3.4 Forest biodiversity
- 3.5 Incentives
- 3.6 Ecosystem approach
- 3.7 Progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and progress towards the 2010 target and relevant Millennium Development Goals

3.8 Financial resources and the financial mechanism

**4. Other substantive issues arising from decision of the Conference of the Parties**

4.1 Access and benefit-sharing

4.2 Article 8 (j) and related provision

4.3 Technology transfer and co-operation

4.4 Monitoring, assessments and indicators

4.5 Biodiversity and climate change

4.6 Biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands

4.7 Protected areas

4.8 Biodiversity of inland waters

4.9 Marine and coastal biodiversity

4.10 Island biodiversity

4.11 Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI)

4.12 Liability and redress

4.13 Co-operation with other conventions and international organisations and initiatives and engagement of stakeholders

4.14 Operations of the Convention

4.15 Scientific and technical co-operation and the clearing-house mechanism

4.16 Guidance to the financial mechanisms

4.17 Communication, education and public awareness (CEPA)

**5. Administration of the Convention budget for the Trust Fund of the Convention for the biennium 2009-2010**

**6. Other matters**

**7. Adoption of the report**

**8. Closure of the meeting**