



Agenda Item 5

Third Meeting of the Environmental Management Group

Geneva, 10 October 2001

ISSUE MANAGEMENT GROUP HARMONIZATION OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING FOR BIODIVERSITY-RELATED TREATIES

1. At its first meeting on 22 January 2001, the Environmental Management Group (EMG) discussed the issue of harmonization of national reporting and agreed to establish an Issue Management Group (IMG) dealing with this issue (Decision 3). UNEP was invited to serve as task manager, focusing on biodiversity-related conventions while considering the relevance of biodiversity-related aspects of other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). The IMG was asked to look at this issue comprehensively, taking into account issues such as the best use of lessons learned, the composition of the group and the number of the countries to be used in a pilot phase. UNEP was asked to provide EMG with its recommendations at its next session.
2. Subsequently UNEP drafted a paper on “harmonization of information management and reporting for biodiversity-related treaties” as the basis for an IMG teleconference, which took place 7 June. The secretariats of four global biodiversity-related treaties (CITES, Convention on Migratory Species, Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Biological Diversity) participated in the teleconference, and further comment and input was also provided by the secretariats of the World Heritage Convention and the Cartagena Convention.
3. The paper was presented to the EMG at its meeting on 15 June 2001, and a range of comments was received from participants. UNEP was asked by the meeting to finalize the report, and to identify clear steps for implementing the recommendations.
4. The paper has now been revised to include all of the comments made at the EMG meeting, and to incorporate further substantive input from FAO, UNESCO and the secretariats of the Barcelona Convention, the Basel Convention and the Convention to Combat Desertification. Some of the content also benefits from discussion with staff at the European Environment Agency, the United Nations University and two UK agencies, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and Scottish Natural Heritage.
5. The current version of the paper is now being made available to the EMG at its meeting on 10 October 2001. Further to the request of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, this paper is also being made available to the “Open-ended intersessional meeting on the Strategic Plan, National Reports and the implementation of the Convention” as an information paper. This meeting takes place in Montreal, Canada, 19 - 21 November 2001.
6. UNEP, as task manager for this IMG proposes the following action:

- (i) Hold informal discussions on the recommended actions (Sections IX-XII) with agreement secretariats and others, in particular at scheduled meetings such as the CBD SBSTTA (November 2001);
 - (ii) Review the outcomes from those projects already under way, and in particular the UNEP pilot projects currently being carried out in a range of countries (due for completion at the end of 2001 – progress report in Annex 1 of the paper);
 - (iii) Draft an action plan for a more proactive approach to harmonization, based on the current paper and the outcomes of the previous two activities (January-February 2002);
 - (iv) Convene a further IMG teleconference to review and agree on the action plan, and to identify lead roles, participation and available resources (March 2002).
7. A progress report will be submitted to the seventh special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in February 2002.