



UNFCCC WORKSHOPS ON SYNERGIES AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER CONVENTIONS: 2-4 JULY 2003

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNFCCC AND THE WORKSHOPS ON SYNERGIES AND COOPERATION

The workshops on synergies and cooperation with other conventions were held from 2-4 July 2003, at the Meripuisto Hotel in Espoo, Finland. The workshops were organized by the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) workshop was convened in response to a request made to the SBI by the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties (COP), held in November 2001. The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) workshop was convened in response to a request made to the UNFCCC Secretariat by SBSTA-17, held in October-November 2002. Sixty-seven representatives of governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attended the workshops.

The SBI workshop focused on possible synergies and joint action with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). It convened in plenary sessions on Wednesday, 2 July, and in plenary and working group sessions on Thursday morning, 3 July. On Wednesday representatives of international organizations presented different approaches to addressing synergies among MEAs, and participants discussed synergies from the perspectives of preserving biodiversity and combating desertification. On Thursday, participants met in four working groups to discuss guiding principles for achieving synergies, practical ways of achieving synergies at the national level, the international community's role in providing impetus to achieving synergies, and ways in which the international community can enhance synergies at the convention level. Participants later reconvened in the plenary to identify such possible synergies and actions.

The SBSTA workshop addressed cooperation with other conventions. It convened in plenary sessions on Thursday afternoon, 3 July, and on Friday, 4 July. On Thursday, government representatives provided an overview of national experiences in achieving synergies between conventions, and the first of four panels on cross-cutting areas under the UNFCCC, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), (the Rio conventions), convened to discuss technology transfer, education and outreach, and capacity building. On Friday, panel discussions were held on the cross-cutting themes of research and systematic observation, reporting, and impacts and adaptation.

Climate change is considered one of the most serious threats to the world's environment, with negative impacts expected on human health, food security, socioeconomic development, water and other natural resources, and physical infrastructure. Global climate varies naturally, but scientists agree that rising concentrations of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions in the Earth's atmosphere are leading to changes in the climate. According to the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC), the effects of climate change have already been observed. Despite some lingering uncertainties, the majority of climate scientists believe that prompt and precautionary action is necessary.

The international political response to climate change began with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Adopted in 1992, the UNFCCC sets out a framework for action aimed at stabilizing atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases to avoid "dangerous interference" with the climate system. The greenhouse gases to be limited include methane, nitrous oxide and, in particular, carbon dioxide. The UNFCCC entered into force on 21 March 1994, and currently has 188 Parties. In 1997, Parties adopted the Kyoto Protocol that includes targets and timetables for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

SYNERGIES: Cooperation with MEAs is an important dimension to the UNFCCC process, with cooperation with relevant international organizations being a standing item on the

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SBSTA agenda. UNFCCC Article 7.2(l) notes that the COP shall “seek and utilize, where appropriate, the services and cooperation of, and information provided by, competent international organizations and intergovernmental bodies,” and Article 8.2(e) provides that the Secretariat shall “ensure the necessary coordination with the secretariats of other relevant international bodies.” Cooperation between conventions was first considered by SBSTA-5, and from SBSTA-10 onwards the substantive linkages between the Rio conventions have been emphasized. At SBSTA-14, held in July 2001, Parties discussed a proposal presented by the Chair of the CBD Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) on potential areas of cooperation between the CBD and the UNFCCC. Based on this proposal, the SBSTA endorsed the formation of a Joint Liaison Group (JLG) between the CBD and UNFCCC Secretariats, and invited the CCD Secretariat to participate in the group. The aim of the JLG is to enhance coordination between the secretariats of the Rio conventions and explore options for further cooperation, such as a joint work plan. The SBSTA also supported a request made by the CBD SBSTTA to the IPCC to develop a technical paper on biodiversity and climate change and called on the IPCC to consider relevant linkages between climate change, biodiversity and desertification.

SBSTA-16, held in June 2002, took note of the JLG’s first progress report and noted that collaboration should facilitate synergies towards national-level implementation of the Rio conventions. SBSTA-17 agreed on the terms of reference of the SBSTA workshop and recommended the adoption of decision 13/CP.8. The COP adopted this decision at its eighth session, affirming the need for enhanced cooperation between the Rio conventions, requesting the SBSTA to continue cooperation with the CBD SBSTTA and the Committee on Science and Technology of the CCD, and urging the JLG to continue its efforts to enhance coordination between the Rio conventions and their secretariats. Regarding guidance for the SBI workshop, decision 5/CP.7 on the implementation of Article 4.8 and 4.8 (adaptation and mitigation), also requested the UNFCCC Secretariat to organize a workshop on possible synergies and joint action with other multilateral environmental conventions and agreements, such as the CCD, and to report the results of the workshop to COP-9.

REPORT OF THE WORKSHOPS

Sirkka Hautajarvi, Secretary-General of Finland’s Ministry of Environment welcomed participants and said synergies between conventions are central to ensuring the cost-effective allocation of sparse financial resources. She stressed that work on consumption and production patterns provides an overarching goal that can facilitate convergence of conventions.

SBI Chair Daniela Stoycheva introduced the SBI workshop theme of maximizing synergies between the Rio conventions and said that MEA implementation is an important concern for the international community.

SBSTA Chair Halldor Thorgeirsson said the SBSTA workshop aimed at providing guidance on how best to realize synergies between conventions and noted that its results would be used by the Subsidiary Bodies in their work. He drew attention to a request to promote cooperation between the subsidiary bodies of the Rio conventions.

Janos Pasztor, UNFCCC Secretariat, noted past and present efforts in promoting synergies between the Rio conventions and in fostering dialogue among Parties to the conventions. He thanked the Governments of Finland, Norway and Switzerland for funding the workshops.

SBI WORKSHOP

During the SBI workshop, participants convened in plenary and working groups to discuss different approaches to addressing synergies, consider synergies from the perspective of preserving biodiversity and combating desertification, and identify possible synergies and joint action with other MEAs.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO ADDRESSING SYNERGIES AMONG MEAS

During this session, held Wednesday morning, 2 July, and chaired by Daniela Stoycheva, representatives of international organizations gave presentations on different approaches to addressing synergies among MEAs, and workshop participants discussed such approaches.

PRESENTATIONS FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

Vijay Samnotra, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), outlined UNEP’s work in improving the effectiveness of MEA implementation, including, *inter alia*:

- harmonizing national reporting;
- developing compliance and enforcement guidelines that focus on institutional coordination at national and international levels;
- building capacity, providing information and training;
- supporting national action plans; and
- developing a synthesis report on the implications of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) for MEAs.

Noting a new project on achieving synergies between conventions in Africa, he said that work on information and awareness raising can be effective only if it addresses the Rio conventions jointly. Responding to a participant who expressed concern over the process of developing compliance and enforcement guidelines, he said that the guidelines were adopted after extensive consultations with all parties involved in implementation.

Khalid Hussain, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), stressed the importance of integrating climate change considerations into poverty alleviation strategies and highlighted the role of public-private partnerships in implementation. He said that UNDP focuses on adaptation and mitigation measures within a sustainable livelihoods framework. Hussain outlined UNDP’s work related to synergies between conventions, including an inter-agency paper on poverty and climate change, which explores adaptation measures and addresses synergies between conventions at all levels.

Avani Vaish, Global Environment Facility (GEF), outlined the GEF’s policy framework and its efforts to promote synergy and harmonization of country-level action. He said that while the GEF can provide feedback on the convention processes, it is the responsibility of Parties to identify synergies and determine approaches to their development. He highlighted some of the multi-focal activities, which the GEF continues to prioritize, noting that substantial resources are allocated for this and for cross-cutting capacity building between 2004 and 2006. In response to a question regarding GEF support to the conventions, he said that there is no correspondence between the role of the GEF as a financial mechanism and the allocation of resources, noting that resource allocation is based on the focal areas.

Jerry Velasquez, United Nations University (UNU), outlined UNU’s Interlinkages Initiative that involves national and regional case studies and analytical research on the role of interlinkages in compliance and enforcement. Among lessons learned, he noted that countries have varied responses and approaches to synergies, institutional roles and responsibilities are often confusing and



conflicting, social challenges to synergies such as nepotism and turf wars are enduring, and donor-driven activities are not always coordinated. Velasquez stressed that synergies should not be imposed but be demand-driven, should add value and support sustainable development.

In her presentation, Annie Roncerel, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), discussed the legal and institutional prescriptions for the implementation of the Rio conventions and outlined various UNITAR country-based initiatives. She noted that UNITAR's efforts include comparing data needs for implementation of conventions at the country level and stressed the need for a data-sharing agreement between ministries. Roncerel highlighted a UNITAR capacity-building effort, involving implementing agencies in the formulation of National Capacity Needs Self Assessment (NCSA) initiative.

Maria Socorro Manguiat, World Conservation Union (IUCN), noted that approaches to synergies adopted by the IUCN have included examining how the Rio conventions can synergize to contribute towards the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) Programme of Work. She said that IUCN aims to more effectively incorporate climate change into future surveys of species survival and noted that the IUCN Task Force on Climate Change, Vulnerable Communities and Adaptation seeks to strengthen the role of ecosystem management. Manguiat stated that the objectives of the IUCN Climate Change Strategy include: informing governments and the public about climate change impacts; promoting strategies to reduce vulnerability and adapt to climate-related disasters; and advancing environmentally-sound approaches to climate change mitigation.

Nick Davidson, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, said the Ramsar Convention commits Parties to wisely use wetlands, designate and manage wetlands of international importance and cooperate at the international level. He outlined cooperation between the Ramsar Convention and other global and regional conventions and agreements, including the Rio conventions, the Convention on Migratory Species, the World Heritage Convention and the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution. He highlighted the global nature of most joint activities and stressed the need to enhance national-level collaboration. Davidson outlined global-scale challenges including developing multi-convention work plans, analyzing common issues and overlap of national implementation requirements, identifying conflicting national requirements under different conventions, and streamlining national reporting.

Carlos Corvalan, World Health Organization (WHO), noted an existing gap between the work of the conventions and the health sector. Calling for an ecological perspective to address public health, he enumerated the negative health impacts of environmental problems such as air and water pollution, ozone depletion, persistent organic pollutants, biodiversity loss, desertification and salinization. Corvalan stressed that there is great scope for the WHO to work with the Rio conventions.

DISCUSSION: Clarifying the purpose and mandate of the discussion, Chair Stoycheva explained that while the SBSTA had provided a clear mandate, the SBI's guidance was not precise. She said that Parties would determine the use of the SBI workshop's results at a later stage. SBSTA Chair Thorgeirsson added that the synergy discussions involve not only the Subsidiary Bodies but also the convention secretariats that focus on the overall strategic level.

Janos Pasztor said the workshops were a forum for information sharing and noted that it was not expected to make recommendations. One participant expressed preference for presenting the results of the workshops to the SBI and SBSTA as recommendations.

Participants then discussed the need for more synergies at the international level, noting that there are over 500 existing MEAs. One participant stressed the importance of identifying appropriate governance of the synergy process and suggested broadening participation in the JLG to secretariats of other conventions, while another expressed skepticism over the potential overlaps between existing processes.

Another participant underlined the need to distinguish between synergies created for saving costs rather than synergies for creating value. A third suggested defining indicators across conventions, which could be used in the definition of core data sets.

BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY PERSPECTIVES

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION: David Cooper, CBD, provided examples of the CBD's cooperation with other conventions, including: the establishment of joint work programmes with the CCD and the Ramsar Convention; cooperation on work programmes with the FAO; and formal recognition of the role of other agreements, including the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the International Plant Protection Convention. He identified three categories of common interests where synergies could be possible: biodiversity-linked measures to mitigate climate change; adaptation measures to mitigate impacts of climate change on biodiversity; and climate change adaptation measures. Cooper noted that CBD COP-5 urged the UNFCCC to take all actions to reduce effects of climate change on coral bleaching, called on CBD Parties to explore how incentive measures under the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol can support CBD objectives; and requested SBSTA to provide scientific advice to integrate biodiversity considerations into the implementation of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol. He concluded that: there are significant opportunities for climate change mitigation and adaptation, while enhancing biodiversity conservation; land use, land-use change and forestry activities can play an important role in reducing net greenhouse gas emissions; and that biodiversity conservation and maintenance of ecosystem structure and function can contribute to adaptation strategies.

PANEL DISCUSSION: Outi Berghäll, Ministry of Environment, Finland, emphasized the usefulness of the IPCC Technical Report on Climate Change and Biodiversity and noted that the process of creating interlinkages is being addressed under a more systematic framework. Alfred Apau Oteng-Yeboah, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Ghana, highlighted that the Rio conventions adopt different approaches to fulfilling similar functions. Ines Verleye, Federal Office for Consumer Protection, Public Health and Environment, Belgium, said that synergies should be developed through both top-down and bottom-up approaches and stressed the need for the JLG to engage in more specific actions to improve information sharing. Stas Burgiel, Defenders of Wildlife, said synergies are desirable within each convention as well as among conventions. He stressed the need to harmonize terminology used in the context of different conventions, and suggested broadening the use of impact assessments, communicating the resulting information, monitoring incentives, and using the knowledge of indigenous communities.



In the ensuing plenary discussion, participants underscored the difficulty of measuring coherence, highlighted the importance of international institutions in this process, and noted the challenge of adopting a broader approach to synergies. They noted that synergies promote coherence and transparency and commended that the SBI workshop's objective was to exchange information, rather than streamline convention-specific issues into other conventions.

DESERTIFICATION PERSPECTIVES

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION: Grégoire de Kalbermatten, CCD Deputy Executive Secretary, spoke on promoting synergies at the national level. He identified key driving forces for creating synergies, including convergence of environment and development objectives, and the search for commonalities and coalition building among relevant actors. He said the CCD Secretariat aims at strengthening institutional linkages and supporting country-driven initiatives such as national workshops to strengthen coordination at local levels and facilitating dialogue among key stakeholders. He noted that Parties to the CCD have identified recommendations, including:

- integrating action programmes of environmental conventions;
- linking national action plans and national adaptation programmes of action;
- establishing liaisons between focal points of the conventions and GEF operational focal points through integrated project development;
- developing technical and financial strategic alliances; and
- increasing the number of national synergy workshops.

Stressing the absence of a CCD financial mechanism and highlighting the beneficial linkages between poverty reduction, biodiversity and desertification, de Kalbermatten called for making CCD projects eligible for GEF funding.

PANEL DISCUSSION: Javier Gonzales, National Climate Change Programme, Bolivia, stressed the importance of finding approaches to respond to different conventions' needs. He underscored the role of water management in addressing climate change and desertification, the importance of institutional capacities, and commitment from the international community to support national-level synergy development.

Stressing the need to consider ecosystems other than forests, Gisela Alonso Dominguez, Environmental Agency, Cuba, underlined the role of coastal management in combating desertification, addressing climate change and preserving biological diversity. She underscored the role of traditional knowledge and South-South cooperation, and added that while desertification was often perceived as a local problem, it had ramifications for global stability. She expressed hope that the GEF would be approved as the CCD financial mechanism.

Halldor Thorgeirsson, speaking in his capacity as representative of the Ministry of Environment, Iceland, outlined the impacts of desertification in Iceland and the links between the Rio conventions and their relation to different ecosystems. He stressed the need for an ecosystem approach to defining synergies and said synergies will not be possible if there are fundamental differences in understanding the reality of the interlinkages.

Pierre Du Plessis, Namibia Committee on Climate Change, noted that the UNFCCC focuses on the global, the CBD focuses largely on the national and the CCD on the local level and said this is reflected in the resources made available for their implementation. He said that sustainable development is feasible only if it is compatible with the market system. On institutional capacity building, he stressed the importance of enhancing local capacities.

In the subsequent plenary discussion, participants stressed the need to identify ways of obtaining international support to implement existing national-level programmes. One participant called for the adoption of concrete projects that address commitments under different conventions.

POSSIBLE SYNERGIES AND JOINT ACTION WITH OTHER MEAS

On Wednesday, 3 July, participants convened in four parallel working groups to stimulate a more free-flowing discussion on several key questions outlined by the SBI workshop Chair, relating to possible synergies and joint action with MEAs. The working groups included participants from developing and developed countries, and representatives from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and addressed an identical set of questions. The results of the working groups were reported to the plenary, where discussion continued. The questions raised in the working groups, participants' responses and the resulting plenary discussion are set out below.

WHAT PRINCIPLES SHOULD GUIDE EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE SYNERGIES? Participants identified sustainable development as the overall guiding principle, together with transparency, subsidiarity and efficient resource use, and highlighted operational principles, including: capacity building, compliance, coherence, and coordination. Participants underscored the need to adopt an ecosystem approach, avoid duplication of activities, and ensure the environmental integrity of the Rio conventions while maintaining their legal distinctiveness. They also stressed that synergies should contribute to efficient and effective implementation of the Rio conventions, add value, be implemented at appropriate levels and promote cooperation. Participants agreed that while opportunities for synergies exist at the local level, the international community needs to build national-level awareness and capacity. Noting that current efforts to create synergies are compartmentalized by conventions, one participant stressed that the search for synergies should be problem-driven and not convention-driven.

WHAT ARE PRACTICAL WAYS TO ACHIEVE SYNERGIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL? Participants agreed on the importance of:

- involving high-level politicians and stakeholders;
- balancing bottom-up and top-down approaches;
- incorporating synergies into national strategies;
- facilitating communication between national focal points for different conventions and agencies responsible for their implementation;
- using the ecosystem approach at the national level; and
- establishing and strengthening clearing-house mechanisms.

Participants underscored the importance of incentives to focus on the long-term goals of the Rio conventions, rather than on more immediate objectives. They agreed that different approaches are needed at different levels, and that local efforts and practices need to be identified in a gradual and incremental way. They also stressed the importance of recognizing and creating enabling environments for improving donor funding, developing strong legal frameworks, building political will, and raising awareness.

WHAT ROLE SHOULD THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY PLAY IN PROVIDING IMPETUS TO ACHIEVE SYNERGIES? Participants noted the importance of learning by doing, and said that the international community should play a catalytic rather than a prescriptive role, and provide technical advice. They emphasized the need for international



funding for national-level synergy initiatives. Some suggested that partnerships be created between international agencies with similar mandates, and called on the UNEP Environmental Management Group to address synergies. Others noted the need to identify best practices, encourage regional solutions, develop local expertise, and optimize reporting requirements. Participants identified bodies and institutions, which should be involved in synergies, including regional organizations, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, and the UNEP Governing Council.

HOW CAN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ENHANCE SYNERGIES AND INTERLINKAGES AT THE CONVENTION LEVEL? Participants agreed on the importance of developing specific terms of reference for the JLG. They also suggested promoting national-level synergy workshops and convening side events on synergies at Subsidiary Body meetings and underscored the need for coherence between convention-specific scientific processes. They suggested learning from issues where consensus had been reached under other conventions, while others cautioned that the applicability and relevance of concepts and issues may differ.

PLENARY DISCUSSION: Facilitator Kilaparti Ramakrishna, Woods Hole Research Center, noted that recommendations emerging from the working group discussions could be grouped into intergovernmental mechanisms, interagency coordination, national-level cooperation among focal points, and other interventions. He said that despite existing studies and agency activities, progress on achieving synergies is weak.

One participant underscored that the search for synergies is a rational approach to efficiency and not a hidden agenda to reduce development assistance. Another stressed the importance of comprehensive approaches to convention implementation, calling for developing concrete policy projects and more specific cooperation among COPs. One participant stressed the need to focus on synergy activities at the national level, and, referring to a UNITAR project, said that the primary role for the international community is to promote national-level integration and coordination among focal points.

Participants noted the need for a common framework for the ecosystem approach. They emphasized that governments have ultimate responsibility for synergy creation and underscored the importance of coordination. In response to a question on how synergies with non-environmental conventions can minimize conflict with environmental issues, one participant stressed the need for mutually supportive synergies between all conventions and agreements. The working group rapporteurs emphasized recommendations that the value-added of synergies be long term, representatives of lending agencies be involved in future discussions on synergies, and that MEAs have a legal standing similar to that of the World Trade Organization.

SBI CHAIR'S CONCLUSIONS

Summarizing the key points of the discussions, Chair Daniela Stoycheva said that synergies have an important role to play in furthering sustainable development and noted that they add value. She said synergies should be built at local and international levels and noted that the SBI workshop's findings will be made available to the next session of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies.

SBSTA WORKSHOP

Participants convened in plenary sessions for the SBSTA workshop, chaired by SBSTA Chair Halldor Thorgeirsson, to hear presentations on national experiences in achieving synergies and to discuss cross-cutting issues under the Rio conventions, including: technology transfer, education and outreach, and capacity building; research and systematic observation; reporting; and impacts and adaptation.

On Thursday afternoon, 3 July, Chair Thorgeirsson opened the SBSTA workshop, saying that the workshop aimed to prepare guidance to national focal points, enhance cooperation and coordination between focal points, and identify options for increased cooperation. He outlined the legal basis for cooperation between the Rio conventions and reviewed relevant SBSTA activities. He noted that cooperation between conventions was first taken up by SBSTA-5, and that from SBSTA-10 onwards, the substantive linkages between the UNFCCC, CBD and CCD were emphasized. He noted that the SBSTA considered this issue in detail for the first time at its 14th session, where it stressed the need for enhanced cooperation and the importance of coordination at the national level, endorsed the formation of the JLG, and supported the CBD SBSTA request to the IPCC to compile a technical paper on interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change. He summarized key conclusions reached by the SBSTA, including that synergies be based on coordination and cooperation, cooperation be carried out at the national level, and that areas of cooperation include technology transfer, education and outreach, reporting, and impacts and adaptation.

PRESENTATIONS ON NATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Suhel al-Janabi, German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), spoke on synergies and coordination in GTZ projects in Mauritania, China and Tunisia. He said that early warning systems, identification of vulnerability indicators, and economic risk assessments represent linkages between the UNFCCC and the CCD. On interlinkages between the UNFCCC and the CBD, he noted that the ecosystem approach adopted by the CBD can be useful for the UNFCCC. He recommended increased cooperation on the impacts of adaptation measures and urged the GEF to link thematic areas. Al-Janabi stressed that local-level action should address the Rio conventions simultaneously, taking into consideration poverty alleviation, economic and social development, combating environmental degradation, and developing education and health policies.

Virginia Sena, Ministry of Environment, Uruguay, stated that the National Capacity Self Assessment (NCSA) project in Uruguay builds the capacity of national institutions. Sena said the anticipated benefits of the NCSA include efficient resource use, enhanced national domestic awareness and knowledge about the Rio conventions, and greater opportunities for public participation in these activities.

Gisela Alonso Dominguez, Environmental Agency, Cuba, provided an overview of Cuba's natural resources, environmental problems, and domestic environmental laws and institutions. Dominguez drew attention to Cuba's Committee on the Environment, which oversees policy actions on all MEAs, and whose principal goals include integral environmental management, pollution reduction, enterprise management, and environmental education. She outlined a hydrographical basins programme that integrates policies on soil degradation, deforestation, waste, water management, biodiversity, natural disasters, climate studies, health, education and employment.



Outi Berghäll, Ministry of the Environment, Finland, said that to achieve synergies, Finland has to focus on the regional level and on forest owners in particular. She noted that Finland addresses synergies through the Interministerial Committee on Climate Change, the EU institutions and the National Council of Sustainable Development. As a concrete example of an integrated approach, she highlighted the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment Project, which is a comprehensive assessment of climate change and its impacts on the Arctic Region.

Rawson Yonazi, Division of Environment, Tanzania, presented an overview of the national efforts to address UNFCCC provisions on adaptation, technology transfer, and education and outreach. Describing the formal and informal processes of institutional coordination, he noted that the Vice President's office is the national focal point for the GEF, the Rio conventions, matters relating to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and poverty alleviation initiatives. He noted that most of the conventions are implemented separately by sectoral ministries. Yonazi said the main challenge in the work on synergies is mobilizing resources for national synergy workshops, enhancing the focal points' capacities, mainstreaming conventions into national policies, generating information and establishing national databases.

Dora Kulauzov, Ministry of Environment and Water, Hungary, outlined the Hungarian experience in reinforcing synergies among the Rio conventions. She listed a number of relevant laws, programmes, and strategies, and discussed environmental, policy, financial, and institutional aspects of synergistic approaches. Kulauzov noted the need to, *inter alia*: take into account the impacts of policies on all ecosystems, systematically observe the state of the environment, conduct integrated assessments of proposed policies, strengthen the scientific base of decision making, and effectively use financial resources.

PANELS ON CROSS-CUTTING AREAS UNDER THE RIO CONVENTIONS

Following keynote presentations, panels convened to discuss the following cross-cutting areas under the Rio conventions: technology transfer, education and outreach, and capacity building; research and systematic observation; reporting; and impacts and adaptation.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH, AND CAPACITY BUILDING: Keynote Presentation: Jerry Velasquez, UNU, outlined key challenges in implementing the Rio conventions with regard to technology transfer, capacity building, and education, awareness and training. He highlighted the need to increase awareness, mainstream the conventions in national strategies, enhance capacities to translate the convention provisions into actions and establish information systems to support the fulfillment of countries' obligations. He drew attention to linkages between the Rio conventions relating to approaches adopted to achieve their goals, the nature of their activities, and the information, monitoring and reporting requirements. Velasquez highlighted similar processes and mechanisms under the conventions relating to technology transfer, capacity building, education, training and awareness. He noted that the main challenges in addressing these include the lack of awareness, the need to bridge the local and global interface, involvement of all stakeholders, creation of incentive systems and mobilization of technologies and financial resources.

Panel Discussion: Joyceline Goco, Environmental Management Bureau, Philippines, agreed that achieving synergies should focus on national-level actions and stressed the role of the interna-

tional community in increasing institutional capacity and technology transfer, developing education materials, generating and sharing information, and raising awareness.

Alfred Apau Oteng-Yeboah, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Ghana, noted that technology transfer can be North-South, South-South, South-North and North-North, and stressed that it can be effective only if there is an enabling environment to receive and use the technology. He said that MEAs can learn from non-MEA experiences, such as UNESCO's work on outreach and awareness-raising.

In the subsequent discussion, one participant drew attention to the IPCC Special Report on Technology Transfer and encouraged relevant parties to consult it. Several participants drew attention to developed-country projects and initiatives on technology transfer. One participant highlighted the use of NGO networks that exist within the framework of each of the Rio conventions in creating public awareness. He referred to the role of the Global Biodiversity Forum in creating dialogue between different stakeholders.

RESEARCH AND SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION:

Keynote Presentation: William Westermeyer, Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) Secretariat, emphasized the importance of high-quality, long-term observation data to address the needs of the Rio conventions, and outlined the GCOS strategies and global networks for observing atmospheric, oceanic and terrestrial systems. Based on past experience, he recommended, *inter alia*: adhering to the GCOS Climate Monitoring Principles for *in situ* and satellite systems; improving data exchange and availability; and building capacity and improving observation systems by creating a donor fund and developing a global observation framework for defining regional impacts. He stressed the need for global-level initiatives and for a regional approach to observation and implementation.

Panel Discussion: Outi Berghäll, Ministry of Environment, Finland, stressed the need for: policy-relevant cross-sectoral research; dialogue between policy makers and researchers at national and international levels; and the representation of developing country views in developed countries. Referring to the technical and policymakers' summaries of the IPCC Third Assessment Report and similar research projects, she said they should be tailored to the needs of policymakers at various levels.

Klas Österberg, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, presented an overview of Swedish forest monitoring activities related to the Rio conventions. He outlined the Swedish policies for nature conservation and described two initiatives where the same inventories are used for different purposes under the UNFCCC and CBD.

Underscoring the importance of a clear definition of synergies, Jun Zhao, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China, noted the differences between synergies and cooperation. He underlined the need for research cooperation at national and international levels.

Awadi Abi Egbare, Togo, said that West African countries lack observation equipment, data and capacity, and called for bilateral and multilateral cooperation in this area. He stressed the importance of data for socioeconomic and environmental impact assessments, policy formulation and development planning.

In the ensuing plenary discussion, a participant said that observation capacities relating to the Rio conventions are disparate and expressed regret at the shortage of donor help and financial resources. Participants underscored the need for more specific core sets of biodiversity data and indicators and for multidisciplinary analysis of data at the country level.



Summarizing the panel discussion, Chair Thorgeirsson noted the considerable overlap between the needs of the Rio conventions, insufficient observation systems, inadequate policy-relevant data, and the need for an international mechanism to devise standards for establishing terrestrial observation systems.

REPORTING: Keynote Presentation: Vijay Samnotra, UNEP, outlined UNEP's activities on harmonizing information management and reporting for biodiversity-related treaties. He highlighted potential obstacles to harmonization, including:

- limited understanding of the link between focal points at the national level;
- jurisdictional conflicts between focal points;
- inconsistent national-level reporting formats;
- limited international-level funding and human resources; and
- Parties' different economic, legislative, social, administrative and statistical systems.

He outlined ways to overcome these barriers, including a clearer understanding of the conventions' objectives and benefits at all levels, enhanced multilateral cooperation and adoption of tested procedures for further implementation. Stressing differences between streamlining and harmonization, he said benefits of harmonization include improved awareness of national obligations, identification of gaps in national legislation and enhanced linkages between international monitoring agencies.

Panel Discussion: Diann Black-Layne, Environment Division, Antigua and Barbuda, noted the different reporting requirements under the Rio conventions, emphasizing the varying degrees of difficulty in report preparation. She underscored the need to mainstream reports, noting that they contribute to fulfilling convention-specific commitments. She said that they also serve as educational material for the Caribbean region.

Ines Verleyne, Federal Office for Consumer Interests, Public Health and Environment, Belgium, stressed the need for a more practical approach to synergies, which includes the identification of potential conflicts. She proposed requesting the Rio conventions' secretariats to identify overlaps between reports and their potential synergistic uses. Verleyne said as the reports influence project funding, they should be compiled along with the financing institutions.

Dora Kulauzov, Ministry of Environment and Water, Hungary, said that institutional cooperation on reporting in Hungary is constrained by the lack of data, duplication of efforts, and limited exchange of data between domestic agencies. She said the different deadlines for report submission under MEAs affect the comparability of the data and reduce domestic interagency coordination.

Álvaro José Rodríguez, Ministry of Environment, Colombia, supported the need to streamline the reports' contents and synchronize their submission timing, but noted that simultaneous reporting would burden national institutions. He highlighted his country's lack of success in:

- integrating convention implementation into policy development;
- coordinating national policies with regional and local-level policy;
- building capacity with practical applicability; and
- harmonizing information systems.

José Romero, Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscapes, noted that there is a need to, *inter alia*: bridge the gap between different conventions through reporting; harmonize reporting and report-timing for MEAs; and improve reporting on issues relevant to desertification.

In the ensuing plenary discussion, one participant commented on the need for improved reporting guidelines and cautioned against over-harmonizing reporting. Another suggested that report harmonization could reduce duplication of efforts. Another stated that there may be potential for conflict of interests between those preparing and relying on the reports for funding, and those advocating harmonization. He questioned the absence of the CCD in the UNEP report harmonization exercise.

One participant stressed the need for strategic use of the reports and called for "preventive reporting," whereby policies and measures proposed under one convention are analyzed in the context of related conventions. Another participant said that while interlinkages between conventions are desirable, reporting requirements remain specific to environmental issues that are distinct from each other, and noted the funding implications. Avani Vaish, GEF, informed participants that GEF provides financial assistance to countries for assessing the state of their knowledge.

Summarizing the panel discussion, Chair Thorgeirsson stressed the relevance of reports at the national and international levels. He highlighted the difference between streamlining and harmonizing, the former facilitating reporting and the latter making data comparable. Thorgeirsson emphasized that reports contribute to identifying potential synergies and conflicts, and stressed the need for building national reporting capacity.

IMPACTS AND ADAPTATION: Keynote Presentation: Avani Vaish, GEF, provided an overview of the GEF's work on climate change adaptation. He said that the GEF addresses adaptation as a cross-sectoral issue, and that its actions are both guided and constrained by the COP's guidance. He said the GEF has addressed adaptation through strengthening enabling environments including the preparation of initial national communications and by incorporating adaptation components into existing GEF projects.

Panel discussion: Susan Edwards, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, New Zealand, presented an overview of forestry policies in New Zealand. She stressed that these policies integrate biodiversity, forestry and climate change concerns. Among lessons learned, she listed the need for cooperation in achieving multiple objectives related to climate change and biodiversity, and the importance of developing good working relations among focal points.

Javier Gonzales, National Climate Change Programme, Bolivia, highlighted the challenge of applying lessons from successful local experiences to regional and subregional policies. He stressed the need for domestic institutional frameworks that provide market incentives for maintaining environmental services. He also noted the importance of enhancing local scientific capacity and using traditional knowledge to facilitate adaptation.

Noting that climate change will have an impact on biological diversity, Benoit Gauthier, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada, underscored the need to devise conservation strategies to address climate change impacts. He also outlined climate change impacts on cultural diversity and stressed the need for capacity building to facilitate adaptation, using indigenous knowledge systems.

Karine Hertzberg, Norwegian Pollution Control Authority, presented an overview of the work on impacts and adaptation in Norway. She suggested that the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report include a section on areas where synergies can be developed between the Rio conventions.

Pierre de Plessis, Namibia Committee for Climate Change, emphasized the role of indigenous technical knowledge. Drawing attention to the fact that Namibia was implementing a rights-based approach to land degradation, he said this could classify as an adap-



tation activity. He expressed concern over implementing adaptation in the context of a globalized economy and stressed the role of public-private partnerships.

In the ensuing plenary discussion, one participant said that acceptable levels of impacts depend in part on the cost of adaptation. Another noted that enhancing ecosystem resilience is important for all MEAs, and stressed the need to develop effective and rapid adaptation tools and decision-making procedures.

Chair Thorgeirsson summarized the discussion, highlighting:

- adaptation is a cross-sectoral issue because of the multiple and diverse impacts of climate change;
- actions on adaptation can accrue significant benefits for a variety of socioeconomic sectors;
- there is a need to strengthen adaptive capacity; and
- regional assessments and regional specificity in global assessments are important.

He said climate change might render local traditional knowledge that was accumulated under old climatic conditions irrelevant.

CLOSING SESSION

Chair Thorgeirsson opened the closing session and underscored the importance of regional assessment information. One participant stressed the need for better information management, noting that a gap exists between the international, regional and local/indigenous knowledge levels. The usefulness of the CCD's thematic regional and subregional networks for identification of synergies was noted.

On the conventions' reporting requirements, several participants stressed the need for communication between all focal points, including the GEF focal points. One participant suggested requesting the JLG or the Rio conventions' secretariats to facilitate the production of joint information and to facilitate the wide distribution of the conventions' reports.

Several participants supported the idea of developing a checklist for identifying opportunities for synergies and proposed harmonizing the reporting process as a way of developing the checklist. One participant expressed reservations over establishing a checklist of activities and suggested instead listing scheduled work products. Some noted that the development of synergies was an intense process and urged undertaking a practical approach that starts with selected thematic areas such as forests and land degradation and involves all stakeholders.

In summarizing the SBSTA workshop discussions, Chair Thorgeirsson highlighted the need to determine ways to facilitate information exchange on outcomes and products. He noted that the consideration of synergies must be mainstreamed, and appreciated the valuable input from different convention secretariats and international organizations to the SBSTA workshop. Regarding the report of the meeting, Thorgeirsson noted that the proceedings of the workshop will be contained in the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* and will be accessible to all convention focal points.

Janos Pasztor said the official SBI and SBSTA workshop reports would be available on the UNFCCC website and would be disseminated through the formal channels of the Executive Secretary. He thanked the Government of Finland and participants, and closed the workshops at 5:20 pm.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

MEETING ON THE FURTHER ELABORATION AND GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECOSYSTEM APPROACH: This meeting, to be convened by the Convention on Biological Diversity, is scheduled to take place from 7-11 July 2003, in Montreal, Canada. For more information,

contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.asp?wg=ECOSYS-01>

SIXTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (CCD): CCD COP-6 will be convened from 25 August to 5 September 2003, in Havana, Cuba. The sixth session of the Committee on Science and Technology and the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention will also meet. For more information, contact: CCD Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2802; fax: +49-228-815-2898; e-mail: secretariat@unccd.int; Internet: <http://www.unccd.int/cop/cop6/menu.php>

THIRD WORLD CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE: This conference will be held from 29 September to 3 October 2003, in Moscow, Russian Federation. The conference will address key scientific issues and policy responses to the problem of climate change. For more information, contact: Organizing Committee; tel: +7-95-255-2143; fax: +7-95-255-1707; e-mail: wccc2003@mecom.ru; Internet: http://www.wccc2003.org/index_e.htm

21ST PLENARY SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC): The 21st IPCC Plenary session will be held on 3, 6, and 7 November 2003, in Vienna, Austria. Sessions of IPCC Working Groups I, II, and III will meet from 4-5 November in Vienna. For more information, contact: IPCC Secretariat; tel: +41-22-730-8208; fax: +41-22-730-8025; e-mail: ipcc_sec@gateway.wmo.ch; Internet: <http://www.ipcc.ch>

NINTH MEETING OF THE CBD SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE: CBD SBSTA-9 will be held from 10-14 November 2003, in Montreal, Canada. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2200; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/convention/sbstta.asp>

COUNCIL MEETING OF THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY (GEF): The GEF Council meeting will be convened from 19-21 November 2003, in Washington, DC, US. NGO consultations will precede the Council meeting. For more information, contact: GEF Secretariat; tel +1-202-473-0508; fax: +1-202-522-3240; e-mail: secretariatgef@worldbank.org; Internet: <http://www.gefweb.org>

NINTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNFCCC: UNFCCC COP-9 will be held from 1-12 December 2003, in Milan, Italy. For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; Internet: <http://www.unfccc.int> and <http://www.minambiente.it/cop9>

THIRTIETH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE TO THE RAMSAR CONVENTION: The 30th meeting of Ramsar's Standing Committee will be convened from 12-16 January 2004, in Gland, Switzerland. For more information, contact: Ramsar Secretariat; tel: +41-22-999-0170; fax +41-22-999-0169; e-mail: ramsar@ramsar.org; Internet: <http://www.ramsar.org/meetings.htm>

SEVENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (CBD): CBD COP-9 will be convened from 9-20 February 2004, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2200; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/convention/cops.asp>