

Submission by Wetlands International to the Programme of Work on the Biological Diversity of Inland Water Ecosystems

Text proposals to Document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/3

The following recommendations are using suggestions from the Vilm report¹, with additional change suggestions:

Text = suggestions to text from the Vilm report which Wetlands International supports

Text = revisions to text by Wetlands International to suggestions from the Vilm report

Text = suggestions to text from Wetlands International not covered in the Vilm report

~~Text~~ = text is suggested to be deleted by Wetlands International

[(Text)] = comment or rationale of by Wetlands International

4 Biodiversity of Inland Water Ecosystems

Item 3.1.2. of the provisional agenda

- Document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/3: In-depth Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Work on the Biological Diversity of Inland Water Ecosystems

Document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/3:

Suggestions on the text:

IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK ON THE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF INLAND WATER ECOSYSTEMS

Note by the Executive Secretary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

1. 1 Report of the Expert Meeting in Preparation of SBSTTA-14, March 15 - 19, 2010, Convened by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation at the International Academy for Nature Conservation, Isle of Vilm

The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) may wish to recommend that the Conference of the Parties adopt a decision along the following lines:

1. *Notes with concern* the overall continuing and accelerating rate of loss of the biodiversity of inland water ecosystems and the rapidly increasing drivers of change in these ecosystems; that the loss of critical services associated with this biodiversity loss, and in particular water-related services, including water supply for both ecosystems and people and the mitigation of hydrological extremes, are already resulting in significant economic **and** social **and environmental** costs, which are projected to rapidly escalate;

2. *Notes with appreciation* the continuing value of national reports of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in providing key information on the status and trends of inland waters biodiversity and drivers of change, and *expresses its appreciation* for the inputs of the Secretariat and Scientific and Technical Review Panel of the Ramsar Convention into the in-depth review;

3. Stresses that human societies rely on numerous services from inland water ecosystems and that biodiversity is critical for the delivery of the ecosystems services that water provides to human;

4. Notes that water is our most valuable natural resource: water security for ecosystems and the most vulnerable people and communities is widely agreed to be the primary natural resource challenge; water forges strong links between biodiversity and development; and water is the key natural resource link between the various Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and their targets;

Implementation of the programme of work

53. *Concludes* that the programme of work on the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems remains a good framework for implementation of relevant activities and that the priority needs are for significantly enhanced implementation, and, in particular, improved coherence with land- and water-use policies and activities;

64. *Notes* the need to improve the scope of the programme of work by better recognizing the relevance of inland water ecosystem services to poverty reduction, sustainable development, climate change mitigation and adaptation and disaster risk reduction and the need for better policy coherence between the programme of work and other programmes of work and land- and water-use policies and practices;

75. *Urges Parties* **to develop and implement national and regional action plans and legal and policy frameworks and to ensure enforcement of existing and future legal measures in order to halt unsustainable utilization of inland water ecosystems such as overfishing, wood harvesting, or peat mining; [(Rationale: to address destructive fishing practices, unsustainable fishing and removing elements of inland water biodiversity.)]**

8. *Urges Parties,* other Governments and relevant organizations and the corporate sector: to strengthen implementation of the programme of work; increase capacity for its implementation, including institutional coordination, with particular emphasis on the contribution of the programme of work to the achievement of sustainable development, **poverty alleviation and achieving the Millennium Development Goals by: [(Rationale: these where identified weaknesses in the implementation of the PoW.)]**

(a) enhancing coordination and collaboration between all sectors managing and using water and other resources associated with inland water ecosystems to avoid negative impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services including the standard use at the earliest stage of decision making of Strategic Environmental Assessment as a tool to evaluate

alternative options for development schemes that specifically evaluates the direct and indirect consequences of ecosystem losses;

(b) further incorporating biodiversity and ecosystem service considerations, including through socio-economic valuation approaches, into the planning and especially the implementation of irrigation, water supply and sanitation schemes and Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and related approaches [(Rationale: IWRM is a planning approach whereas most of the schemes are irrigation, supply and sanitation)]

(d) enhancing efforts to address the drivers of inland water biodiversity degradation and loss by fully integrating biodiversity and ecosystem service considerations into planning and decision making of other sectors e.g. energy production, transport, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, regional development; [(Rationale: to improve biodiversity considerations into decision making for sector activities)]

(e) addressing the alteration of water flows that will be detrimental to biodiversity;

(f) preventing unsustainable use of groundwater;\

(g) exploring ways and means to further develop and implement the “payment for ecosystem services” approach as a means to support local community participation in restoring and managing inland water ecosystems ;

(h) valuating by developing valuation tools and market mechanisms that enable the value of inland water biodiversity and ecosystem services to be integrated and integrating it into national accounting systems in order to improve sectoral integration the basis for planning and decision-making; [(Rationale: to include findings of the TEEB study.)]

(i) and mobilize significant and additional financial resources for) capacity-building for implementation as a means, *inter alia*, to achieve the substantial economic benefits of improved inland water ecosystem management, in accordance with Article 20 of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

96. Recognizing the importance of inland water ecosystems on islands, their often unique inland water biodiversity and, in particular, their role in sustaining limited water supplies on islands, urges small island developing State, as appropriate, to give increased attention to the implementation of the programme of work;

107. Urges Parties and other Governments, where necessary, to re-align their water allocation policies based upon sustainable supply and not demand and explore alternative practices allowing better use of resources; [(Rationale: to propose solutions to end-users to allow this shift.)]

11. Urges Parties and other governments to take measures to reduce cities' water footprints; [(Comment: this should be reflected in the possible future PoW on Cities Biodiversity, taken from the in-depth review of inland waters.)]

12. Notes that agriculture accounts for 70% of all water taken from inland water ecosystems, and this pressure will continue to increase with climate change and the need to address the food security crisis, requests the Executive Secretary in partnership with the FAO and in consultation with other relevant international organizations to investigate ways and means to reduce water consumption for irrigation in agriculture; [(Comment: taken from the in-depth review of inland waters.)]

x Notes that with increasing energy demands, water consumption for energy production is likely to increase unless biofuel production is limited to the use of waste, or idle and marginal lands, or increased efficiency in existing agricultural areas without additional impacts on water use; avoiding competition with other stakeholders and unless also indirect land use impacts are addressed.

11. Urges Parties and other governments to take measures to reduce the impact of biofuel production on water competition by setting criteria on the feedstocks and areas used for production and on indirect land use impacts.

Climate change

138. Notes the findings of the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change Technical Report *Climate Change and Water*, which concludes, *inter alia*, that the relationship between climate change and freshwater resources is of primary concern and interest and that expert opinion is that water and its availability and quality will be the main pressures, and issues, on societies and the environment under climate change; *also noting* that the carbon cycle and the water cycle are perhaps the two most important large-scale bio-geological processes for life on Earth and that they are inter-linked with significant feedback mechanisms between the two;

14. Notes that inland water ecosystems are the most significant stores of terrestrial carbon, by some estimates storing twice as much carbon as forests, and that in particular the conservation and restoration of peatlands results in significant climate change mitigation as this has already been recognised by the Conference of the Parties in decision IX/16 D [(Rationale: introduction to paragraph 16, 19 and 20.)]

159. Urges Parties and other Governments to:

(a) recognize the prominence of changes occurring in the water cycle when considering the impacts of climate change on people and terrestrial, inland and coastal ecosystems and therefore the importance of the role of the water-related services provided by ecosystems, in particular inland water ecosystems, in ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change;

(b) ensure that their climate change mitigation and adaptation activities are designed and implemented in harmony with the needs and opportunities to sustain and/or enhance the services provided by inland water ecosystems;

(c) recognize the relationships between the carbon and water cycles in their mitigation activities and, in particular, the need to sustain the water cycle in order to sustain the carbon storage services provided by ecosystems;

16. Encourages Parties and other governments, in collaboration with UNFCCC, to take into consideration the adaptation and mitigation capacities of wetlands when developing their climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies; [(Rationale: include the capacities of wetlands with regards to climate change mitigation and adaptation.)]

179. Notes that water provides strong linkages between the interests of the multi-lateral environment agreements and in particular CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC and the Ramsar Convention, and *invites* Parties and other Governments to build upon these linkages to further strengthen coherence between these agreements at national level **including through further exploring streamlined reporting;**

18. ~~and~~ ~~Requests~~ the Executive Secretary to use these linkages to strengthen collaboration within the Joint Liaison Group and the Biodiversity Liaison Group; **[(Rationale: these paragraphs are about the functioning of the convention in relation to other MEAs, maybe move to another recommendation.)]**

19. **Stresses that reducing wetlands degradation and destruction can provide multiple benefits for biodiversity and ecosystem services and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in cost-effective ways and encourages relevant bodies of the UNFCCC to consider the issue of reducing emissions from wetlands destruction and degradation in the framework of the UNFCCC, notably by introducing the accounting of degradation and restoration of wetlands, in particular peatlands, mandatory under LULUCF regulations, by prioritizing the conservation and restoration of wetlands, in particular peatlands, in developing countries, and by developing and applying a mechanism for the accounting of carbon storage and sequestration in wetlands and in particular in peatlands; [(Rationale: so that carbon stored in wetlands is not released into the atmosphere.)]**

20. **Invites Parties, other Governments, and relevant international and other organisations to address both, direct and indirect, positive and negative impacts that the production and use of biomass for energy, in particular large-scale and/or industrial production and use, might have on inland water biodiversity, on ecosystem services, and on indigenous and local communities, also taking into account the components of the decision IX/2 on biofuels and biodiversity relevant to inland water biodiversity, reflecting varying conditions of countries and regions; [(Rationale: to address the impact of biomass production on inland water ecosystems.)]**

Scientific, technical and technological matters

~~21~~4. *Recognizes* the need for enhanced science-policy coordination and integration between the inter-related subjects of biodiversity, terrestrial and inland water ecosystem functioning and service provision, land- and water-use practices, water security, poverty reduction, sustainable development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

~~22~~4. *Welcomes with appreciation* the development and expanded use of tools to assist implementation of the programme of work by Parties, other Governments, international and non-governmental organizations and other partners as well as the corporate sector, and *encourages* their further development and wider application whilst *noting* that priority needs lie in the social, economic, institutional and policy arenas in order to better coordinate the management of the multiple drivers of change to inland water ecosystems so as to achieve balanced, fair and equitable sharing of their benefits within the context of sustainable human development;

~~23~~4. *Invites* Parties and other Governments and the corporate sector to recognize the increasing relevance of existing guidance available under the Ramsar Convention and to continue, and strengthen where necessary, consideration of this guidance; ~~and~~

24. ~~#~~*Urges* Parties to both conventions to take more comprehensive measures for joint implementation of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Biological Diversity at the national level **among others using the TEMATEA tool;**

~~25~~4. *Requests* SBSTTA and the Executive Secretary to include consideration of the implications of changes in the water cycle, and freshwater resources, where relevant and feasible, in all relevant future deliberations in all thematic and cross-cutting programmes of work, and with

special attention to the links between hydrology, greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity, ecosystem functioning and sustainable development;

~~26~~¹⁵. *Recognizing* the need for improved guidance in the context of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, *calls for* further scientific assessments of the relationship between biodiversity, hydrology, ecosystem services and sustainable development, in particular regarding, *inter alia*,

(i)___relationships between the carbon and water cycles, and policies and management interventions in each, and the ability of biodiversity to underpin both cycles;

(ii)___the impact of the direct anthropogenic use of water on terrestrial biodiversity, and *vice versa*, including, *inter alia*, fluxes between soil moisture, groundwater and evapo-transpiration of plants, and shifts in local and regional precipitation, taking into account any additional water-induced stresses on ecosystems through climate change; and

(iii) relationships between the water cycle and its impact on inland waters, their biodiversity, their carbon stocks and provision of services

~~27.~~ *Requests* the Executive Secretary and *invites* the STRP of the Ramsar Convention, building upon existing ~~other~~ assessments and in collaboration with partners, to translate those scientific findings into possible interventions ~~undertake more comprehensive assessments of these linkages~~, including by convening expert group meetings, subject to resources, and requests the Executive Secretary to report the findings for the consideration by SBSTTA prior to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties; *invites* Parties and other Governments to provide technical and financial support for this; ~~and requests the Executive Secretary to report the findings for the consideration of SBSTTA at a meeting prior to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties;~~ **[(Rationale: change was made to clarify text, the actual text was already there.)]**

~~28~~¹⁶. *Recognizes* the need for improved incorporation of biodiversity and ecosystem service considerations in water-resources scenario planning and *requests* the Executive Secretary and *invites* the STRP of the Ramsar Convention to strengthen and contribute to ongoing processes in this regard, including, *inter alia*, the scenario analysis being undertaken for the Fourth World Water Development Report; and *invites* Parties and other Governments to provide technical and financial support to this end;

Biodiversity and ~~natural~~ disasters

~~29~~¹⁷. **[(Comment: the two following paragraphs could apply more widely than inland waters; Rationale: shorten paragraph.)]** *Noting* the ~~already significant economic and social impacts of natural disasters on people, poverty reduction and sustainable development and the role of ecosystems in providing services that reduce vulnerability to and the impact of disasters, in particular water-related impacts such as flooding and drought, and that climate change is anticipated to increase disaster vulnerability and risk,~~ *requests* the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with partners, including the Ramsar Convention and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and building upon ongoing assessments, to

(i)___undertake a gap analysis in relation to biodiversity, ecosystem services and disaster risk reduction;

(ii)___address these gaps through strengthened tools and information, including policy and management guidance; and

(iii)___develop a capacity-support programme to these ends, as a means to assist Parties to improve the contribution of the Convention to disaster risk reduction; ~~and~~

~~30.~~ ~~Invites~~ Parties and other Governments to provide technical and financial support to this end;

31. Encourages Parties and other Governments to recognize healthy wetlands' capacities to protect human communities and biodiversity from natural disasters and to integrate these considerations into relevant policies; [(Rationale: addresses the need to integrate wetlands into relevant policies with regards to natural disaster protection.)]

Biodiversity, water and the hydrological cycle

~~32~~⁴⁸. Concerned that major anthropogenic changes are ongoing in the Earth's water cycle at the global, regional and local scales through direct water use; that the limits of sustainability of both surface water and groundwater resources have already been reached or surpassed in many regions; that demands for water continue to increase; that these trends will be heightened through climate change; and that water stress on both people and ecosystems is rapidly escalating;

~~33~~⁴⁹. Recognizes ~~water as a service provided by ecosystems and the role of biodiversity in sustaining the water cycle, including both the availability of water and its quality for both ecosystem and human needs and~~ **therefore:** ~~that water security is essential to, inter alia, the achievement of the MDGs collectively, socio-economic well-being, poverty reduction, sustainable cities and sustainable economic growth;~~

(i) ~~establishes~~ water as an over-arching subject across the thematic and cross-cutting issues of the Convention; and *urges* Parties and other Governments, and

(ii) ~~requests~~ SBSTTA and the Executive Secretary ~~to make full use of the opportunities that the role of biodiversity in the achievement of water security presents to mainstream biodiversity across a broader political, public and business constituency as a contribution to the achievement of the Strategic Plan of the Convention~~ **making full use of the opportunities provided by the fact that biodiversity is inevitably a key component in the water cycle, including by ensuring and therefore water security.**² [(Rationale: more emphasis is made to what Parties etc. are asked to do.)]

34. Urges Parties and other governments to collaborate in national implementation on elements of the Programme of Work on Inland Waters and of the Programme of Work on Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity taking into account the role of biodiversity in the global water cycle.

² This recommendation in particular has implications for, and may need adjustment in the light of, the revised Strategic Plan of the Convention and might also be brought to the attention of the Working Group on Review of Implementation.