

## Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity



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Photo credits: Mark Edwards/Alphapresse Tree seed collection to be used for reforestation, Australia

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## **Foreword**

Biological diversity - the variability among living things and the ecosystems that support them - is the foundation upon which human civilizations have been built. Sustaining that biodiversity, in the face of considerable threats from human activities, constitutes one of the greatest challenges of the modern era. The importance of this challenge was universally acknowledged at the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The Convention on Biological Diversity arose from this summit and entered into force in the next year. There are now 188 Parties to this international legally binding treaty, reflecting a virtually universal participation.

The objectives of the Convention are the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. The Convention sets out broad commitments by Governments to take action at the national level for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Since its entry into force, the Parties have translated the Convention into a series of programmes of work. Each programme of work establishes a vision for, and basic principles to guide, future work, identifies goals, objectives and activities, determines potential outputs and suggests a timetable and means for achieving these outputs.

The programmes of work are adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention's governing body, which meets every two years. They represent far-reaching decisions, which are negotiated and agreed upon by consensus of all participating Parties. In preparation for the meetings of the Conference of the Parties, experts from all parts of the globe, including representatives from other United Nations bodies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, indigenous and local communities and the private sector, contribute to drafting a text, which is subsequently discussed and amended by meetings of bodies mandated to provide recommendations to the Conference of the Parties. The expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity contained in this document has undergone such a process of multiple refinements before being adopted by the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in 2002.

Together, tropical, temperate and boreal forests offer diverse habitats for plants, animals and micro-organisms, holding a large percentage of the world's terrestrial species. Forest biological diversity provides a wide array of goods and services, from timber and non-timber forest resources to playing an important role in purifying, recycling and storing water, and mitigating climate change. At the same time, it provides livelihoods and jobs for hundreds of millions of people

worldwide. Forest biological diversity plays a particularly important economic, social and cultural role in the lives of many indigenous and local communities. To ensure the conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity is therefore a global obligation.

The Convention has now firmly moved into a phase of implementation. This involves a greater emphasis on practical results based on the identification and pursuit of outcome-oriented targets with a view to achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity, as set out in the Strategic Plan of the Convention and endorsed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development. As forest ecosystems are significant repositories of the planet's terrestrial biodiversity, implementation of the expanded programme of work is expected to contribute to the 2010 target of achieving a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss.

The expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity provides a framework for action by everybody to reach the goals of the Convention. And action matters if we are to achieve the goals and targets we have set ourselves. I therefore urge you to use this document and to bring it to the attention of your colleagues and collaborators. Please also share with us your experiences and any suggestions you may have to improve our collective efforts.

Hamdallah Zedan Executive Secretary

## Introduction

The expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity constitutes a broad set of goals, objectives and activities aimed at the conservation of forest biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of forest genetic resources. The work programme was developed by an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group and adopted in 2002 at the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. It consists of three elements. The first covers largely biophysical aspects, such as the reduction of threats to forest biological diversity through restoration, agroforestry, and watershed management, and the establishment of protected areas. The second element deals with the institutional and socio-economic environment that in turn enables the conservation and sustainable use of forest biological diversity. The third element covers assessment and monitoring. Together, these elements, and the goals and activities contained therein, are designed to address the main causes of forest biological diversity loss.

The implementation of the work programme is the responsibility of the Parties to the Convention. Given the broad variation in ecological and socio-economic conditions of forest environments, the activities in the work programme are intended to provide guidance, and it is the sovereign right and responsibility of the Parties to define their priorities at the national level in order to implement these activities in cooperation with relevant stakeholders. In order to both facilitate the implementation of the forest work programme by Parties as well as its review at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2008, the Secretariat has also developed a forest web portal as a tool for information exchange, and for providing, to interested users, stakeholders and practitioners, guidance on how to implement the various activities under each of the 27 objectives of the programme. The portal will also provide the opportunity for all users to report on those activities relevant to the programme throughout 2004-2006.

The expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity is reproduced in this booklet as adopted in the annex to decision VI/22 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Readers should note that decision VI/22 further contains a series of actions to be carried at the national, regional, and global levels on key areas related to the conservation, sustainable use, and access and benefit sharing arising from the utilization of forest biological diversity. These actions are aimed at facilitating the implementation of the expanded programme of work and are directed to potential actors from Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, other conventions, the international donor community, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, and the United Nations Forum on Forests.

This is the first volume of a series of CBD publications on the programmes of work. The series is intended to further disseminate the various programmes of work of the Convention to a wider audience and thereby stimulate the necessary actions.

## **Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity**

In undertaking this expanded programme of work, Parties, Governments, international and regional organizations and processes, civil society organizations and other relevant bodies and all relevant implementers are invited to take into account the following considerations:

- a. The need to focus on key priorities for sustainable use of forest resources and the equitable sharing of benefits;
- b. The need to facilitate adequate participation of indigenous and local communities and the need to respect their rights and interests;
- c. The need for urgent conservation action for forests that are ecologically significant and/or most important for biological diversity on national and regional scales, in accordance with national priorities, where forest biodiversity loss or threats of loss are significant or of great concern, but also to work to enhance conservation in all types of forests, both within and outside protected areas;
- d. The need to achieve synergies and avoid duplications between the work of the key international instruments and bodies, such as the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests;
- e. The need to ensure capacity-building and the provision of adequate financial, human and technical resources to allow implementation of the work programme by all relevant stakeholders;
- f. The need to ensure that relevant activities be effectively incorporated into national and subnational forest and biological diversity strategies and programmes;
- g. The need for clarification of the links between the ecosystem approach and sustainable forest management.

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