RESPONDING TO THE 2010 BIODIVERSITY CHALLENGE: GOVERNANCE, IMPLEMENTATION AND INFLUENCE
A workshop organised by Chatham House and Countdown 2010

3-4 July 2006, London

1. INTRODUCTION
On 3-4 July 2006 a workshop entitled “Responding to the 2010 Biodiversity Challenge: Governance, Implementation and Influence” was held at Chatham House in London. It was attended by high-level officials from national governments, international organizations, private sector, NGOs, and academia.

The objective of this workshop was to identify priority issues and opportunities for action to achieve the 2010 biodiversity target. The workshop was an informal brainstorming event and was held under the Chatham House Rule. This report, prepared by the organisers, is a summary of diverse views expressed and does not represent a full consensus.

The 2010 biodiversity target aims:

“to achieve, by 2010, a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth”.

In 2002, it was agreed to take action to meet this target by both the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), in Decision VI/26, and also the Heads of State at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. Therefore, the 2010 target has the potential to profoundly affect biodiversity policy. However, there are a number of major challenges and obstacles to achieving this.

Among the most significant of these obstacles is the ineffectiveness of the international governance of biodiversity. Its fragmented nature and lack of strength has hindered the implementation of biodiversity conservation strategies. The global governance of biological diversity is particularly challenging since it relates to resources and activities that take place under national jurisdictions, but which have global, long-term impacts. Furthermore, biodiversity conservation tends to command less political clout than trade and development issues, and is often seen to be in conflict with these issues.

At the international level, biodiversity issues are being considered in various forums. However, the central focus remains the CBD, which has been requested by its Parties to consider the

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1 “When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed".
establishment of a flexible framework such as a global partnership for biodiversity. Discussions within this Roundtable were held with a view to this agenda, while also considering the wider context.

This meeting drew upon the outcomes of the international consultation held on 11-13 May 2005, organised by Chatham House, on the issue of implementation and effectiveness of the CBD (http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/pdf/research/sdp/W110505.doc), as well as the report of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review Implementation of the CBD, held on 5-9 September 2005 (http://www.biodiv.org/wgri/default.shtml).

2. STRUCTURE OF THE WORKSHOP
The workshop began with an opening plenary session to introduce the main issues and challenges, and was followed by group discussions on the following themes:

- The governance challenge: how to enable international biodiversity and environmental processes to support delivery of the 2010 biodiversity target?
- Positioning biodiversity on the international stage: what strategic linkages can be developed with other policy agendas: development, poverty-reduction, and trade?
- Addressing the implementation gap: How to strengthen networks and partnerships to implement concrete action that significantly reduces the loss of biodiversity?

On the second day, the three groups reunited to discuss the issues that had emerged during the working group sessions.

3. OPENING PLENARY SESSION: THE CHALLENGES FACED
During the plenary session, views were presented as to the main challenges faced in striving to achieve the 2010 target, as well as some opportunities for addressing these. These focused on four main areas:

- the international environmental governance system;
- targets and indicators to assess and monitor biodiversity;
- "selling" biodiversity and raising its profile; and
- sustainable sources of finance.

Presentations on the international environmental governance system highlighted the problems created by a system that is characterised by overlapping international regimes and a heterogeneous institutional environment with different technologies, norms and values. While such a wealth of mechanisms, initiatives and expertise can be regarded in a positive light, the challenge remains of implementing the various commitments, and co-ordinating actions and decision-making. In fact, it was suggested that debates over environmental governance have placed too much emphasis on where the authority should lie for this, rather than focusing on how to facilitate effective action and promote collective and equitable decision-making. The 2010 biodiversity target might present a window of opportunity to rally the different institutions around a joint commitment.

These problems were felt to be due to the lack of priority given to biodiversity issues compared to other environmental agendas such as climate change, institutional fragmentation and weakness and a lack of integration and functional interface between science and policy making. Illustrative of these problems are the international negotiations on agricultural policy, within
which biodiversity issues have barely been recognised, and also the fact that the CBD has not yet been granted observer status within the WTO. The lack of impact of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment was also highlighted as significant, this being attributed to the fact that the outcomes of this process did not present solutions nor did they engage with the public sufficiently.

Measures that were proposed to improve the governance system included:

- minimising legal inconsistencies between the various regimes;
- increasing co-ordination between international organisations and activities, particularly within specific issue areas, for example, forests;
- setting up effective implementation review mechanisms;
- improving mechanisms to ensure compliance and enforcement of commitments;
- structuring scientific advice so that it can feed into decision-making.

The problems that have arisen within the CBD process in particular were outlined, most notably, the gaps in implementation of the various strategies and action plans. Thus, it was noted that while there had been "decisions galore", many have not been put into action. This was felt to be due to the low political priority given to biodiversity issues, particularly in many developing countries. Therefore, the need to raise awareness of the relevance of biodiversity for poverty reduction and other development objectives was regarded as a key means of gaining political support for the sector within these countries. Linked to this, it was felt that biodiversity conservation needed to be integrated into national programmes and strategies within other sectors. A further reason for the lack of implementation is a lack of resources. Indeed, the need to transfer resources (both financial and technical) to the poorest countries, where most of the world's biodiversity hotspots are located, was highlighted.

One area of focus was the practical difficulties faced with the current indicators and targets set by the CBD Parties. The importance of establishing workable benchmarks for biodiversity to monitor progress in achieving the 2010 target was highlighted – a task that is the focus of the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership. While many indicators have been established within the framework of the CBD, there remain significant gaps, for example, indicators to assess the status of indigenous and traditional knowledge, and the use of biodiversity for food and medicine. Such indicators need to balance the needs of both science and policy makers, while also having public resonance. Other factors that need to be born in mind are the availability of data, cost-effectiveness and scaleability.

The need for better interface between science and policy was a common theme. In particular, it was suggested that knowledge on biodiversity has not been translated into policy options nor have practical actions been identified, making it difficult for policy makers, governments, the private sector and the wider public to identify what steps need to be taken. More generally, it was felt that the communication of the biodiversity "message" had not been sufficiently strong or effective – both to policy makers and the wider public – and for this reason, biodiversity has remained a special interest issue that has failed to reach mainstream society. It was suggested that there has been too much emphasis on negative stories, rather than focusing on successes and achievements within the sector. Furthermore, the relevance of biodiversity to other agendas had not been given enough emphasis – for example, its role for poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods. It was also mentioned that the poor communication between science and policy had also resulted in a lack of concrete estimates of the costs of measures needed to achieve the 2010 target.
The need for improved participation of both the private sector and civil society within the environmental governance system was also highlighted. In particular, it was noted that NGOs need to be engaged as partners within this system, and that greater attention needs to be paid as to how to develop and manage these relationships. NGOs were seen as key to establishing better feedback between the global, national and local levels, since it is they who are usually at the forefront of conservation actions, and can see the practical implications of environmental policies and decisions made at higher levels.

With respect to the private sector, it was highlighted that there are various opportunities for engaging with the private sector that could help to mainstream biodiversity into business planning. For example, the use of benchmarking in the extractive industry was described. This tool describes best practice for biodiversity management by businesses, enabling them to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and increasing transparency and public visibility of their performance. Biodiversity offsets were also presented as a potentially valuable tool to help achieve a balance between development and conservation objectives. Thus, it was suggested that offsets could help prevent the loss of biodiversity, focus conservation efforts on priority areas and bring additional finance into the conservation sector. Such tools could enable businesses to play a more positive role in biodiversity conservation – reducing the negative impact of their activities, increasing conservation activities and providing additional financing opportunities.

The overall message from the plenary session was that a step-change is needed in the international environmental governance system if the 2010 target is to be achieved. Thus, in order to improve international co-ordination, and to increase financial and political commitment to environmental issues, the biodiversity sector needs to:

- engage with other global agendas, such as trade, security and poverty alleviation;
- develop stronger and more effective messages that link the various environmental sectors and address cross-cutting issues;
- improve inter-linkages between the various MEAs;
- facilitate compliance with commitments on biodiversity through technical and financial support, and enforcing these through better systems for monitoring, reporting and also sanctions;
- engage with all sectors, in particular, the private sector and NGOs;
- communicate and educate on the benefits of biodiversity.

These issues were discussed in more detail in the subsequent discussions which took place in the working groups, and the results of these are presented in more detail below.

4. DISCUSSION TOPICS

4.1 The Governance Challenge: How to enable international biodiversity and environmental processes to support delivery of the 2010 biodiversity target?

The shortcomings of the international system for environmental governance, as outlined above, were widely acknowledged by the participants. Discussions focused on how to improve inter-linkages between different agendas, both within the environmental sector and also that of development. It was considered that this would help to improve co-ordination of activities, while also giving biodiversity issues a much higher profile, so raising them up the political agenda. Discussions focused on the following areas:
4.1.1 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA)
It was noted by participants that the MEA process was one of the most comprehensive science-based assessments on the status of the world's biodiversity and environment. However, its findings have had relatively little impact, either on public consciousness or on decision makers.

This was felt to be due to the fact that the findings were not communicated in a meaningful way, for example, highlighting the crucial role of biodiversity as a source of traditional medicines on which the majority of the world’s population depend for their healthcare, or the role of biodiversity in mitigating climate change. Furthermore, the MEA outcomes did not meet the needs of policymakers, for example, by providing policy options for governments to deal with reducing the rate of biodiversity loss.

More specifically, it was considered that the MEA outcomes should be better tailored to meet global challenges, such as climate change or healthcare, so helping to provide a clear vision and direction for action. An action programme could also be developed to implement the findings of the MEA.

It was suggested that the MEA should be a continuous process with explicit links to discussions and decisions in the CBD. Thus, the MEA outcomes should be used as a basis for reviewing the challenges and achievements for 2010 targets in the years to come.

4.1.2 Raising the profile of biodiversity
Participants discussed how to regain political support for environment and biodiversity issues, which have slipped down the agenda as a result of other emerging priorities within the international arena. It was felt that the lack of implementation of the commitments made during and after the Rio Summit and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) had resulted in mistrust and a lack of willingness to engage on these issues among many countries.

An important way of raising the profile of biodiversity would be to develop a stronger and clearer message on biodiversity. In particular it was felt that these issues should be linked with livelihoods, poverty and national development, to highlight their relevance to poorer countries. The 2010 target does make specific mention of poverty alleviation, and it was suggested that the conservation community should give more attention to this aspect, since biodiversity is often regarded as a "western" priority and as an impediment to development. This change in approach would help to gain political support for environment and biodiversity issues, particularly in developing countries. This was felt to be a crucial ingredient for ensuring that the 2010 target is prioritised by governments, and is translated into reality.

It was felt that lessons could be drawn from other policy areas, such as the development agenda and from campaigns such as "Make Poverty History" and that for HIV-AIDS, to identify ways in which greater political and public attention can be focused on biodiversity issues. In particular, the need for better communication of the importance of conservation to the wider public was highlighted, perhaps through identifying "champions", i.e. high-profile campaigners, to fulfil this role. This would help to raise awareness among the public of peoples’ roles and responsibilities in achieving the 2010 target. It was noted that Countdown 2010 has created such a momentum in Europe and that this might provide the seeds for creating a larger movement beyond Europe around the 2010 target.
4.1.3 Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into national planning and development
Participants identified the need to mainstream biodiversity into countries’ development and economic agendas. Thus, biodiversity issues need to be integrated into sectoral planning and development decision-making processes, for example, in areas such as development cooperation and trade, in order to get greater policy co-ordination. Thus, decisions about these processes need to factor in biodiversity – both the positive role it may play in development and, conversely, any potential negative impacts of such decisions on biodiversity.

It was noted that poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) rarely mention biodiversity or conservation issues. This could be addressed through integrating NBSAPs with these, or alternatively, by including a chapter on biodiversity or Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 7 (see also below). Participants also discussed the added value of NBSAPs in that context.

4.1.4 Implementing plans and strategies
Participants identified the lack of support for the implementation of biodiversity-related activities as a major hurdle for countries striving to achieve the 2010 target. This was an issue of concern given past experiences with implementation of the CBD, in which it was felt that funding agencies had given more attention to the development of action plans and strategies rather than their implementation. For example, while the GEF has supported the development of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), support has been less forthcoming for their implementation, mainly due to their marginal role in and lack of integration with the overall planning in the context of national development plans, such as PRSPs. Suggestions were also made to review the biodiversity support portfolio of GEF during the forthcoming replenishment period.

4.1.5 Economics of conservation
One challenge for putting biodiversity back on the global platform is the need for sound information on the economics of conservation and its role in development. It was felt that better economic and social modelling needs to be developed within the biodiversity sector, in order to enable planners to integrate conservation principles into national priority setting.

A key element of this would be to identify priorities for conservation actions, and determine the costs of these. Such information would enable more focused discussions on where the gaps are, and of how these could be funded. To facilitate this, better defined targets are needed and also a methodology to determine real cost.

4.1.6 The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
It was considered crucial to establish a clearer link between the 2010 Target and the MDGs. In particular, there is a need to focus on MDG 7 and raise this up the agenda, since this is currently off-track. It was felt by some participants that the elaboration of additional criteria and indicators for biodiversity within MDG 7 could facilitate this. The challenges and added value of developing these were discussed, and the need for a practical and scientifically credible system was highlighted.

Although the 2010 targets are most in the context of MDG 7, on environmental sustainability, it was thought that closer links should also be made with other MDGs. Attention was drawn to the emerging programme on the Integrated Package of Services (IPS) as a possible model to plan support to countries in achieving the 2010 targets.
It was also suggested that if the 2010 Target was adopted as a part of the MDG targets at the forthcoming 61st Session of the UNGA, this would help to place the biodiversity agenda at the centre of international debates on sustainable development. However, the feasibility of this was questioned, given the short time-scale.

4.2 Positioning Biodiversity on the International Stage: What strategic linkages can be developed with other policy agendas: development, poverty-reduction, and trade?

The need to link biodiversity with other environmental and development agendas was regarded as crucial for raising the profile of biodiversity issues and in helping to achieve the 2010 targets. Thus, it was felt that there was much to be gained from "riding the wave" of other campaigns and issues. Three high profile issues were considered, in order to identify possible linkages with biodiversity and the 2010 agenda.

4.2.1 Climate Change
Climate change is high on the political agenda, and so this was regarded as an important area to link up with. Making these linkages was also felt to be crucial both because of the huge threat which climate change poses for biodiversity, and conversely, because of the important role that biodiversity could play in adapting to climate change and in mitigating its impact. Therefore, it was seen as a high priority to contribute knowledge from within the biodiversity sector to these debates.

One area of engagement for the biodiversity community could be in discussions about the post-2012 agenda. The positive contribution of biodiversity to climate change should be highlighted, for example, the role of forests or protected areas as carbon sinks, and initiatives such as proposals to include "deforestation foregone" in future commitments on carbon emissions should be explored.

The issue of biofuels was of great concern, because of the potential negative impact of large-scale monocultures on biodiversity and food security. Therefore, it was felt that there is a need to become more involved in the debate to ensure that biodiversity is considered, for example, in efforts to develop sustainable criteria for bio-energy.

4.2.2 Trade:
Within WTO negotiations, biodiversity issues have been given scant attention, for example in discussions over agricultural subsidies. One area of engagement could be the elimination of environmentally harmful subsidies, for example, lessons could be drawn from initiatives to reform fisheries subsidies, which have met with some success. The reform of the Green Box was mentioned as another potential area of engagement, for example, through investigating the impact of these subsidies on biodiversity.

The access and benefit-sharing (ABS) agenda was briefly considered, because of its potential to be used as an incentive for biodiversity conservation. However, it was questioned whether there would be room for "pro-biodiversity" at the global level, whether at WIPO, WTO or the CBD. Doubts were also expressed as to whether it would be strategic to engage in this area, because of the slow progress of negotiations. One possibility would be to focus more on the private sector than the intergovernmental arena.
4.2.3 Poverty:
A frequent theme throughout the meeting was the view that biodiversity needs to be integrated into the poverty agenda. As mentioned above, it was thought crucial to raise the profile of biodiversity within the MDGs, while at the national level, it was proposed that such issues could be included within countries’ PRSPs.

To ensure buy-in at the national level, it was proposed that an initiative to support the participation of local biodiversity experts and practitioners in developing countries could be launched. This would have the twin benefits of raising the profile of biodiversity issues and building capacity at the national level. It would also assist in incorporating biodiversity and natural resource issues into development co-operation agendas. A more general discussion also pointed to the need for clearer understanding of the extent to which biodiversity and protected areas can assist in alleviating poverty.

The need to work with both donors and recipients was highlighted – the benefits and risks of imposing conditionalities on funds were discussed, but with no consensus. There was agreement that greater resources, both financial and technical, were needed to enable developing countries to implement any biodiversity strategies and that the Paris Conference scheduled for 19-21 September 2006 on Integrating Biodiversity in EU Development Cooperation organised by IUCN and Countdown 2010 would provide a good starting point for addressing these issues.

4.3 Addressing the Implementation Gap: How to strengthen networks and partnerships to implement concrete action that significantly reduces the loss of biodiversity?

Discussions in this area highlighted the need to unify the purpose of the wide range of conservation activities, to rationalise the many voices and viewpoints and to identify priorities for action.

4.3.1 Scientific Panel
There was general consensus on the need for a better and more effective interface between science and policy. While some participants favoured the establishment of a scientific panel on biodiversity, there were diverse views as to the best format and structure for achieving such an enhanced interface. The IPCC was mentioned as one possible model. While it was generally agreed that this should be high-profile exercise and instituted at a high level by governments concerns were raised at to the duplication of existing mechanisms.

Reference was made to the efforts by France in establishing such a an International Mechanism on Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMOSEB) (http://www.imoseb.net/) It was stressed that any mechanism should build on existing mechanisms and expertise, and in particular, should build on the efforts of the MEA, to co-ordinate an ongoing international assessment process with a strong support of governments.

Important objectives of such a mechanism would be to collate data and translate this into policy relevant information. It could also serve to add credibility to this information and to calls for action on biodiversity conservation, and thus, raise the profile of biodiversity issues.
4.3.2 Reporting
The need for reform of the CBD’s national reporting system was briefly discussed. In light of the concerns of many Parties to the Convention as to the relevance and effectiveness of the national reporting system, it was suggested that more participatory reporting be implemented in future. A better reporting format was also called for.

The need for better indicators on the status of biodiversity was also mentioned in this context, in order to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of conservation actions. The CBD indicators need further elaboration and development, and these need to be practical to use and meaningful for policy makers.

4.3.3 Identifying priorities
It was suggested that there is a need to identify successful models of conservation actions and processes, at national, regional and global levels, in order to help establish such processes elsewhere. However, it was highlighted that these should not be used as "prescriptive" action plans. Rather, they should be used to draw out lessons learnt and identify the elements underlying the success of particular actions in order to develop locally adapted solutions. The approach adopted by the Equator Initiative was cited as an example.

In this context, the need for more engagement with civil society was emphasised, because it is this sector which is most engaged with practical actions. Participants also called for a process to bring together initiatives from different regions to achieve better understanding of the issues and challenges, and to share experiences.

4.3.4 Finance
The need for more sustainable financing for biodiversity was highlighted. A number of the steps outlined above would help achieve this, namely improving communication of the biodiversity message, prioritising actions, and costing biodiversity.

The need to explore innovative sources of funds was also considered briefly, for example, the use of international taxes, side payments, fees on ecosystem services and bilateral aid.

4.3.4 Engaging the private sector
The need to engage more fully with the private sector was highlighted, in order to mainstream biodiversity issues into business practices and so enable businesses to have a more positive role in biodiversity conservation.

A number of mechanisms were proposed, including the use of biodiversity offsets and benchmarking, and greater use of NGO-business alliances. Other options that could be explored include: promotion of best practices by governments; establishment of government procurement programmes that support biodiversity; use of measures to stimulate the finance community to influence company behaviour, for example through more stringent reporting and disclosure requirements; and perhaps harmonising corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

5. SUMMING UP
The workshop highlighted the fact that the 2010 target provides an ideal opportunity to re-frame the message of the biodiversity sector, and to re-position these issues at the centre of the
sustainable development agenda. However, for this challenge to be met, urgent action is needed.

A range of opportunities for further action and a number of priority areas were identified. It was acknowledged that wider consultation was needed on these issues – a process that is to be implemented by IUCN at the regional level – and that further elaboration of the ideas put forward was necessary in order to come up with a clear strategy of how to proceed. The following themes are those that emerged from the workshop as priorities for future actions:

Communication, education and lobbying
Communication of the biodiversity "message" needs to be improved, by focusing on the relevance of biodiversity for sustainable development and livelihoods and also improving linkages with policy. Furthermore, a more positive message should be developed, based on the successes achieved.

"Riding the wave"
Biodiversity issues should be linked to other key global challenges, both to raise awareness of the significance of biodiversity and help in identifying options for processes and actions. In particular, the biodiversity sector needs to engage in those areas which represent particular challenges to conservation and to achievement of the 2010 target.

Integration with the MDGs
The 2010 target needs to be integrated into the MDGs, one element of which should be the elaboration of biodiversity indicators to include within MDG 7.

Prioritising
The priorities for conservation actions need to be identified. These should be linked to costs, and a methodology needs to be elaborated to determine this.

Financing conservation action
Innovative finance mechanisms should be explored to create incentives for biodiversity conservation, particularly for poor countries, and thus ensure sustainable financing.

Scientific panel
An enhanced high-level science policy interface needs to be established. Any such process should build on the MEA process. Key objectives of such a process should be to improve the communication of biodiversity information and establishing policy links.

Private sector engagement
The private sector needs to be engaged more in the biodiversity agenda. Mechanisms should be explored to mainstream biodiversity into business practices. In addition, the use of public – private partnerships should be investigated, and biodiversity expertise shared to a greater extent with the private sector.