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**Performance of the programme of work and budget,
including implementation of the resolutions of the
Environment Assembly**

**Progress in the implementation of resolution 2/17 on enhancing
the work of the United Nations Environment Programme in
facilitating cooperation, collaboration and synergies among
biodiversity-related conventions**

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

In its resolution 2/17 on enhancing the work of the United Nations Environment Programme in facilitating cooperation, collaboration and synergies among biodiversity-related conventions, the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme made a number of requests to the Executive Director and invitations to biodiversity-related conventions and to Governments in relation to cooperation, collaboration and synergies among biodiversity-related conventions.

The Executive Director is responding to those requests, primarily by launching a new project on realizing synergies for biodiversity. That and other projects contribute to achieving the expected accomplishments of the environmental governance and ecosystems management subprogrammes of the programmes of work for the bienniums 2016–2017 and 2018–2019, as well as the respective programmes of work of biodiversity-related conventions.

* UNEP/EA.3/1.

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides information on the implementation of resolution 2/17 on enhancing the work of the United Nations Environment Programme in facilitating cooperation, collaboration and synergies among biodiversity-related conventions, together with recommendations and suggested action.

II. Progress in the implementation of resolution 2/17

2. In resolution 2/17, the governing bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions, other relevant United Nations bodies and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services were invited to consider the results of the project on improving the effectiveness of, and cooperation among, biodiversity-related conventions and on opportunities for further synergies and also on related outcomes of the second session of the Environment Assembly. The Environment Programme provided relevant information to the governing bodies and the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions.

3. Consequently, at its thirteenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted decision XIII/24 on cooperation with other conventions and international organizations. The decision recognizes the work of the Environment Programme and builds on the recommendations for further enhancing synergies. At its seventeenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora adopted decisions 17.55 and 17.56 on cooperation with other biodiversity-related conventions, by which it encouraged parties to strengthen synergies at the national level and requested the Standing Committee to explore options to strengthen cooperation, collaboration and synergies at all relevant levels.

4. As requested in resolution 2/17, the Environment Programme continues to facilitate and support programmatic cooperation and collaboration among biodiversity-related conventions. Starting in June 2016, consultations have been held between the Environment Programme and relevant convention secretariats in preparation for the strategic portfolio of projects for the implementation of the medium-term strategy for the period 2018–2021 and programmes of work to reflect the programmatic priorities and needs of each convention. Through active engagement with the secretariats, the project concepts were adopted.

5. The Environment Programme actively supports the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and national biodiversity strategies and action plans as instruments for the coherent delivery of the goals of the biodiversity-related conventions through national and regional projects. The Environment Programme is also responding to the request to strengthen coherent system-wide action on capacity-building. Jointly with the secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States and supported by the European Commission, the Environment Programme is promoting environmental sustainability in the countries of those regions by building capacity for the effective implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, including the biodiversity-related conventions (ACP MEAs 2 project). Those activities are intended, in the long term, among other objectives, to enhance the capacity of countries to comply with their obligations under the agreements, to improve the management of natural resources and to reduce loss of biodiversity. The Environment Programme implements and executes projects funded by the Global Environment Facility and by other donors. Examples include assistance provided to parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to develop their legal, administrative and technical frameworks and their biosafety clearing house mechanisms, the ratification and implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity, national reporting and monitoring under individual conventions, strengthening of national institutions and legislation, and projects on marine biodiversity are contributing to strengthening coherent system-wide action for the effective implementation of biodiversity-related conventions and agreements.

6. The Environment Programme continues to facilitate cooperation on improving the efficiency of interoperability of data, scientific research and information-sharing, knowledge and tools using instruments that are part of the Multilateral Environmental Agreement Information and Knowledge Management Initiative and its United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (InforMEA). The initiative is convention-led and facilitated by the Environment Programme by providing the secretariat. Since 2013, the initiative has received financial support from the European Union. Phase II of the InforMEA project, which began in 2016, builds on multilateral environmental agreements, including biodiversity-related conventions. The search engine feature is able to access the decisions of governing bodies, national reports and implementation plans, which is

made possible through an interoperable and carefully negotiated information exchange system. In phase II, the Information Portal was expanded with the introduction of a section showing the collective contribution to the attainment of internationally agreed goals and targets (including the Sustainable Development Goals, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the global environmental goals).

7. In July 2016, subsequent to the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, the Environment Programme organized a consultation with the secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions. The results of that meeting fed into the development of a new concept, the environmental treaties programme, which includes the development of a project aimed at enhancing synergies among the conventions. The project responds directly to the calls made in resolution 2/17 and related decisions of the governing bodies of biodiversity-related conventions. The project will be launched in the fourth quarter of 2017 and implemented in the period leading up to 2020. It seeks to create opportunities for cooperation between conventions in the light of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. It will also provide input to discussions of governing bodies on realizing synergies and on enhanced cooperation at the national, regional and global levels. The project will also provide input to discussions on a long-term strategic plan for capacity-building, biodiversity communication, data and reporting related to biodiversity and is intended to support work at the national and regional levels to realize synergies. Work under the project will build on existing results and complement ongoing activities.

8. The project will contribute to the objectives and expected accomplishments of the environmental governance subprogramme. In particular, as a direct result of support from the Environment Programme, it will aim to increase the uptake of approaches for a coherent implementation of multiple multilateral environmental agreements and other multilateral institutional mechanisms (which would fulfil environmental governance subprogramme indicator (a) (ii)). The project will be implemented in close cooperation with the biodiversity-related conventions and other organizations concerned with biodiversity, with funding from the European Union and Switzerland.

9. In paragraph 9 of resolution 2/17, the United Nations Environment Assembly invited the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to consider the development of a follow-up strategic framework to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020. At its thirteenth meeting, in its decision XIII/1, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to prepare, in consultation with the Bureau and for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at its second meeting, a proposal for a comprehensive and participatory preparatory process and timetable for the follow-up to the Strategic Plan.

III. Recommendations and suggested actions

10. Through the above-mentioned work and project conception phase, the Environment Programme supports the enhancement of cooperation, collaboration and synergies among biodiversity-related conventions. The engagement and cooperation of the secretariats of the conventions and the parties thereto are an essential prerequisite.

11. The Executive Director will continue to undertake efforts to foster alignment of the programme of work of the Environment Programme with the programmatic decisions of the governing bodies of relevant conventions and to cooperate with their secretariats and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services to exchange information, knowledge and tools and enhance sharing of information when implementing the medium-term strategy for 2018–2021.