

EVALUATION REPORT ON PHASE II OF THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FORUM:  
BROADENING SUPPORT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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## CONTENTS

	Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
INTRODUCTION	6
I. BACKGROUND	6
A. Summary of the project	6
B. Evaluation methodology	7
II. MAJOR FINDINGS	7
III. GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FORUM PROJECT OBJECTIVES	8
A. Level of participation of target groups in the forums	8
B. Global Biodiversity Forum accredited increases in number of new institutions and stakeholders in the process of the Convention on Biological Diversity	8
C. Level of geographic representation in the Forums	9
D. Extent of new cooperative partnerships catalyzed	10
E. Adequacy in number of regional sessions	10
IV. GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FORUM PROJECT ACTIVITIES	10
A. Number of forums held	10
B. Number of participants in each forum	11
C. Pace at which translations are carried out	11
D. Development of the Global Biodiversity Forum website	11
E. Range of distribution of Global Biodiversity Forum products	11
F. Feedback from the monitoring and evaluation programme	11
V. GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FORUM PROJECT OUTCOMES	12
A. Usefulness of the issues selected	12
B. Number, type and quality of products generated	12
C. Ease of use of the Global Biodiversity Forum website	13
D. Extent of engagement of business sector	13

E.	Contribution of Global Biodiversity Forums, publications and spin-off initiatives to decisions and recommendations on the Convention on Biological Diversity	13
F.	Number and type of regional cooperative initiatives and measures catalyzed through regional dialogue	15
G.	Number of national and sub-national case studies presented at Global Biodiversity Forum workshops	16
VI.	FUNCTIONAL, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES	16
A.	Coordination and secretarial issues	16
B.	Follow-up to focus issues	16
C.	Workshop facilitation and Forum management	17
D.	Communications	17
VII.	RECOMMENDATIONS	17
A.	Policy recommendations	17
B.	Programme recommendations	18
VIII.	CONCLUSIONS	18
<u>Annexes</u>		
I.	Persons who were interviewed or provided comment	20
II.	Methods used to undertake interviews and evaluation	21
III.	Comments on Global Biodiversity Forum focal points	22
IV.	Attendance at Global Biodiversity Forums	25

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Global Biodiversity Forum (GBF) was designed to support implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Through a medium-sized grant from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) in 1998, GBF continued to provide an independent international mechanism to engage biodiversity stakeholder groups in ongoing dialogue. The Forum provides an opportunity to increase capacity and understanding, especially in developing regions, as well as facilitating increased cooperation and partnership, through sharing, debate and catalytic development of networks.

2. GBF as a process has achieved many of its immediate objectives, although there is a particular need to be able to quantify its results through measurable outputs through the monitoring process now in place. This is especially challenging for longer term tracking of GBF influence that may extend over a number of years. The forum is at a critical stage where it needs to consider a number of strategic options for the future including widening the range of stakeholders, regionalization, innovative connections between the Convention on Biological Diversity and other conventions, and maximizing the effectiveness of workshops, and outputs which do not originate from the Conference of the Parties and which effect outcomes of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

3. Specific policy recommendations include:

- (a) Development of a communications strategy;
- (b) Consideration of a very small, focused and dedicated secretariat;
- (c) Engagement with private, business and research stakeholders;
- (d) Consideration of the timing of GBF and related convention meetings including:
  - (i) Development of a planning cycle;
  - (ii) Increased use of regional forums;
  - (iii) Follow-up on issues and actions; and
  - (iv) Achieving overall financial stability for the programme, including long-term funding.

4. Specific programme recommendations include:

- (a) Greater use of commissioned review papers of focal issues in conjunction with expansion of the range of case studies;
- (b) Professional facilitators for workshops;
- (c) Highly targeted analyses;
- (d) Increasing levels of interaction with other conventions;
- (e) A more open and structured approach to topic selection;
- (f) Ongoing use of the internal monitoring and evaluation plan; and
- (g) Greater use of language translation, especially for regional forums, as funding allows.

5. It is necessary to distinguish between:

- (a) The GBF process; and
- (b) GBF project as funded by GEF for which an overall favourable evaluation of Very Good can be given.

The process has shown considerable value and is developing as a major component of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Can the process continue and evolve further in the absence of GEF funding? Probably not, at least in the short-term.

## INTRODUCTION

6. This evaluation of GBF, Phase II, project GF/1200-98-10, focuses on the objectives of the project and its quality and utility. Key to this is the evaluation of the impact of the project on the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity both at meetings of the Conference of the Parties and at regional, national and local levels including community and environmental non-governmental organization engagement in discussion.

7. The evaluation is based primarily on attendance at the Nairobi GBF held in May 2000 and interviews with participants in the forum, along with consideration of forum processes and outcomes. Also interviewed were representative stakeholders including delegates at the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity immediately following the Nairobi GBF. There was particular follow-up of contacts for focus issues at past forums.

### I. BACKGROUND

#### A. Summary of the project

8. GBF was designed to support implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Through a medium-sized grant from GEF in 1998, GBF continued to provide an independent international mechanism to engage biodiversity stakeholder groups in ongoing dialogue. The Forum provides an opportunity to increase capacity and understanding especially in developing regions, as well as facilitating increased cooperation and partnership, through sharing, debate and catalytic development of networks.

9. The pilot phase of GBF, from 1992 to 1997, was a response to calls by Agenda 21 and the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity for people involved in a wide range of biodiversity related activities to contribute effectively to understanding values and uses of biodiversity and to actions for conserving and using biological resources sustainably and equitably. The pilot phase involved 1550 individuals from more than 105 countries, in a total of eight sessions. Important objectives of GBF are to:

(a) Establish an informal mechanism where parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and major stakeholder groups can explore and debate the central priority issues around the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

(b) Expand the Convention on Biological Diversity constituency and foster broader involvement of, and commitment by, independent, public and business sector partners in the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

(c) Catalyze new cooperative partnerships and initiatives involving parties and stakeholder groups among different sectors;

(d) Strengthen regional output into the process and implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity through regional initiatives and sessions that consider issues in a more in-depth and open process;

(e) Foster feedback between science and policy, at global to local levels, by multi-disciplinary workshops and the sharing of technical experience.

10. Initial sessions of GBF were all convened prior to meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Later, GBF was tested regionally in East Africa and Latin America, and its capacity to bridge science and policy was tested through meetings prior to the meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) to the Convention on Biological Diversity, with focus on technical and scientific aspects of biodiversity issues. Forums were also tried as bridges to other international processes, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Commission on Sustainable Development.

11. Phase II of GBF, to which GEF contributed, commenced in March 1998 with completion in February 2000. The strategy for this phase was to more effectively focus GBF meetings and outcomes on the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity, especially on areas that have been identified by the meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity as particularly important in supporting national priorities, action plans and programs, including areas in which GBF support has been recommended by the Conference of the Parties. Project activities will be implemented in close collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to ensure that priorities identified by the Conference of the Parties receive adequate attention from developing country parties.<sup>1/</sup> Phase II identifies a number of indicators which provide a framework for this evaluation.

12. Expected outcomes from Phase II (GBF: Phase II, Project Summary) include:

- (a) A fully operational and coordinated institutional basis for GBF;
- (b) About seven GBF meetings prepared and held;
- (c) Broader and more active stakeholder engagement in the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity globally, regionally, nationally and locally;
- (d) Extensive dissemination of, and documentation on, implementation measures for the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- (e) A sustainability study undertaken;
- (f) Monitoring and evaluation plan developed and implemented.

## B. Evaluation methodology

13. The overall objective of this evaluation of Phase II of GBF is to document the impact of the project on targeted international, regional, national and local groups, especially in terms of their willingness and ability to engage in discussions and subsequent implementation of actions under the Convention on Biological Diversity. The sectional arrangement of this evaluation follows closely the indicators identified in the project document.

14. For details of the evaluation see Annex II.

## II. MAJOR FINDINGS

15. These are grouped to match the objectives and indicators in the original Project Summary document. One indicator has been omitted from the list of GBF Project Objectives, as it is virtually identical to an indicator listed under GBF Project Outcomes. The evaluation is primarily on core issues but also notes suggested changes.

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<sup>1/</sup> Global Biodiversity Forum: Phase II, Project Summary

### III. GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FORUM PROJECT OBJECTIVES

#### A. Level of participation of target groups in the forums

16. Initial phases of GBF were sometimes viewed as closed sessions of northern participants whereas later GBFs have increasingly utilized indigenous participants from developing regions. When the Secretariat of GEF attended the regional GBF session for Eastern and Southern African countries in Mombasa, they found that the majority of participants were representatives of either Eastern and Southern African governments, non-governmental organizations or the local community from the region. Nevertheless, several participants at the fifteenth GBF felt that there were still occasions when debate on issues was blocked by developed Northern blocs, and there were lapses in cultural sensitivity.

17. Focal issue discussions involve an expanding range of stakeholders. Facilitators, however, face the dilemma of how to maximize discussion while allowing people and institutions to make statements. Too many papers erode highly valued discussion time, with a risk that issues are not fully traversed. This may mean being more selective or moving to alternate presentation systems such as poster papers or electronic presentations. Increasing the number of concurrent sessions is unlikely to be an acceptable solution. A considerable number of case studies could be presented with only brief workshop summaries, assuming that participants have read their documents in advance. There is a lot of literature and information available on the forum topics which delegates could be encouraged and helped to access ahead of time.

18. A mechanism that might be explored is to pre-empt recommendations within commissioned review papers with discussion of draft recommendations. Most interviewees favoured commissioning review papers to traverse issues and identify key questions. This would leave greater time for debate and consideration of case studies, seen by many as being vital. The Steering Committee has already debated several alternative formats to streamline discussion. Focus is important when maximising impact. Regional meetings focused on one topic but dealing with it in-depth, then leading up to the broader truly global GBF, provides another mechanism that should be considered further. Regional meetings should be timed to coincide with other meetings that have significant commonality, in order to be cost-effective.

19. Not only is each forum different in character, but every issues workshop is unique and to some extent unpredictable. Despite pre-registration, it is difficult to predict workshop size. At the fifteenth GBF in Nairobi, numbers of participants in the three workshops ranged from 30 to 120. Innovative skill of workshop organizers is vital to the success of workshops in such an uncertain situation. Interviewees indicated marked improvement in workshop organization throughout the course of GBFs.

20. Very high value is placed on informal networking by GBF participants. This is appreciated by forum organizers who try to ensure that session breaks facilitate this. Informal networking allows people not normally exposed to global issues to acquire knowledge and interest and be part of a global voice. One interviewee said, "I thought I was the only one who had my problems until I started talking".

21. A constraint, which may result from having fewer formal presentations, is how to select those who receive funding to participate. In the past, presentation of a paper has been a criterion for such support, but if the number of formally presented papers is reduced then a different way of allocating finance to participants will have to evolve.



B. Global Biodiversity Forum accredited increases in number of new institutions and stakeholders in the process of the Convention on Biological Diversity

22. GBF is being increasingly recognized by the intergovernmental process as a very useful mechanism for discussing issues related to the Convention on Biological Diversity. This is occurring through a variety of channels including direct participation by members of non-governmental organizations who have come up through the GBF process at meetings of the Conference of the Parties, and indirectly through production of issue-based reports and statements, input into other conventions, and by within-country and intra-regional action and networks.

23. The Steering Committee deliberately encourages new people into the forums. Newcomers are sometimes perceived as a risk in that one does not know exactly what they will say and how they will say it, and they may traverse previous discussion. However, a mix of old and new faces should be considered essential to GBF as a viable forum. Nevertheless, several participants at the fifteenth GBF noted that presenters from developed countries were sometimes too much to the fore in discussions. A very pleasing move was to see the forum plenary presentation by African farmers on arid land issues.

24. The next step in increasing the breadth of participants in the Convention on Biological Diversity process is somewhat harder to both achieve and assess. A significant number of people who come through GBF have gone on to take up influential roles in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and GBF participants are increasingly involved as members of the Convention on Biological Diversity panels of experts. For developing country participants, financial assistance may be necessary and it should be noted that several international non-governmental organizations have assisted African delegates to attend both GBFs and meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

25. GBF has not engaged sufficiently with the private, industry and research sectors, each of which was poorly represented at the fifteenth GBF. Industry and private interests are significant stakeholders in the Convention on Biological Diversity and their greater engagement through the GBF process should be an urgent priority, which may require one or more GBFs being timed to coincide with trade meetings.

26. The Steering Committee of GBF realizes the need to quantify indicators more precisely. It has recommended that the registration form for future forums should ask if participants are attending primarily in a GBF role or meeting of the Conference of the Parties role, and whether they are attending both. A target of getting ten per cent new people to attend the meeting of the Conference of the Parties through GBF is recommended. A better question might be to ask registrants whether this is the first time they have attended GBF and whether their institution is a new participant. A significant number of institutions and individuals at the fifteenth GBF were participating for the first time.

C. Level of geographic representation in the Forums

27. Relatively informal advertising of its existence and role is important for GBF. Funding assistance helps provide a geographic spread. A strong African presence at the fifteenth GBF was to be expected. It suggests that strengthening the GBF alliance is aided by judicious selection of meeting venues. A lot of effort goes into making GBF relevant through affiliations with meetings of the Conference of the Parties, non-governmental organization networks, the networks of focus issue organizers and the Steering Committee. Nevertheless, at the fifteenth GBF, representation from some regions and sectors was weak:

(a) 40 per cent of the participants were from the local region and another 40 per cent were from the developed nations. This suggests that:

- (i) the location of a GBF is an important determinant;
- (ii) that it may be difficult for people from less affluent regions to participate.

(b) South and East/Southeast Asia (eight participants each), Oceania (ten participants) and especially the Middle East and West Asia (two participants) were under-represented. Two of these regions have significant interests in one of the focal topics of arid land biodiversity and utilization;

(c) There was a paucity of research and university representatives (25 participants), which means outputs may lack a desirable level of scientific veracity;

(d) Industry and the private sector were particularly poorly represented (seven participants).

#### D. Extent of new cooperative partnerships catalyzed

28. GBF relies on partnerships. A small number of global institutions with a high profile within the forum structure are the key drivers of GBF. In this situation it is very easy for perceptions of a club mentality to emerge. It is important that although World Conservation Union (IUCN) is the lead organization for GBF Phase II, it must not be perceived to be leading GBF but should be seen only as one of a number of facilitators, albeit a primary one, although two delegates strongly suggested that the forums ought to primarily be meetings of IUCN affiliates.

29. The forum engages in a form of transfer technology, where people who otherwise would not touch with world issues can be introduced to them and can be tutored into responsible roles in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and related forums. This appears to have gained efficiency as forums have matured. GBF does bring people into the system in this way, and facilitates new cooperative partnerships, although this is difficult to quantify. Monitoring should track both individuals and organizations into the meetings of the Conference of the Parties arena not only for the Convention on Biological Diversity but also for other conventions. A significant number of those at the fifteenth GBF were also at the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties so that while people seemed not to want the meeting of the Conference of the Parties to be dominant (effectively this would make the GBF into another meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity) they were encouraged to see growing connectivity. There is further potential in this area as a significant number of delegates of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties still seem little aware of the existence of GBF.

#### E. Adequacy in number of regional sessions

30. Regional meetings on the Convention on Biological Diversity have not been held during the period of Phase II of GBF. Responses with regard to regional meetings of GBF were mixed. Justification for regional meetings lies in the likely wide regional participation, and easier focus on specific issues. Several delegates volunteered the view that while large global GBFs tend to be dominated by generalists (often Northern), regional forums could bring in more local specialists who can dissect issues. An emerging consensus was for focused regional workshops leading onto regional synthesis meetings and then to larger global gatherings. An emerging pattern might be two regional GBF workshops each year, and a single annual global Forum.

31. Regional meetings need to be carefully organized and resourced. The East African regional GBF, run as part of the Pilot Scheme, cost about \$150,000, of which \$25,000 came from IUCN. This meant fund-raising and a long wait until publication of results. Such meetings rely a lot on the goodwill of local, usually volunteer, organizers. On the other hand, they should also lead to a new range of contacts and potential partners. Regional meetings, such as in east Africa, facilitate discussion on regional priority problems and issues that then lead to significant GBF outcomes without going through the meeting of the Conference of the Parties intergovernmental processes. The benefits are seen at national level implementation rather than through the intergovernmental process. This is probably a more expedient way of directly influencing on-the-ground implementation of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity rather than working only through meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

### IV. GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FORUM PROJECT ACTIVITIES

#### A. Number of forums held

32. A total of 15 GBFs have been held of which six have been held during the course of GBF Phase II. In addition, there have been regionalized forums during this period in Moscow in May to June 1999, Sri Lanka in October 1999 and Eastern and Southern Africa in Mombasa in February 2000. These have been locally coordinated to look more specifically at regional issues in a global context. The total number of forums is that forecast in the project outline.

#### B. Number of participants in each forum

33. Records show that there has been a reasonably high although variable attendance at successive forums (Annex IV). The total figure of over 1450 participants is very encouraging, and it is evident from the fifteenth GBF and discussions with interviewees relating to previous Forums that overall there has been an increasing and high representation by developing nations.

#### C. Pace at which translations are carried out

34. Proceedings for the fifteenth GBF were in English with no on-site translation facilities, a cost consideration. Where it has been possible to provide simultaneous translation, for instance at some smaller regional meetings, this has been done. At the fifteenth GBF, non-English speakers generally came across adequately, although there was some inhibition noted during open discussion and question-time. For indigenous people, language is often very important, and sometimes there is a perception that when you leave your native tongue you also abandon essential knowledge. However, for a global meeting there is no easy answer, although for regional meetings it will be appropriate to translate results into major regional languages.

35. Reports from forums are made available as promptly as possible in English, French and Spanish. The major problem with achieving this in the past has been workshop organizers getting behind schedule, rather than the time taken to do translations. To rectify this, the Nairobi forum hired a forum Chief Rapporteur to ensure that workshop organizers were fully resourced and to help make reports available in a timely manner.

#### D. Development of the Global Biodiversity Forum website

36. Detailed access statistics have been maintained by IUCN. As a representative sample, the records for May 2000 indicate a high rate of use for the site. During this period there were 6890 hits, and 4376 files involving over 40,000 KB transferred to users. The maximum number of hits on any one day was 639 with an average of 222. In terms of users, 2800 were unresolved (40 per cent), 745 were from non-profit organizations (10.8 per cent), and 691 from networks (10 per cent). Major country users are Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and the United States of America.. A total of 40 countries recorded hits during this period. This constitutes a reasonable level of success.

#### E. Range of distribution of Global Biodiversity Forum products

37. Products are widely distributed and many are available for free down-loading from the GBF website. Hard copy reports of forums are available and a growing number of secondary products such as case studies and workshop follow-up documents are now available. This in itself is a measure of the growing success of the Forums at a local and direct level. Many of the long-term products are in transformed people and attitudes, including greater access of individuals to the process of the Convention on Biological Diversity and increased awareness by governments of the views and functions of non-governmental organizations and of the positions of traditional society on biodiversity issues. Analysis of the website statistics suggests a wide dissemination of GBF products. Nevertheless, comments from southeast Asia and parts of Oceania and Australasia, and the absence of adequate representation from the Middle East suggests that products are still not significantly reaching some of these parts of the world.

## F. Feedback from the monitoring and evaluation programme

38. A further project indicator is the extent to which the monitoring and evaluation plan, developed by the project, was used in providing feedback into the design and implementation of subsequent sessions of GBF. Consultants to the Biodiversity Policy Coordination Division of IUCN developed a monitoring and evaluation plan in 1999. This has three major goals:

- (a) To provide accountability to investors;
- (b) To continually improve the usefulness of future sessions; and
- (c) To provide pertinent information about the project to future funders.

An internal monitoring trial of GBF participants was tested at the fourteenth GBF and the system was approved by the Steering Committee in June 1999.

39. Monitoring is now in place and at the fifteenth GBF all participants were asked to return a survey sheet to the organizers for professional evaluation by a consultant hired for the purpose. The response rate was high at 50 per cent. The results of this monitoring are not yet available but the questions cover general organization, general outcomes, detailed comments on workshops attended, and follow-up to GBF including how individuals expect to follow up issues themselves. This is the first forum where there has been a full monitoring system in action and its evaluation is not yet complete.

## V. GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FORUM PROJECT OUTCOMES

### A. Usefulness of the issues selected

40. Issues for discussion are selected by the GBF Steering Committee through a process of consultation. Once issues have been decided, co-sponsoring is sought, abstracts are asked for and issue statements are organized. Forum organizers seek comment from those with a GBF track record, while also encouraging new participants. This may result in some participants feeling that their issues are ignored, for example, climate change issues for smaller island nations. Most participants appear to be happy with the system although some advocate a more open approach to topic selection. One instance was cited of a topic having financial sponsorship, a full slate of speakers, international non-governmental organization backing and key linkages established, yet having difficulty being approved and having to be strongly championed by outsiders.

41. Issues dealt with are representative of the major issues of the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The major exception appears to have been an under-representation of trade, industry and consumptive issues. Not surprisingly, issues such as forests, access to and benefit sharing of genetic resources are prominent. Two problems identified are the need to provide succinct and rigorously targeted material, and whether there ought to be greater canvassing of the larger constituency of GBF on both the selection of issues and presenters. Also, the developing emphasis on an ecosystems approach by the Convention on Biological Diversity, creates a situation where one can cogently argue for getting a greater range of participants into the process of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as consideration of multi-sectoral issues, cultures and socio-economics increases. This will especially suit a mixed regional and global approach to future forums.

### B. Number, type and quality of products generated

42. The major outputs of GBF in terms of the Conference of the Parties process are its reports and associated documents from each GBF, the summary statement of conclusions and recommendations made to meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and other convention meetings, and speech notes when appropriate. The documents are available in hard copy and as electronic copy from the GBF

website. Major reports are available in English, French and Spanish. Major outputs in terms of other channels are the development of local and regional networks, regional issue-based publications and reports, input into other conventions, and local or community action generated by attendance at the forums.

43. One of the criticisms sometimes expressed of the forum outputs is that general recommendations lack teeth for solving practical problems, and it has been suggested that the reports and especially recommendations are coming back to the same problems too often, indicating that too little headway is really being made in major issues. A major issue in presentation and especially in resolving the content of recommendations, for instance to the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, is that of reconciling a wide diversity of views. The general quality of output documents is good, although the comment has also been offered by several participants and government officials that technical discussion sometimes lacks the level of detail wanted by Conference of the Parties delegations and convention secretariats.

44. Follow-up with focal issue coordinators shows that there is a wide range of outputs, some of which are not measurable as publications (for instance, generation of local projects), and others which are produced by means other than through the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. A significant proportion of the long-term output of the forums will be subsequent to, perhaps many months or even years after, a GBF. Thus, there needs to be a means of tracking developments in particular issues which have been discussed by the GBF, as part of the monitoring system, at least over an ensuing five year period.

#### C. Ease of use of the Global Biodiversity Forum website

45. The website of GBF is readily accessible and well indexed, a refreshing feature being its lack of complex graphics so that it comes up on the computer screen in minimal time. Navigation is extremely simple either into particular forums, focus issues, or general information about GBF itself. Reports are available in English, French or Spanish, along with lists of participants, closing statements and workshop information, press statements, and major speeches.

#### D. Extent of engagement of the business and private sector

46. The engagement of the private sector generally, and the business and corporate sector in particular, is still weak. Most interviewees agreed, as did government Conference of the Parties and Convention Secretariat representatives, that it was necessary to bring in other stakeholders, especially from the development and private sectors. Several production industry representatives were present at the fifteenth GBF but did not appear to have been involved in any formal way with the workshops.

47. An important aspect of this may be the need for GBF to engage more with industry, trade, private sector and producer interests on their own ground by, for instance, coordinating a session of GBF to coincide with international trade or economics meetings. Several interviewees considered that a significant number of players in the production sector are seeking to understand biodiversity in a sustainability context. Last year the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat met with industry representatives and it would seem appropriate for GBF to follow this lead. The intangible private sector involves real people and there are ethical investors who ought to be involved in GBF-type discussions. It is important to avoid tokenism by inviting just a few representative private interests. Regional meetings probably provide a useful arena to work ideas through between the non-governmental organization and industry sectors. Greater involvement of private and business sectors will require preparation to ensure that contributions are mutually constructive. It is likely that private and business interests would be very objective about cost benefits of meetings. Their participation may be dependent on knowing that their contribution was meaningful and the benefits were tangible.

E. Contribution of Global Biodiversity Forums, publications and spin-off initiatives to the decisions and recommendations of the Convention on Biological Diversity

48. One of the most important indicators is the extent to which forums and their outputs contribute constructively to formal decisions and recommendations taken at the Convention on Biological Diversity intergovernmental level, and to effective national and regional implementation efforts. At first, only a handful of Forum participants were involved directly in meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. It is now estimated that that up to 50 per cent of those who attend a GBF may attend an associated meeting of the Conference of the Parties as well. There is significant GBF influence on traditional knowledge and indigenous peoples issues being dealt with by meetings of the Conference of the Parties. SBSTTA has reacted positively to GBF requests for working groups. The GBF also provides a channel for drawing attention to agenda items for future Conference of the Parties and SBSSTA meetings. SBSSTA is very helpful as part of the process, including allowing follow-up for later GBF workshops that can be subsequently fed into the Convention process. It is therefore important that GBF documents and issues papers are widely distributed, not just passively but actively into the hands of those who can best use them.

49. An important consideration concerns timing of GBF and related convention meetings such as the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The view of some delegation members of the Conference of the Parties is that as governments have already developed their positions prior to arriving at a meeting of the Conference of the Parties, this is too late a stage for presentation of additional recommendations. On the other hand, GBF recommendations can be readily used in subsequent action as, for instance, is reported to have occurred following the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties, where a workshop of GBF on access to genetic resources led to subsequent work at the national level. A Forum prior to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat, later led to a number of initiatives concerning peatlands and climate change. On the other hand, timing of the GBF immediately before a meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity facilitates participation by delegates, as well as facilitating non-governmental organization participation in the meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Advantages in this include bringing new government delegates up to speed on biodiversity issues which they may otherwise miss, prior to debates at the meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

50. A suggested solution from several GBF participants and Conference of the Parties delegates is that of GBF moving into a more obvious planning cycle between meetings of the Conference of the Parties. One model would be to shift the major global meeting to follow the meeting of the Conference of the Parties and use this to traverse the issues that are on the immediate agenda of the latter and the SBSTTA. These would provide the focal point issues for the following two years using working parties and regional workshops to develop position statements and expert analyses which could be provided to Conference of the Parties delegations at least six months prior to the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Prior to the meeting, an executive group would fine-tune the strategy for the presentation of GBF statements and papers to the meeting.

51. A key issue raised at Convention Secretariat level is that of collaboration between GBF and the Conference of the Parties. A point of criticism is that most GBFs have lacked desirable integration, but that a major exception was the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands when the GBF immediately prior was very effective in feeding into the meeting. The Convention on Wetlands Secretariat worked with GBF organizers to ensure that several of the sessions were reviewing decisions of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties or providing the opportunity for in-depth discussion of keynote papers and issues in the meeting of the Conference of the Parties. An observation from this exercise was that the GBF concept is to bring non-governmental organizations, governments and private sector together and it seems that the latter two are yet to embrace the concept fully.

52. It has already been suggested that comprehensive, commissioned review papers of focal issues, prepared well ahead, would be a particularly useful GBF output. This would allow focus meetings to work through the detail of issues combined with fully global forums. Such focus meetings could also be targeted to helping national delegations decide their positions for future meetings of the Conference of the Parties. This would assist in resolving the difficulty of a forum trying to cope with a number of in-depth issues in only two days.

53. An important philosophical point is that GBF does not itself reach positions to be advocated, but rather seeks to illuminate positions for participants themselves to consider within the framework of their particular socioeconomic, environmental and cultural framework. GBF is not currently designed to be a lobby for particular positions on issues, although this perception is widespread. It does aim to raise awareness levels in deliberations of meetings of the Conference of the Parties. But the question that must continually be asked is whether delegations are going to change their views as a result of GBF deliberations when their own positions are largely determined by government advisors who may choose to ignore GBF outputs. This emphasizes the important role of GBF in working on within-country and within-region actions.

54. An essential feature, yet also an Achilles heel of the GBF process, is its very broad constituency and consensus process. There is no easy answer to this tension, the resolution of which largely depends on organizational skills and sensitivity of workshop leaders, rapporteurs and the Steering Committee. One of the most frequent words used by interviewees was focus, in the context of ensuring that GBF provides highly targeted views and analyses compiled not by the same people but involving the best available professionals in the field, interacting with people and organizations involved in the issues on an everyday basis.

#### F. Number and type of regional cooperative initiatives and measures catalyzed through regional dialogue

55. This is a very difficult indicator to estimate especially in any quantitative sense, yet such estimates are important if GBF is to demonstrate its overall effectiveness. Interviewees did cite numerous instances where they were aware of contributions to regional and national measures that can be attributed primarily to the GBF process and outputs. GBF is moving towards engaging with other biodiversity interest groups apart from the direct relationship with the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, such as the Convention on Wetlands and CITES.

56. Contact with listed coordinators for focal issues produced very mixed results ranging from enthusiasm and information about ongoing initiatives to inability to contact the person(s) listed. Nevertheless, the following encouraging examples of actions separate from the meetings of the Conference of the Parties are cited:

(a) Invasive species were dealt with at the thirteenth GBF and the GBF-SSEA. This resulted in greatly increased awareness of indigenous people's issues, and modification of the statements of the Convention on Wetlands especially to tie invasive species work into regional and international agreements and organization programmes. Awareness was also fostered at the level of meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity;

(b) Climate change issues (eleventh GBF and twelfth GBF) led to development of greater focus in institutional programmes, such as the IUCN climate change programme, and also fed into the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and other meetings. One of the complications of the climate change issue is that GBF is only one player in a well populated field;

(c) On forests and biological diversity (eighth GBF), there was partial success through circulation of a range of alternative views, although this was hampered by lack of political will to move ahead with a forest work programme. Nevertheless, other forest programmes were strengthened;

(d) Wetlands have been discussed in several forums (e.g., the eighth GBF which is prior to the GBF Phase II, and the thirteenth GBF). The focal points have been very successful, for example, through the Convention on Wetlands. The carbon sink role of wetlands catalyzed the interest of a number of agencies, including IUCN, at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands and will

hopefully lead to a global action plan at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands, in 2002. Indigenous people's wetland issues (thirteenth GBF) resulted in a high level of national follow-up activities also being included in the outputs of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity;

(e) Public education and awareness (tenth GBF which is prior to GBF Phase II) resulted in development of common principles for good practice which were transmitted to the Conference of the Parties, and this has been followed up by publication of a subsequent report to the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. It also had networking implications for facilitating national work;

(f) Debate of financial innovations and desertification (twelfth GBF) led to identification of synergies, with later workshops on the Convention on Biological Diversity building on results, including the role of the private sector. The forum brought agencies and partners together;

(g) Scale in adaptive management (fourteenth GBF) resulted in a report that is due to be published shortly and also provided a sense of authority for a range of sustainable use initiatives. It indicated the need to prepare practical tools for laypersons and practitioners.

#### G. Number of national and sub-national case studies presented at Global Biodiversity Forum workshops

57. Case studies are the backbone of GBF discussion and have been well presented in forum documents. There is a will to expand the range of case studies available and consideration should be given to providing case studies in a virtual electronic format. It was, for instance, apparent at the fifteenth GBF, with the discussions on dryland ecosystems, that there were significant regions which were not represented but which should have made significant case study input. This suggests that there should be a more vigorous pursuance of case studies and fuller representation.

58. Several interviewees suggested that there is sometimes too much preaching to the converted, especially from a developed country perspective, which cut down on the time available to analyse case studies from other more biodiverse regions experiencing problems with biodiversity management and preservation. Case studies emerged in interviews as a further vital part of the GBF process to be expanded.

## VI. FUNCTIONAL, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

### A. Coordination and secretariat issues

59. GBF is still undergoing a process of evolution, and many participants may not be entirely clear about its primary purpose, for instance, whether it is primarily technical or political. A key document in draft form is the GBF Guide for Organizers. This document will provide comprehensive and practical guidelines for future operation of GBF.

60. It is recognized by the Steering Committee that a formal secretariat for GBF would lead to more defined and formal processes and to better follow-up of issues. However, the forum is deliberately designed to encourage individual organizations and individuals to follow up issues themselves. Nevertheless, there is a growing role for a very small, dedicated, focused secretariat to enhance the operation of the GBF ongoing development of issues and use of outputs. Thus, ongoing development of the Steering Committee structure, regionalization, and significant changes in workshop structure all require continuity of resources if they are to be effected.



## B. Follow-up to focus issues

61. Follow-up of issues is vital and needs to be given high priority within the operations of GBF. This should improve with the setting up of a comprehensive monitoring system. However, it is essential that the forum can point to quantitative evidence of its effectiveness.

62. Forums should be helping to set future agendas for the Convention on Biological Diversity. This requires a very active monitoring and follow-up structure for GBF so events are not just left to chance. It means:

(a) Developing effective mechanisms to ensure that GBF recommendations are robust and fully defensible, and based on rigorous analysis and wide participation;

(b) Mechanisms (including timing) to ensure that GBF outputs are used in the most effective way to positively influence decisions and activities;

(c) Medium-term and long-term follow-up to focus issues and long-term monitoring of the spin-offs from GBF initiatives.

## C. Workshop facilitation and Forum management

63. Effective workshop organization is absolutely vital to the successful running of GBF and production of focused outputs. Discussion, especially with Steering Committee members, indicated that it is virtually impossible to predict the make-up of a workshop audience prior to the Forum commencing, even with pre-registration. This places a heavy burden on workshop organizers who are also being asked to use their networks to provide the right mix of experts and a structure conducive to producing results. A prudent measure would be to provide professional facilitators for workshops, concentrate on group dynamics, participatory processes and end-products, freeing workshop organizers to concentrate on content.

64. Some organizational problems were experienced at the fifteenth GBF. A change of venue two days prior to the start of the Forum meant that lunch was taken several minutes from the conference site and this meant both some late starts to sessions and that it was a little more difficult for delegates to find each other over the lunch break. There were also comments about the adequacy of some rooms and whether this reflected a perception that this was only an indigenous non-governmental organization meeting.

## D. Communications

65. GBF needs to make sure that all stakeholders and key countries (especially those with pressing biodiversity issues) know about GBF and understand its role, ensuring that there is a full and open flow of information about GBF and its outputs, ensuring that potential participants are fully briefed as to their reasonable expectations, developing further participatory processes, monitoring and improving dialogue with Conference of the Parties delegates, and ensuring that there is a full range of expert consultation in developing issues.

66. An important aspect of communications is the role of the media. This is an aspect of GBF that has a lot of possibilities for innovation. Media representatives need to be deliberately targeted and attracted with compelling by-lines. The fifteenth GBF held press conferences, made press kits available and had a full-time press officer. There were some highly significant people at the Forum, some extremely important issues under discussion, and some riveting stories and case studies that deserved to get a much higher profile.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

67. This section concentrates on those issues which are considered important and strategic to the operation of GBF and which require attention and responses.

#### A. Policy recommendations

- (a) Development of a communications strategy: stakeholder's and country's issues, participant briefing, participatory processes, Conference of the Parties delegate dialogue, consultation on developing issues, and a compellingly attractive and targeted media policy;
- (b) Reassessment of coordination roles and consideration of whether a very small, focused and dedicated secretariat would enhance the operation of GBF, especially in the areas of funding, ongoing development of issues, use of outputs and monitoring;
- (c) Effective and growing engagement with private, business and research stakeholders, including meeting sector representatives on their own ground and developing appropriate workshops, for instance, in trade issues;
- (d) Consideration of the timing of GBF and related convention meetings including development of a planning cycle, determination of key input mechanisms into delegation papers of the meetings of the Conference of the Parties, development of more effective collaboration between GBF and the Conference of the Parties;
- (e) Increased use of regional forums and greater development and monitoring of regional and national outcomes that do not originate from the Conference of the Parties;
- (f) A high priority for follow-up including active monitoring, resourcing of focal point issue coordinators, facilitating within-country and within-region dissemination of the results of forum debates and follow-up protocols for GBF issues;
- (g) Achieving overall financial stability for the programme including long-term funding.

#### B. Programme recommendations

- (a) Greater use of commissioned review papers of focal issues, prepared well ahead, and presented through focus meetings before presentation to global forums;
- (b) Expansion of the range of case studies, and representation to give a fully global picture, with consideration of poster papers and electronic formats;
- (c) Provision of professional facilitators for workshops, to concentrate on group dynamics, flexible participatory processes and end-products, and so free up workshop organizers to concentrate on workshop content;
- (d) Ensuring that forums provide highly targeted views and analyses involving the best available professionals interacting with people and organizations involved in the issues on an everyday basis;
- (e) Increasing levels of interaction with other convention groups in addition to the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- (f) A greater openness and structured approach to topic selection taking full account of particular regional and country priorities;
- (g) Ongoing use of the monitoring and evaluation plan developed by the project for providing feedback to the design and implementation of subsequent sessions of GBF through the course of project implementation;
- (h) Attention to greater use of language translation as funding allows.

## VIII. CONCLUSIONS

68. In carrying out this evaluation, a wide range of views was encountered. There are significant differences in people's perceptions of the role and purpose of the Forum and the most effective way for it to operate. The majority of comments from interviewees were favourable but included pointers for improvement. There is also a wide range of perceptions of its effectiveness, ranging from ecstatic approval to uncertainty well expressed in the comment, "everyone feels positive about the effect and impact of GBF but I remain uncertain of exactly what effect it has, besides a warm glow amongst the club". The evaluator also detected strong feelings that Forums must engage private and business stakeholders as a matter of urgency, and ensure that issues discussed are those that are important to the international community at large.

69. The evaluation concludes that GBF as a process has achieved many of its immediate objectives, although there is a particular need to be able to quantify its results through measurable outputs through the monitoring process now in place. This is especially challenging for longer term tracking of GBF influence that may extend over a number of years. Recommendations outline a range of issues to be considered by GBF organizers. The Forum is at a critical stage where it needs to consider a number of strategic options for the future including widening the range of stakeholders, regionalization, innovative connections into the Conference of the Parties process for the Convention on Biological Diversity and other conventions, and maximizing the effectiveness of workshops and outputs which do not originate from the Conference of the Parties and which effect outcomes of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

70. It is necessary to distinguish between:

- (a) the GBF process; and
- (b) the GBF project as funded by GEF for which an overall favourable evaluation of Very Good can be given.

71. The process has shown considerable value and is developing as a major component of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Can the process continue and evolve further in the absence of GEF funding? Probably not, at least in the short-term.

Annex I

Persons who were interviewed or provided comment.

Seventy six individuals were interviewed at GBF or the meeting of the Conference of the Parties, provided evaluation sheets, or were contacted later by phone or e-mail. Symbols are used below as follows:

- \* registered for fifteenth GBF
- provided opinion of delegation member of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties
- provided evaluation of a GBF focal issue

S. Aggarwal-Khan (Kenya)

\*  A. Argumedo (Peru)

A. Bagri (Switzerland)

\* C. Barber (Philippines)

\* J. Barber (United Kingdom)

\* P. Barnard (Namibia)

\* M. Behangana (Uganda)

D. Brackett (Canada)

P. Bridgewater (Australia)

S. Burgiel (USA)

\*  A. Chikuni (Malawi)

T. Chua (Malaysia)

\* L. Christen (Switzerland)

M. Cock (United Kingdom)

\* D. Cooper (Canada)

D. Cresswell (Australia)

K. Davenport (United Kingdom)

M. De Poorter (New Zealand)

B. Dias (Brazil)

S. Edwards (USA)

\*  R. Ellison (New Zealand)

\* L. Emerton (Kenya)

\* M. Figuera (Namibia)

A. Finger-Stich (France)

\* B. Gemmill (Kenya)

\* C. Ginés (Canada)

\* J. Gradé (Uganda)

W. Goldstein (Switzerland)

\* J. Grant (United Kingdom)

S. Gruber (Canada)

\* M. Heath (United Kingdom)

\*  J. Herity (Canada)

\* P. Herkenrath (United Kingdom)

\* A. Heydendahl (Canada)

J. Illueca (Kenya)

H. Jenkins (Australia)

E. Joubert (Saudi Arabia)

\*  D. Lawson (Australia)

\*  D. Leamann (Canada)

\*  L. Makili (Solomon Islands)

E. Maltby (United Kingdom)

\*  C. Martinet (Switzerland)

\* J. McNeely (Switzerland)

\* K. Mtindin (Zimbabwe)

\* J. Mugabe (Kenya)

\* P. Mulvany (United Kingdom)

B. Orlando (United States)

G. Oviendo (Switzerland)

\* F. Parish (Malaysia)

B. Phillips (Australia)

J. Pittock (Australia)

\* A. Puyol Espinosa (Ecuador)

S. Rallo (Switzerland)

\* B. Roberts (Canada)

C. Rubec (Canada)

\* M. Ruiz (Peru)

C. Samper (Colombia)

\* D. Sastrapradja (Indonesia)

\*  P. Schei (Norway)

\*  D. Schnierer (Australia)

\*  J. Seyani (United Kingdom)

S. Simiyu (Kenya)

\*  G. Sherley (Samoa)

\* V. Solís Rivera (Costa Rica)

\*  M. Solomon (New Zealand)

\* Y. St.Hill (United Kingdom)

\*  K. Ten Kate (United Kingdom)

E. Thomson (New Zealand)

D. True (Australia)

A. Volentras (Samoa)

F. Voorhies (Switzerland)

P. Warren (New Zealand)

S. Winkler (Switzerland)

P. Wyse Jackson (United Kingdom)  
\* T. Young (Germany)

\* T. Young (Germany)

## Annex II

### Methods used to undertake interviews and evaluation

The evaluation was based on:

- (a) Desk review in New Zealand of:
  - (i) The initial project documents, monitoring reports and relevant correspondence;
  - (ii) Specific Forum products including reports of the sessions highlighting presentations, case studies, technical information, web materials, and recommendations for action on topics regarded as focal issues;
- (b) On-site in Nairobi, Kenya:
  - (i) Interviews with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and IUCN staff and other members of the Steering Committee at the fifteenth GBF in Nairobi (May 2000);
  - (ii) Interviews and correspondence with participants attending the fifteenth GBF- held this year in Nairobi, with Convention Secretariats, with delegation members of the Convention on Biological Diversity, with industry and professional sources, and with and discussions with several organizations closely linked with the GBF.
- (c) Desk follow-up in New Zealand of:
  - (i) Interviewees, to clarify points of discussion, including e-mail correspondence on a range of specific points with Organizing Committee members;
  - (ii) E-mail and telephone interviews of Focal Point contacts to determine follow up of major GBF discussion and workshops;
  - (iii) Specific Forum products including reports of the sessions highlighting presentations, case studies, technical information, web materials, and recommendations for action on topics regarded as focal issues;

Annex III

Comments on GBF focal points

CODE	THEME	COMMENTS
GBF7/2	Non-detrimental export/sustainable use	This was a great success in bringing very different views together and promoting harmonization which should be a major theme of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It forced CITES focus on implementation and not just vision, and was also a meeting place for IUCN members and agencies.
GBF8/3	Forests and biological diversity	There was good and interesting output but both lack of acquaintance with the SBSTTA agenda by some and a subsequent limited political will to take forest work under the Convention on Biological Diversity seriously. Statements were circulated later in other forums. A step for the GBF would be to concentrate on providing substantial scientific and multi-stakeholder inputs as well as focus on evaluating ways in which the Convention on Biological Diversity is implemented nationally. The issue of forests should be followed through within an ecosystems approach
GBF8/4	Inland waters and biodiversity	The issue was very successfully aired and led to further discussion at the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on Wetlands. GBF role was significant but in parallel with other players, and there are now other players and champions so it is not needing follow up
GBF10/5	Financial innovations	It was hoped the issue would break through in the meeting of the Conference of the Parties but it did not, although within the GBF community it has stimulated growing interest and innovation Within IUCN it led to new world conservation finance initiative and it should be followed through
GBF10/7	Public education and awareness	Good examples were raised in discussion by non-governmental organizations but there was lack of government responses. Net working was good - people discovered quite a lot of commonality and recommendations passed onto the meeting of the Conference of the Parties (including lunch session). GBF opportunity provided catalyst for workshop.
GBF11/1	Forests and climate change	This was a useful and successful catalyst for future discussion. It helped to develop the IUCN climate change issues. Discussion may

		have been more successful at the meeting of the Conference of the Parties than at GBF where there were a lot of players so the programme was tightly packed. The session may have been too late to influence particular policy issues – but did involve non-governmental organizations in the meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
GBF11/3	Climate change, finance, biodiversity	Provided much needed foundation to attention to biodiversity impacts with the GBF instrumental in calling attention to relevance of the Framework on Climate Change Convention (FCCC). GBF does need to address broader issues and harmonize. Sister workshops are now run in other forums
GBF11/4	Sustainable use and climate change	A useful and successful catalyst for future discussion, this was too late to influence particular policy issues at the meeting of the Conference of the Parties, but it did involve non-governmental organizations in the meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Tended to be a non-governmental organization talk-shop at workshop
GBF12/1	Financial innovations	GA good mix of participants from the Convention on Biological Diversity and from the Convention on Biological Diversity community with outputs recognized by the meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and later Convention on Biological Diversity workshops. The Convention on Biological Diversity has significantly built on the workshop discussion and results. GBF has helped bring agencies and partners together and link to other agendas. The issue is being watched closely and followed up
GBF12/4	Desertification and climate change	A catalyst which is shaping future discussion, and helped to develop IUCN ideas further. Too late to influence particular policy issues – but did involve non-governmental organizations in the meeting of the Conference of the Parties
GBF13/2	Impact of aliens/invasives	Good output was used as a forum for seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands resolutions adopted. It influenced the meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and provided useful harmonization, and re-enforced the alien issues for the Convention on Wetlands and increased awareness for a lot of people. It needs to be followed through as big issue every 3-5 years.
GBF13/4	Global carbon cycle: peatlands management	This created strong interest in issues and was followed through by IUCN CEM although it is really other agencies who push the initiative



GBF13/5	Indigenous peoples and wetlands	This was a reasonably successful workshop – high attendance and good follow-up. An indigenous people’s network now operates for wetlands – created as a result of the workshop. The GBF provided forceful focus for issues prior to the meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and the majority of proposals were considered by the meeting of the Conference of the Parties and include in final recommendations and resolutions. The issue should continue to be followed through – eg: implementation of the Convention on Wetlands
GBF14/3	Scale – households to landscapes	The workshop provided a useful forum and publication is in final stages; we are only just scratching the surface in SU issues although too many politicians think it is a done deal. What is needed are practical tools/interpretations for the layman on all aspects. The GBF workshop started this process
GBF-A/3	Alien invasive species	This was a good workshop, feeding back into SBSTTA4 and galvanized regional awareness which was needed. It needs to be picked up further

Annex IV

Attendance at Global Biodiversity Forums

(a) Overall attendance at previous GBFs

GBF	ATTENDANCE	NO. COUNTRIES
10	300	57
11	150	40
12	160	46
13	200	49
14	145	33
Moscow	150	n.d.
SSEA	133	24
Mombasa	n.d.	n.d.
15	207	46

(b) Attendance summary at GBF-15

Africa	82
Europe	46
North America	35
South America	15
South Asia	8
East/southeast Asia	8
West Asia	2
Oceania incl. Australasia	10
Government representatives	25
Inter-government (include. IUCN)	46
International non-governmental organization	52
National non-governmental organization	42
University/research center	25
Private sector/business/consultants	7
unspecified	9

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