

CAFF CONTRIBUTION TO THE PREPARATION OF A RIO+10 DOCUMENT

2002 marks the 10th anniversary of the Rio Summit and also of the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Programme. Over its 10-year history, CAFF has served as a unique circumpolar forum for managers, scientists and indigenous peoples to tackle a range of issues on the conservation, management and sustainable use of the Arctic's biodiversity. It has operated within a framework of sustainable development and has been instrumental in helping the Arctic countries achieve the agreements reached at Rio.

A CAFF Retrospective

Over the past 10 years, CAFF has assisted the Arctic countries to meet, *inter alia*, the principles of the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Arctic ecosystem (principle 7) and to make environmental protection an integral component of the development process (Principle 4)

CAFF has worked to help the countries meet the objectives of the *Convention on Biological Diversity* to conserve the biodiversity of the Arctic, to use its components sustainably and to share the benefits of its genetic resources equitably. To achieve the latter, it has paid particular attention to developing circumpolar strategies and plans for conservation (Article 6), to identifying and monitoring biodiversity and potential threats (Article 7) and to implementing the actions needed for in-situ conservation such as a network of protected areas and various species recovery plans. (Article 8).

More recently, CAFF, in collaboration with its sister programme, AMAP, has been instrumental in assisting the countries to meet the requirements for regional overviews and impact studies called for under the *Framework Convention on Climate Change* and by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change through the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) process.

At all times, the cooperation within CAFF has striven to deliver products and fill knowledge gaps that could not otherwise have been achieved. We like to think that over the past 10 years, our work has made a valuable contribution to the long-term protection and sustainable development of the Arctic region, to maintaining its biodiversity and ecological integrity within a global context, and to its people.

Some of CAFF's major achievements stemming from the Rio process have been:

- Status reports and conservation management strategies for designated species of common concern and for networking protected areas
- Studies on global, regional and domestic governance regimes on protected areas and on marine biodiversity

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- Projects on applying traditional ecological knowledge to resource management in the north and on conserving Arctic cultural sites
- Projects to equip decision-makers with better data needed to integrate conservation and biodiversity ecological considerations into development activities.
- A comprehensive overview, released for Ministers in 2001 to celebrate 10 years of circumpolar co-operation, on the biodiversity of the Arctic, on its role in the lives of the peoples of the north, and on the Arctic's distinct forest, tundra, polar desert, freshwater and marine ecosystems.

The Way Forward

Despite the efforts of the global community, world leaders have acknowledged that the earth's environment continues to deteriorate due to human activity and unsustainable development.

- It continues to lose species and genetic resources due to detrimental human activity
- It continues to convert precious natural spaces and wildlife habitats to non-compatible uses and
- It continues to compromise the very integrity of the ecosystems that support all life on earth.

The Arctic is not immune. CAFF has alerted the Arctic Council to continuing incidences of species overexploitation and unsustainable resource use, to escalating fragmentation and degradation of the Arctic's pristine landscapes (some of the last remaining on the globe), to the need to assess the full range of values of the Arctic's natural resources as a precautionary measure to ensure sustainable development, to the need to increase education and information on the Arctic's natural environment and interaction with traditional cultures, to the need for additional regulatory and voluntary protection measures and to the need to more fully engage local communities and indigenous peoples in responding to these challenges.

Among the several themes identified by Arctic leaders for special regional attention at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, two are particularly pertinent to CAFF's mandate. They are *Sustainable Management and Conservation of the Natural Resource Base* and *Improving Governance and Democratic Processes at All Levels*. On both themes, the Arctic countries have signalled the need to intensify efforts in light of increasing pressures on the Arctic's resources and threats to its fragile ecosystems. CAFF proposes to focus its contribution in five categories: (1) conserving species (2) conserving Arctic ecosystems and habitats (3) assessing and monitoring biodiversity (4) global issues and solutions, and (5) engaging society.

Under Conserving Species, CAFF will strengthen its efforts to assess Arctic wildlife and to develop sustainable management and conservation strategies

Under Conserving Arctic Ecosystems and Habitats, CAFF will intensify efforts to complete the circumpolar network of protected areas in the terrestrial and marine environment, and will work with communities and industry to minimise habitat fragmentation and species disruptions caused by urbanisation and development.

Under Assessing and Monitoring Biodiversity, CAFF will continue to build a monitoring network to detect impacts to key species, species groups and habitats of large-scale changes from, *inter alia*, global warming and shifting land/resource uses.

Under Global Issues and Solutions, CAFF will increase its co-operation with non-Arctic states to (a) protect shared migratory species and their seasonal habitats, (b) more effectively implement and strengthen international conservation governance and; (3) continue to develop better tools and

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strategies to assess the effects of global change, including climate change through ACIA, on Arctic biodiversity and to mitigate negative impacts.

Under Engaging Society, CAFF will assess the environmental, cultural and economic values of the Arctic's living resources to contribute to more sustainable management and will be proactive in encouraging greater participation of Arctic communities and schools in Arctic conservation efforts.