



SBSTTA-6 HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 15 MARCH 2001

Delegates to the sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) met in two working groups. Working Group I (WG-I) on invasive alien species (IAS) met during the day and in a long night session to review recommendations on options for future work and a revision of the Guiding Principles (GPs). Working Group II (WG-II) reviewed recommendations on scientific assessments, migratory species, the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI) and biodiversity and climate change.

WORKING GROUP I – INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

In the morning session, delegates heard brief reports on evening roundtables on protected areas, and on border controls and quarantine measures. Jeffrey McNeely, IUCN, presented the Global Invasive Species Programme's (GISP) Global Strategy on IAS included in UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/INF/9. The INTERNATIONAL PLANT PROTECTION CONVENTION (IPPC) also reported on areas of potential collaboration with the CBD.

OPTIONS FOR FUTURE WORK: Chair Anastasios Legakis (Greece) introduced a conference room paper, incorporating delegates' previous comments on options for future work. Delegates debated whether to delete a recommendation on identifying and exploring legal gaps in the international legal framework. After informal consultations, delegates agreed that SBSTTA identify and explore such gaps in light of inter-sessional work. Regarding the importance of IAS strategies and action plans, PORTUGAL proposed addition of regional strategies and plans, and PAPUA NEW GUINEA highlighted the need for their funding. Delegates debated inclusion of a footnote on the occasional necessity of eradication of IAS, including mammals and vertebrates, with specific regard to concerns of animal welfare organizations. Several developing countries supported requesting financial assistance from international organizations. HAITI proposed inclusion of lifestyles of local and indigenous communities regarding UNFCCC considerations regarding IAS. The US proposed inclusion of collaboration with trading partners.

Regarding the Clearing-house Mechanism (CHM), MEXICO called for inclusion of national focal points. On development of technical tools for prevention, early detection, eradication and control, BURKINA FASO and SENEGAL called for inclusion of environmental education, and the US of monitoring. CANADA proposed that IAS be a pilot thematic issue under the CHM. Regarding arrangements for financial resources, several delegates supported a list of activities to be financed and priority attention to isolated ecosystems. Delegates also called for references to GISP, CITES, IPPC, the Berne Convention and the Island Cooperative Initiative.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES: Delegates based their deliberations on a Chair's revised text. Delegates agreed to rename the document "Alien Species that Threaten Ecosystems, Habitats or Species," while referring a decision on whether the points would be Guiding Principles or Guidelines to COP-6.

Introduction: In reviewing changes to the introduction, Chair Legakis noted reference to the GPs' non-binding nature, dependence of implementation on available resources and inclusion of IUCN/GISP definitions from UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/INF/5. After discussion of the definitions, upon ARGENTINA's suggestion, delegates agreed to move them to a footnote pending further discussion on terminology by COP-6. Regarding a proposal recognizing that species distributions vary over time, several delegates objected to reference to climatic factors, and delegates agreed to note their variation without human impact.

GP-1 Precautionary Approach: After prolonged debate, delegates formulated three alternatives for presentation to COP-6, including: use of Rio Declaration Principle 15 (Rio-15) with reference to "full" scientific certainty; reference to the approach as "initially" set forth by Rio-15 and "further elaborated" in the CBD and Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety; and retention of original text with no reference to Rio-15. Some proposed applying the precautionary approach to unintended introductions and eradication, control or containment measures.

GP-2 Three-stage Hierarchical Approach: The GP was accepted with AUSTRALIA's proposal to remove specification of costs to be evaluated.

GP-3 Ecosystem Approach: After some debate, delegates agreed to replace use of the ecosystem approach "whenever possible" with "as appropriate."

GP-4 State Responsibility: Delegates debated: bracketing language on activities constituting a risk for another State; retaining general language on state responsibility; using language of CBD Article 3 (Principle); and adding language on identification of invasive species and making such information available. Delegates recognized the political nature of the issue and agreed to retain the GP's original text for discussion at COP-6.

GP-5 Research and Monitoring: After debating use of terms "alien species" and "invasive species," the former was accepted with the qualifier of monitoring alien species "as appropriate." Delegates also discussed language on genetic impacts.

GP-6 Education and Public Awareness: The GP was accepted without comment.

GP-7 Border Control and Quarantine Measures: Regarding language on risk assessments, delegates debated whether such assessments should be "scientific," ultimately agreeing to refer to scientific, social and economic assessments.

GP-8 Information Exchange: SWEDEN suggested dissemination of information on the ecology and genetics of IAS.

This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Changbo Bai <changbobai@hotmail.com>, Tonya Barnes <tonya@iisd.org>, Stas Burgiel <stas@iisd.org>, Tamilla Gaynutdinova <tamilla.gaynutdinova@iiee.lu.se> and Elsa Tsioumani <elsa@iisd.org>. The Digital Editor is Franz Dejon <franz@iisd.org>. The Editor is Pamela Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@iisd.org> and the Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The Sustaining Donors of the *Bulletin* are the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Canada (through CIDA), the United States (through USAID), the Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL), the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the European Commission (DG-ENV). Specific funding for coverage of this meeting has been provided by the Rockefeller Foundation. General Support for the *Bulletin* during 2001 is provided by the German Federal Ministry of Environment (BMU) and the German Federal Ministry of Development Cooperation (BMZ), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministries of Environment and Foreign Affairs of Austria, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Environment of Norway, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Environment of Finland, the Government of Australia, the Ministries of Environment and Foreign Affairs of Sweden, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japanese Ministry of Environment (through the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies – IGES). The *Bulletin* can be contacted by e-mail at <enb@iisd.org> and at tel: +1-212-644-0204; fax: +1-212-644-0206. IISD can be contacted by e-mail at <info@iisd.ca> and at 161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y4, Canada. The opinions expressed in the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD and other funders. Excerpts from the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications only and only with appropriate academic citation. For permission to use this material in commercial publications, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services. Electronic versions of the *Bulletin* are sent to e-mail distribution lists and can be found on the Linkages WWW server at <http://www.iisd.ca>. The satellite image was taken above Montreal ©2001 The Living Earth, Inc. For information on the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, send e-mail to <enb@iisd.org>.



GP-9 Cooperation, including Capacity Building: ARGENTINA expressed concern over requiring States of Origin to provide information on potential IAS. SWITZERLAND, with others, suggested reference to information on the potential invasiveness of IAS. Regarding capacity-building support, BRAZIL proposed adding mitigation of risks of introductions. The US proposed that research efforts include monitoring and control.

GP-10 Intentional Introduction: Delegates debated, *inter alia*: addition of genetic diversity to ecosystems, habitats and species potentially harmed, and accommodation of social and economic considerations in risk assessments. After extensive discussion, delegates agreed to: remove the "science-based" qualifier regarding risk assessment; and link resolution of bracketed text on burden of proof on safety and on the precautionary approach to COP-6 consideration of GP-4 and GP-1 respectively.

GP-11 Unintentional Introductions: This principle was approved without major debate.

GP-12 Mitigation of Impacts: Delegates debated language stating that individuals responsible for an introduction should bear the cost of control measures and biodiversity restoration in case of non-compliance with national regulations. No agreement was reached, and two formulations will be forwarded for consideration by COP-6.

GP-13 Eradication: Delegates debated use of the term "cost-effective." BRAZIL favored its use, while the SEYCHELLES opposed it.

GP-14 Containment: Delegates agreed to delete language on the importance of monitoring specifically outside control boundaries.

GP-15 Control: Following a suggestion by the SEYCHELLES, delegates debated the necessity of detailed provisions on control measures and eventually accepted the text with minor revisions.

WORKING GROUP II

SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENTS: In the morning session, Chair Raed Bani Hani (Jordan) asked delegates to consider draft recommendations contained in a conference room paper. The NETHERLANDS added reference to focusing on the regional level. GERMANY highlighted the need to follow standardized procedures. ECUADOR called for language on education and public awareness. On ongoing and planned assessments, the NETHERLANDS proposed reference to the state of the world's genetic resources. Delegates agreed to inclusion of information from assessments in national reports. On advancing assessments on priority issues, BELGIUM and GERMANY requested that text remain bracketed due to the unresolved relationship between the CBD and IPCC. On reference to a technical paper on interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change to be prepared by the IPCC, CHINA suggested that the expert group also prepare a paper. ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA noted that the specific role of the IPCC was not yet agreed.

The BAHAMAS proposed sub-paragraphs highlighting ecosystem evaluation and assessment, and further aspects of marine and coastal biodiversity. GHANA, with KENYA, called for inclusion of the IUCN Red List regarding project briefs for assessments. GERMANY said that scientific assessments should be linked to a core set of indicators. CANADA noted that the purpose of indicators in this context was unclear. CHINA, with ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA and TANZANIA, proposed language on strengthening the capacity of developing countries.

On financial resources, the NETHERLANDS preferred referring the issue to COP-6 and proposed deleting the paragraph. ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, the BAHAMAS and CHINA disagreed, arguing that the language simply asks COP-6 to identify resources. Delegates agreed to recommend that COP-6 examine the need for financial resources to support the assessment process under the CBD including through guidance to the financial mechanism as appropriate.

MIGRATORY SPECIES: Delegates based discussion on a conference room paper. Regarding language on provision of financial resources, delegates agreed to request that COP-6 examine their need. BRAZIL noted that funding should be in accordance with the proposed joint work programme. On a paragraph regarding the joint work programme, delegates agreed to request close collaboration between the CBD and CMS Secretariats. As proposed by BELGIUM, the EC, GERMANY and the CMS, reference to possible elements for the joint

work programme in UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/12/Add.1 was included. ECUADOR and others requested reference to capacity building. BELGIUM preferred inclusion of collaboration with other organizations, while CANADA, supported by COLOMBIA, stressed focus on collaboration between the CMS and the CBD.

GLOBAL TAXONOMY INITIATIVE: Delegates considered a conference room paper including draft recommendations and a work programme. Discussion centered on planned activities under the work programme. On public awareness and education, UNESCO emphasized its Global Initiative on Biodiversity Education. On access and benefit-sharing, as proposed by COLOMBIA, delegates agreed to delete a paragraph concerning the GTI's involvement in commercialization of biodiversity. On developing a coordinated global taxonomy information system, GERMANY recommended the CHM as the leading actor. NEW ZEALAND noted indigenous people's knowledge in taxonomy. On global and regional capacity building to support access to taxonomic information, MEXICO stressed the need for infrastructure to collate and curate the biological specimens, and generation of taxonomic information. The UK underscored contributions by expert institutions.

Regarding SBSTTA's recommendations, delegates agreed to: amend language on provision of financial resources for the GTI to maintain consistency with other recommendations; refer to capacity building through regional workshops; and encourage the CBD Executive Secretary to invite governments and other relevant organizations to contribute to the work programme.

BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE: Discussion was based on a conference room paper containing recommendations. Several delegates stressed that the document had been carefully negotiated, and supported its present form. BRAZIL proposed, and delegates accepted, new language recognizing reliable scientific data demonstrating that climate change is already impacting coral reefs and recommending immediate actions within the CBD and the UNFCCC to reduce and mitigate effects on coral reef biodiversity and associated socio-economic impacts. GHANA proposed, and delegates supported, reference to the ecosystem approach in crosscutting issues. FINLAND specified reference to the *ad hoc* technical expert group and to the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF). ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA proposed reference to the GEF's Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel. NORWAY suggested, with ARGENTINA, replacing language on the IPCC participating in the pilot assessment with text on contributing to this assessment process by preparing a technical paper and identifying experts. ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA proposed, and the NETHERLANDS opposed, reference to climate variability.

On the expert group's analyzing effects of climate change, many opposed NORWAY's suggestion to delete reference to "adverse" effects, and the language was retained. ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, with JAPAN, noted that although many have ratified the Kyoto Protocol, it would be difficult to analyze "any" measures under it before it comes into force. MEXICO proposed, while ARGENTINA opposed, analyzing measures related to carbon sinks and reforestation. BELGIUM, with BOLIVIA, suggested alternate language on identifying factors, deleting reference to "adapting to" climate change. On identifying further work, CANADA, with JAPAN, proposed specifying options for the participation of the IPCC and UNFCCC. COLOMBIA called for flexibility in timelines for progress reports, while the BAHAMAS supported a sense of urgency.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As SBSTTA-6 comes to a close, some delegates were looking forward to SBSTTA-7's in-depth discussions on forests. Noting past criticisms of the forest work programme and the reams of information already produced under the CBD, UNFCCC and IPF/IFF/UNFF, some expressed hope that discussions would truly abide by COP-5's guidance to move from research to practical action.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: Plenary will convene at 10:00 am to review the Working Groups' recommendations and to discuss SBSTTA-7's agenda, dates and venue.