



MSP HIGHLIGHTS MONDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2001

Delegates to the Open-ended Inter-session Meeting on the Strategic Plan, National Reports and Implementation (MSP) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) met in a morning Plenary to hear opening statements, address organizational matters and make general comments on the strategic plan. In the afternoon, delegates met in two working groups, with Working Group I (WG-I) considering the strategic plan and Working Group II (WG-II) addressing implementation and operations of the Convention.

OPENING STATEMENTS

Reuben Olembo, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), on behalf of the President of the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP), opened the meeting. He reviewed the meeting's main objective to develop a strategic plan covering the period of 2002-2010. He stressed the meeting's importance in assisting COP-6 provide policy guidance, and noted its importance in relation to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).

CBD Executive Secretary Hamdallah Zedan expressed gratitude to Denmark, the European Commission, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom for their financial contributions. He highlighted progress achieved during the seventh meeting of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-7), and the overall achievements of the Convention regarding biosafety, access and benefit sharing, and forest biodiversity. He then reviewed the agenda for the meeting (UNEP/CBD/MSP/1/Add.1).

Paul Chabeda, on behalf of UNEP Executive Director, Klaus Töpfer, stressed: the importance of the meeting; the need for effective tools to implement the Convention at the grassroots level; and the center-stage position of global biodiversity at the forthcoming WSSD.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Delegates adopted the provisional agenda (UNEP/CBD/MSP/1/1) and considered the proposed organization of work regarding use of two working groups. HAITI, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC), observed that most countries had only one delegate present and suggested that delegates meet in Plenary throughout the meeting. Other regional groups supported the structure proposed by the Secretariat, while acknowledging the problem highlighted by GRULAC. CAMEROON called for adequate information flow between the two working groups.

The Chair of SBSTTA-7, Jan Plesník (Czech Republic), noted the need for a result-oriented strategic plan and said that the plan should include emerging issues.

The SEYCHELLES presented the conclusions of a workshop on the strategic plan held from 28-30 May 2001, in the Seychelles. He highlighted the plan's proposed structure, including: a mission statement; a vision composed of three elements reflecting the CBD's objectives; operational goals for each element of the vision; action plans to achieve each operational goal; and monitoring, reporting, assessment and review, and communication.

PLENARY

Delegates made general remarks on the strategic plan. Most delegates supported the plan's structure. JAMAICA said the plan should be restricted to issues needing collective action by Parties, such as target-setting, implementation and review of decisions. MEXICO stressed the need for a balanced plan that reflects priorities and, with NAMIBIA, for a focus on implementation. COLOMBIA called for a more balanced reflection of the Convention's objectives. The UK stressed the need for goals and targets and noted that overly detailed action plans could duplicate CBD work programmes. JAPAN called for further study of the relation between the strategic plan and national plans. The PHILIPPINES said that outcomes should be measurable, realistic, obtainable, and time-bound. PANAMA said the plan's mission and vision should be phrased in a positive way. CUBA said the goals are too broad to be feasible. NIGERIA and KENYA underlined monitoring and evaluation. SWITZERLAND stressed the need for a mechanism to review the plan's implementation, and with ALGERIA and SLOVENIA, stressed the need for further cooperation with other international instruments.

The NETHERLANDS and others stated the strategic plan must send a strong signal to the WSSD regarding the importance of biodiversity as a means to achieve sustainable development. Many delegates addressed the need to build national capacity. CHINA, BRAZIL and SENEGAL noted the need to address technology transfer. Many said the plan needed to help integrate biodiversity and economic and social policies. NORWAY underscored the need for cooperation with economic sectors and called for support for developing countries.

A number of delegates highlighted the need to address regional or sub-regional priorities, with SENEGAL drawing attention to work on transboundary biosphere reserves. COLOMBIA highlighted the Clearing-House Mechanism's (CHM) importance for implementation. TOGO emphasized public participation and information sharing. UNEP noted its pilot projects on harmonizing national reporting on a regional basis, as described in UNEP/CBD/MSP/1/INF/3. Regarding education and public awareness, UNESCO stated its readiness to continue contributing to the CBD's work.

BELGIUM, on behalf of the EU, said the plan should be reflected in a multi-year work programme. CHINA said the plan should address revisions to existing national plans. GREENPEACE INTERNA-

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TIONAL said that the ecosystem approach should figure prominently in the plan, while BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL said the WSSD would be an opportunity to raise awareness of biodiversity issues. The LAWYERS' ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION TEAM expressed concern about NGO involvement and called for a means to support participation.

WORKING GROUP I

STRATEGIC PLAN: Chair Peter Schei (Norway) introduced UNEP/CBD/MSP/2. On the plan's structure, delegates suggested including an introductory section and sections on: linkages to the scientific community; obstacles/challenges; implementation; capacity building; and a chapeau to the proposed operational goals to address cross-cutting issues.

On the introductory section, the PHILIPPINES stressed the need to translate the CBD's provisions into action. RWANDA called for a reflection on the status of biodiversity. SWITZERLAND stressed the underlying causes and accelerating rate of biodiversity loss. HAITI and NAMIBIA called for a reference to poverty alleviation. ARGENTINA and COLOMBIA called for regional implementation and resources for capacity building. HUNGARY suggested a reference to implementation gaps. POLAND underscored the need to reflect concepts related to the production-consumption pattern.

On the mission statement, HUNGARY suggested keeping it as short as possible and, with BULGARIA and CUBA, said that benefit sharing should refer to all biodiversity components instead of genetic resources only. ETHIOPIA and GABON stressed benefit sharing at the community level. CHINA said the main objective should be to mobilize international organizations to take action in implementing the CBD. The PHILIPPINES and others suggested a reference to improving people's lives and welfare. EGYPT and GUYANA called for socioeconomic development, while BELGIUM and GERMANY emphasized sustainable development. AUSTRALIA and KENYA supported language from CBD Article 1 (Objectives).

On the plan's vision, many supported a reference to the ecosystem approach. Regarding language on reversing trends in biodiversity loss, BELGIUM, supported by others, proposed calling for a halt in biodiversity loss, while others argued that the proposal was overly ambitious. Regarding language on reducing unsustainable use, delegates generally preferred more positive wording. Regarding language on benefit sharing, delegates preferred reference to biological, rather than genetic resources. Delegates then debated a reference to the time frame of 2010. Some delegates supported moving the reference to a section on operational goals, stating that a vision cannot be measured, while most called for its retention, with CANADA and CUBA noting that the operational goals could have shorter time frames.

On the obstacles/challenges, delegates highlighted institutional, financial, legal, political, socioeconomic and technical obstacles, population growth, and natural phenomena. Delegates also stressed the need for, *inter alia*: political recognition of the CBD; information dissemination; knowledge accessibility; societal involvement; education and public awareness; capacity building; addressing underlying causes of biodiversity loss; and environmental impact assessments. Chair Schei said that a new draft would be prepared to accommodate suggestions.

WORKING GROUP II

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CBD: Chair Elaine Fisher (Jamaica) opened WG-II's discussion on implementation of the CBD (UNEP/CBD/MSP/4).

Regarding development and adoption of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAP), BURUNDI and the UK noted the need to consult with various stakeholders. IRAN suggested making NBSAPs available through the CHM. BURKINA FASO suggested including a reference to benefit sharing.

Many countries supported regional or sub-regional approaches for implementation, while others suggested an eco-regional or bioregional approach. SENEGAL stressed environmental education in relation to

protected areas. Regarding national mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation, CANADA called for language to address the special needs of indigenous communities. The NETHERLANDS supported integrating biodiversity's conservation and sustainable use into sectoral or cross-sectoral plans. ERITREA requested taking into account a country's particular circumstances. CHINA said the plan should emphasize conservation.

On financial support, DENMARK stressed bilateral assistance, while NORWAY highlighted support for training and education. NIGERIA stressed technical support. GRENADA called for increased capacity building for small countries for implementation of NBSAPs. The UN Development Programme noted the need to identify institutions to help with capacity building.

On transmitting a message to WSSD, DENMARK, supported by others, suggested that COP-6 send a separate message to WSSD. The NETHERLANDS and ZIMBABWE urged reducing bureaucracy in evaluation and assessment.

OPERATIONS OF THE CONVENTION: Delegates considered UNEP/CBD/MSP/5. NEW ZEALAND made suggestions regarding effective meetings. MEXICO said communications between the Secretariat and Parties could be improved by using the CHM. On review of the implementation status of COP decisions, COLOMBIA and MEXICO expressed concern that many decisions have not been implemented, and called for more focused themes for future COPs. Many supported translating the CBD Handbook into other UN languages. BURUNDI said that the proposed legal drafting group should be multi-disciplinary, while many said that the group was not necessary. Regarding review of SBSTA recommendations, the EU and others said that review should be done by an independent group of experts.

Many delegates supported regional activities, including use of regional centers for capacity building. DENMARK and SLOVAKIA said that regional activities should include cooperation in preparing for COPs and implementing regional instruments. ARGENTINA and COLOMBIA supported use of existing regional centers. JAPAN said establishment of new regional centers would be premature.

On mechanisms to review implementation, ARGENTINA, COLOMBIA and JAPAN did not favor using an *ad hoc* working group. NEW ZEALAND accepted use of a group, but stressed the need for a clear agenda, mandate and timelines. FRANCE said best practices should be made available through the CHM. On procedures for decision-making regarding administrative and financial matters, JAPAN said that different trust funds are independent and that transfer of surplus funds from one to another should not be allowed. GREENPEACE INTERNATIONAL proposed establishment of an independent monitoring body to assess each country's progress on implementation of biodiversity-related measures.

Chair Fisher said that draft text would be prepared.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As delegates began discussions on the strategic plan, the divergence of views on its purpose became apparent. Noting the COP decision that established the current process, some delegates argued that it should be a "meta-plan," bringing existing and future work of the CBD toward a common goal. Others said the plan's focus should be to complement existing work. One participant expressed frustration that this divergence in views might prevent the Convention from seizing a unique opportunity to set clear strategic goals for its diverse work.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TOMORROW

Working Group I: WG-I will meet at 10:00 am to discuss the strategic plan's operational goals and to review the Chair's draft.

Working Group II: WG-II will meet at 10:00 am to begin discussions on national reports.