

WGPA 2 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 2008

The second meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Protected Areas (WGPA 2) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) opened on Monday, 11 February, in Rome, Italy. Delegates convened in plenary where they heard opening statements and keynote presentations on the implementation of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA), challenges and future prospects.

PLENARY

OPENING STATEMENTS: José Antônio Marcondes de Carvalho, WGPA 2 Chair, welcomed delegates to the meeting and underscored the importance of PAs for eradicating poverty, generating income and enhancing ecosystem services and goods. With a view to achieving the 2010 biodiversity target to significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss, he emphasized the need for united and focused efforts as well as enhanced international cooperation for PAs.

Aldo Cosentino, on behalf of Pecoraro Scanio, Italy's Minister of the Environment, underlined the importance of creating a global network of PAs and highlighted Italy's efforts regarding PAs, such as the development of effective management systems.

Ahmed Djoghlaif, CBD Executive Secretary, outlined CBD activities relating to the PoWPA implementation. He said that effective implementation is contingent on commitment from governments and the wider public, pointing to the presence of the environment ministers from Mexico and Ecuador and the President of the Federated States of Micronesia as testament to such a political commitment.

Jan Heino, FAO, gave an overview of FAO activities regarding PAs, which center on: identification, assessment, management and monitoring; the interface between PAs and the agricultural sector; and PAs contributing to food security and mitigating climate change.

A representative of international conservation NGOs outlined support in the areas of ecological gap analysis, financing for PAs and capacity development. She emphasized the importance of

PoWPA implementation workshops and exchange of information on priority issues with regional and national experts to catalyze further action on the ground.

THE INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORUM ON BIODIVERSITY said the establishment of PAs on indigenous communities' lands and territories violates indigenous peoples' rights. On mobilizing financial resources, he rejected proposed options such as carbon trading, privatization of water provisioning and payment for ecosystem services.

THE INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS expressed concern regarding continued biodiversity loss and human rights violations and called for a moratorium on extractive industries in important biodiversity conservation areas and on indigenous peoples' territories, without their prior informed consent.

Many countries outlined activities, achievements and challenges regarding the implementation of the PoWPA and noted the need for increased indigenous community participation. Several referred to draft recommendations contained in the review of implementation of the PoWPA (UNEP/CBD/WG-PA/2/2). SOUTH AFRICA, INDIA, the EU, CANADA and ARGENTINA supported establishing national focal points and multi-stakeholder coordination committees, with INDIA and ARGENTINA stressing that parties should be free to determine which stakeholders should participate. SOUTH AFRICA underlined the need to ensure that all users support PA conservation and development projects. PERU and THAILAND called for monitoring systems and the establishment of baselines for measuring progress in PoWPA implementation. CHILE said that lack of institutional capacity and fragmented PA governance are the main obstacles to sound management and cost-effectiveness. THAILAND proposed including the review of national policies and legislative reform in the recommendation in order to implement the PoWPA. COLOMBIA called for a regional meeting in South America to discuss challenges and future prospects of the implementation of the PoWPA.

CHINA detailed progress in implementing the PoWPA, highlighting the challenge faced in balancing biodiversity conservation with economic growth. The BAHAMAS provided information about its PA system and called for sub-regional

technical clinics to assist with the development of a range of implementation tools. ECUADOR reported its progress, including a gap analysis and the development of a sustainable finance strategy.

BRAZIL, CUBA, TUNISIA, GRENADA and TIMOR-LESTE highlighted the lack of financial resources for implementing national and regional PA systems. On enhancing implementation, BRAZIL noted the need for capacity building, technology transfer as well as tools for monitoring PAs, and emphasized the need for participation and cooperation to be strengthened. Slovenia, for the EU, emphasized the importance of strengthening the inter-relationship between PAs and climate change policy processes, mechanisms and organizations and drew attention to the potential for synergy between the CBD, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.

LEBANON outlined its five year PA national plan and the enactment of a comprehensive bill to regulate PAs. NEW ZEALAND supported a custom-made approach to management tools and suggested that some of the activities listed for the proposed multi-stakeholder coordinating committee are not appropriate and called for clarification of linkages between recommendations, agreed targets and goals. URUGUAY pointed out that it has developed a national system of PAs, which includes a multi-sectoral commission with involvement of the public and private sectors, NGOs and academia. PAKISTAN noted the usefulness of regional and sub-regional workshops and related capacity development activities in the region.

MAURITIUS announced its intention to establish 16 island national parks. SENEGAL provided an update on its PAs, including a recently promulgated code of biodiversity and public-private partnerships for conservation.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: Delegates adopted the agenda (UNEP/CBD/WG-PA/2/1) and organization of work (UNEP/CBD/WG-PA/2/1/Add.1) without amendment. Mary Fosi (Cameroon) was elected Rapporteur with the CBD COP Bureau serving as the Bureau for the Working Group

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS: Emanuel Mori, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, detailed his country's conservation efforts through the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and discussed regional initiatives such as the Micronesian Conservation Trust and the Micronesia Challenge, which aims to reserve 30% of Micronesia's marine resources and 20% of its terrestrial resources by 2020. Highlighting the limitations of local responses to biodiversity loss, he called on delegates to implement PA management in an integrated manner.

Juan Rafael Elvira Quesada, Secretary for the Environment and Natural Resources, Mexico, outlined activities and achievements of the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas, which has overseen the recent increase in PA coverage and focuses on making the network more representative of Mexico's biodiversity. He highlighted national efforts to mainstream integrated environmental management and underscored the importance of PAs for regional development and local communities.

Guy Suzon Ramangason, Ministry of Environment, Water, Forests and Tourism, Madagascar, presented on his country's achievements regarding participatory PA management,

reconciling PAs and other activities such as mining, and integrating ecotourism, watershed management and other ecosystem services into PA management plans. He also noted that PA management costs have decreased from US\$ 3.5 per hectare a year to US\$ 2.5

Maria Cecilia Wey de Brito, Ministry of the Environment, Brazil, stated that the PA network in Brazil will be increased to cover 15% of its territory, including 30% of the Amazon rainforest. She emphasized initiatives to improve PA management effectiveness, including the Chico Mendes Institute of Amazon Studies and the Amazon Region Protected Areas Programme. Underscoring the importance of fair and equitable sharing of benefits from PAs, she urged parties to conclude negotiations on an international binding regime on access and benefit-sharing before 2010.

Marc Hockings, University of Queensland, Australia, presented the findings of a global study of management effectiveness evaluation in PAs. He explained that the latter is a useful tool for improving reporting and allocating resources as well as helping to build support for PAs. The study recorded over 6,300 assessments of management effectiveness from 100 countries and reported that although PAs are conserving their values and contributing to the livelihood of communities, PA management requires improvement. Findings included: the need to address serious threats to PAs to conserve their values; the lack of basic requirements for PAs to operate effectively; the need for enhancing communication, community involvement and programmes beneficial to communities; and the need for managers to improve pro-active management capacity.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The meeting opened with a sense of gravitas stemming from the attendance of a head of state and two ministers of the environment. This sentiment was echoed by a number of delegates who argued that, since PAs will not be considered in detail at COP 9, WGPA 2 is effectively setting the agenda for PAs until COP 10 in 2010, and as a result it is a critical moment for the PA agenda.

There was also a sense of optimism regarding the outcome of the meeting. One delegate suggested that disagreements over marine protected areas beyond national jurisdiction, which had bogged down previous discussions on PA implementation, were unlikely to resurface this week, because COP 8 had excluded it from the Working Group's mandate. Marine genetic resource issues will instead be considered by next week's SBSTTA meeting with the aim of providing input to the UN General Assembly's *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Informal Working Group on Marine Biodiversity.

Noting the lengthy and detailed interventions outlining countries' implementation of the PoWPA, a number of delegates argued that, while work on PAs is clearly taking place, "more focus" is required to assist countries to turn "action plans into action on the ground". Another echoed this idea, adding that the "will is there, but it needs to be nourished by training and funding".