

WGRI 3 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 26 MAY 2010

On Wednesday morning Chair Flasbarth proposed a short morning plenary session to allow the two Contact Groups, on revision of the Strategic Plan and resource mobilization, to continue and finish their work before night. In plenary, WGRI 3 participants considered the proposed Biodiversity Technology Initiative (BTI) and the establishment of an IPBES. In the late morning, they split into Contact Groups and continued working into the evening.

PLENARY

FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSED BIODIVERSITY TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE:

On Wednesday morning, Chair Flasbarth introduced the document on the proposed BTI (UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/3/10).

The EU welcomed the possible establishment of a voluntary BTI to support the implementation of CBD Articles 16 to 19 and the programme of work on technology transfer. She stressed that the BTI should be a voluntary initiative independent from the CBD and proposed to carry out a gap analysis. Serbia, on behalf of the CEE, supported the BTI as a voluntary initiative. NEW ZEALAND proposed to omit a reference to the international ABS regime in the draft recommendation.

SWITZERLAND highlighted that the BTI should not duplicate existing activities. CANADA argued that the establishment of a BTI is premature and that the Climate Technology Initiative is not the most appropriate model to follow. JORDAN welcomed the initiative, emphasizing the importance of capacity building. MALAWI supported the establishment of the BTI under the CBD, supported by CHINA, and emphasized the full participation of all parties and indigenous and local communities. SENEGAL, supported by KENYA, GUINEA and TANZANIA, insisted on the importance of technology transfer and that it be accompanied by capacity building.

The PHILIPPINES requested addressing the removal of barriers to technology transfer posed by intellectual property rights, and with BRAZIL and ARGENTINA, stressed the need to further clarify governance structures and operational mechanisms

of the initiative. ARGENTINA also objected to referencing the Copenhagen Accord. INDIA proposed including language from Article 15.6 of the CBD, on carrying out research based on genetic resources with the full participation of, and where possible in, the parties providing them.

IPBES: On the request that WGRI 3 consider the outcome of the intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meetings on the establishment of an IPBES, Chair Flasbarth proposed that WGRI add in the recommendation that COP 10 instead considers this outcome.

CONTACT GROUP ON THE REVISION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

On Monday morning, the Contact Group reconvened to discuss the elements of the revised Strategic Plan and the proposed recommendations and review the progress of the small group established to discuss target 11 on protected areas. One party highlighted the importance of referring to the protocol on ABS, while a regional group underscored the lack of gender mainstreaming in the Strategic Plan, goals and targets. On the rationale for the Strategic Plan, another party discussed ways of better reflecting governments' commitments and creating a broader political support base; another party asked that the "lack of scientific information for policy and decision-making" be reflected as an obstacle in reaching the 2010 biodiversity target.

Regarding the mission statement, countries deliberated over wording that could convey ambition, inspire urgent and significant action, and establish realistic timeframes, all in a simple and memorable sentence. One country highlighted that the feasibility of a mission statement depended on both political will and also the response of species and ecosystems to the measures taken. Some countries suggested bracketing this text for resolution at COP 10, while others wanted to refine the mission statement at this meeting.

Parties then addressed the draft recommendations. On national targets, one party proposed making use of the flexible framework of indicators developed for the Strategic Plan. Another party proposed an additional recommendation, highlighting the role of TEEB study in motivating investment in biodiversity and ecosystem services. Another party proposed bracketing part of the sentence on motivating investment. On recalling the

Strategy for Resource Mobilization, one party proposed deleting the reference to making resources available to developing countries and economies in transition for the implementation of the Strategy, with many objecting to the deletion. Another party proposed taking “prompt actions” to implement the Strategy in support of CBD’s three objectives. On preparing an analysis of targets, parties debated over the inclusion of “national and regional” targets and their contribution towards the global targets. One group proposed adding a recommendation to convene an AHTEG on indicators for the Strategic Plan, but given that such recommendation is already reflected in a SBSTTA decision, the proposal was dismissed.

Discussions continued into the evening.

CONTACT GROUP ON THE STRATEGY FOR RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

GUIDANCE TO THE FINANCIAL MECHANISM:

Co-Chair Luna invited comments on the draft recommendation (UNEP/CBD/WGRI/3/9). On a consolidated list of guidance to GEF, a regional group preferred to work on the basis of the existing COP decisions, eliminating outdated and redundant guidance from there. Noting that this would require further work, he floated the idea of having the guidance adopted at COP 11 rather than compromising the quality of the consolidation. One developed country stressed the need to consult with the GEF on the type of information that would be most useful. Delegates agreed that further work was needed, with a regional group insisting that such work take place prior to COP 10.

A regional group proposed that the COP should decide that the guidance to the financial mechanism, for a specific replenishment period, shall consist of a consolidated list of programme priorities that define how to finance an outcome-oriented framework. He also requested deletion of the reference to indicators and associated targets throughout the text, opposed by several developing countries. The same regional group argued that setting targets and indicators for the GEF is not in accordance with the COP mandate and would interfere with the operational aspects of the GEF. A developed country proposed to add that the programme priorities that define what to finance shall be based on the Strategic Plan. He further supported, with several developing countries, a paragraph inviting parties to submit information and proposals on potential indicators and associated targets that may be used in the further development of programme priorities concerning the utilization of GEF resources for biodiversity. A civil society organization proposed to invite not only parties, but all other stakeholders including indigenous and local communities to submit such information and proposals. A regional group proposed deletion of the entire paragraph.

While one party was ready to be flexible and delete the reference to targets and associated indicators, a regional group and various other developing countries preferred retaining it, noting that even though the GEF Council may be an appropriate forum to discuss such targets and indicators, unless a party is a contributor, its voice is not heard there.

On a paragraph deciding on the guidance to the GEF, many developing countries highlighted the need to link ambitious new targets in the Strategic Plan to adequate and predictable funding.

They preferred retaining references to “indicators and targets” in connection with an outcome-oriented framework of programme priorities. A developed country proposed, and previous speakers accepted, “taking into account the Strategic Plan, including the associated indicators and targets.” Another regional group proposed “its” associated indicators and targets, explaining his understanding that they referred to the Strategic Plan and were not meant to be prescriptive to the GEF. This was opposed by a regional group of developing countries and retained as an option in brackets. A proposal by a large developing country to delete references to indicators and targets and address them only in the following paragraphs was supported by a developed country and opposed by another large developing country and others.

On a paragraph inviting parties to submit information and proposals on potential indicators and associated targets that may be used for the further development of programme priorities, a regional group proposed deletion. He also suggested maintaining another paragraph requesting WGRI 4 to review the implementation of the current outcome-oriented programme priorities prior to COP 11, noting the review will bring new elements and experiences to improve the next guidance to the GEF replenishment.

After prolonged discussions on whether the paragraphs under consideration should refer to or omit a reference to “indicators and associated targets,” several parties tabled a compromise text. One developing country explained that the text requests the Executive Secretary to compile information and views submitted by parties on proposals to further improve indicators and associated targets on the Strategic Plan and on the performance of the financial mechanism. While some parties felt that such text would help the GEF to plan its programme activities, and allow the vision and mission of the Strategic Plan to be implemented with predictable and adequate funding, a regional group still expressed several concerns, including the fear of losing the idea of a review of the outcome-oriented framework. Discussions continued late into the evening.

IN THE BREEZEWAYS

In the morning, Chair Flasbarth revealed to plenary that he suffers from a “severe allergy to brackets.” Recalling yesterday’s contact group sessions, he lamented a dearth of constructive debate and insufficient efforts to “find a bridge instead of a wall.” As the contact group on resource mobilization breached the ban on brackets, there was increased risk of triggering an anaphylactic shock in Chair Flasbarth. One delegate bemoaned a regional group’s inflexibility to proceed with indicators and targets on guidance to GEF, with another wondering whether technical expertise is always the best guide for a negotiator, given that proximity to the affected processes may magnify the perceived costs of changes suggested. One seasoned observer predicted that while references to targets and indicators may be controversial today, reservations will likely dissipate in years to come.

As the clock runs down on WGRI 3, the pressure to make substantive progress is increasing, and the presence or absence of an allergic reaction in Chair Flasbarth will reveal the measure of that progress.