

CBD COP 12 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2014

Plenary heard opening and regional statements; addressed organizational issues; and discussed the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-4). In the afternoon, Working Group (WG) I addressed the GBO-4 and the mid-term review of the Strategic Plan implementation. WG II addressed Article 8(j) (traditional knowledge).

OPENING PLENARY

Following a performance of Korean drums, Hem Pande (India), on behalf of the COP 11 Presidency, opened the meeting. He called on parties to agree to final targets on resource mobilization, and noted that sustainable development, ecosystem restoration and poverty eradication can be addressed concurrently, including through effective implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs).

COP 12 President Yoon Seongkyu, Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea, underlined that GBO-4 findings reveal insufficient progress towards the realization of many Aichi targets. He expressed the hope that the Pyeongchang roadmap will be adopted; and underscored the need to mainstream biodiversity and integrate it in the post-2015 development agenda. Choi Moon-soon, Governor of Gangwon Province, expressed hope that the demilitarized zone becomes a symbol of peace and biodiversity preservation.

Achim Steiner, UNEP Executive Director, celebrated the rapid entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol, stressing the need to translate it into national policies and multi-stakeholder approaches. He underscored the tremendous efforts by developing countries, which, he said, should be reflected in decisions on finance; and called for a universal, integrated approach that seizes the opportunities present in the post-2015 development agenda, and shifts biodiversity to the heart of the economic discussion. He then announced the extension of the post of CBD Executive Secretary Braulio Dias for another term.

Executive Secretary Dias commended parties for timely ratification of the Nagoya Protocol and the Government of the Republic of Korea for providing a model of modernization without compromising environmental integrity; and stressed the significance of NBSAPs in informing the mid-term review of the Strategic Plan.

STATEMENTS: All regional groups welcomed entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol. Mauritania, for the AFRICAN GROUP, highlighted the need to substantially increase financial resources to step up implementation in developing countries, and stressed focus on the Convention's third objective (fair and equitable benefit-sharing). The EU called for synergies and for mainstreaming biodiversity policies into other policy areas; stressed that the CBD and Strategic Plan objectives need to be appropriately reflected in the sustainable development goals (SDGs) targets and indicators; and called for a balanced decision on resource mobilization, on the basis of the COP 11 agreement.

Grenada, for GRULAC, prioritized discussions on resource mobilization, capacity building, scientific and technical cooperation and technology transfer; and, with Egypt, for the ARAB GROUP, called for ensuring full and effective participation of all parties in CBD processes. Georgia, for CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE (CEE), highlighted the importance of resource mobilization for NBSAPs implementation. Thailand, for the ASIA-PACIFIC GROUP, noted the Convention has entered a new phase, in the context of discussions on the post-2015 development agenda and entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol.

AUSTRALIA committed to implementing obligations under the CBD, including on funding; highlighted that funding for biodiversity should come from all sources; and stressed the central role of PAs in biodiversity conservation, drawing attention to the upcoming IUCN World Parks Congress. South Africa, for the LIKE-MINDED MEGADIVERSE COUNTRIES (LMMC), noted that implementation activities vary depending on national circumstances; called for a solid target on resource mobilization and a substantial increase in financial resources; and stressed the importance of South-South cooperation.

The INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORUM ON BIODIVERSITY (IIFB) prioritized discussions on, among others, terminology regarding indigenous peoples and local communities; synthetic biology; the participation of women and youth; and finance. The CBD ALLIANCE drew attention to the rights of smallholder farmers and pastoralists, and urged using the precautionary principle, particularly regarding synthetic biology. WWF said achieving the Strategic Plan would contribute to poverty reduction, and urged accelerating its implementation by mainstreaming biodiversity through NBSAPs and engaging in the post-2015 development agenda. The GLOBAL YOUTH BIODIVERSITY NETWORK emphasized the importance of involving youth at all levels of decision making and announced the launch of the Youth Voices project.

ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES: Delegates adopted the agenda and organization of work (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/1/Rev.1 and Add.1/Rev.1); and elected Eleni Rova Marama Tokadua (Fiji) as Rapporteur of the meeting, and Tone Solhaug (Norway) and María Luisa del Río Mispireta (Peru) as Chairs of WG I and WG II, respectively. They deferred to COP 13 consideration of outstanding majority-voting rules in the Rules of Procedure and Financial Rules. COP President Yoon Seongkyu recalled Mexico's offer to host COP 13.

REPORTS: Ho-Min Jang, Republic of Korea, reported on the Cartagena Protocol COP/MOP 7, highlighting decisions of relevance to the COP. Plenary took note of the reports of intersessional meetings (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/2-5). Executive Secretary Dias reported on the administration of the Convention, the trust funds and the budget for the biennium 2015-2016 (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/7, 27, 27/Add.1 and INF/36). Following a brief presentation of five budget scenarios, a budget group chaired by Spencer Thomas (Grenada) was established.



Executive Secretary Dias reported on the first phase of the functional review of the Secretariat (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/INF/26 and 28).

STATUS OF THE NAGOYA PROTOCOL: Fernando Casas (Colombia), Co-Chair of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Nagoya Protocol (ICNP), reported on ICNP deliberations and outcomes. Plenary took note of the ICNP 3 report and a status report on the Protocol (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/6 and 8); and decided to establish a contact group on compliance, which will meet on Thursday evening.

GBO-4: Executive Secretary Dias launched the GBO-4 (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/9), which provides a summary of the mid-term assessment of progress towards Strategic Plan implementation.

Paul Leadley, Université Paris-Sud, leader of the GBO-4 technical group, noted that there is progress towards achieving the Aichi targets but at an insufficient rate. He used invasive alien species (IAS) as an illustration of the economic consequences of failing to address the main drivers of biodiversity loss. He presented a series of national case studies to show that the tide can be turned, and concluded with a vision of integrating biodiversity, development and climate change goals in a synergistic way.

WORKING GROUP I

GBO-4: Many countries welcomed the GBO-4, referred to translation efforts, and emphasized the need for resource mobilization, technology transfer and capacity building. COLOMBIA emphasized the need for communication mechanisms to enable stakeholders to take action. BELARUS suggested analyzing and using GBO-4 key findings in the review of NBSAPs.

Many countries reported on their national efforts to implement the Strategic Plan. FIJI urged addressing the Aichi targets in an integrated manner through NBSAPs. SAINT LUCIA noted that areas of high importance for small island developing states (SIDS), including marine biodiversity, capacity building, resource mobilization and IAS, should be reflected in COP decisions. The GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION FACILITY (GBIF) focused on Aichi Target 19 (improving and sharing biodiversity knowledge), noting its fulfillment will accelerate progress on other targets. TURKEY offered to host COP 14.

MID-TERM REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION: The Secretariat introduced the draft decision and documents on key actions and indicators (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/1/Add.2/Rev.1, and 9/Add.1 and 2).

JAPAN urged analysis of each of the key actions and inclusion of additional ones. Cameroon, for the AFRICAN GROUP, suggested placing the key actions on a scale of urgency and effectiveness and, with many, emphasized capacity building and resource mobilization. MALAYSIA stressed technical and scientific cooperation, and FIJI called for public-private partnerships. MEXICO emphasized cooperation with other biodiversity-related conventions and processes. Many parties, including CHINA, ECUADOR, QATAR and SWITZERLAND, reported on their national implementation efforts. BOLIVIA urged respect for different country approaches to sustainable development; stressed that achievement of the Aichi targets by developing countries depends on the allocation of financial resources; and called for recognizing the rights of indigenous and local communities (ILCs), including land rights. QATAR called for clear national and regional goals that could converge with the implementation of international goals.

Cautioning against prioritizing certain targets, SWITZERLAND underscored that the Strategic Plan must be implemented as a whole.

WORKING GROUP II

ARTICLE 8(J): The Secretariat presented six draft decisions (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/1/Add.2/Rev.1), the report of the eighth meeting of the Working Group on Article 8(j)

(UNEP/CBD/COP/12/5), an analysis of the implications of the use of the term “indigenous peoples and local communities” (IPLCs) (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/5/Add.1) and compilations of views (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/5/INF/1, and Add.1 and 2).

Many expressed support for the draft decisions, and stressed the importance of full participation of ILCs. Several delegates emphasized the need to avoid duplication of work, and called for collaboration with the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge (TK) and Folklore (IGC).

Delegates were divided on the use of the term IPLCs. CANADA, supporting the term ILCs, argued that the CBD addresses *in situ* conservation of biodiversity in relation to communities that are living “traditional lifestyles” dependent on biodiversity. He noted that CBD Article 29 provides a formal process for amending the treaty, stating that Canada would not support such a move. INDONESIA and the REPUBLIC OF KOREA also argued for maintaining CBD language on ILCs, while the EU, UGANDA, COSTA RICA, GUATEMALA, the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC), SWITZERLAND, ARGENTINA, NORWAY, BOLIVIA, COLOMBIA, PERU and BRAZIL supported reference to IPLCs. The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) appealed for use of the term IPLCs, stressing its history of use in relation to indigenous peoples’ struggle for self-determination.

On the next meeting of the Working Group on Article 8(j), the EU, the PHILIPPINES and others supported a dialogue focusing on “Communication, Education and Public Awareness” (CEPA), while many others preferred the topic “Protecting shared TK across borders: challenges and opportunities for regional cooperation.”

On developing guidelines under tasks 7, 10 and 12 of the work programme (prior informed approval and benefit-sharing from the use of TK, unlawful appropriation of TK, and guidance for national legislation), the EU called for focusing on gaps and measures to complement the Nagoya Protocol, for example with regard to the provisions of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGR), especially on farmers’ rights.

On the customary sustainable use of biodiversity, JAPAN highlighted the Satoyama Initiative, emphasizing its contribution to facilitating traditional land use.

On repatriation of TK, MEXICO said greater clarity on its scope and implications will be needed, before adopting any guidelines. The EU said the plan of action should facilitate the exchange of information, rather than restrict it.

The IIFB called for safeguards on the protection of TK and highlighted that indigenous peoples are rights-holders, not only TK-holders.

IN THE CORRIDORS

An optimistic mood reigned during the opening plenary, as delegates moved briskly through reports and organizational items, invigorated by the beat of Korean drums and the morning sunshine. Despite the sobering GBO-4 conclusions that progress towards achievement of the Aichi targets is behind schedule, several delegates were upbeat. They noted that, not only has the Nagoya Protocol entered into force, but the COP is poised to accelerate implementation of the Strategic Plan by addressing many issues related to resource mobilization and other means of support, also in readiness for discussions on the post-2015 development agenda.

On the sidelines of Working Group II, some delegates noted that the EU’s overcoming of internal differences regarding the use of the term “indigenous peoples” has predictably brought some silent dissenters out of the woodwork, who previously had been “coasting along” in the wake of the EU’s opposition.