

CBD COP 12 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2014

WG I addressed implementation of the Strategic Plan and resource mobilization. WG II considered liability and redress, marine and coastal biodiversity, and invasive alien species (IAS). A Friends of the Chair group considered use of the term “indigenous peoples and local communities.”

WORKING GROUP I

MID-TERM REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION: Many countries supported establishment of an *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on indicators, with CANADA underlining that the development of a broad set of socioeconomic indicators is beyond the CBD mandate. The PHILIPPINES recommended that the AHTEG build on work on indicators already undertaken in other initiatives. NORWAY stressed that the general conclusion and key actions of GBO-4 should be adopted as a whole.

SUPPORT FOR STRATEGIC PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION: The Secretariat introduced draft decisions and relevant documentation (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/10/Rev.1, 11 and 12).

A number of parties reported on their national efforts. GAMBIA highlighted the major political and societal changes needed to achieve the targets. ETHIOPIA called for focus on areas where progress is lacking. Tonga, for PACIFIC ISLAND STATES, stressed that national targets and indicators should be realistic, practical and aligned with regional and sub-regional frameworks. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA drew attention to the Bio-Bridge Initiative to promote technical and scientific cooperation. JAPAN expressed commitment to further support NBSAP-related activities through the Japan Biodiversity Fund.

Many underscored the need for resource mobilization, capacity building and technology transfer for implementation, and CHINA urged developed countries to honor their commitments. MALAWI suggested enhancing information sharing on technology transfer. TOGO called for support to address institutional weaknesses and stakeholder involvement. THAILAND, with many, stressed the need for enhancing capacity-building initiatives and providing enabling tools; and noted the opportunity for collaboration with relevant technical and scientific bodies. EGYPT reminded delegates that many countries lack internet access and equipment. MEXICO and Niger, for the AFRICAN GROUP, called for support to South-South cooperation.

On the CHM, COLOMBIA, INDIA, KENYA and NORWAY underscored platform harmonization for the Convention and its protocols. MEXICO and the EU supported reference to the online reporting system for implementing the Strategic Plan as a means of submitting voluntarily national information. JAPAN stressed the need to focus on priority actions.

FAO highlighted sectoral instruments and tools relevant for biodiversity conservation. The Global Forest Coalition emphasized the fundamental role indigenous and community conserved areas play in biodiversity conservation.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION: The Secretariat introduced a draft decision and relevant documents (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/13 and Add.1-5).

Delegates debated two proposed options on targets for resource mobilization, both of which refer to the interim target of doubling biodiversity-related financial flows to developing countries by 2015, agreed at COP 11. Kenya, for the AFRICAN GROUP, called for doubling the interim target by 2017. MALAYSIA said option 1 allows for reducing the gap between needs and resources at the domestic level. GUATEMALA and ECUADOR supported option 2, with ECUADOR noting the language better reflects the importance of integrating different sectors of society. CHINA suggested the final target be reviewed at future COPs.

The EU, AUSTRALIA, JAPAN and Fiji, for PACIFIC ISLAND STATES, stressed the need for a substantial increase of resources from all possible sources, including the private sector and innovative financial mechanisms, in line with the COP 11 decision. CANADA underscored the need for domestic resource mobilization. NORWAY underlined the need to enhance efficiency through sector integration and creation of enabling conditions. The EU stressed the importance of mainstreaming biodiversity in all sectors. ARGENTINA called for additional funding to assist countries in providing data to the financial reporting framework.

BOLIVIA and VENEZUELA expressed concern over commercializing natural resources and transferring responsibilities from the public to the private sector. GUATEMALA called for non-market-based approaches. The PHILIPPINES said that market-based approaches need validation before being endorsed.

The EU and NEW ZEALAND supported extending the resource mobilization strategy until 2020. On international financial flows, BOLIVIA called for a compliance mechanism, including monitoring and reporting to enhance transparency.

On Aichi Target 3 (incentives), THAILAND suggested organization of workshops and development of activities to assist parties in meeting milestones. BRAZIL encouraged tailor-made incentives according to country needs. MEXICO called for national-level studies to progressively eliminate harmful incentives.

Emphasizing that the “time has come to walk the talk,” INDIA stressed the need for new and additional finance to meet the cost of biodiversity conservation and management, in particular in megadiverse countries. PERU called for prioritizing funding towards centers of origin.



The UN Development Programme (UNDP) presented their Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN), which provides technical assistance on resource mobilization. IUCN suggested that resource mobilization strategies include both market and non-market-based approaches. The IIFB warned that safeguards should provide for fair and equitable benefit-sharing through clear national frameworks. ECOROPA warned that innovative financial mechanisms should not lead to commodification of nature. A contact group was established to consider a non-paper.

WORKING GROUP II

LIABILITY AND REDRESS: The Secretariat introduced the draft decision and background document (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/18). South Africa, for the AFRICAN GROUP, ARGENTINA and BRAZIL said the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Biosafety Protocol does not provide useful guidance on damage to biodiversity in the context of Article 14(2) (liability and redress for damage to biodiversity, including restoration and compensation), given its issue-specific focus. Several parties welcomed UNEP's Guidelines for the development of domestic legislation on liability, response action and compensation for damage caused by activities dangerous to the environment, with the AFRICAN GROUP noting their voluntary character. CANADA called for reference to the work of the CBD Group of Legal and Technical Experts on Liability and Redress.

NEW ZEALAND, ARGENTINA, CANADA and AUSTRALIA did not see the need for developing new guidelines on liability and redress at this stage. The EU urged gaining experience with available tools before developing new ones and stressed the need to incorporate awareness-raising and capacity-building activities. NIGER called for a clear definition of damage to biodiversity. BRAZIL supported grounding liability in Principle 2 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (transboundary harm prevention). GUINEA-BISSAU identified the need for a mechanism to assess costs arising from cultural damage. A revised draft decision will be prepared.

MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY: The Secretariat introduced draft decisions on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs), and on other matters, including impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise and ocean acidification, priority actions to achieve Aichi Target 10 (coral reefs), and marine spatial planning and training initiatives.

EBSAs: Many countries supported "welcoming" the work of the scientific and technical evaluation of information contained in the regional workshop reports for describing EBSAs, while THAILAND, ARGENTINA and SINGAPORE preferred "taking note" of the work.

On further work on EBSAs, South Africa, for the AFRICAN GROUP, with the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, NORWAY, AUSTRALIA, JORDAN, ECUADOR, MALDIVES and EGYPT, supported a request to the Secretariat to tabulate information on the types and levels of human activities in areas described as meeting the EBSA criteria. CANADA supported this option as a basis for discussion, noting the importance of collaboration with relevant organizations in this regard. COSTA RICA and MALAYSIA supported instead a broader request to the Secretariat to undertake a scientific and technical analysis of the status of marine and coastal biodiversity in relation to the types and levels of human activity in such areas. Proposing modifications, the EU also supported this option.

Palau, for PACIFIC ISLAND STATES, with COLOMBIA, MEXICO, INDIA, ARGENTINA, FIJI, CHINA, YEMEN, TURKEY, BRAZIL and others preferred deleting reference to further work on EBSAs, with MEXICO noting that this goes beyond the mandate of the Convention and, with CHINA and BRAZIL, calling for finalization of the description of EBSAs in all regions before further work is undertaken.

ARGENTINA emphasized the application of scientific criteria to EBSA identification is an exercise to be carried out under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

ICELAND called for a peer review process to ensure the scientific quality of data, and lifted his country's reservation over the inclusion of nine areas meeting the EBSA criteria in the Arctic Ocean and the Northwest Atlantic Ocean. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION stressed that the EBSA description process does not determine the manner in which these areas will be governed. MOROCCO appreciated the qualifier that the description of EBSAs does not imply any position regarding their legal status or borders.

Other Matters: On underwater noise, SENEGAL, with INDONESIA, called for studies in developing countries. BRAZIL called for collaboration with the Convention on Migratory Species and the International Maritime Organization. South Africa, for the AFRICAN GROUP, expressed concern over seabed mining. OMAN highlighted the stressors in his region due to oil exports. NORWAY, with the EU, noted the difficulty of conducting appropriate impact assessments and monitoring, and establishing thresholds to protect sound-sensitive species. JAPAN, NORWAY, the EU and SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS supported priority action on Aichi Target 10. MALDIVES, supported by many, called for adequate financial and technical resources to meet this target.

On marine spatial planning (MSP), the AFRICAN GROUP urged parties to ensure that capacity-building and partnership activities are conducted. NORWAY called for involving competent regional organizations. The PHILIPPINES, with WWF, highlighted MSP as a tool for applying the ecosystem-based approach.

Informal consultations will be held on outstanding matters and a draft decision will be prepared.

INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES: The Secretariat introduced the draft decisions and documents (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/19, and INF/8, 9, 10 and 34). Many countries supported the draft decisions and highlighted their national actions on IAS. BOLIVIA called for strengthening control measures on the introduction of IAS through trade.

Many countries supported the voluntary guidance on measures to address the risks associated with the introduction of alien species as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, and as live bait and live food. BELARUS, with many, supported the establishment and work of the Global IAS Information Partnership.

On risk management, SOUTH AFRICA highlighted the need for collaboration, early detection and rapid response. QATAR called for more detailed guidance on implementing measures to address IAS, and a study on potential damage associated with recent escapes. BRAZIL and MALAYSIA supported the adoption of guidance on dealing with risk, and recommended the results of risk assessment be shared through the CHM.

Many countries called for adequate financial resources to implement work on IAS. Many also highlighted the value of regional cooperation, and cooperation among international instruments and organizations, calling for controlling pathways of IAS introduction.

The IIFB recommended preparing a note on social, cultural and livelihood impacts of IAS. ECONEXUS urged considering the potential of synthetic organisms to become IAS.

IN THE CORRIDORS

On day two of the COP, delegates began discussions on some of the more unwieldy agenda items, and interpretation of nuances was the activity of the day. "There are two options on resource mobilization targets, but the difference between them escapes me," complained a WG I participant. In WG II, delegates were divided on the mandate of the Convention regarding further work on EBSAs, and on what form this work should take. This reminded many of SBSTTA 18 closing plenary, which almost ended in a stalemate. "We'll get through it this time," quipped a seasoned delegate. Meanwhile, a Friends of the Chair group met to try and resolve differences over the use of the term "indigenous peoples and local communities" that has proven contentious, reporting back that while diverse views persisted, a good spirit of finding solutions prevailed.