



Earth Negotiations Bulletin

A Reporting Service for Environment and Development Negotiations

Vol. 9 No. 64

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Friday, 15 November 1996

CBD COP-3 HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 1996

During the final day of the Ministerial Segment, delegates to COP-3 heard over 50 statements from governments, IGOs and NGOs. The Working Group on financial issues met throughout the day to complete its work.

MINISTERIAL SEGMENT

FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND MECHANISM, TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND CAPACITY-BUILDING: Several developing countries reiterated the need for providing financial resources in a timely and predictable manner, and characterized the lack of compliance by developed countries with Article 20 on financial resources as a hindrance to implementation. MICRONESIA stressed that financial resources beyond those available for regional initiatives are required for national level activities. ROMANIA stated that implementation of CBD depends on the availability of financial resources. DOMINICA said that SIDS need help fighting the losing battle for economic development through new and additional sources of funding.

JAPAN said it is the duty of developed countries to actively assist developing countries in their efforts to plan and implement relevant programmes and disseminate information. FINLAND supported a policy of relieving debt of heavily-burdened countries. FRANCE called for support for developing countries to devise national strategies.

URUGUAY, WESTERN SAMOA and TOGO called for simplified procedures for funding from GEF. CHILE said that multilateral agencies should look carefully at national agendas and suggested a review of multilateral agencies to improve the quality of investments. KENYA called for the commitment of more resources to GEF, which should make more resources available for African projects. ERITREA said that GEF funding must exceed enabling activities. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA welcomed the GEF Council agreement to expedite the approval of biodiversity projects. MOZAMBIQUE called for an MOU between the COP and the GEF. ITALY noted that the GEF was achieving its aim of efficiency and transparency, and called for it to be deemed the permanent funding mechanism.

LESOTHO noted that capacity-building should involve not just technology transfer, but also information sharing, awareness building and improvement of indigenous capacity. WESTERN SAMOA cautioned against contracting foreign consultants without training local people. MAURITIUS said the CHM must

be committed, dynamic and non-bureaucratic, and that the Parties must have the necessary capacity to access the information.

ARTICLE 8(J), IPR, ACCESS TO GENETIC RESOURCES AND AGRICULTURE: AOSIS supported the implementation of Article 8(j) as it captures the true spirit of the CBD. SWEDEN stressed that information could soon be lost forever as cultures are degraded. The GROUP OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES called for an immediate moratorium on bioprospecting and said that indigenous peoples are not satisfied with the decision taken by COP-3 on Article 8(j). SRI LANKA has established a governmental department for development of indigenous medicine.

WESTERN SAMOA said that IPR issues, especially patent rights, are a serious concern in the South Pacific region due to a lack of legislation. The EUROPEAN COMMUNITY called for exploring the possibility of developing IPR systems and contractual mechanisms to better value indigenous knowledge. NICARAGUA recognized that providing access to biotechnology and establishing IPR will allow for the development of a new international framework for the conservation of biodiversity.

The US recognized the benefits of having an informal open system of access, with the key benefit being greater global food security. POLAND noted that broad and free access to genetic resources was fundamental to food supplies but recognized sovereign rights over genetic resources. The NETHERLANDS supported broad access to a wide variety of genetic resources, with due respect for the existing UPOV Convention and TRIPS agreement. PAKISTAN highlighted the value of the International Undertaking and an international code of conduct on collection of plant genetic resources, both developed by FAO.

BIOSAFETY: The REPUBLIC OF KOREA noted that the first step had been taken regarding a biosafety protocol and expressed confidence that agreement will be reached soon despite the diversity of views on structure and content. The EUROPEAN COMMUNITY said delegates must negotiate diligently to complete a protocol on biosafety by the end of 1998. AOSIS supported the establishment of a protocol on biosafety that addresses elements such as liability, compensation and socioeconomic considerations. PAPUA NEW GUINEA called for a biosafety protocol that goes beyond transboundary movement of LMOs. The BIOTECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY ORGANIZATION stated that successful cooperation on biosafety between industry and government is based on equality of understanding and a business environment.

MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY: WESTERN SAMOA called on the COP to seriously address concerns of

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SIDS, with appropriate financial mechanisms. AOSIS highlighted the sustainable use of coral reefs and reef ecosystems, and noted that this will require regional and international efforts, such as the International Coral Reef Initiative. The BAHAMAS highlighted the special conditions of the least developed countries and SIDS, which are vulnerable to pollution and in need of assistance.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER CONVENTIONS AND PROCESSES: FINLAND welcomed the decision on forest biodiversity and called for strengthening the dialogue between CBD and IPF. The US called for close links with the work of the IPF. ROMANIA emphasized CBD input into the IPF process. WESTERN SAMOA noted that SBSTTA should play a vital role in implementing the SIDS Programme of Action. ITALY called for immediate clarification and reorientation between the CBD and existing agreements in the areas of conservation, agriculture and the seas. DENMARK said the CBD is keeping biodiversity on the international agenda and noted that the CBD is so broad in objectives that close cooperation is a must. The NETHERLANDS questioned the need for a separate Secretariat for each convention. The EUROPEAN COMMUNITY urged sending a strong message to the UNGA to take biodiversity considerations seriously. JAPAN noted that with the Special Session approaching, each Party must make renewed efforts to promote implementation of the CBD.

INDICATORS AND IMPLEMENTATION : FINLAND stressed the need to develop monitoring and assessment indicators on biodiversity. ITALY said the evaluation criteria for implementing the CBD should be simple, understandable, cost-effective and highly representative. SRI LANKA called for a set of performance indicators. SURINAME hopes to establish criteria for evaluation of progress made in national implementation.

Several ministers highlighted their national implementation efforts, including the BAHAMAS, BELARUS, BULGARIA, CAMEROON, the CZECH REPUBLIC, CHILE, DENMARK, ESTONIA, EGYPT, GHANA, GUATAMALA, GUYANA, KENYA, the PHILIPPINES, PORTUGAL, RUSSIA, LESOTHO, THAILAND, TUNISIA, UKRAINE and URUGUAY. They described the development of new environmental laws, as well as sustainable policies on forests, fisheries and the use of biological diversity. Some countries are implementing legislation on access to genetic resources, IPR regimes and the rights of indigenous and local communities. Other speakers highlighted the initiation of data collection programmes to assess domestic biological resources, biomonitoring programmes in protected areas and development of national biodiversity data management systems. Some delegates noted the preparation of national strategies, the establishment of national ecological reserves, and the initiation of decentralized environmental management strategies.

Delegates also raised a number of other issues key to implementation. JAPAN stressed that the formation of national strategies and programmes is crucial. The SEYCHELLES highlighted sustainable tourism with a portion of revenues invested in conservation. AUSTRIA emphasized integrating the objectives of the CBD into various economic sectors, which would help mainstream sustainable development. The US said its current administration intends to pursue ratification, and in the meantime will continue to participate as an active partner. PAPUA NEW GUINEA called for incentive packages to reward resource owners who set up protected areas.

MAURITIUS deplored the proliferation of intersessional meetings and documents and the politicization of SBSTTA. The NETHERLANDS proposed that the COP meet every two years, relying on an annual meeting of SBSTTA.

SYRIA stressed the integration of conservation in educational systems. Regional cooperation was stressed by NICARAGUA, MONACO and GUATAMALA. RWANDA highlighted the environmental impact of regional insecurity, demographic

pressure and repatriating refugees, and called for poverty reduction and preventive diplomacy. BANGLADESH said that biodiversity loss is due to increasing poverty and is therefore a moral issue.

IGOs AND NGOs: UNESCO is carrying out programmes on marine and coastal areas, natural and cultural heritage sites, and protection and promotion of traditional knowledge. UNCTAD highlighted its Biotrade Initiative and urged promotion and reinforcement for the capacity of developing countries to compete in emerging markets. SPAIN commended UNCTAD on its Biotrade Initiative as an economic valuation exercise. FAO highlighted the current World Food Summit, the Leipzig Conference and the revision of the International Undertaking as key activities in 1996.

IUCN stated it would continue to contribute to CBD implementation through documentation, dialogue, analysis and creative solutions. The LATIN AMERICAN NGO FORUM called for expanded participation of civil society, and restructured incentives for both public and private sector investment. COOPERATIVA TECNICO SCIENTIFICA DI BASE highlighted the contradiction between allowing patents on improved varieties but not on traditional varieties, and called for *sui generis* systems.

WORKING GROUP ON FINANCIAL ISSUES

Delegates to the Working Group on financial issues completed consideration of the three outstanding texts. On the MOU, delegates deleted text noting that, if the COP considers a specific project decision does not comply with its guidance, it may "ask for a reconsideration of that decision." Delegates also deleted the instruction that COP review the amount of funding "available" for CBD on the occasion of each replenishment.

On the draft decision on Additional Guidance to the Financial Mechanism, delegates agreed to underline "the importance of paragraphs 1 and 4 of Article 20" of the CBD. They also added a note stating that the COP endorsed recommendation II/2 of SBSTTA concerning capacity-building for taxonomy.

The text on the procedure to review the effectiveness of the financial mechanism calls on the Secretariat to: gather information; prepare a synthesis; send it for appraisal to five regional representatives; take account of the comments; distribute copies to all Parties and relevant bodies for comments; based on these, prepare a draft report to be presented to the regional representatives and made available to the GEF and implementing agencies; and submit the synthesis with supporting documents to Parties not later than 3 months prior to COP-4. Supporting documents will include comments and other information, identified by source.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Some participants observed that the previously divisive debates over the relationship between the CBD and the GEF appear to have changed focus from the MOU to how the CBD will give operational guidance to and review its financial mechanism. Some delegates were pleased with the support offered for the MOU in many statements during the COW. Several commented that intersessional activities clarified some concerns that had rankled previous COPs. Some delegates suggested the review anticipated by COP-3's draft decision that would guide the review of the financial mechanism could feed back into further discussions on the MOU.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The closing Plenary is expected to meet today.