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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE THIRD SESSION OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE 2 SEPTEMBER 1997

Delegates to the Third Session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-3) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) met first in Plenary and then in two Working Groups. Working Group I discussed biodiversity of inland waters and Working Group II focused on forest biodiversity.

### PLENARY

In Plenary, the Chair announced the nominations of working group Chairs and the Rapporteur Manbongi Sodi Nakahuedi (Democratic Republic of Congo). Martin Uppenbrink (Germany) will chair the drafting group on the Clearinghouse Mechanism (CHM) and Peter Schei (Norway) will chair the one on the review of SBSTTA. GRULAC nominated Patricia Gudiño (Costa Rica) for the Bureau.

**WORKING GROUP I:** Chair Elaine Fisher (Jamaica) invited the Secretariat to introduce the report on biological diversity in inland waters (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/2). Many delegations, including NORWAY, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, the UK, the EU, SWEDEN, FINLAND, GERMANY, AUSTRALIA and DENMARK, supported the proposed work programme and noted the importance of the ecosystem approach and integrated watershed management. Many delegations, including NORWAY, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, the UK, SWEDEN, FINLAND, GERMANY and SOUTH AFRICA, noted the need to ensure contact between the CBD's biodiversity efforts and the CSD-6 work programme, which will focus on freshwater. KENYA, the NETHERLANDS, ARGENTINA, CANADA and FRANCE supported the establishment of partnerships with specialized organizations from the wetlands and water resources sectors at local, national, regional and international levels. Several delegations, including IRELAND, PERU and INDIA, underscored the importance of catchment areas.

NORWAY and SWEDEN highlighted the conclusions of the Workshop on Freshwater Biodiversity, which took place in Selbu, Norway, 5-7 June 1997: conservation of national and regional waters; national capacity building; and the need for taxonomic inventories of freshwater systems. The UK suggested that priorities include the sharing of information and experience on managing the natural processes of whole catchments and raising awareness on controlling alien species. Noting that freshwater ecosystems or inland waters represent a variety of habitats, FINLAND and GERMANY suggested that the ecosystem approach to freshwater management requires the integration of both terrestrial and aquatic components. SWITZERLAND said the CHM should synthesize available information on inland water ecosystems

and, with INDIA, said the GEF should finance projects that promote inland water conservation and sustainable use. The US recommended, *inter alia*, participatory watershed management and better integration of inland water ecosystems with traditional resource management.

COLOMBIA favored a work programme that strengthens national capacity and focuses equally on conservation and utilization. With BRAZIL, she called for defining priorities at the regional level. BRAZIL called for addressing integrated river management and, with MEXICO, proposed consideration of transboundary impacts. ARGENTINA said the report should address activities affecting inland waterways, such as deforestation, mining and tourism. PERU highlighted: training and public awareness; technical guidelines and management plans; and technical assessments. CANADA called for a focus on issue-driven technological adaptation and an assessment of ongoing programmes of international organizations. The NETHERLANDS and KENYA stressed the need for a taxonomic inventory of inland water systems.

KENYA, HAITI, GUINEA, SOUTH AFRICA and the AFRICA GROUP, stressed increased financial support and technology transfers; institutional arrangements for incorporating indigenous knowledge; and local self-help programmes. The AFRICA GROUP also highlighted: synergy with relevant conventions; impact assessments; watershed management, with local community participation. He urged SBSTTA and the COP to: establish regional expert groups; include inland waters in the SBSTTA-4 agenda; and facilitate participation in regional workshops and meetings. CAMEROON favored an integrated review of inland water biodiversity with guidance from international organizations and conventions. INDONESIA noted that public awareness is particularly important in countries with dense populations. A representative of RAMSAR noted that its Strategic Plan could contribute to the CBD's emphasis on inland water systems and requested guidance from the CBD on how to operationalize this role.

The WORLD BANK said its review of project impacts on inland water ecosystems indicated that certain irrigation, water supply, and hydroelectric projects are bereft of biodiversity management and could benefit from improved monitoring and impact assessment.

WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL stressed the need to enhance communication with and participation by cross-sectoral groups. A representative from the GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FORUM-8 highlighted the need for information on threats to individual species and whole system functioning and suggested that information exchange could be implemented through the Clearinghouse Mechanism (CHM). INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S BIODIVERSITY NETWORK observed that the summary document does not adequately reflect the role of traditional technologies and underscored the need for specific case studies regarding the knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples.

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FAO observed that reports of fishery production data often do not include information from inland sources and that improved catch and effort data could provide indicator information.

Delegates also discussed a report on identification and monitoring of components of biodiversity of inland water ecosystems (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/7). The UK, COLOMBIA, SWEDEN and JAPAN noted that RAMSAR criteria may be helpful, but did not support their adoption by CBD. The UK supported developing an overall classification system for inland waters. FRANCE agreed with the adoption of existing Ramsar criteria, but cautioned against adding new criteria. NORWAY supported endorsing the criteria regarding threatened species, but was reluctant to recommend that Parties prepare indicative lists. BURKINA FASO suggested that the proposed criteria for assessing specific sites are too simplistic. PERU said that guidelines should include physical and biological risks to humans, plant and animal life caused by pollution.

**WORKING GROUP II:** Chair Gabor Nechay (Hungary) opened discussions on forest and agricultural biodiversity. The Secretariat introduced the Draft Programme of Work for Forest Biological Diversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/5). Many delegations stressed cooperation with the Inter-agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF) and non-duplication with the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF), the International Forum on Forests (IFF) and other ongoing forest activities. VENEZUELA, with BRAZIL, was concerned about inconsistency with UNGASS and, with AUSTRALIA, about possible duplication by the CBD of the IPF's holistic work on forests. The IFF Interim Secretariat suggested that it is premature for SBSTTA-3 and COP-4 to adopt a Work Programme (WP) on forests before an IFF contribution. BRAZIL, SWEDEN, PERU, the REPUBLIC OF CONGO, GLOBAL FOREST POLICY PROJECT (GFPP), GREENPEACE INTERNATIONAL and FUNDACION ECOTROPICA, warned against other processes duplicating the legally-binding CBD mandate and, with SWITZERLAND, hoped the CBD would not wait to make its contribution to the IFF. GFPP reminded delegates that the IPF is over and the IFF dialogue has yet to begin.

FINLAND and PERU welcomed the forest liaison group initiative but other delegates raised concern over the ways and means of formulating and implementing the WP. JAPAN and GFPP requested clarification of the liaison group selection procedures. GERMANY and the UK suggested not being limited to liaison groups and technical workshops. AUSTRALIA, with GFPP, JAPAN and GERMANY questioned the transparency and participation of the liaison group model. VENEZUELA, JAPAN, INDIA and the REPUBLIC OF CONGO said it duplicated efforts, funding and time.

Delegates generally supported the draft WP, but had general and specific comments. FINLAND, NORWAY, the UK, AUSTRALIA, SWEDEN, NEPAL, FRANCE and the NETHERLANDS called for clearer objectives, priorities and action-orientation. Many delegations expressed concern over omission of UNGASS and CSD decisions or IPF proposals for action. AUSTRALIA and VENEZUELA did not consider discussion of a global framework for forest biodiversity appropriate. The UK, AUSTRIA and JAPAN asked for clarification on who will oversee the work and, with CANADA, requested full costing and timelines. CANADA proposed that SBSTTA recommend to the COP selection of an appropriate international agency to prepare costed options for financing WP priorities.

The US suggested prioritization of best practices. NORWAY proposed distinguishing management from scientific aspects. BENIN, the NETHERLANDS and SOUTH AFRICA highlighted the role of natural forests rather than planted, agricultural and secondary forests and called for research on livelihood alternatives for farmers. Many delegations called for complementing efforts to define sustainable forest management (SFM) and advising on how to integrate biodiversity into national programmes and reporting.

FINLAND suggested more emphasis on: traditional forest related-knowledge (TFRK) and traditional systems of conservation and sustainable use; ongoing work on Article 8(j); and human influences and mitigation measures to counter the underlying causes of biodiversity loss. The AFRICA GROUP stressed the interrelationship of forest and non-forest ecosystems and called for incorporation of community

participation and socioeconomic aspects. SOUTH AFRICA and the NETHERLANDS stressed the restoration of degraded forests and, with KENYA and MALAWI, proposed an inventory and categorization of forests. PERU emphasized the need for national and regional consensus, particularly concerning criteria and indicators (C&I). GERMANY suggested adding a separate WP element on assessment of ways to minimize or mitigate negative influences. With the GFPP, NEW ZEALAND and DENMARK stressed focusing on issues where the CBD can fill gaps.

FINLAND supported work on the ecosystem approach to forest biological diversity. BRAZIL, COLOMBIA and the FUNDACION ECOTROPICA called for clearer definitions. GERMANY, with ITALY, MEXICO, AUSTRALIA and KENYA suggested clarifying links with national forest programmes and TFRK, and emphasizing mitigation measures and opposed developing methodologies for assessing ecological landscapes, forest fragmentation and population viability. DENMARK, CANADA, and the US favored regarding the ecosystem approach as an implicit part of all other WP elements. ITALY and the NETHERLANDS proposed integrating all SBSTTA sectoral work on the ecosystem approach. MEXICO, with the AFRICA GROUP, BRAZIL, COLOMBIA, NETHERLANDS, FRANCE, AUSTRALIA and SWEDEN stressed incorporation of socioeconomic aspects.

Many delegates supported integration of forest biodiversity into sectoral and cross-sectoral planning (Article 6b). GERMANY proposed limiting analysis to non-legally binding recommendations for national reporting. AUSTRALIA and VENEZUELA favored national determination of stakeholder definition and participation. NEPAL, MALAWI and SWEDEN called for capacity building in this area through the GEF. Regarding C&I, GERMANY and AUSTRALIA supported a testing and evaluation phase and, with FINLAND, ITALY, DENMARK, CANADA, AUSTRALIA, JAPAN, BRAZIL, the US, SWEDEN and the GFPP, stressed compatibility with existing national, regional or international C&I processes. The GFPP, supported by PERU and the FUNDACION ECOTROPICA, suggested that the CBD improve C&I processes. JAPAN added a proposal for selecting an executing agency such as FAO or ITTO, while AUSTRALIA favored CBD/FAO collaboration for implementation. The NETHERLANDS noted that ongoing C&I processes give little attention to forest biodiversity and suggested CBD coordination.

Regarding research needs and information dissemination mechanisms, FINLAND stressed the need to involve national expertise and different stakeholders, and with PERU, to improve coordination and conduct further analysis of gaps in knowledge in the WP. GERMANY suggested prioritizing the analysis of threats to forest biodiversity while AUSTRALIA recommended work on integrating traditional knowledge. FIJI and MALAWI stressed forest inventories. INDIA with the NETHERLANDS, SOUTH AFRICA, SWEDEN, the US and BIONET, supported prioritization of best practices. SWEDEN suggested focusing on ecosystem and landscape best practices and the US stressed looking at local and regional approaches. GFPP suggested consideration of how well best practices care for biodiversity. Although DENMARK noted that best practices for forest biodiversity are a condition for SFM and should be developed for national and biogeographical levels, he did not support best practices as an element of the WP. GERMANY suggested postponing this element until the ecosystem approach is defined and underlying causes are analyzed.

On agrobiodiversity, the Secretariat introduced Review of Ongoing Activities on Agricultural Biological Diversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/6). BRAZIL recommended a core set of C&Is for agricultural biodiversity. AUSTRIA and AUSTRALIA recommended acceptance of all draft recommendations. INDONESIA called for pooled efforts to enhance capacity for utilizing domestic resources.

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR

**WORKING GROUP I:** Working Group will meet in Room I at 10:00 am.

**WORKING GROUP II:** Working Group II will meet in Room II at 10:00 am.

