



# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE THIRD SESSION OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE 4 SEPTEMBER 1997

The Executive Director of UNEP addressed delegates in a morning Plenary session. Working Groups I and II considered and adopted draft recommendations on their respective agenda items in morning, afternoon and evening sessions.

### PLENARY

Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Executive Director of UNEP, highlighted, *inter alia* the resurgence of global concern for the vulnerability of freshwater and marine ecosystems; linking agro-biodiversity and food security objectives; the need for biodiversity economics; and integrating biodiversity into forest management. She asked delegates to ask themselves to what degree their work has protected the world's biodiversity and noted that declining developing country participation and voluntary contributions threaten CBD implementation.

### WORKING GROUP I

The Secretariat introduced document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/4 on conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biological diversity, which transmits the advice and recommendations of the first Meeting of Experts, along with a proposed Work Plan (WP). The NETHERLANDS commented that the success of the WP depends on the initiative of countries, IGOs and NGOs, and suggested that SBSTTA request these groups to propose contributions for implementing specific elements of the WP. The NETHERLANDS, BRAZIL, the US and VENEZUELA also stressed the importance of using regional processes as a vehicle for implementation.

Many delegations, such as CANADA, cited the need for further focus and prioritization. Other delegations, such as MALAYSIA, found the targets realistic. The UK, with SWEDEN, recommended a strong focus for all outputs, and, supported by the US, JAPAN and INDONESIA, outlined a possible task management structure, which would increase involvement by the roster of experts, rely on Internet communications, and decrease the cost and time components of large meetings. ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA and TANZANIA lauded the Secretariat's efforts to develop a roster of experts on marine and coastal biodiversity, while CANADA, the INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S BIODIVERSITY NETWORK and JAPAN FISHERIES ASSOCIATION advocated broadened representation, including local resource users and indigenous peoples. ICELAND expressed continued concern about openness and transparency of process and advised greater involvement by the roster of experts.

With regard to the application of the precautionary approach, CANADA said that SBSTTA should limit related activities to well-defined areas where identified gaps exist, while the US saw no need for a separate programme element. The section was deleted.

The REPUBLIC OF KOREA agreed that "integrated marine and coastal area management" (IMCAM) is the best policy for the conservation of the marine ecosystem and the US, INDONESIA and MEXICO said that IMCAM provides a framework for bringing together the four other priority areas identified by SBSTTA.

On eco-labeling of fishery products, TANZANIA acknowledged that this subject is new to developing countries and recommended, along with MALAYSIA, that particular emphasis be placed on the exchange of information. BRAZIL said that eco-labeling is a subject better dealt with in other fora. PERU suggested that SBSTTA coordinate the evaluation of eco-labeling initiatives with current activities at the WTO.

NEW ZEALAND requested that development of ecosystem approaches to sustainable use of marine and coastal living resources include the identification of critical components of ecosystem functioning. The SEYCHELLES, supported by NEW ZEALAND, said that approaches should focus on resource destruction caused by poor fishing methods. The SEYCHELLES, noting the importance of marine and coastal protected areas to small island developing states (SIDS), said their isolation and lack of funding constrains effective management, particularly in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The US highlighted marine and coastal protected areas as a programme activity where the CBD could provide "added value." After many delegations expressed concern about using the IUCN category definitions for marine and coastal protected areas, AUSTRALIA explained that the IUCN categories were specifically designed to apply to terrestrial, coastal and marine areas and should not be problematic to use.

SWEDEN expressed a need for additional data on loss of biodiversity resulting from mariculture. ICELAND, along with PERU, objected to the rationale that mariculture offers possibilities for enhancing genetic aspects of biodiversity and the final draft incorporated this concern. ICELAND, JAPAN, AUSTRALIA and NORWAY questioned the relevance of the section on CITES. This section was deleted.

BRAZIL, NEW ZEALAND, SEYCHELLES and the US supported an increased focus on threats posed by the introduction of alien species. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA also proposed that the discussion of alien species incorporate the debate on Genetically Modified Organisms from the Biosafety Protocol WG. SAINT LUCIA observed that development by some small island states (SIDS) might include alien species and emphasized the importance of information exchange. CANADA also thought such work was a priority, noting that it was not addressed comprehensively by other institutions.

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SWEDEN and ICELAND suggested that because organizations such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) were already tackling it, SBSTTA should rely on their expertise and efforts. GERMANY and BRAZIL advocated recognition of the impacts of tourism on biodiversity in coastal regions, with GERMANY cautioning that without sufficient attention, this issue would become political. The BAHAMAS added that impacts of tourism pose a particular threat to SIDS.

Delegates reviewed and approved the draft report of Working Group I (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/WG.1/L.1), which did not contain the revised draft recommendations. Following presentation of the draft recommendations on biological diversity of inland waters (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/WG.1/CRP.1), CANADA presented additional amendments generated by informal consultations with a number of countries, including NORWAY, GERMANY, BRAZIL, the NETHERLANDS, MALAWI and the US. These amendments were incorporated into revised draft recommendations (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/WG.1/CRP.1/Rev.1) on: general recommendations; the SBSTTA Work Plan; recommendations to Parties; and financing.

COLOMBIA proposed that SBSTTA concentrate on examples of equitable sharing of benefits derived from the use of inland water biodiversity. Delegates accepted language stating that SBSTTA would involve indigenous and local communities in the development of management plans and projects that may affect inland water biodiversity and implement Article 8(j) as related to inland water biodiversity.

Delegates also considered draft recommendations on marine and coastal biodiversity. The recommendations address: implementation of integrated marine and coastal area management; living resources; protected areas; mariculture; and alien species. The SEYCHELLES proposed including an introductory paragraph recognizing the significance of SIDS in the conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity.

## WORKING GROUP II

Working Group II began discussions on Recommendations for a Core Set of Indicators of Biodiversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/9). Countries agreed with the importance of biodiversity indicators for CBD implementation and noted the need to benefit from other ongoing initiatives and sister conventions. NEW ZEALAND, supported by the UK, the US, PERU and AUSTRALIA recommended identifying key questions and principles for: amenability to interpretation; the design of national monitoring and indicator programmes; relating indicators to management questions; and the ability to show trends, provide reliable results and distinguish between natural and human-induced change. With FINLAND, AUSTRALIA, BRAZIL, CANADA, MEXICO and NORWAY, NEW ZEALAND also prioritized case studies of best practice.

GERMANY, PERU and NIGER stressed that indicators be practical, policy relevant and empirically based. The AFRICA GROUP cautioned against duplicating efforts and highlighted desertification. AUSTRIA raised the problem of first determining data availability and collection means. SWEDEN, AUSTRIA and INDIA questioned the cost effectiveness of such work. BRAZIL, FINLAND, NORWAY, the AFRICA GROUP and BIONET supported the two-track approach.

The AFRICA GROUP, with SWITZERLAND, the NETHERLANDS and CANADA, supported global and regional indicators. SWEDEN, with PORTUGAL and NORWAY stressed local level indicators as a way to improve standards given different starting points. Several delegations favored national and regional indicators, commenting on the prematurity of global core indicators. AUSTRALIA opposed indicator aggregation into a single "national index of national capital." CANADA said that aggregating national data to regional and global levels would give the CBD "teeth."

Delegations generally supported the work of the existing liaison group. MEXICO, supported by NEW ZEALAND, SWITZERLAND, the AFRICA GROUP, BIONET and the UK, suggested broadening it to include regional and ecosystem expertise. The US, with DENMARK and the ZIMBABWE TRUST, proposed including NGOs, academia and industry. SWITZERLAND suggested that a roster of experts be created before liaison group expansion. PORTUGAL recommended that regional discussions precede global

ones. ARGENTINA suggested using the CSD approach of regional consultations. FRANCE conveyed concern over the costly duplication of regional initiatives, but the AFRICA GROUP suggested "piggy-backing" meetings onto regional COP preparatory meetings.

The UK, NIGER, DENMARK and NORWAY supported the pressure-state-use-response model. GERMANY opposed the "use" category of indicators, while FRANCE suggested system self-regeneration indicators. MEXICO, with CANADA, FRANCE and AUSTRALIA, proposed adding genetic level indicators. PERU called for, *inter alia*: national indicators, the cautious use of threatened species and the inclusion of capacity and political indicators. INDIA called for linking indicators to sustainable forest management (SFM). ARGENTINA proposed sustainability, socioeconomic and demographic indicators. The AFRICA GROUP noted, *inter alia*, the need to balance conservation and sustainable use objectives, consumptive and non-consumptive uses, and pressure and response indicators. NIGER proposed drought and climate variability as pressure indicators.

Regarding baselines, thresholds and targets, BIONET emphasized verifiable targets. GERMANY, with the UK, FRANCE, ARGENTINA, PORTUGAL, FINLAND, AUSTRALIA, and the EC opposed using a pre-industrial baseline. The AFRICA GROUP preferred a "pre-impact" baseline to account for differences between regions. The US supported a 1993 baseline.

During review of the Chair's draft paper on biodiversity indicators, ARGENTINA inserted language on the role of indicators in assessing CBD implementation performance while SWITZERLAND and the US added indicators following global and regional trends. MEXICO and SWITZERLAND inserted reference to all three levels of biodiversity. CANADA added a reference to standard methodologies for indicator reliability.

A first draft set of recommendations on agro-biodiversity was viewed as too long and redundant. A second draft was tabled. Delegates accepted a proposal by BRAZIL to change mention of "Annex 3" (case studies) to "Annex 2" (list of thematic areas) in the recommendation to expand the focus on soil microorganisms to soil biota. On funding through the GEF and other institutions, there was much debate over MALAWI's proposal to omit FAO initiatives. CANADA added language on "providing an opportunity for Parties and governments to participate" in identifying issues related to trade and agro-biodiversity. The US changed C&I for agricultural biodiversity to "indicators," and deleted language on a core set of C&I and sustainable agriculture.

The Friends of the Chair paper on forest biodiversity was adopted with an annexed organizational matrix for a draft work programme, applying research, cooperation and technology development to: ecosystem approaches; criteria and indicator processes; and assessment of ways to mitigate negative influences. The GLOBAL FOREST POLICY PROJECT attempted to comment and the Chair supported BRAZIL's concern that the drafting group remain in the control of governments. The WG adopted the introductory elements of the Draft Report of Working Group 2 (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/WG.2/L.1), which will add on agreed conclusions on indicators, agro-biodiversity and forests, noting that countries can still take reservations.

## IN THE CORRIDORS

Many NGOs voiced strong disappointment and frustration regarding Wednesday's forest drafting group, wherein the "open-ended" group that met in the afternoon was closed to NGOs in the evening with little warning or explanation. Some were concerned about setting a precedent that could hamper future NGO contributions to SBSTTA and other UN scientific bodies. Others commented that the exclusion appears politically motivated, particularly regarding the work programme's relationship with the IPF/IFF, indicating that SBSTTA is anything but a truly scientific body. Based on statements made in the afternoon session, one NGO said some delegations seemingly want a programme that does little or nothing at all.

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR

**PLENARY:** Plenary will convene at 10:00 am in Room 1/2.