



## SBSTTA-6 HIGHLIGHTS TUESDAY, 13 MARCH 2001

Delegates to the sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) met in two working groups during the day. Working Group I (WG-I), focusing on invasive alien species (IAS), heard presentations and discussed: an integrated approach to IAS; prevention, early detection and incursion response; and options for future work. Working Group II (WG-II) discussed scientific assessments and the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI).

### WORKING GROUP I

**INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES:** WG-I Chair Anastasios Legakis (Greece) introduced the organization of work in UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/1/Add.2 and its Annex, noting that delegates would address four areas regarding options for future work: an integrated approach; prevention, early detection and incursion response; eradication; and mitigation of effects. The Secretariat introduced UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/6, 7 and 8, and relevant information documents. Nirmalie Palewatta, University of Colombo (Sri Lanka), highlighted IAS' role in the CBD's thematic areas, islands, polar regions, Mediterranean habitats and mountains. She listed gaps in knowledge including: short/long-term and cumulative impacts; extent and rate of spread; country baselines; and taxonomy.

**Integrated Approach:** Delegates then heard a number of presentations. Jeff Waage, Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP), reviewed an integrated approach, outlining conditions for a national programme, namely: awareness raising; economic assessments; engagement of stakeholders; national surveys; legal and institutional frameworks; and incorporation in national biodiversity action plans. He summarized options for addressing invasives: prevention; early detection; eradication; and containment, control or mitigation. Peter Schei (Norway) highlighted the role of international cooperation for information sharing, joint research programmes, harmonization of regulations and standardization of risk assessments, and emphasized potential cooperation with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

Case studies were presented by: Eladio Fernández Galliano, Council of Europe, on behalf of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats; Greg Sherley, South Pacific Regional Environment Programme; and Nick Davidson, Ramsar Convention. Marcos Silva, CBD Clearing-house Mechanism (CHM), highlighted information needs and recommended, *inter alia*: inter-relating various data types; creating national and regional biodiversity information networks; developing public awareness initiatives, specialist centers and capacity-building programmes; improving access to information; creating inventories of experience, expertise and tools; and improving prediction capacity.

Chair Legakis outlined options for a comprehensive agreement, an instrument to fill identified gaps and enlargement of existing instruments. HAITI proposed looking at international cooperation among multilateral organizations that may propagate IAS. GERMANY questioned inclusion of human pathogens and pests that only incur economic damage. SWEDEN and BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL called for inclusion of alien genotypes. The SEYCHELLES called for use of terminology approved in COP Decision V/8 on alien invasive species, as opposed to invasive alien species. SWEDEN and IRELAND called for increased attention to IAS at the genetic level. SENEGAL highlighted the role of local knowledge. VENEZUELA proposed consideration of trade in raw materials and the effects of improved species on inter-species diversity. TOGO emphasized consideration of biological control methods. IRELAND proposed use of native species and highlighted species' movement within national boundaries. BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL emphasized consideration of invasives within the context of local food webs.

**Prevention, Early Detection and Incursion Response:** Case studies on national prevention measures were presented by: Vicente Paeile (Chile) on Chile's control, detection and prevention measures; and John Hedley (New Zealand) on New Zealand's biosecurity regime. Nick Van der Graaf, IPPC, described the IPPC's scope and provisions, including its role in setting International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures. MEXICO, with COLOMBIA and PERU, called for countries to make information on all species available. SWEDEN called for risk analysis on intentional introductions. CUBA proposed an analysis of developing countries' ability to address IAS. PERU highlighted the need for education. The US underscored addressing key pathways and working with industry on prevention programmes.

**Options for Future Work:** The SEYCHELLES, supported by PAPUA NEW GUINEA, called for prioritization of the needs of isolated ecosystems to reflect language in COP Decision V/8. KENYA, on behalf of the African Group, highlighted regional problems and asked for their periodic review. AUSTRALIA, BRAZIL, COLOMBIA, HAITI, INDIA, NEW ZEALAND and the UK expressed reservations regarding a recommendation on considering the development of an international instrument. The EC, FRANCE and DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE supported retaining such language, noting the need to keep the option for future consideration. A number of countries supported: further consideration of existing instruments; CBD cooperation with relevant organizations; country ratification of the IPPC; preparation of an international instrument on ballast water under the International Maritime Organization; and elaboration of standards relating to IAS. JAMAICA questioned SBSTTA's mandate to recommend ratification of the revised IPPC. JAPAN noted that the different objectives of existing instruments should be considered.

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The FAO underlined relevant IPPC experience and opportunities for cooperation with the CBD. The CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES (CMS) stressed that invasives are particularly problematic for migratory species and their habitats. BRAZIL, PORTUGAL and the COUNCIL OF EUROPE stressed enhancement of regional cooperation. NORWAY proposed addressing how to develop standards regarding IAS. BRAZIL highlighted the need to consider species shifts resulting from climate change, and, with MALI, stressed the need to raise public awareness. AUSTRALIA proposed language on financial measures, which would encompass disincentives and sanctions. NEW ZEALAND recommended improving access to information, capacity-building pilot projects, work on islands and cost-effective surveillance techniques. KENYA and NEW ZEALAND stressed the need for taxonomic work. The INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORUM ON BIODIVERSITY called for participation of indigenous and local communities at the policy and implementation levels. The SUNSHINE PROJECT called for a ban on use of biological control agents in crop eradication.

## WORKING GROUP II

**SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENTS:** Chair Raed Bani Hani (Jordan) briefly discussed scientific assessments. The Secretariat introduced: UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/3, on ongoing assessment processes; UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/9, on suggested recommendations; and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/9/Add.1, on a brainstorming meeting held in Oslo in November 1999. On the roster of experts, many delegates supported using it without creating additional bodies, while some emphasized better coordination and tailoring to specific assessments. BRAZIL, COLOMBIA, ECUADOR and PERU proposed its expansion. A number of delegates supported a pilot study on procedures to identify experts, and use of the CHM in scientific assessment processes. The BAHAMAS specified parameters for assessments. The EU stressed a more comprehensive indicative list of proposed assessment initiatives. GERMANY and others supported consideration of assessments in establishing a core set of indicators and criteria. The US said the existing criteria and indicators should be followed to avoid duplication. COLOMBIA called for identification of available human and financial resources for pilot projects. INDIA said that the financing element was unclear. Many delegates emphasized capacity building.

CANADA and NORWAY supported Oslo recommendations on expert group reports and outlining a process and tasks for reviewers. ECUADOR, MEXICO and SWITZERLAND emphasized linkages to national reports and to strategic environmental assessments. CAMEROON noted that assessment activities should be prioritized. The SEYCHELLES emphasized a COP-4 decision on priority of rapid assessment for small island developing States. CHINA stressed prioritizing assessments and cooperation with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. JAPAN and INDIA said a pilot project on CBD and climate change was premature, while PORTUGAL said it should be emphasized. The NETHERLANDS advocated timely assessment of climate change's impact on biodiversity, and supported a coral reef assessment. BRAZIL encouraged governments to mobilize national institutions. PORTUGAL requested that dry and semi-dry land areas be included in the work programme. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION, supported by others, called for attention to regional experiences and national case studies. COLOMBIA and VENEZUELA proposed development of a multinational pilot project.

The FAO, IUCN, and UNEP/Global International Waters Assessment and UNESCO drew attention to their assessment work in various areas, particularly endangered species, forests and water. GHANA, KENYA and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION supported use of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species in pilot project briefs and suggested combining projects on forest biodiversity. The INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORUM ON BIODIVERSITY emphasized gender balance and inclusion of indigenous experts. UNEP/WORLD CONSERVATION MONITORING CENTRE supported inclusion of protected areas. CANADA and ECUADOR prioritized forest biodiversity and Millennium Ecosystem Assessments for pilot assessments, and supported a project on inland water biodiversity. The RAMSAR CONVENTION highlighted links to inland water ecosystems. The

BAHAMAS proposed rapid assessment of marine and coastal biodiversity. The WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION proposed reference to climate variability.

**GLOBAL TAXONOMY INITIATIVE:** In the afternoon, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) made a short presentation, noting its creation on 1 March 2001. GBIF is an interoperable network of biodiversity databases that makes information freely available and works in cooperation with established programmes and organizations such as the GTI. Delegates then considered the GTI, and the Secretariat introduced UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/10 and INF/4. Many delegates expressed general support for the proposed programme of work. SWITZERLAND requested the work programme be prioritized in line with available financial resources. NEW ZEALAND, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, SWEDEN, the UK, the US and others supported a permanent post for a GTI officer within the CBD Secretariat. KENYA underscored its importance in securing funding. SWEDEN, with BELGIUM, the UK and the COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT, said the link between the GTI and the GEF should be clarified and developed, and GEF funding be increased.

BRAZIL, supported by many, emphasized national and regional facilities on taxonomic activities and called for capacity building. GHANA requested an additional workshop for Africa to develop taxonomic capacities. POLAND highlighted lack of public awareness on taxonomy and a planned activity on public education. COTE D'IVOIRE stressed incentives for young researchers.

AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND supported BioNET International's involvement. JAPAN stressed the importance of creating accurate inventories and maintaining inventory experts. MEXICO, with COTE D'IVOIRE, PERU and others, advocated repatriation of taxonomic information. FINLAND stressed inclusion of CBD objectives in GTI networks; noted intellectual property rights (IPR) issues related to collections, public material and databases; and suggested elaboration of biogeography under the GTI. INDIA noted interrelation of need assessments and targeted actions and supported taxonomic reference collections. CANADA highlighted the need for adjustments to planned activities on agricultural biodiversity and on supporting implementation of Article 8(j), and suggested waiting for input from other processes. GREECE stated that some elements of the GTI could be initiated prior to COP-6. NEW ZEALAND, with GHANA, noted time constraints in planned activities. UNESCO underscored the need to incorporate the GTI in other processes. COLOMBIA stressed traditional knowledge. The INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORUM ON BIODIVERSITY called for recognition of IPRs for indigenous people; supported taxonomic systems developed by indigenous people; and requested funds for the planned activity on Article 8(j).

## IN THE CORRIDORS

Participants initially expressed some confusion and concern with WG-I's "experimental" cross-referencing of options for future work with topical discussions on an integrated approach to invasives and prevention, detection and response measures. Some called for a better balance of informative presentations and deliberations on recommendations, following an overburdened morning and a lighter afternoon session.

Elsewhere in the corridors, informal discussions on the CBD's links to climate change have raised issues associated with forests, invasive species, coastal biodiversity and coral reefs. Some questioned how adequately the UNFCCC will be able to deal with any CBD recommendations, given their own political paralysis over sinks and land-use change issues.

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

**WORKING GROUP I:** WG-I on invasive alien species will meet at 10:00 am to address eradication and mitigation of effects, before considering the guiding principles. A revised version of recommendations on options for future work incorporating delegates' comments will be distributed.

**WORKING GROUP II:** WG-II will meet at 10:00 am to discuss biodiversity and climate change, and migratory species and cooperation with the CMS.