



SBSTA-8 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 12 MARCH 2003

Delegates met throughout the day in two Working Groups. Working Group I (WG-I) considered SBSTA operations, and biological diversity and tourism. Working Group II (WG-II) continued discussions on marine and coastal biodiversity, and started considering dry and sub-humid lands biodiversity. The contact group on the programme of work for mountain biodiversity and a contact group on deep seabed genetic resources met in the evening.

WORKING GROUP I

SBSTA OPERATIONS: Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (Ghana) presented the strategic plan of SBSTA (UNEP/CBD/SBSTA/8/12), and the Secretariat introduced the review of SBSTA recommendations (UNEP/CBD/SBSTA/8/13). Discussion then focused on the Bureau's recommendations on the strategic plan.

NORWAY, supported by UGANDA, stressed that SBSTA should focus on technical and scientific issues, and avoid political debates. HUNGARY said SBSTA is an advisory body and not a scientific one. GREECE, supported by many, suggested changing the plan's name to "Plan for the Operation of SBSTA." CANADA, with AUSTRALIA, questioned the need for an additional plan, noting that the Convention's Strategic Plan provides overall guidance for SBSTA. They also recalled SBSTA's *modus operandi*. JORDAN, supported by JAMAICA and others, highlighted the need for a financial mechanism to achieve proposed objectives. The NETHERLANDS and SWITZERLAND underscored the need for practical and concrete work programmes. COLOMBIA requested restructuring the document to reflect operational activities and, with BRAZIL, noted the affluence of cross-cutting issues. MALAYSIA stressed the importance of the Clearing-house Mechanism (CHM) and information management. TOGO called for North-South cooperation. KENYA proposed to improve SBSTA's operation by assessing the implementation of COP decisions. TURKEY, supported by BRAZIL, proposed adding technology transfer to the SBSTA's plan. PANAMA noted the need for improving participation of developing countries in meetings, and for promoting synergies between CBD and other conventions. CHINA suggested fostering synergies with the Global Environment Facility (GEF). AUSTRIA, supported by BELGIUM and the UK, suggested that SBSTA-9 reconsider the plan after receiving directions from the upcoming meeting on the multi-year programme of work. UKRAINE proposed that SBSTA have a more forward-looking approach, and focus on future trends and forecasts. ETHIOPIA underscored the need for strong institutional arrangements.

SWITZERLAND, supported by AUSTRALIA, called for increased involvement of scientists in SBSTA and, with the UK, for considering legal and economic aspects of technology transfer. BRAZIL, supported by PERU, opposed language suggesting that SBSTA delegations should ensure that COP delegations support their recommendations. ARGENTINA noted that the role of focal points is in disseminating information and not decision making, and opposed using SBSTA focal points during preparatory and follow-up SBSTA work. The EC said that focal points can play a key role in preparing for meetings, and UGANDA underscored the need to strengthen them, especially in developing countries. AUSTRALIA opposed the Bureau's suggestion on appropriate constitution of delegations. Chair Robert Andren (Sweden) said the comments would be incorporated into a CRP document.

MOUNTAIN BIODIVERSITY: Delegates considered UNEP/CBD/SBSTA/8/WG.1/CRP.1 on the programme of work on mountain biodiversity. UKRAINE suggested adding goals on eco-nets, and education and public awareness. The EC called for restructuring within the three programme elements. COLOMBIA suggested dividing each element into objectives, goals and actions. Cameroon, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, reiterated the importance of women's empowerment, CHM, and a broader definition of mountain. She also proposed incentives for conservation for indigenous and local communities, rather than capacity building for benefit-sharing arrangements. BRAZIL said that activities should take into account national and local conditions, and requested reference to national legislation regarding access and benefit-sharing.

A contact group met in the evening to reconsider goals and activities, and remove activities not related to mountains.

BIODIVERSITY AND TOURISM: Scott Muller, Project for the Study and Management of Wilderness Areas of Kuna Yala, presented a case study on the implementation of CBD draft guidelines on sustainable tourism. The Secretariat presented documents on the draft guidelines for sustainable tourism and biodiversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTA/8/11) and on case studies on their implementation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTA/8/INF/8). BRAZIL highlighted controversies in the guidelines and suggested revisions, including respect for national legislation. The PHILIPPINES underscored the need for capacities and technologies to promote sustainable tourism, and proposed amendments relating to marketing sustainable tourism. The UK suggested adding reference to the CHM. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION, supported by PORTUGAL and opposed by AUSTRALIA, proposed adoption of the guidelines, rather than endorsement by the COP. JORDAN noted that national sustainable tourism activities have generated income and employment. FRANCE and MOROCCO said the guidelines should be



adopted in their entirety. MEXICO stressed participation of local and indigenous communities. The NETHERLANDS expressed concerns relating to the practical use of the guidelines and suggested elaborating a users' guide. ICELAND, with ARGENTINA and CANADA, observed that the guidelines are voluntary and proposed structural modifications. AUSTRALIA stressed the importance of tourism to maintain vulnerable ecosystems in good condition.

WORKING GROUP II

MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY:

Mariculture: The Secretariat introduced the report of the expert group on mariculture (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/9/Add.2 and INF/6). Clive Wilkinson, Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network, presented the status of global coral reefs, their importance and reasons for concern. He highlighted anthropogenic interference, climate change impacts, and bleaching from El Niño and La Niña, and recommended ways forward.

Philippe Gouletquer (France) reported on the findings of the expert group on mariculture. EGYPT stressed the need to include environmental impact assessments. GERMANY recommended referencing sub-species, sustainable fisheries, development of selective fishing methods to minimize by-catch, and traditional knowledge. NAMIBIA underscored that mariculture contributes to food security and, with BRAZIL, emphasized the needs and role of indigenous and local communities in mariculture management. CANADA requested referencing Decision VI/10 (Annex II) on assessments for developments impacting on lands occupied by local communities. She also noted that the use of non-native species may be appropriate in certain circumstances and, supported by others, recommended that the expert group's recommendations for future research and monitoring projects be endorsed by SBSTTA. After a proposal made by FINLAND, delegates agreed that SBSTTA should not address genetically modified organisms. FAO emphasized the benefits of cooperation with the CBD on mariculture.

Deep seabed genetic resources: The Secretariat then introduced the document on the conservation and sustainable use of deep seabed genetic resources beyond national jurisdiction (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/9/Add.3/Rev.1). Valentina Germani, UN Division of Oceans Affairs and the Law of the Seas (UNDOALOS), outlined the main findings of the joint CBD-UNDOALOS study, on the relationship between the CBD and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/INF/3/Rev.1). ARGENTINA and other developing countries said they lacked the means to exploit deep seabed genetic resources and, noting that genetic resources beyond national jurisdiction fall outside the CBD mandate, opposed SBSTTA dealing with the issue. Others said the COP was competent because of legal and economic implications. BRAZIL, COLOMBIA and PERU opposed expanding CBD's scope. The EC, GREECE and the SEYCHELLES recalled that the issue fell within the CBD's mandate according to CBD Articles 3 (Principle) and 4 (Jurisdictional scope), and that SBSTTA was competent to deal with its scientific aspects under Decision II/10 on marine and coastal biodiversity. Many delegates supported further studies on the issue. TURKEY recorded that its approval of the meeting's report would not prejudice its position with regard to UNCLOS. KENYA recommended referencing benefit-sharing. ICELAND outlined domestic inventories of deep seabed resources. FRANCE recommended specifying the CBD Executive Secretary's tasks for establishing a monitoring system and a code of conduct, and stressed the need to strengthen the relationship with the International Seabed Authority. NORWAY emphasized the need for discussion in the UN General Assembly.

A contact group met in the evening to consider the suggested recommendations, and reached agreement on an information-gathering and analysis process.

DRY AND SUB-HUMID LANDS: The Secretariat introduced documents on dry and sub-humid lands (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/10, INF/2 and 10). Ndegwa Ndiang'ui, UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), outlined progress on the UNCCD-CBD joint work programme. Sarat Babu (India) reported on the work of the expert group on dry and sub-humid lands. Most delegates welcomed cooperation with the UNCCD and other conventions, including the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and encouraged synergies at the international and national levels. COLOMBIA highlighted the need for resources and appropriate mechanisms for periodic assessment of status and trends, and development of progress indicators. TANZANIA said fair and equitable benefit-sharing should be tackled earlier than 2008. INDIA recommended targeted local-level assessments. HAITI underscored South-South cooperation, timelines for developing indicators, referencing regional initiatives and, with NORWAY, the ecosystem approach. SWITZERLAND stressed avoiding overlaps among CBD thematic work programmes. FINLAND highlighted the need for targets and timeframes regarding conservation and sustainable use, resource management and support for sustainable livelihoods. GERMANY called for strengthening developing countries' capacity for periodic assessment and addressing poverty reduction as a cross-cutting issue and, with CANADA and ETHIOPIA, stressed the need to involve local and indigenous communities in decision making and implementation. The UK suggested taking into account the Global Taxonomy Initiative when developing targets for the work programme's implementation. BURKINA FASO stressed the role of poverty eradication to combat desertification. The CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES said a Memorandum of Understanding with the CBD was under development and requested its inclusion in the joint liaison group.

INLAND WATERS: Delegates considered UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/8/WG.II/CRP.1 on the work programme on inland water ecosystems, prepared by the Friends of the Chair group. On assessment of status and trends, and rapid assessment, the GEF suggested including causes of threats to inland waters and COLOMBIA noted the need to define the resources to carry out the work mentioned. Regarding the request to the Executive Secretary to develop complementary tools to assess the function and health of inland waters, COLOMBIA, in consultation with GERMANY, suggested that a working paper be presented at COP-8. CANADA stressed the need to include socioeconomic aspects in the report of the expert group on rapid assessment (UNEP/SBSTTA/8/INF/5).

IN THE CORRIDORS

With SBSTTA-8 entering full swing, delegates worked into the night to resolve outstanding issues from deep seabed to mountain heights. While rifts appeared in WG-II discussions regarding the CBD's mandate to address deep seabed genetic resources, some noted that the issue should have long been addressed by SBSTTA, and that the debate on CBD's mandate was out of place. Others feared that engaging in such a highly political and legally complex issue would undermine recent efforts to focus on scientific and technical topics. However, contact group discussions were unexpectedly led in a spirit of good will and cooperation.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUP I: WG-I will meet at 10:00 am in Conference Hall 1 to continue considering the draft guidelines on sustainable tourism, and address CRPs on mountain biodiversity and SBSTTA operations.

WORKING GROUP II: WG-II will meet at 10:00 am in Conference Hall 2 to consider CRPs on inland waters, marine and coastal biodiversity, and dry and sub-humid lands.