



FIRST MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON PROTECTED AREAS: 13-17 JUNE 2005

The first meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Protected Areas (PAs) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) begins today and will continue until 17 June 2005, in Montecatini, Italy. The Working Group was established by the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-7) to the CBD to support and review the implementation of the programme of work on PAs, adopted by Decision VII/28. The objective of the programme of work is to support the establishment and maintenance, by 2010 for terrestrial and by 2012 for marine areas, of comprehensive, effectively managed, and ecologically representative national and regional systems of PAs that collectively, *inter alia* through a global network, contribute to achieving the three objectives of the Convention and the 2010 target to significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss.

The Working Group is expected to:

- explore options for cooperation for establishing marine PAs in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, consistent with international law and based on scientific information;
- explore options for mobilizing adequate and timely financial resources for the implementation of the programme of work by developing countries and countries with economies in transition;
- contribute to the further development of toolkits for the identification, designation, management, monitoring and evaluation of national and regional systems of PAs, with special regards to indigenous and local communities and stakeholder involvement, and benefit-sharing mechanisms;
- consider reports from Parties, academia, scientific organizations, civil society and others on progress in the implementation of the programme of work; and
- recommend to the COP ways and means to improve implementation of the programme of work.

Following the opening plenary on Monday morning, delegates are expected to convene in two sub-working groups. Sub-Working Group I will consider: options for cooperation for the establishment of marine PAs in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction; and further development of toolkits for the identification, designation, management, monitoring and evaluation of national and regional systems of PAs. Sub-Working Group II will address: options for mobilizing financial resources for the implementation of the programme of work; and review thereof, including consideration of reports, and ways and means to improve implementation.

The Working Group will reconvene in December 2005, in Montreal, Canada, and then forward its recommendations to COP-8, to be held from 20-31 March 2006, in Curitiba, Brazil.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CBD AND PROTECTED AREAS

The CBD, negotiated under the auspices of the UN Environment Programme, was opened for signature on 5 June 1992, and entered into force on 29 December 1993. There are currently 188 Parties to the Convention, which aims to promote “the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.” Establishment and management of PAs, together with conservation, sustainable use and restoration initiatives in the adjacent land and seascape, are central to CBD Article 8 (*In situ* Conservation).

COP-2 AND -3: At its second (November 1995, Jakarta, Indonesia) and third meetings (November 1996, Buenos Aires, Argentina), the COP considered CBD Article 8, and emphasized regional and international cooperation, and the importance of disseminating relevant experience.

COP-4: At its fourth meeting (May 1998, Bratislava, Slovakia), the COP decided to consider PAs as one of the three main themes for COP-7. It encouraged the CBD Executive Secretary to develop relationships with other processes with a view to fostering good management practices in several areas related to PAs, including ecosystem and bioregional approaches to PA management and sustainable use of biodiversity, mechanisms to enhance stakeholder involvement, and transboundary PAs. It also established an *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on marine and coastal PAs. PAs formed a central element of the thematic work programmes on marine and coastal biodiversity, and inland water ecosystems.

COP-6: At its sixth meeting (April 2002, The Hague, the Netherlands), the COP adopted an expanded programme of work on forest biodiversity, containing a number of activities related to PAs, and calling for work on PA role and effectiveness. It also adopted the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, which specifies that by 2010: at least 10% of each of the world’s ecological regions should be effectively conserved, implying increasing representation of different ecological regions in PAs, and increasing effectiveness of PAs; and protection of 50% of the most important areas for plant diversity should be ensured through effective conservation measures, including PAs. COP-6 further established an AHTEG on PAs to prepare consideration of the issue by COP-7.

SBSTTA-8: The eighth meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-8) (March 2003, Montreal, Canada) produced a recommendation on marine and coastal PAs, on the basis of the work of the AHTEG on marine and coastal PAs.

MYPOW: The Open-ended Inter-session Meeting on the Multi-Year Programme of Work of the COP up to 2010 (MYPOW) (March 2003, Montreal, Canada) requested that the AHTEG on PAs, SBSTTA-9 and COP-7 consider the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development



(September 2002, Johannesburg, South Africa), which called for supporting initiatives for hotspot areas and other areas essential for biodiversity, and for promoting the development of national and regional ecological networks and corridors (Plan of Implementation paragraph 44 (g)).

FIFTH IUCN WORLD PARKS CONGRESS: The fifth IUCN World Parks Congress (September 2003, Durban, South Africa) called on the CBD COP to adopt a rigorous programme of work on PAs, including specific targets and timetables, and establish effective means to monitor and assess its implementation. A liaison group meeting was convened by the CBD Executive Secretary with a view to identifying Congress elements which should be drawn to SBSTTA's attention.

SBSTTA-9: On the basis of the work of the AHTEG on PAs, SBSTTA-9 (November 2003, Montreal, Canada) considered PAs as one of the themes for in-depth consideration and proposed a revised programme of work.

COP-7: At its seventh meeting (February 2004, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), the COP adopted the programme of work on PAs. The programme of work consists of four interlinked elements on: direct actions for planning, selecting, establishing, strengthening and managing PA systems and sites; governance, participation, equity and benefit-sharing; enabling activities; and standards, assessment and monitoring. COP-7 further decided to establish an *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on PAs and assess progress in the implementation of the work programme at each COP meeting until 2010.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

UNICPOLOS-5: The fifth meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (UNICPOLOS-5) (7-11 June 2004, New York) adopted recommendations on new sustainable uses of the oceans, including conservation and management of seabed biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The first international workshop on the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socioeconomic aspects, was held in conjunction with UNICPOLOS-5.

TENTH INTERNATIONAL CORAL REEF

SYMPOSIUM: The tenth International Coral Reef Symposium (28 June-2 July 2004, Okinawa, Japan) considered several issues, including: remote sensing; new approaches to sustaining coral reef ecosystems and their fisheries; coral reef restoration and remediation; and designing effective coral reef marine PAs. In a final Declaration on Conservation and Restoration of Endangered Coral Reefs of the World, delegates recommended four key strategies for coral reef conservation: achieve sustainable fisheries; increase effective marine PAs; ameliorate land-use change impacts; and develop technologies for coral reef restoration.

UNGA RESOLUTION 59/24: At its 59th session, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution 59/24 of 17 November 2004 (Oceans and the Law of the Sea), which establishes an *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction.

THIRD IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS: Convening on the theme "People and Nature – only one world," the third IUCN World Conservation Congress (17-25 November 2004, Bangkok, Thailand) approved 118 resolutions and recommendations addressing a series of topics, including: a call for a moratorium on further release of genetically modified organisms; the establishment of the World Conservation Learning Network to build the capacity of conservation and development professionals; actions that contribute to combating poverty through nature conservation; conservation and sustainable management of high seas biodiversity; and work with indigenous peoples, particularly in the establishment and management of PAs.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON

BIODIVERSITY: The International Conference on Biodiversity (24-28 January 2005, Paris, France) convened on the theme "Biodiversity: Science and Governance." Plenary sessions addressed: challenges of biodiversity, science and governance; the status and trends of the world's biodiversity; social and ecological benefits of biodiversity; and management of living resources. Workshop topics included: governance; biodiversity and agriculture; challenges to achieving the 2010 target to significantly reduce biodiversity loss; indicators and the 2010 target; and sustainable management of tropical and subtropical biodiversity, including islands and forests.

SBSTTA-10: The tenth meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-10) (7-11 February 2005, Bangkok, Thailand) established an AHTEG on biodiversity and climate change, and adopted a series of recommendations to COP-8, including on: a work programme on island biodiversity; the suitability of various indicators for an assessment of progress towards the 2010 target; the integration of global outcome-oriented targets into CBD work programmes; steps for the review of implementation of the Global Taxonomy Initiative programme of work; options for a cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition; and proposals for the application of ways and means to remove or mitigate perverse incentives.

ABS-3: The third meeting of the CBD *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS) (14-18 February 2005, Bangkok, Thailand) initiated negotiations on an international regime on ABS, as mandated by COP-7. The Working Group also considered: additional approaches to complement the Bonn Guidelines on ABS, such as an international certificate of origin/source/legal provenance; measures to ensure compliance with the prior informed consent of Parties providing genetic resources and of indigenous and local communities providing associated traditional knowledge; and options for indicators for ABS to be used for evaluating progress in the implementation of the CBD Strategic Plan.

26TH SESSION OF FAO COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES:

The 26th session of the Committee on Fisheries of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (7-11 March 2005, Rome, Italy) discussed several issues, including: implementation of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related international plans of action; deep sea fisheries; marine PAs; fisheries subsidies; and a strategic framework for human capacity development in fisheries.

MEETING OF THE IUCN WCPA STEERING

COMMITTEE: The Steering Committee of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) (26-29 April 2005, Gland, Switzerland) identified WCPA's strategic priorities, including: conserving biodiversity; developing capacity; improving PA management; and addressing issues of governance, equity and livelihoods. The meeting developed a strategic plan focusing on implementing the CBD programme of work on PAs, the Durban Action Plan, adopted at the fifth IUCN World Parks Congress, and the Millennium Development Goals.

UNICPOLOS-6: UNICPOLOS-6 (6-10 June 2005, New York) exchanged views on: areas of concern and actions needed; cooperation and coordination on oceans issues; and issues for further consideration. Two discussion panels were held to consider fisheries and their contribution to sustainable development, and marine debris. The report of the meeting, to be submitted to UNGA's 60th session, contains elements agreed by consensus on fisheries and their contribution to sustainable development, and non-negotiated draft elements on marine debris, and cooperation and coordination. The recommendation on marine PAs encourages progress to establish criteria on the objectives and management of marine PAs for fisheries, welcomes the proposed work of the FAO to develop technical guidelines on implementation of marine PAs, and urges close coordination and cooperation with relevant international processes including the CBD.