On the third day of the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-4) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Plenary convened in a morning session to hear the conclusions of the Ministerial Roundtable, continue discussion on biosafety and address administrative and budgetary matters. In the afternoon, delegates met in two Working Groups. Working Group I considered status and trends of inland water ecosystems and options for conservation and sustainable use. Working Group II discussed synthesis of information contained in national reports.

**PLENARY**

**CONCLUSIONS FROM MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLE:** Jozef Zlocha, President of COP-4, presented a summary of the discussions of the Ministerial Roundtable held on 4 and 5 May, 1998. The summary is based on the results of two working groups; a working group on aspects of integrating biodiversity concerns into tourism, chaired by Angela Merkel (Germany) and the involvement and role of the private sector in implementation of the CBD, chaired by Shri Suresh Prahoo (India).

**BIOSAFETY:** The Plenary continued to discuss issues surrounding the finalization of the protocol on biosafety, including the schedule of meetings, means of finance for meetings and participation of delegates from developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

HAITI, IRAQ, the PHILIPPINES, SLOVENIA, on behalf of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), CHINA, BURKINA FASO, KOREA, MADAGASCAR, UGANDA, MAURITANIA, ZIMBABWEE, EGYPT and SOUTH AFRICA supported the BSWG-4 recommendation for two more meetings and an extraordinary COP to adopt the protocol. However, opinions varied as to whether the final meeting and extraordinary COP should be held in December 1998 or February 1999. CHINA, SENEGAL, IRAQ, the PHILIPPINES, UGANDA and SOUTH AFRICA requested that Veit Koester (Denmark) continue to chair the BSWG.

UGANDA stressed that implementation of the protocol should be accompanied by capacity building in developing countries. MALAWI called for both North-South and South-South partnerships to facilitate implementation of the protocol. The EU acknowledged the need to support the costs of meetings as well as delegate participation, and pledged to contribute funding.

INDONESIA recommended that SBSTTA formulate a plan for implementing the protocol and called for strengthening national capacity and development of appropriate national mechanisms to implement the protocol.

The International Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) highlighted its: biosafety network to monitor regulatory issues in biotechnology; harmonization of biosafety procedures; and annual workshops.

INDONESIA made a general statement on behalf of the G77/CHINA, noting the: growing challenges in reaching the Convention’s goals; difficulties in reaching consensus; and lack of attention on the CBD’s objective of equitable sharing of resources.

The INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ BIODIVERSITY NETWORK called on the COP to provide, inter alia, the inclusion of indigenous peoples in GEF-funded information management programs.

**ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS:**

The CBD Executive Secretary introduced documents: UNEP/CBD/COP/4/INF/12, UNEP/CBD/COP/4/24, UNEP/CBD/COP/4/25, UNEP/CBD/COP/4/25/Add.1. They highlighted, inter alia, activities carried out by the Secretariat, and personnel and financial issues. He noted that the CBD budget is different in structure and content than in the past, and that it includes provisions for travel for Parties to attend meetings.

SWITZERLAND noted that the budget is ambitious and “audacious,” and that the relationship between and roles of the Secretariat and UNEP should be clarified and redefined, and that in light of this analysis, a consolidated budget decision should be reserved for COP-5.

The EU, with AUSTRALIA and MONACO, noted the sizable budget increase. The EU, supported by PERU, said the increase must be closely tied to agreed upon activities.

The MARSHALL ISLANDS, on behalf of the Pacific Island Countries, pointed to: problems obtaining visas and booking reservations for the COP; the high costs of arranging travel through UNEP; and high hotel costs. He hoped that “price gauging” could be avoided in the future.

KENYA stressed that the Convention would benefit from cooperation with the GEF and said that UNEP, if in a partnership with the CBD, should make a statement on the proposed budget. Noting the downward trend of ODA, he advocated new measures to provide incentives for private sector investment in biodiversity management.

TUNISIA, with MONACO, FRANCE, HAITI, MOROCCO, and SUDAN, all complained that many important documents were not available in all languages and asked the Secretariat to provide them as soon as possible.

**WORKING GROUP 1**

On Wednesday afternoon Working Group I, chaired by Marcel Vernooy (the Netherlands) began consideration of the status and trends of the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems and options for conservation and sustainable use (UNEP/CBD/COP/4/4). In accordance with COP decision III/13, SBSTTA-3 considered this topic, as well as the related
topics, arising out of COP decision III/10, national elaboration of Annex I of the Convention and review of methodology for assessment of biodiversity.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (RAMSAR) highlighted the Memorandum of Cooperation signed between the two Secretariats and COP decision III/21, inviting RAMSAR to cooperate in the implementation of CBD activities related to wetlands. RAMSAR urged that cooperation not be restricted to inland freshwater ecosystems.

WG-I overwhelmingly supported SBSTTA recommendation III/1 as a work programme. In particular, WG-I supported the continued cooperation of the CBD with RAMSAR and the CSD, and endorsed the results of CSD-6.

Delegates stressed environmental impact assessments, monitoring mechanisms, alien species and taxonomy. Many delegates, including the IVORY COAST, ARGENTINA, and BURKINA FASO, stressed the need for methodological frameworks to bring about synergies between the CBD and other Conventions.

CANADA suggested Parties include information on implementation of the programme of work in their national reports. The EU and other delegations highlighted the importance of the ecosystem approach to the management of inland waters, and said it is necessary to extend this approach to river catchments and watersheds, land use planning, and integrated management of natural resources, taking social and economic uses into account. The EU underlined the need to integrate biodiversity concerns into all relevant aspects of water management through use of incentive measures and economic valuation.

INDIA said that means other than the Trust Fund should be explored for implementing the work programme in developing countries, and INDIA and ETHIOPIA endorsed provision of adequate support from the GEF to developing country Parties.

AUSTRALIA said the recommendations and work programme should be amended to provide a more focused and integrated approach.

FUJI, the SEYCHELLES and the BAHAMAS, speaking for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) called for linkages between inland waters and marine and coastal issues. SIDS are particularly concerned with sea water infiltrating freshwater due to rising sea levels from climate change. They called for action to address SIDS concerns, which were absent from the document.

The US highlighted its work in domestic watershed management as well as its bilateral assistance. IRAN stressed guidance as well as its bilateral assistance. IRAN stressed guidance in implementing the work programme in developing countries, and INDIA and ETHIOPIA endorsed provision of adequate support from the GEF to developing country Parties.

AUSTRALIA said the recommendations and work programme should be amended to provide a more focused and integrated approach.

Presentations from the four NGO "Ramsar Partners," stressed that active and formal partnership between Conventions, governments and NGOs will enhance effectiveness of measures taken under the CBD. The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) detailed its activities and called for increased public awareness and education and in situ conservation of aquatic genetic resources.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WG-I: WG-I will reconvene in Hall C at 10:00 am and begin its review of the Jakarta Mandate on marine and coastal biological diversity.

WG-II: WG-II will meet in Hall A at 10:00 am to complete discussion on national reports and address results of the special session of the General Assembly to review the implementation of Agenda 21.