



## SBSTTA-4 HIGHLIGHTS

During morning and afternoon Plenary sessions, SBSTTA-4 delegates adopted their agenda, heard reports on recent meetings and discussed: cooperation with other bodies; progress on thematic areas; *ad hoc* expert groups; and the SBSTTA programme of work.

### OPENING STATEMENTS

SBSTTA-4 Chair Zakri A. Hamid (Malaysia) opened the meeting and stressed the importance of incorporating the best available science and translating it into policy. He said collaboration with the scientific community remains piecemeal and suggested considering establishing a structured mechanism, similar to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), to better draw upon scientific research, assessments and organizations. He urged delegates to draft specific and targeted recommendations that delimit policy options, timetables, products, actions and follow-up, and identify relevant actors.

Paul Chabeda (UNEP) stressed the importance UNEP attaches to providing guidance and the most up-to-date and best available scientific knowledge to the CBD. He also noted that UNEP gives SBSTTA high priority and stressed the importance of linkages with other international environmental conventions.

Hamdallah Zedan, Acting Executive Secretary of CBD, said the national reports have raised many complicated issues, which will make SBSTTA-4 a challenge. He emphasized the importance of issues like benefit sharing and biosafety, and informed delegates that preparations for the resumed ExCOP on Biosafety have continued since last February. The President of the ExCOP and the President of COP-4 will attend the Intersessional meeting on the Operations of the Convention (ISOC-1).

### ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Chair Hamid noted that COP-4 had invited him to remain in office until the end of SBSTTA-4 with the Chair-elect, Cristián Samper (Colombia), invited to attend the Bureau as an *ex-officio* member. He introduced the Bureau as: Edgar Gutiérrez-Espeleta (Colombia), Jan Plesnik (Czech Republic), Kutelama Seleko (Democratic Republic of Congo), Martin Uppenbrink (Germany), Gábor Nechay (Hungary), Elaine Fisher (Jamaica), Zipangani Vokhiwa (Malawi), Peter Schei (Norway) and Mick Raga (Papua New Guinea). Delegates agreed to establish two working groups (WG). WG-1 will be chaired by Martin Uppenbrink with Elaine Fisher as Rapporteur. WG-2 will be chaired by Zipangani Vokhiwa and a candidate from Asia. Jan Plesnik will serve as Rapporteur for Plenary. Delegates adopted the agenda and organization of work.

## REPORTS ON MEETINGS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The 14th GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FORUM met from 18-20 June, 1999 in Montreal, Canada. Recommendations included using economic arguments to illustrate the need to integrate biodiversity into decision-making and capacity-building for biodiversity economists. Participants also called for practical, clear indicators. The RAMSAR CONVENTION highlighted its excellent partnership with the CBD and reported on the outcome of Ramsar COP-7, held from 10-18 May 1999 in San José, Costa Rica. He also presented a Progress Report on Implementation of the Joint Work Plan between the Wetlands Convention and the CBD. He invited the SBSTTA Chair to be a permanent observer on Ramsar's Scientific and Technical Review Panel and proposed that their joint work plan be further harmonized, especially on invasive species, impact assessments and incentives.

FAO expressed support for its joint programme of work with the CBD Secretariat. She stressed FAO's role in sectoral and cross-sectoral issues in the area of food and agriculture and agro-biodiversity. The CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (CCD) said the CCD and CBD Secretariats should undertake complementary work, and highlighted several programmes for cooperation based on the MOU between them.

The CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES highlighted its 1997 MOU with the CBD and called for increased collaboration on transboundary initiatives, migratory species and their habitats, particularly Sahelian and Saharan species in arid zones. The International Plant Genetic Resources Initiative (IPGRI) said it could participate in SBSTTA liaison and expert groups on agro-biodiversity.

## COOPERATION WITH OTHER BODIES AND PROGRESS ON THEMATIC AREAS

The Secretariat introduced the report on cooperation with other bodies (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/2) and progress in the work programmes on thematic areas (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/3). Regarding cooperation with other bodies, the NETHERLANDS and the UK called for greater transparency in cooperative mechanisms. ARGENTINA and NORWAY encouraged cooperation with other processes when developing indicators. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA suggested speeding up the establishment of MOUs with other bodies, specifically the WTO. TONGA said the CBD Secretariat should improve cooperation with small island States in the South Pacific. ARGENTINA and others opposed the production of a periodical. NORWAY stressed the importance of a strong outreach component for the International Biodiversity Observation Year (IBOY). INDONESIA said public education should be the main focus in cooperation with other bodies.

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MALAWI questioned how SBSTTA could take advantage of scientific information from other conventions. BRAZIL stressed the need to better establish interaction within the scientific community. CANADA supported collaboration with Ramsar and more broadly involving IUCN's Commissions of global experts. SWITZERLAND and others suggested strengthening scientific information with other existing instruments, in particular linkages with the FCCC and DIVERSITAS. CAMEROON said the CBD should develop rosters of experts for all CBD areas.

Regarding progress on thematic areas, the NETHERLANDS endorsed the CBD's relationship with the Ramsar Convention and discouraged creating a technical group on inland waters. JAPAN emphasized the importance of taking the outcome of Ramsar COP-7 into account. On agro-biodiversity, the NETHERLANDS highlighted the need to include life support services of biodiversity. CANADA supported all proposed SBSTTA-5, especially agro-biodiversity. NORWAY said the follow-up of the agricultural programme demonstrates the necessity for specifying actors and timetables. The NETHERLANDS, with BRAZIL, NORWAY, the UK, MALAWI and NEW ZEALAND lamented the lack of progress on forest biodiversity. BRAZIL expressed concern for the slow progress on the development of indicators.

NORWAY suggested expanding the work on coral reefs to include all forms of physical destruction and expressed opposition to "suicidal" seeds. The UK suggested that future progress reports identify problem areas and remedial actions. NEW ZEALAND said the IPCC model warranted discussion. The US supported the development of expert groups and drew attention to the IFF work on protected areas. BRAZIL called for better use of the CHM for different thematic work programmes.

#### **SBSTTA PROGRAMME OF WORK**

The Secretariat introduced the document on the draft programme of work for SBSTTA (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/4 with Annex 1). NEW ZEALAND, with GERMANY, the NETHERLANDS and JORDAN, recommended that SBSTTA limit its agenda and clarify its objectives with definite timetables and targets. NEW ZEALAND recommended: developing a common framework for case studies; peer review of Secretariat documentation; closer collaboration with NGOs and the private sector; greater use and expansion of the roster of experts; and GEF implementation of priority issues. He said that certain issues, such as alien species and marine and coastal biodiversity, can be addressed by existing CBD or other processes. BUKINA FASO said "alien species" should include other species that threaten the natural environment. GERMANY, with the NETHERLANDS, said inland water ecosystems should continue to be addressed by Ramsar as a CBD partner.

GERMANY, FINLAND, the UK, SWITZERLAND and CANADA opposed, and CAMEROON and INDIA supported, work on access to genetic resources and benefit sharing. KENYA underscored the need for advice on access to genetic resources and poverty alleviation. PERU said sustainable use discussions should not be limited to tourism. SURINAME emphasized the CBD's objectives on sustainable development and livelihoods. SOUTH AFRICA, with COLOMBIA and the GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT NETWORK, proposed identifying mechanisms to harmonize SBSTTA's work with other scientific bodies. COLOMBIA, with SWEDEN, stated the work programme should focus on scientific and technical matters. BRAZIL expressed concern over the lack of reference to genetic diversity and micro-organisms.

The NETHERLANDS suggested that all Parties be notified about materials received from relevant workshops and experts groups. CHINA suggested developing a global theme for celebrating CBD anniversaries.

The EC encouraged SBSTTA to make environmental impact assessments of policies and initiatives rather than projects. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA called for SBSTTA to provide advice on *ex situ* and *in situ* technologies. ECUADOR supported regional meetings and encouraged the input of social scientists and economists.

#### **AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUPS**

The Secretariat introduced the document on the terms of reference of the *ad hoc* technical expert groups (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/5). Delegates supported the establishment of expert groups but held different views regarding their number, composition and purpose. The UK, with BRAZIL, endorsed the establishment of informal liaison groups, and with CHINA, GREECE, CANADA, ZIMBABWE and ARGENTINA, favored postponing decisions on topical areas until later in the week.

NORWAY noted the confusion in CBD terminology regarding informal inter-agency task forces, expert groups and liaison groups. He noted that the latter aims for liaison between the Secretariat and other organizations and processes. NEW ZEALAND stressed that expert groups should have clear mandates and not duplicate others' work. NORWAY proposed having two expert groups on drylands and forests. AUSTRALIA supported expert groups on drylands and impact assessment. GERMANY recommended that they address biodiversity indicators, and with ZIMBABWE, the ecosystem approach. The NETHERLANDS suggested two groups: one on ecosystem issues and the other on species issues such as taxonomy. INDIA opposed expert groups on marine and coastal, inland waters and alien species, preferring a group on mountain ecosystems. Several delegates recommended the continuation of the CBD Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Expert Group and Ramsar's work on inland water ecosystems. BRAZIL noted the difference in mandates and Party representation of Ramsar and the CBD. SWEDEN proposed three expert groups: agro-biodiversity, forests and marine and coastal biodiversity. INDONESIA supported prioritizing forests.

GERMANY suggested treating drylands within the agro-biodiversity work programme. GREECE disagreed, proposing the creation of a drylands liaison group to avoid duplication. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, with CÔTE D'IVOIRE and BRAZIL, supported establishing an invasive species expert group. ECUADOR disagreed, noting that the Global Invasive Species Programme already exists. CANADA encouraged special efforts to include experts in traditional knowledge and, with NEW ZEALAND and COLOMBIA, encouraged further development of the roster of experts once the terms of reference have been defined.

JAPAN said the roster of experts should be fully utilized when selecting experts. ARGENTINA, with PERU, SURINAME and ECUADOR, proposed broadening the range of criteria used to determine the composition of technical groups, and including non-English speakers and members from all geographical regions. SURINAME recommended creating mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of expert groups.

#### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

A number of delegates expressed disillusionment with the style and format of the meeting, suggesting that SBSTTA is not reflecting its scientific mandate. Some delegates suggest that the problem may lie in the fact that the CBD does not have a scientific body, like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, to provide technical information for consideration by SBSTTA.

#### **THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY**

**WORKING GROUP I:** Working Group I is expected to consider drylands ecosystems during the morning and afternoon.

**WORKING GROUP II:** Working Group II is expected to consider new plant technology during the morning and sustainable use, including tourism, during the afternoon.