



ICCP-1 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 14 DECEMBER 2000

Delegates to the first Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (ICCP) met in working and contact groups throughout the day. Working Group I (WG-I) debated recommendations on the pilot phase of the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) and on handling, transport, packaging and identification. Delegates in Working Group II (WG-II) considered decision-making, compliance, capacity building and the roster of experts. In both Working Groups, delegates considered recommendations for inter-sessional action, as well as Chair's summaries of the discussions (except for the pilot phase of the BCH).

WORKING GROUP I:

Chair Pythoud called for comments on the report of WG-I (UNEP/CBD/ICCP/1/WG.1/L.1), which was adopted after brief corrections and additions.

PILOT PHASE OF THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING-HOUSE: WG-I considered the report of the contact group during the morning and its revision as UNEP/CBD/ICCP/1/WG.1/CRP.2 in the afternoon. The draft recommendation addresses the pilot phase's objectives, characteristics and elements required for implementation. An annex addresses the pilot phase's implementation with specific regard to administration, oversight and management, technical implementation, monitoring and review, capacity building, languages, resources and project plan. Within the recommendation, on elements for implementation, SOUTH AFRICA, supported by the EU, requested specifying the articles of the Protocol relevant to different types of information in the central database. The EU and MEXICO supported including a searchable index in the central database to facilitate decision-making. AUSTRALIA proposed amending the reference to common formats for information to incorporate information linked through appropriate search engines.

In the annex's administration section, KENYA, on behalf of the African Group, proposed explicitly distinguishing between the roles of the CBD's Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) and the BCH. EL SALVADOR called for specific reference to Article 20.1 of the Protocol, which recognizes that the BCH is part of the CHM. After consultations, WG-I agreed that the ICCP should recognize their different roles and recommend that the BCH be run as a distinct element of the CHM at the technical and operational levels. On technical implementation, CANADA, with BRAZIL, suggested encouraging governments with national databases to establish linkages with the BCH. On monitoring and review, JAMAICA and SOUTH AFRICA proposed identification of indi-

cators, timeframes and resources for reviewing the pilot phase. AUSTRALIA proposed using indicators to measure success against the pilot phase's objectives. After consultations, WG-I agreed to request an independent review including indicators and timeframes.

On capacity building, INDONESIA requested reference to centers of origin and genetic diversity. On resources, the EU suggested that donor countries could provide technical support as well as financial resources. On the project plan, the UKRAINE proposed development of mechanisms for electronic information-sharing, and, with JAMAICA and KENYA, identification of measures to meet national capacity building needs. CANADA and the EU stressed the need to identify the necessary financial resources to implement the pilot phase. Chair Pythoud directed delegates' attention to background document UNEP/CBD/ICCP/1/3/Inf.1, on the estimate of financial resources for the BCH.

The draft recommendation was adopted with other minimal adjustments.

HANDLING, TRANSPORT, PACKAGING AND IDENTIFICATION: WG-I Chair François Pythoud (Switzerland) introduced the revised draft decision UNEP/CBD/ICCP/1/WG.1/CRP.1/Rev.1 for consideration, while noting a separate Chair's summary of discussions to be attached to the meeting's report. Regarding an invitation to governments and intergovernmental bodies to provide information to the Executive Secretary, ARGENTINA requested adding the Codex Alimentarius Commission, International Civil Aviation Organization, International Maritime Organization, World Health Organization and World Trade Organization to those already listed (International Plant Protection Convention, International Standards Organization and Office International des Epizooties). Significant debate ensued over whether and which organizations to include. After convening a small group to consider the matter, WG-I agreed to list the organizations in the Chair's summary.

Regarding materials for preparation for ICPP-2, the US proposed including rules and standards in a synthesis of existing practices, which was accepted. ARGENTINA requested an assessment of socioeconomic impacts regarding imports, and, after debate over its relevance, agreed to a reference in the Chair's summary. Regarding convening a technical experts' meeting, INDIA, BRAZIL and TURKEY suggested that it address Article 18.2(a) (on LMOs for Food, Feed or Processing) in addition to Articles 18.2(b) (on contained use) and 18.2(c) (on intentional introductions). CANADA and the US objected. CHINA and NORWAY supported a general reference to Article 18. WG-I eventually agreed to maintain the original text referring to Articles 18.2(b) and (c). The US called for reference to participation of

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major stakeholders. After some discussion, delegates agreed to note this in the Chair's summary. Delegates also agreed to Canada's proposal to co-host the expert meeting with France, and the document was adopted.

WORKING GROUP II:

DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURES: The informal working group on decision-making procedures met in the morning to discuss a Chair's summary and an EU draft paper. On the summary, many countries called for an action-oriented component to facilitate decision-making. BRAZIL and CAMEROON suggested reference to national legislation. The US noted the roster's mandate to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA called for attention to institutional mechanisms to facilitate decision-making. Delegates debated whether to include language comparing the Rotterdam and Basel Conventions with the Protocol. In this context, AUSTRALIA proposed adding a reference to the International Plant Protection Convention.

Some delegations supported the EU draft paper, while AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, the US and CAMEROON, on behalf of the African Group, requested time for consideration. Concern was expressed on the roster's use and the Secretariat's role. NEW ZEALAND said that more than one mechanism should be available. The EC, supported by NORWAY, suggested forwarding this and other proposals to ICCP-2 for consideration. WG-II Chair Mohammad Reza Salamat (Iran) noted that a revised summary would be prepared for further consideration.

In the afternoon, WG-II adopted UNEP/CBD/ICCP/1/WG.II/CRP.2, on action to be taken inter-sessionally on decision-making, without discussion. The document calls on countries to communicate their views on procedures and mechanisms to facilitate decision-making by April 2001, and requests the Executive Secretary to prepare a synthesis report for ICCP-2's consideration. Regarding the Chair's summary, NORWAY noted the need to consider ways of involving the public in decision-making. The US emphasized that the mandate of the roster of experts was to facilitate decision-making by developing countries and countries with economies in transition, rather than Parties of import, which could also include developed countries. The EC concurred with this interpretation, but opposed opening the summary for amendments. The document was adopted with other minor adjustments.

CAPACITY BUILDING: WG-II's contact group on capacity building met in the morning to discuss the Chair's summary. NEW ZEALAND noted the need to outline clear priorities. Supported by COLOMBIA, she emphasized synergies in capacity building for biosafety and "biosecurity" issues such as alien species. CUBA offered to host a workshop on capacity building to develop national biosafety frameworks. CANADA and NEW ZEALAND questioned the need for an expert group meeting in addition to a workshop. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA called for capacity building for LMO testing, and for a long-term coordinated capacity building programme, although IRAN highlighted the need to meet short term needs as well. HAITI suggested that regional approaches be based on national consultations and emphasized that many countries relied on the GEF to help identify needs. BRAZIL, supported by UGANDA, preferred a regional approach in centers of origin and diversity, while MEXICO and CHILE called for a national focus. The EC emphasized the need to collect and disseminate information on bilateral, private sector and NGO capacity building initiatives. The COOK ISLANDS on behalf of SIDS noted their special needs. CAMEROON emphasized the need for technology transfer, while NEW ZEALAND noted that this should be addressed within the CBD.

In the afternoon, WG-II considered UNEP/CBD/ICCP/1/WG.II/CRP.3, on action to be taken inter-sessionally on capacity building. The document calls for, *inter alia*: the GEF to facilitate capacity building; a workshop and an expert meeting to be held in June 2001 and hosted by Cuba; and information on capacity needs, priorities and initiatives to be submitted to the Secretariat and synthesized for ICCP-2. NEW ZEALAND, supported by COLOMBIA, reiterated the need to reflect synergies between biosafety and non-biosafety areas such as alien species. CANADA suggested that the expert meeting be "open-ended, subject to availability of funds." The document was adopted with these amendments. The group also adopted the Chair's summary with minor adjustments.

ROSTER OF EXPERTS: During a morning contact group discussion on the roster of experts, NEW ZEALAND proposed flexibility in accepting expert nominations through either the CBD or the biosafety focal point, and, with the COOK ISLANDS, supported experts' compensation. Other comments included: the specific situation of SIDS; the use of a standardized nomination form; categories of expertise; the need for rules of procedure; the relevance of institutions in contrast to individuals; the role of the Secretariat; and use by all Parties, importers and exporters.

In the afternoon, document UNEP/CBD/ICCP/1/WG.II/CRP.4, on the roster of experts, was introduced. After the US and NEW ZEALAND expressed concern about the nature of work to be undertaken by the Secretariat, Chair Salamat called for informal group consultations. This group clarified the tasks for governments and the Secretariat during the inter-sessional period. The revised text was adopted by WG-II. The document invites governments' nominations of experts and submission of views and comments on the roster's development. It also requests the Executive Secretary to: report on experience to national focal points; develop draft guidelines on the roster's use; make it available through the BCH; assist parties in identifying experts; develop proposals on availability of financial resources; analyze categories of expertise; strive for geographical balance; and report on progress for consideration by ICCP-2.

COMPLIANCE: In the afternoon, Chair Salamat introduced document UNEP/CBD/ICCP/1/WG.II/CRP.1, on compliance. The document: invites communication of governments' views to the Secretariat; requests the Executive Secretary to prepare a synthesis report of these views for consideration by an expert meeting and submission to ICCP-2; and invites financial support for the expert meeting. ARGENTINA and NEW ZEALAND called for clarification of the expert meeting's task. BRAZIL and others suggested reference to the meeting's open-ended character. The document was adopted with minor adjustments. The group also accepted the Chair's summary.

WG-II report (UNEP/CBD/ICCP/1/WG.II/L.1) was adopted without discussion.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Despite fits and starts during the week, such as a late night contact group on the Biosafety Clearing-House and a WG-II discussion on capacity building and the roster, delegates were generally pleased to emerge from the Working Groups with approved recommendations in hand. Many hoped to end ICCP-1's final Plenary in time for an extended lunch in Montpellier.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

PLENARY: Plenary will meet at 10:00 am in the Berlioz Hall to adopt the results of the Working Groups, consider ICCP-2's agenda and venue, and adopt a Montpellier Declaration.