



SBSTTA-7 HIGHLIGHTS TUESDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2001

Delegates to the seventh meeting of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) met in two working groups during the day. Working Group I (WG-I) on forest biodiversity, heard introductory presentations and discussed: status, trends, and threats; conservation and sustainable use; and bushmeat. Working Group II (WG-II) discussed agricultural biodiversity and the plant conservation strategy.

WORKING GROUP I - FOREST BIODIVERSITY

INTRODUCTORY PRESENTATIONS: WG-I Chair Paula Warren (New Zealand) introduced two keynote presentations. José Joaquín Campos, Tropical Agriculture Research and Higher Education Center, presented on the management of goods and services from neotropical forest biodiversity in Costa Rica. He highlighted the need for innovative financial mechanisms so that forest owners might capture benefits of sustainable forest management (SFM). Regarding non-timber forest products (NTFPs), Campos stated that traditional harvesting systems cannot ensure sustainable production and called for development of management guidelines to address both timber and non-timber products. He argued for an approach that would combine short-term strategies to reduce impacts of forest operations with a longer-term adaptive management strategy, and suggested promoting national standards for SFM and emphasizing incentives over control measures.

Robert Nasi, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), addressed sustainable harvest of NTFPs, stressing their importance and diversity. He noted differences in perceptions of developing and developed countries regarding the use and importance of NTFPs. Using the current bushmeat crisis as an example, he said that sustainable harvest of NTFPs depend on biological traits and type of harvest and noted vast illegal markets. He called for partnerships between conservation and private sector communities and for the establishment of a UN bushmeat task force and captive breeding programmes.

Chair Warren outlined the process for discussions on forest biodiversity and the Secretariat introduced documents UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/7/6, 7, 8 and 8/Add.1 and information documents UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/7/INF/1-5 and 14. Gordon Patterson (UK) and Ian Thompson (Canada), co-chairs of the *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group on Forest Biodiversity, reviewed the group's discussions, mandate, and outputs on status, trends and gaps in knowledge. In a question-answer session, delegates addressed: forest definition and quality; traditional knowledge; manuals of sustainable practices; the relations among forest area, biodiversity and endemism; acidification and eutrophication; the relation between the expert group's work and the

existing work programme; development of enabling environments at the sub-regional and regional levels; and the balance between research activities and measures addressing the causes of biodiversity loss.

STATUS, TRENDS AND THREATS: COLOMBIA supported developing indicators. BRAZIL called for a balanced approach towards all forest types, and recommended that forest targets address means of implementation, including provision of financial resources and technology transfer. ARGENTINA called for assessment of sustainably managed forests. COSTA RICA highlighted conversion of primary forests to plantations. CANADA stressed non-timber forest resources and forest classification systems. FRANCE addressed forest networks, corridors and restoration.

BRAZIL and MALAYSIA proposed that illegal harvesting of forest products be discussed within the broader context of illegal trade in genetic resources. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION noted international trade pressures on large forest stands. Delegated underscored cooperation with relevant international organizations. GREENPEACE INTERNATIONAL highlighted the plight of ancient forests, challenging SBSTTA-7 to set clear targets to reverse forest biodiversity loss.

CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE: Chair Warren invited general remarks and guidance on the draft work programme on forests. The FAO stressed the importance of cooperation with regard to definitions, concepts and assessments, and, supported by many, called for synergies with the CBD and the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) through the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF). CUBA suggested joint work programmes. GHANA offered, and many welcomed, holding a workshop to share experiences and enable synergies and cooperation among CPF members. The US highlighted the CBD's role as the lead international body on biodiversity and forests, noting that the UNFF is simply a facilitative and coordinating body. AUSTRIA supported cooperation at the regional level.

NORWAY, with ARGENTINA, BRAZIL and CUBA, called for a balanced work programme, noting its current bias towards conservation and lack of emphasis on sustainable use and benefit-sharing. NORWAY proposed developing links between national forest programmes and national biodiversity strategies and action plans. GERMANY supported integration of the proposals for action from the Intergovernmental Panel and Forum on Forests (IPF/IFF) into national biodiversity strategies and action plans. NORWAY, with the NETHERLANDS, SLOVAKIA and the US, advocated for a focus on the ecosystem approach. CUBA stressed the importance of environmental education, public awareness and the involvement of local communities, and HAITI called for attention to capacity building. COLOMBIA expressed concern about the feasibility of conducting inventories every five years and highlighted focusing on hotspots for conservation and ecosystem management.

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Chair Warren noted that she would convene an informal contact group to discuss how to address recommendations on the work programme.

BUSHMEAT: Chair Warren then called for comments on the unsustainable harvest of bushmeat. The EU stated that a joint work programme with other institutions might be preferential to a task force. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION noted related problems in temperate and boreal forests. The NETHERLANDS called for differentiation of endangered species from the larger issue of unsustainable harvests. CAMEROON, with SENEGAL, stressed the need for alternative sources of protein. COLOMBIA highlighted the responsibilities of consumer countries. SENEGAL noted the need for breeding programs and financial resources. Chair Warren noted that she would consult informally on how to proceed with a recommendation.

WORKING GROUP II

AGRICULTURAL BIODIVERSITY: The Secretariat introduced documents UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/7/9 and Add.1. The FAO reviewed work regarding: soil biodiversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/7/INF/11); animal genetic resources (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/7/INF/12 and 13); pollinators; genetic use restriction technologies (GURTs); and plant genetic resources. The INTERNATIONAL PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES INSTITUTE (IPGRI) reported on the International Symposium on Managing Biodiversity in Agricultural Ecosystems held prior to SBSTTA-7. The ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT reviewed its work on indicators. POLAND, on behalf of the FAO Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources, was followed by many in its call to support the first report on the state of the world's animal genetic resources.

On the progress report, most delegates supported the suggested recommendations. GERMANY and many others stressed the need for an interim report before COP-7 to synthesize studies and reports and analyze gaps. The UK highlighted case-studies, while COLOMBIA said they should be disseminated through the Clearing-House Mechanism. COLOMBIA also stressed the need to consider CBD Article 8(j) on traditional knowledge. HUNGARY, on behalf of Central and Eastern European countries, with others, underlined capacity building and assessment of economic value of pollinators. The NETHERLANDS called for linkages with the Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing. KENYA noted links with biosafety. POLAND stressed that implementation should be managed at the local level.

The COUNCIL OF EUROPE noted efforts related to sustainable agriculture and biodiversity. IPGRI referenced a Memorandum of Understanding between the CBD Secretariat and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, and recommended that CBD work on agricultural biodiversity be submitted to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. SWEDEN urged the CBD Executive Secretary to seek observer status in the WTO Committee on Agriculture. UNEP drew attention to its ongoing projects on agriculture, trade and the environment. Regarding GURTs, SOUTH AFRICA noted lack of information dissemination. TANZANIA said that the precautionary principle should be taken into account. NEW ZEALAND urged countries to leave options open regarding GURTs' possible positive impacts.

On the International Pollinators Initiative, most comments were supportive. GERMANY, with others called for broadening the scope beyond agricultural ecosystems and, with SOUTH AFRICA, for including the effects of genetically modified organisms and invasive alien species. FINLAND and SWEDEN supported coverage of all terrestrial ecosystems with reference to forest ecosystems. TANZANIA stressed taxonomic capacity needs for least developed countries. ERITREA noted damages to pollinators by other ecosystem activities such as desert control. AUSTRALIA, UGANDA and the US drew attention to non-bee pollinators. NEW ZEALAND supported links to invasive alien species initiatives. The NORTH AMERICAN POLLINATOR PROTECTION CAMPAIGN highlighted its coordinated action plan for all pollinator species.

Many delegates welcomed the adoption of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and urged its ratification. POLAND noted that its list of crops should be expanded and diversified.

Chair Rodriguez said that a Chair's draft recommendations would be prepared to incorporate delegates' comments.

PLANT CONSERVATION STRATEGY: The Secretariat introduced documents UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/7/10 and INF/10. GHANA, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, noted the need to refine the strategy and increase flexibility of criteria for objectives and targets, and said plant management and use is critical for increasing food security. Many delegates called for integration of the ecosystem approach and inclusion of lower taxa and fungi. COLOMBIA suggested identification of plants threatened with extinction, emphasized national inventories, and stressed the need to identify national and international technical and financial organizations that could support implementation. TOGO and the BOTANICAL GARDENS CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL stressed capacity building for implementation at the national level. AUSTRALIA and DENMARK called for further taxonomic research. CHINA noted impacts of industrial waste on plant conservation.

CANADA stressed that the strategy should be a framework leading to greater involvement of the global community in conserving plants rather than a CBD work programme. IPGRI said that the strategy complements the Global Plan of Action. BRAZIL called for involvement of the botanical community and NAMIBIA for indigenous and local communities.

JAPAN, PORTUGAL and the UK stressed the strategy's contribution to coordination and synergies among existing activities. COSTA RICA called for a coordination mechanism with other relevant initiatives. The EUROPEAN COMMUNITY suggested clarification of links with other CBD work programmes and development of the strategy by the Secretariat prior to COP-6. The SEYCHELLES underscored the lack of a method to incorporate the strategy into existing thematic programmes.

Regarding objectives, many delegates said more balance is needed between *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, prioritizing *in situ*. The COUNCIL OF EUROPE highlighted the European Plant Conservation Strategy, which was welcomed by many as a model for regional action.

Many delegates said that the targets needed amendment. SPAIN, supported by others, called for inclusion of national red lists for endangered plants and national strategies. The UK and others said prioritization should be done at the national level. BELGIUM suggested that countries report on incorporation of targets into national policies, and with others, called for reference to incentives other than certification schemes. JAMAICA, JAPAN and the SEYCHELLES said the targets are unrealistic and should be revisited. SWITZERLAND, supported by NEW ZEALAND, stressed the targets should reflect ecosystems and habitats as well as indigenous knowledge. THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT emphasized benefit sharing.

Chair Rodriguez said she would prepare a draft to accommodate suggestions.

IN THE CORRIDORS

With a number of background papers on forest biodiversity and an even larger number of side events inputting into SBSTTA-7's discussions, delegates again had to address the best means to synthesize information and define their priorities. Despite initial lags in getting to the substance of forests, most delegates were satisfied with the afternoon's concrete discussions on expanding the CBD's work programme. Some highlighted latent tensions in the apparently never-ending debate over the CBD's relationship to the IPF/IFF/UNFF, while others noted that discussions on targets seemed to be proceeding much further than they had under the UNFF. One participant questioned whether the debate would ultimately come down to a matter of "buying" conservation targets with additional financial resources and technology transfer.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUP I: WG-I will convene at 10:00 am in Assembly Hall 1 to continue discussions on forest biodiversity, particularly on conservation and sustainable use and on the revision of the work programme.

WORKING GROUP II: WG-II will meet at 10:00 am in Assembly Hall 2 to discuss incentive measures, indicators and impact assessment.