



SBSTTA-7 HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 15 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 and two contact groups. Working Group I (WG-I) met in a brief afternoon session to address recommendations to COP-6 and convened two contact groups that met throughout the day and into the evening to draft text on elements of the work programme on forest biodiversity. Working Group II (WG-II) reviewed draft recommendations on: agricultural biodiversity; the plant conservation strategy; incentive measures; indicators; and environmental impact assessment (EIA). The Secretariat also launched its first Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO).

WORKING GROUP I – FOREST BIODIVERSITY

The chair of the previous evening's contact group noted consideration of: programme elements on knowledge, assessment and monitoring; and conservation, sustainable use and benefit-sharing. Chair Paula Warren (New Zealand) then proposed that WG-I split into two contact groups to address the programme elements on conservation, sustainable use and benefit-sharing; and on institutional and socioeconomic enabling environments. She also proposed that the *Ad hoc* Technical Expert Group's (AHTEG) report be used to develop the relevant actors, timeframes and process targets for consideration by COP-6.

CONSERVATION, SUSTAINABLE USE AND BENEFIT-SHARING: Delegates discussed objectives and activities, and recommended promoting collaborative work with other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF). One developed country proposed support for credible voluntary forest-certification systems, and another questioned the role of States in such market-driven instruments. Delegates recommended using case-studies to illustrate forest conservation and on-ground delivery of goods and services through sustainable forest management.

Regarding conservation of forest genetic diversity, delegates discussed and modified text relating to effective and equitable information-sharing systems, and strategies on *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation and sustainable use. Specific activities discussed related to, *inter alia*: diversity of forest genetic resources; action plans for forest ecosystems deemed most vulnerable; and access and benefit-sharing, taking into account existing and future relevant COP decisions. Regarding regulations for controlling use of genetically modified organisms, participants agreed to delete text referring to the Cartagena Protocol, noting that it was not yet in force. Participants agreed to place a general reference to capacity building in the chapeau.

On protected area networks, delegates discussed, *inter alia*: assessment adequacy and efficacy of existing networks; establishment of protected area networks; and participation by and respect for local and indigenous communities. On forest fires, delegates discussed, *inter alia*: best practices; fire as a management tool; risk assessment and early warning; and capacity building. One developed country proposed development and use of management methods that mimic natural disturbances, such as fires and floods, as a measure to mitigate loss of natural disturbances in some ecosystems. Delegates highlighted the need to mitigate impacts of pollution, such as acidification and eutrophication, as well as promoting reduction of pollution levels. Some noted that combating pollution is beyond the scope of the work programme, with others highlighting its importance. Discussing forest fragmentation and conversion of forests, delegates proposed establishment of ecological corridors, and promotion of environmental and social impact assessment prior to conversion. On invasive alien species, delegates discussed, *inter alia*, prevention and mitigation. One developing country opposed, with others supporting, a reference to invasive genotypes noting the need for compliance with relevant international law. The contact group met into the evening to consider other issues relating to conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing.

The second contact group addressed issues of desertification and unsustainable harvesting. After noting previous suggestions to delete the section on desertification, delegates discussed objectives and activities related to coordination and the CBD joint work programme with the Convention to Combat Desertification. On unsustainable harvesting, the group noted a proposal on the establishment of a CPF liaison group on non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and briefly addressed, *inter alia*, harvesting practices.

INSTITUTIONAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC ENABLING ENVIRONMENT: The contact group reviewed the goals, objectives and activities during the morning, and then revisited areas of disagreement in the afternoon and evening. Regarding the goal on the institutional enabling environment and language on integration of forest biodiversity into policies and programmes, the group discussed: reference to donor bodies and poverty reduction strategy papers; national formulation of policies and priority targets; ecotourism and recreational activities; monitoring and assessment; sustainable forest management; and the ecosystem approach. Delegates also addressed integration of biodiversity concerns into regional programmes, while questioning references to trade and the externalization of national problems.

The group debated language on synergies with other forest processes, reporting mechanisms, strategies for resource provision, sectoral policies, and forest fire prevention plans. Regarding causes of biodiversity loss, delegates referenced lessons learned in mitigation, early warning systems, and distinctions between global and national

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underlying causes. The group debated language on: good governance; permanent forest estates; land tenure and resource rights; the Bonn Guidelines on Access and Benefit-sharing; illegal logging and associated trade; performance bonds in forest concessions; codes of conduct for forest practices; certification schemes and chain of custody; and capacity building.

Regarding the goal on socioeconomic failures and distortions, the group discussed: elimination of perverse incentives; means to balance local costs with global benefits; compatibility of national laws and international trade measures with forest conservation and sustainable use; analyses of consumption and production; and forest subsistence economies. Regarding the goal on public education, participation and awareness, reference was proposed to education of logging workers. The group also briefly reviewed actors, ways and means, and made numerous textual and organizational changes.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Regarding the recommendation on the AHTEG, WG-I reformulated language on acknowledging the AHTEG's report and taking note of its work on status and trends. Regarding the recommendation on the work programme, the NETHERLANDS proposed having COP-6 decide on priorities, including definition of targets, timeframes and actors. COLOMBIA suggested adding progress indicators. GERMANY proposed inviting the Secretariat to present SBSTTA's deliberations to the second UN Forum on Forests, which was questioned by MALAYSIA given lack of COP review. SWITZERLAND proposed that the CBD assume the role of lead agency on biodiversity within the CPF.

Regarding the recommendation on bushmeat, the NETHERLANDS, with NORWAY, suggested a reference to IUCN as a partner in preparing a joint work plan. NIGERIA stressed the need for increased knowledge on the causes of the bushmeat crisis. Delegates then debated whether to establish a liaison group or an expert group without resolving the issue.

WORKING GROUP II

AGRICULTURAL BIODIVERSITY: Delegates considered document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/7/WG.II/CRP.1. Regarding implementation of the work programme, ARGENTINA emphasized full participation. COLOMBIA referred to preventing adverse impacts of agriculture on biodiversity, and called for case-studies for the soil biodiversity initiative. CANADA and the NETHERLANDS noted adequate information already exists. COLOMBIA said that the SBSTTA Bureau should be consulted on the format of such reports. MEXICO requested that case studies on agricultural biodiversity be made available through the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM). Delegates accepted the proposed amendments and a number of textual suggestions.

On the International Pollinators Initiative, delegates agreed to an amendment by SOUTH AFRICA, recommending that COP-6 adopt and review the Initiative's plan of action. On animal genetic resources, a textual change was made to a recommendation to COP to consider the need for financial resources.

PLANT CONSERVATION STRATEGY: The Secretariat presented UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/7/WG.II/CRP.2. On the recommendation, ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, JAMAICA and the SEYCHELLES called for incorporating the strategy's implementation into existing CBD work programmes to avoid overburdening Parties. CANADA, with SPAIN, suggested that language on the Executive Secretary's refinement of the targets' quantitative elements include consultation with relevant international initiatives. COLOMBIA and SPAIN called for Parties' participation in the intersessional activities. PORTUGAL said intersessional work should not be confined to quantitative elements. ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA stressed country-driven implementation activities. On funding allocation, the GEF highlighted its long list of priorities.

On the global strategy for plant conservation, NORWAY suggested restructuring objectives to stress the ecosystem approach. Regarding general principles, COSTA RICA proposed adding enhancement of national initiatives and inventories. SWITZERLAND suggested that targets might be revised in light of new scientific data. AUSTRALIA called for biogeographical representation of actors involved in the strategy.

INCENTIVE MEASURES: The Secretariat introduced UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/7/WG.II/CRP.3. COLOMBIA, on behalf of GRULAC, said that incentives should be consistent with national legislation and

international obligations. BELGIUM called on Parties to submit case studies and best practices to COP-6. DENMARK referred to removing and mitigating the negative impacts of perverse incentives. SOUTH AFRICA called upon the Executive Secretary to make information gathered on perverse incentives available to COP-6. The NETHERLANDS noted that incentives could be used at all relevant spatial scales. The PHILIPPINES made reference to poverty alleviation.

On guidelines for selecting appropriate and complementary measures in Annex I, ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, GUYANA and JAMAICA said that property rights should not be a prerequisite for effective implementation of incentives. MEXICO requested including a reference to raising awareness about environmental services.

On cooperation, PORTUGAL and SOUTH AFRICA opposed prioritizing ecosystems. The UK questioned reference to financial support for development of conceptual frameworks or for baseline information for incentive measure assessments.

INDICATORS: Delegates considered UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/7/WG.II/CRP.5. Many suggested that a liaison group should be formed based on both UN regional groups and biogeographical groups. NEW ZEALAND, supported by BELGIUM, said the list of available and potential indicators should be quantitative and qualitative. The PHILIPPINES said that regional approaches should be on a mutually accepted basis. With a number of other amendments, WG-II adopted the draft recommendations.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: The Secretariat introduced UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/7/WG.II/CRP.4 containing: draft recommendations; draft guidelines for incorporating biodiversity-related issues into EIA; screening criteria; an indicative list of environmental functions derived from biodiversity; and a checklist on scoping. On the draft recommendations, ERITREA and NAMIBIA suggested a reference to other means of communication in addition to the CHM. Delegates debated reference to the precautionary principle/approach. NEW ZEALAND noted COP language on the precautionary approach and the EUROPEAN COMMUNITY accepted the reference, but stressed they consider it to be a principle of international law.

The draft report of WG-II (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/7/WG.II/L.1) was accepted without comment. Chair Lily Rodriguez (Peru) said that the final documents incorporating comments would be forwarded to Plenary.

GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY OUTLOOK

In the afternoon, the Secretariat launched its first GBO, the CBD's report on its activities and the status and trends of global biodiversity. Reuben Olemba, UN Environment Programme, on behalf of the COP-5 President, congratulated the Secretariat and highlighted the CBD's achievements since UNCED. Hamdallah Zedan, CBD Executive Secretary, recalled SBSTTA's initial recommendation regarding preparation of a periodic paper to assess status and trends of global initiatives. In accepting the first copy, Geke Faber, State Secretary of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries (the Netherlands) stressed the document's importance along with challenges facing the Parties before COP-6. Jan Plesnik, SBSTTA-7 Chair, said the GBO would help achieve the CBD's three main goals by increasing knowledge about the status of management and sustainable use of biodiversity.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As bleary-eyed delegates worked deep into the night on the text of the forest work programme, many noted that the document being crafted was one of the most ambitious and far-reaching within UN forest discussions in terms of ecological, social and economic facets of forest biodiversity. Some NGOs noted that governments were making their jobs far too easy; although several participants highlighted that the downside of such a wealth of substance is the sheer difficulty of prioritization and implementation.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUP I: WG-I will convene at 10:00 am to approve the work of the contact groups and WG-I's report.

PLENARY: Plenary will convene after WG-I to adopt the Working Groups' recommendations and to discuss the agendas, dates and venues for SBSTTA-8 and 9.