



SBSTTA-9 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2003

Delegates to the ninth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-9) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) convened in opening Plenary and Working Group sessions. In the morning, Plenary heard opening statements, addressed organizational matters, and considered progress reports on: the implementation of the thematic programmes of work (PoWs); cross-cutting issues; the Bureau's intersessional activities; and the meeting "2010 – The Global Biodiversity Challenge." In the afternoon, Working Group I (WG-I) discussed the draft PoW on mountain biodiversity, and Working Group II (WG-II) considered the inter-linkages between climate change and biodiversity.

OPENING PLENARY

STATEMENTS: Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (Ghana), Chair of SBSTTA-9, noted that protected areas are an important tool to implement CBD Article 8 (*In-situ* conservation), and said the draft PoW on protected areas should draw on other thematic and cross-cutting issues. He stressed that technology transfer and cooperation is central to achieving the CBD objectives. Chair Oteng-Yeboah noted the need to develop targets and timeframes to evaluate progress in implementing the CBD, and clearly identify actions to achieve the 2010 target to significantly reduce biodiversity loss and the goals set out in the CBD Strategic Plan.

Nehemiah Rotich, on behalf of UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer, emphasized the importance of knowledge management, policy targets and assessment, and inter-agency collaboration, outlining the work of UNEP and other processes on these issues.

Highlighting the entry into force of the Biosafety Protocol on 11 September 2003, Hamdallah Zedan, CBD Executive Secretary, urged all CBD Parties to ratify the Biosafety Protocol. He stressed the need for capacity building for its effective implementation, and urged Parties and non-Parties to contribute information to the Biosafety Clearing-House Mechanism.

Nadia El-Hage Scialabba, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), noted that the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture is expected to enter into force in the first half of 2004, and proposed the establishment of an international ecological agriculture initiative in protected areas and buffer zones.

Rocio Lichte, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), presented the report of the *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Biodiversity and Climate Change (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/11) and the outcomes of the workshop on synergies between the UNFCCC, the CBD and the UN Convention to

Combat Desertification (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/INF/12). She recommended collaborating on cross-cutting issues and adopting the ecosystem approach.

Susan Braatz, UN Forum on Forests (UNFF), welcomed the CBD request to UNFF to share knowledge on sustainable forest management and its involvement in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests as a focal point for traditional knowledge and forest biodiversity.

Sam Johnston, United Nations University (UNU), outlined the work of the UNU Institute of Advanced Studies regarding protected areas and technology transfer, highlighting the importance of non-monetary benefits arising from the use of genetic resources and the challenge to develop mechanisms for sharing these benefits and transferring soft technologies.

Nick Davidson, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, highlighted joint activities between the Ramsar Convention and the CBD, stressing progress in the development of an integrated work plan on mountain biodiversity and indicators to assess progress towards the 2010 target.

The Philippines, for the ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION, requested the Secretariat to organize regional preparatory meetings for the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-7). Algeria, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, called for strengthening synergies between multilateral environmental agreements. Tebtebba Foundation, on behalf of indigenous peoples and non-governmental organizations, emphasized the importance of securing indigenous peoples' rights to their land in protected areas. She said targets and monitoring systems should include indicators on human rights and social equity, and called for prohibiting field testing of genetic use restriction technologies (GURTs).

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: In addition to Chair Oteng-Yeboah, delegates agreed that the following Bureau members would continue their office: Boumediene Mahi (Algeria), Asghar Mohammadi Fazel (Islamic Republic of Iran), Theresa Mundita Lim (Philippines), Peter Straka (Slovakia), Yaroslav Movchan (Ukraine), Joseph Ronald Toussaint (Haiti), Mitzi Gurgel Valente da Costa (Brazil), and Robert Lamb (Switzerland). The election of regional representatives was postponed pending further consultations in the regional groups. Plenary elected Theresa Mundita Lim as Rapporteur of the meeting.

Delegates then adopted the agenda and organization of work (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/1 and 9/1/Add.1) without amendment, and elected Robert Andren as Chair of WG-I and Asghar Mohammadi Fazel as Chair of WG-II.

REPORTS: The Secretariat introduced reports on progress in implementing the thematic PoW (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/2; UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/INF/6, INF/14-15, and INF/31) and cross-cutting issues (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/3; UNEP/CBD/

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SBSTTA/9/INF/16-18, INF/20, and INF/37), intersessional activities of the Bureau (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/4), and the meeting "2010 – the Global Biodiversity Challenge" (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/INF/9).

CANADA noted scientific inaccuracies in the report of the AHTEG on GURTs (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/INF/6), and NEW ZEALAND stressed that new biotechnologies are best managed through case-by-case assessments, including field testing. ARGENTINA suggested considering the report at SBSTTA-10, and BRAZIL objected to adopting the report without in-depth discussion, but said SBSTTA should review it before COP-7. The PHILIPPINES said SBSTTA and the Working Group on Article 8(j) (traditional knowledge) should consider the GURTs report, and stressed that Parties should decide whether or not to prohibit the introduction of GURTs. The ET CETERA GROUP warned that terminator seeds will become a commercial reality before 2010 if the commercial approval of GURTs is not prohibited.

FINLAND said references to climate change-related issues should not be limited to the PoW on forest biodiversity, and the UK noted the need to develop specific proposals related to the 2010 target. MOROCCO recommended prioritizing proposals for incorporating biodiversity-related issues into environmental impact assessments, and the Ramsar Convention requested that recommendations be prepared on this issue.

WORKING GROUP I

The Secretariat introduced the proposed PoW on mountain biodiversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/12). ITALY reported on the AHTEG on mountain biodiversity meeting, held in July 2003 (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/INF/11). Delegates noted the need to address more explicitly measures for poverty alleviation in mountain areas, and the role of traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous and local communities. GERMANY and others called for national priority setting, outcome-oriented targets and their linkages with criteria and indicators, and specific timeframes. COLOMBIA and the UKRAINE said that timetables and means for implementation must be integrated into the PoW. SLOVENIA, supported by NEW ZEALAND and the UKRAINE, recommended better integration with other PoWs.

JORDAN, FRANCE, PERU and POLAND called for increased cooperation through the clearing-house mechanism, including cooperation with regional conventions on mountains. SWITZERLAND suggested that the International Partnership on Sustainable Development in Mountains act as the coordinating platform for implementing the PoW. ITALY, LIBERIA and PERU recommended addressing watershed management and land-use planning.

ECUADOR, COLOMBIA and PERU proposed a more holistic approach to mountain biodiversity management. SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND and FINLAND proposed including an action item on the loss of traditional agricultural practices that have positive impacts on mountain biodiversity.

TUNISIA stressed population density in mountain areas. MALAWI proposed benefit-sharing, and LEBANON suggested compensation as incentives for mountain peoples to remain in mountain areas. INDIA noted the impacts of activities in high mountain areas on foothills and, supported by CAMBODIA, stressed their importance as river catchments. JAPAN insisted on maintaining the reference to "illegal logging" in the PoW, while BRAZIL proposed to refer to "unsustainable harvesting." The EC suggested using wording from the PoW on forests regarding law enforcement and trade.

UNESCO described how its activities on mountains relate to the PoW. PERU requested eliminating reference to the Bonn Guidelines on Access and Benefit-Sharing in relation to promoting indigenous peoples' access to genetic resources.

WORKING GROUP II

The Secretariat introduced the report of the AHTEG on Biodiversity and Climate Change (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/11 and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/INF/12). Robert Watson, Co-Chair of the

AHTEG, reviewed the main findings of the report, outlining how climate change impacts biodiversity. He said there is scope to harmonize afforestation and reforestation projects with biodiversity conservation benefits, and suggested the development of a set of common international environment and social standards to avoid perverse outcomes.

FINLAND, IRELAND, GERMANY, NORWAY and SWITZERLAND, opposed by AUSTRALIA, CANADA, JAPAN, NEW ZEALAND and the US, recommended that SBSTTA adopt the Executive Summary of the report. MEXICO proposed submitting the Executive Summary and the full report to government review before forwarding it to COP-7 for adoption. BRAZIL said SBSTTA should adopt the report and defer the suggested recommendations on inter-linkages to the COP, and cautioned against interpreting the report to imply that biodiversity-rich countries have additional obligations to conserve biodiversity as a result of climate change impacts. The NETHERLANDS suggested that SBSTTA comment on the accuracy of the report if it decides not to consider it for adoption.

MALAYSIA called on Parties to focus on synergies between adaptation to climate change and biodiversity conservation. IRELAND and the NETHERLANDS supported developing draft voluntary guidelines to promote synergy between activities on climate change mitigation and adaptation and biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIA and CANADA said developing such guidelines exceeds SBSTTA's mandate, noting that it is not appropriate for SBSTTA to propose activities to the UNFCCC. The US and ARGENTINA cautioned against making recommendations to other conventions. GUINEA BISSAU requested advice on how to implement synergies in practice.

The UNFCCC said UNFCCC COP-9 will consider the AHTEG report. The GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY noted that the AHTEG report will be incorporated into its focal area on sustainable land use, and the WORLD BANK drew attention to its Biocarbon Fund, which supports projects linking forestry with biodiversity. The GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT CENTER noted the need to protect natural ecosystems for carbon sequestration. DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE and FRIENDS OF THE EARTH stressed the importance of a coordinated approach to issues common to climate change and biodiversity.

IN THE CORRIDORS

With COP-7 drawing closer, delegates to SBSTTA-9 met in good working spirits to tackle a heavy agenda, boosted by a busy and productive intersessional period of over 20 AHTEG and liaison group meetings.

While many delegates expressed optimism regarding the draft programme of work on PAs, one delegate raised concern over discussions on a legally binding instrument for PAs, noting that this may distract from more pressing issues, including the need for stronger measures regarding the development of a global system of PAs.

According to some, the integration of outcome-oriented targets into the CBD's programmes of work may prove more controversial than expected. While most agree on their necessity to achieve the 2010 target, some questioned the benefits of setting targets without a realistic perspective of achieving them.

Besides possible heated debates over proprietary technologies, one delegate pointed at procedural issues regarding technology transfer, noting that the mandate to develop a programme of work is weak.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUP I: WG-I will meet at 10:00 am in Conference Hall I to start discussing protected areas.

WORKING GROUP II: WG-II will convene at 10:00 am in Conference Hall II to start discussions on technology transfer and cooperation.