



TENTH MEETING OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY: 7 – 11 FEBRUARY 2005

The tenth session of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-10) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) opens today at the United Nations Convention Centre in Bangkok, Thailand, and will continue until 11 February 2005. The meeting will be immediately followed by the third meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Open-Ended Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing, to be held at the same venue.

SBSTTA-10's topic for in-depth discussion will be island biodiversity. In addition, delegates will address: draft reports on the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment; agricultural biodiversity, including options for a cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition, the International Initiative for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Soil Biodiversity, and the report of the *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Genetic Use Restriction Technologies; the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI); terms of reference for an AHTEG to develop advice on synergies between activities addressing biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, desertification, land degradation and climate change; goals and sub-targets to facilitate coherence among the programmes of work; indicators for assessing progress towards the 2010 target to significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss; the role of the Clearing-house mechanism (CHM) in promoting technical cooperation and facilitating information exchange; and ways and means to remove perverse incentives. The SBSTTA's recommendations will be forwarded to the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP), expected to be held in the first half of 2006 in Brazil.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CBD

The Convention on Biological Diversity, negotiated under the auspices of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), was opened for signature on 5 June 1992, and entered into force on 29 December 1993. There are currently 188 Parties to the Convention, which aims to promote "the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources."

The COP is the governing body of the Convention. It is assisted by the SBSTTA, which is mandated, under CBD Article 25 (SBSTTA), to provide the COP with advice relating to the Convention's implementation. To date, the COP has held seven meetings, and convened one extraordinary meeting (ExCOP). Since its establishment, in 1994 by a COP-1 decision, the SBSTTA has held nine meetings.

COP 1-4: Prior to the ExCOP, the COP held four meetings (November – December 1994, Nassau, the Bahamas; November 1995, Jakarta, Indonesia; November 1996, Buenos Aires, Argentina; and May 1998, Bratislava, Slovakia), and adopted decisions on, *inter alia*: the establishment of the CHM; the designation of the Global Environment Facility as the interim financial mechanism; the designation of Montreal, Canada, as the permanent location for the Secretariat; and cooperation with other biodiversity-related conventions. The COP also established open-ended *ad hoc* working groups on biosafety and on CBD Article 8(j) (traditional knowledge), as well as an expert panel on access and benefit-sharing (ABS). Thematic programmes of work were adopted on: inland water ecosystems; marine and coastal biodiversity; agricultural biodiversity; and forest biodiversity.

ExCOP: The ExCOP (February 1999, Cartagena, Colombia) convened to adopt the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The meeting was suspended following disagreement on a compromise package that would have finalized the Protocol. Following three sets of informal consultations to resolve outstanding issues, the ExCOP resumed in January 2000, in Montreal, Canada, and adopted the Protocol. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety addresses the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms that may have an adverse effect on biodiversity, with a specific focus on transboundary movements. The Protocol entered into force on 11 September 2003, and has been ratified by 111 CBD Parties to date.

COP-5: At its fifth meeting (May 2000, Nairobi, Kenya), the COP adopted a programme of work on dry and sub-humid lands and decisions on: the ecosystem approach; access to genetic resources, including the establishment of the Open-ended *Ad Hoc* Working Group on access and benefit sharing (ABS-WG); alien species; sustainable use; biodiversity and tourism; incentive measures; the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC); the Convention's operations; the GTI; the CHM; financial resources and mechanism; identification, monitoring and assessment, and indicators; CBD Article 8(j); education and public awareness; and impact assessment, liability and redress.

ABS-WG1: At its first meeting (October 2001, Bonn, Germany), the ABS-WG developed the draft Bonn Guidelines on ABS, and also: identified elements for a capacity-building action plan; called for an open-ended workshop on capacity building for ABS; and considered the role of intellectual property rights in implementation of ABS arrangements.

SBSTTA-7: The SBSTTA's seventh meeting (November 2001, Montreal, Canada) reconsidered and expanded the programme of work on forest biodiversity, and adopted recommendations on: agricultural biodiversity, including the International Pollinators Initiative; the GSPC; incentive measures; indicators; sustainable tourism; and environmental impact assessments.

COP-6: The sixth meeting of the COP (April 2002, The Hague, the Netherlands) adopted the revised programme of



work on forest biodiversity as well as guiding principles for IAS, the Bonn Guidelines on ABS, and the Strategic Plan for the CBD. Decisions were also adopted on: the GSPC; the GTI; the ecosystem approach; sustainable use; incentive measures; liability and redress; the CHM; financial resources and mechanism; cooperation with other conventions and international initiatives; a contribution to the ten-year review of Agenda 21; CBD Article 8(j); and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGR).

SBSTTA-8: On its major theme for discussion, mountain biodiversity, the SBSTTA's eighth meeting (March 2003, Montreal, Canada) adopted the structure of a proposed programme of work. It also adopted recommendations on: inland water ecosystems; marine and coastal biodiversity; dry and sub-humid lands; biodiversity and tourism; and the SBSTTA's operations.

SBSTTA-9: The ninth meeting of the SBSTTA (November 2003, Montreal, Canada) considered elements of work programmes on protected areas and on technology transfer and cooperation. Delegates also adopted recommendations on, *inter alia*, biodiversity and climate change, monitoring and indicators, and incentive measures.

ABS-WG2: At its second meeting (December 2003, Montreal, Canada), the ABS-WG initiated discussions on the process, nature, scope, elements and modalities for an international ABS regime. Parties also adopted recommendations on: experiences with the Bonn Guidelines on ABS; use of terms; compliance measures with prior informed consent and mutually agreed terms; and capacity building.

COP-7: The seventh meeting of the COP (February 2004, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) adopted three work programmes on: mountain biodiversity; protected areas; and technology transfer and cooperation. Decisions were also adopted on: biodiversity and tourism; monitoring and indicators; the ecosystem approach; biodiversity and climate change; sustainable use; IAS; the Strategic Plan; inland waters ecosystems; marine and coastal biodiversity; ABS; CBD Article 8(j), including the Akwé: Kon Guidelines on impact assessments; incentive measures; communication, education and public awareness; scientific and technical cooperation and the CHM; financial resources and mechanism; and national reporting.

COP/MOP-1: The First Meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP/MOP-1) (23-27 February 2004, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) adopted decisions on, *inter alia*: decision making by Parties of import; capacity building and the roster of experts; handling, transport, packaging and identification of living modified organisms, information sharing and the Biosafety Clearing-house; liability and redress; compliance; and the medium-term programme of work for the COP/MOP.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

WORKSHOP ON FORESTS AND FOREST ECOSYSTEMS: PROMOTING SYNERGY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THREE RIO CONVENTIONS:

This workshop (5-7 April 2004, Viterbo, Italy), organized by the Secretariats of the CBD, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, considered presentations and case studies on two main themes: potential for synergies in coordinating work on forest landscape management and soil conservation; and ecosystem services and poverty reduction at the local level.

CGRFA-10: The tenth regular session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) (8-12 November 2004, Rome, Italy) considered agenda items relating to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA), animal genetic resources (AnGR), and general issues, including: the reports and future work of the intergovernmental technical working groups on PGRFA and AnGR; cooperation with the CBD; the draft code of conduct on biotechnology; and the future work of the Commission.

ITPGR INTERIM COMMITTEE: The second session of the CGRFA acting as the Interim Committee for the ITPGR (15-19 November 2004, Rome, Italy) agreed to establish an open-ended intersessional working group to address the rules of procedure and financial rules for the Governing Body, the funding strategy and compliance procedures. Delegates also considered the draft work programmes and budgets for the Interim Committee and the Governing Body. The meeting agreed on the terms of reference for an intersessional contact group to draft the standard Material Transfer Agreement for Governing Body consideration.

CBD AHTEG ON INDICATORS: The AHTEG on indicators for assessing progress towards, and communicating, the 2010 target (19-22 October 2004, Montreal, Canada) reviewed provisional indicators as listed in Annex I to COP decision VII/30 (Strategic Plan: Future Evaluation of Progress).

3RD IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS: Convened under the theme "People and Nature – only one world," the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress (17-25 November 2004, Bangkok, Thailand) comprised three principal elements: the Commissions at Work, assessing the work of IUCN's six Commissions; the World Conservation Forum, taking stock of biodiversity conservation; and the Members' Business Assembly, addressing governance, policy and programmatic issues for IUCN. High-level roundtables also discussed a range of conservation and sustainable development challenges. The Congress approved 118 resolutions and recommendations shaping IUCN's governance and future areas of work, and elected a new Council, with Mohammed Valli Moosa (South Africa) as President.

CBD AHTEG ON ISLAND BIODIVERSITY: The AHTEG on Island Biodiversity (13-17 December 2004, Canary Islands, Spain) reviewed the outcomes of the regional and inter-regional preparatory meetings for the 10-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action, considered status and trends of, and major threats to, island biological diversity; and identified characteristics of island biodiversity. The Group also reviewed ongoing work under the thematic areas and cross-cutting issues of the CBD, as well as under other relevant processes, and identified significant gaps in, and constraints to, implementation. The AHTEG developed proposals for the programme of work on island biodiversity.

INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON THE REVIEW OF THE BARBADOS PROGRAMME OF ACTION: The International Meeting (IM) to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (10-14 January 2005, Port Louis, Mauritius), considered: environmental vulnerabilities; challenges in trade and economic development; the role of culture in SIDS' sustainable development; emerging trends and social challenges; and building resilience. A high-level segment held a general debate on the "Comprehensive review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS," as well as roundtable discussions on mobilizing resources and building capacity. The IM adopted the Mauritius Declaration and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action on the Sustainable Development of SIDS.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BIODIVERSITY: Hosted by the Government of France, this Conference (24-28 January 2005, Paris, France) convened under the theme "Biodiversity: Science and Governance." Four plenary sessions addressed: challenges of biodiversity, science and governance; status and trends of the world's biodiversity; social and ecological benefits of biodiversity; and management of living resources. Workshops were held on, *inter alia*: governance; biodiversity and agriculture; challenges to achieving the 2010 target – funding research; indicators and the 2010 target; and sustainable management of tropical and subtropical biodiversity, including islands and forests. The Conference produced a Statement and the Paris Declaration on Biodiversity, an appeal by scientists for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.