



SBSTTA-10 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2005

Delegates to the tenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-10) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) convened in working groups and contact groups. Working Group I (WG-I) considered the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI) and terms of reference for an *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on biodiversity, desertification and climate change. Working Group II (WG-II) addressed the role of the clearing-house mechanism (CHM) in achieving the 2010 target, and discussed ways and means to remove perverse incentives. Contact groups convened on island biodiversity and incentive measures. A Friends of the Chair group also met to draft recommendations on genetic use restriction technologies (GURTs).

WORKING GROUP I

WG-I Chair Theresa Mundita Lim (Philippines) established a Friends of the Chair group to draft recommendations to COP-8 on GURTs.

CLIMATE CHANGE: Delegates considered terms of reference for an AHTEG on synergies among activities related to biodiversity, desertification and climate change (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/10/18).

THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC) briefed delegates on relevant outcomes of the UNFCCC COP-10 and its Subsidiary Bodies. FINLAND reiterated its readiness to provide financial support to CBD's work on biodiversity and climate change. Many delegates supported establishing the AHTEG, while AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND opposed, on the ground that it was premature. Palau, on behalf of ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, with GRENADA and others, suggested including island biodiversity in the terms of reference. ARGENTINA and COLOMBIA said the AHTEG should not have a political mandate.

NORWAY stressed the need to take into account existing scientific assessments. The NETHERLANDS and CANADA proposed that the AHTEG assess the role of biodiversity in mitigating climate change. SWITZERLAND stressed the role of carbon sinks, and LIBERIA the impact of logging and deforestation. BRAZIL requested deleting references to deforestation, land-use change and climate change mitigation. FRANCE suggested analyzing the social, economic and health impacts of climate-related biodiversity changes. INDIA stressed the need to avoid duplication and reduce costs in the implementation of the Rio Conventions. TANZANIA suggested

a reference to biodiversity livelihood indicators as a means of measuring the contribution of biodiversity to human subsistence.

The GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY highlighted its financial support to pilot projects on adaptation and self-assessment of capacities regarding synergies among the Rio Conventions. The CANADIAN INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY NETWORK said the AHTEG's work could benefit from indigenous expertise.

GLOBAL TAXONOMY INITIATIVE: The Secretariat introduced documents on the process and guidelines for the in-depth review of the GTI work programme (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/10/16), and the outline of the GTI guide (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/10/17).

CHINA called for recognizing national efforts and supporting megadiverse developing countries in their taxonomy work. JAPAN stressed the need to improve the GTI Coordination Mechanism. AUSTRIA proposed a reference to the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). ITALY suggested developing a CHM portal for the GTI. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA said the Secretariat should share information on type specimens with taxonomists.

Iran, on behalf of ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, highlighted scientific and traditional knowledge and, with Palau and Liberia, on behalf of AFRICA, called for capacity building, including in-country trainings. Singapore, for the ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH-EAST ASIAN NATIONS, supported a process to monitor progress in implementing the GTI work programme, while SWEDEN called for mechanisms to measure its efficiency. BANGLADESH and VANUATU stressed the need to integrate modern techniques with traditional knowledge, such as ethnobiodiversity. The US, supported by CANADA, pointed to DNA bar coding as an innovative approach in taxonomy. NEW ZEALAND requested a reference to the importance of taxonomy in addressing invasive alien species. BELGIUM noted the need for a new generation of taxonomists. WG-I Chair Lim said a conference room paper would be prepared on the basis of the discussion.

Regarding the GTI guide, France, supported by many countries, suggested developing a summary for broader dissemination. PERU, supported by the US, said the guide should inform decision makers about the importance of taxonomy.

WORKING GROUP II

CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM: The Secretariat introduced a document on the CHM's role in promoting technical cooperation to achieve the 2010 target and facilitating



information exchange on progress made (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/10/11). The majority of delegates called for capacity building, training, technology transfer, and financial resources to establish and maintain the necessary CHM infrastructure. Several delegates supported convening national and regional workshops to enable developing country Parties to use the CHM. BOLIVIA and SWEDEN highlighted the importance of biodiversity inventories to feed the information exchange. BELGIUM noted the role of political commitment in ensuring long-term sustainability of national CHM focal points. NEPAL requested the Executive Secretary to consider alternatives to the electronic format. ASIA AND THE PACIFIC requested the Secretariat to develop new tools for information exchange on threatened species. BHUTAN said the Secretariat should assist countries in getting the necessary funds to establish national CHMs.

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC and TURKEY underscored the need to address language barriers for communication with national scientific communities. MEXICO called for facilitating access to data sources and regularly updating data source lists.

AUSTRALIA stressed that interoperability should not be interpreted as a top-down mechanism to establish formats and standards for data exchange. CANADA, GERMANY, the EC and the UK noted that infrastructure development is a prerequisite for interoperability. The EC said data gathered from geographic information systems should be made available to decision makers and the public, and the UK emphasized the role of the GBIF. Noting the cost of biodiversity information technologies, NORWAY, supporting GERMANY, recommended cooperation with organizations that have already developed these tools. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION underlined that cartographical and geological data needs to be accessible in accurate formats, and information provided through the CHM translated. ARGENTINA stressed that the CHM is only one of many tools to strengthen cooperation.

DENMARK said the CHM should provide links to information sources rather than transmit data. GERMANY stressed its role in making indicator-related information accessible and, with NORWAY and SOUTH AFRICA, in developing long-term scientific partnerships between Parties. SOUTH AFRICA, PERU and the CZECH REPUBLIC also noted the role of the CHM in facilitating capacity building. PERU said facilitating information exchange is a priority, and proposed establishing regional portals for regional-level information exchange. The CZECH REPUBLIC highlighted the EC CHM as an example of successful regional cooperation.

NEW ZEALAND and SAMOA encouraged broader efforts for developing, sharing and replicating successful biodiversity-management approaches. TURKEY requested that the CHM include data-management systems.

SWEDEN supported creating a portal on the GTI. Noting the need for focused efforts to achieve the 2010 target, CHILE requested the Executive Secretary to identify priorities regarding relevant indicators to be communicated to national focal points. NORWAY said work under the CHM should be linked with work undertaken by the AHTEG on Technology Transfer. BRAZIL emphasized regional networking.

Noting the lack of indigenous involvement in the Conservation Commons initiative, the INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION NETWORK said the initiative should not be formally endorsed until further discussion with indigenous and local communities.

INCENTIVE MEASURES: The Secretariat introduced a document on the further refinement and consideration of proposals for the application of ways and means to remove or mitigate perverse incentives (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/10/12).

Noting that they would put forward several amendments, ARGENTINA and NEW ZEALAND, supported by BRAZIL, SOUTH AFRICA and ECUADOR, proposed establishing a contact group. BRAZIL requested that the contact group focus on agricultural subsidies. The NETHERLANDS, the EC and the UK suggested clarifying the status of the proposals as voluntary guidelines in order to avoid contact group discussions. COLOMBIA proposed adjourning discussions on the issue.

AUSTRALIA stressed that their acceptance of the proposals contained in the document was subject to consistency with existing international obligations.

CHINA expressed concerns regarding the applicability of the proposals in all countries. THAILAND suggested that Parties further develop the proposals according to national priorities. SWEDEN said incentives other than subsidies should also be addressed. SWITZERLAND proposed a reference to the OECD Handbook on Incentive Measures for Biodiversity.

Regarding dissemination of the proposals, GABON suggested organizing an international meeting to ensure broad dissemination among international organizations and processes. WG-II Chair Christian Prip (Denmark) established a contact group to further discuss the proposals.

CONTACT GROUPS

ISLAND BIODIVERSITY: Under the chairmanship of Horst Korn (Germany), the contact group resumed discussions on the timeframe, global targets and priority actions for the work programme on island biodiversity. Delegates agreed to use wording from COP decision VII/30 Annex II (Provisional Framework for Goals and Targets) on global targets. Regarding supporting activities, participants requested the Secretariat to ensure that the work programme remains consistent and island-focused. They agreed to draw upon appropriate elements of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Delegates agreed to replace references to Island States by island biodiversity throughout the document. Delegates then started discussing priority actions by Parties, without major disagreement.

INCENTIVE MEASURES: The contact group, chaired by Sem Taukondjo Shikongo (Namibia), considered the document on proposals for the application of ways and means to remove or mitigate perverse incentives. On definition of terms, delegates requested the Secretariat to prepare a glossary to assist discussions. Delegates discussed whether the removal of perverse incentives is a crucial, rather than important, element in promoting the conservation of biodiversity. On identification of policies or practices that generate perverse incentives, they agreed not to distinguish between principles, and ways and means.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Recalling the Chinese belief, according to which actions performed on the very first day of the New Year shape the coming year, a group of delegates favored Bangkok's merry Chinese New Year parties over lengthy deliberations with other Parties on the nitty-gritty of perverse incentives in the contact group. Trade-related concerns were once more at the root of slow progress on the issue, and some delegates reaffirmed their frustration with the intractability of positions, carried on from COP-7.

In slightly more hospitable realms, slow but constructive discussions were noted regarding targets for the work programme on island biodiversity. Some delegates also expressed hope that the active lobbying on this Chinese Year's first day would bode well for the fate of the report of the *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group on Genetic Use Restriction Technologies.