

SBSTTA-11 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 2005

Participants to the eleventh meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-11) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) continued to meet in two working groups (WGs) throughout the day. WG-I considered: invasive alien species (IAS); sustainable use; guidance to promote synergy; and a draft recommendation on the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI). WG-II addressed: marine and coastal biodiversity; inland water ecosystems; and draft recommendations on refinement of the framework of the goals and targets, dry and sub-humid lands and forest biodiversity. The contact group on goals and targets met briefly in the evening.

WORKING GROUP I

INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES: SPAIN and the BAHAMAS, opposed by PERU, supported retaining and refining a recommendation on incentive schemes. JAPAN proposed that accompanying documents identify species contained in shipments. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA called for evaluating the safety of biocontrol agents. The INTERIM COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES expressed its readiness to cooperate in developing a glossary of terms. DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE highlighted the potential of joint work plans. The SECRETARIAT OF PACIFIC REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME stressed threats from IAS to food security and health.

SUSTAINABLE USE: The Secretariat introduced relevant documents (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/11/17, and INF/6 and 21). The UK, with many others, opposed opening discussion on terms already defined in the Convention.

On indicators, COLOMBIA, supported by others, urged reference to developing countries' regional efforts. COLOMBIA stressed application of the Addis Ababa guidelines to promote agro-biodiversity in urban areas. The AMERINDIAN PEOPLES ASSOCIATION noted indigenous peoples' perspective on sustainable use, and stressed the need for traditional knowledge indicators.

GUIDANCE FOR PROMOTING SYNERGY: The Secretariat introduced the document on guidance for promoting synergy among activities addressing biodiversity, desertification, land degradation and climate change (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/11/18). Heikki Toivonen (Finland), Co-Chair of the *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Biodiversity and Adaptation to Climate Change, presented the AHTEG's report (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/11/INF/5).

Many parties emphasized the need for capacity building to bring about these synergies, and CHINA warned against synergy's use as a pretext for reducing the total financial input to developing countries. JAMAICA and others underscored the

need to promote synergies at regional levels, ARGENTINA at sub-regional, SWEDEN at local, and SOUTH AFRICA at the project levels.

FINLAND and AUSTRIA asked for further elaboration of research gaps in the draft recommendations. PAKISTAN called for research on the carbon sequestration potential of species and ecosystems. SLOVENIA, the UK and AUSTRIA underscored the role of the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions. BRAZIL and PERU supported the development of pilot projects involving joint actions for meeting the objectives of the Rio Conventions.

AUSTRALIA cautioned against CBD's involvement in mitigation activities. NEW ZEALAND said the CBD should focus on practical advice regarding adaptation activities. SWITZERLAND and CANADA favored recommending that COP-8 invite the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to report on common issues and suggest joint activities. The UK welcomed the informal joint meeting of SBSTTA-11 and the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice. NEW ZEALAND said the AHTEG should offer practical biodiversity-related tools, and its final report be approved by SBSTTA. The GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY (GEF) highlighted its pilot programme on adaptation. On synergy gaps, FRIENDS OF THE EARTH INTERNATIONAL addressed the issue of genetically modified (GM) trees.

GLOBAL TAXONOMY INITIATIVE: WG-I Chair Annemarie Watt (Australia) introduced a draft recommendation reflecting Monday's discussions.

On capacity-building needs to address the taxonomic impediment, Liberia, for the AFRICAN GROUP, opposed by the EUROPEAN COMMUNITY (EC), called for a special fund for taxonomic capacity building for developing countries. After informal consultations, the EC presented a compromise that emphasizes the need to build and retain capacity to address the taxonomic impediment, and in this context, explore options to ensure the long-term sustainability of the necessary financial support, including the possibility of the establishment of a special fund.

On the mobilization of financial and technical resources for maintaining collections of biological specimens, BRAZIL and MEXICO, opposed by the NETHERLANDS, called for supporting the repatriation of biological systems. BRAZIL and PERU supported a reference to megadiverse countries, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, to countries with economies in transition, while JAMAICA preferred to refer only to the least developed countries, small island developing States (SIDS), and countries with economies in transition. After informal consultations, BRAZIL presented compromise text in which delegates agree: to invite parties and organizations to assist developing countries, the least developed and SIDS among them, countries with economies in transition, and those that

are megadiverse; to build and maintain systems and significant institutional infrastructure in order to obtain collate and adequately curate biological specimens. Delegates also agreed to facilitate information exchange, including repatriation of information on the specimens' biodiversity.

On promoting cooperation and networking for capacity building, SWEDEN and LIBERIA suggested a reference to publishing, through the CHM and other means, procedures and requirements for the deposition, transfer and loan of biological specimens. On exploring synergies between the CBD and the International Plant Protection Convention, the UK asked that it particularly addresses IAS.

Delegates also agreed to BELGIUM's suggestion not to confine GEF support to its enabling activity projects. The GEF requested that the meeting report reflect his concern that the language of the recommendations overstepped the Memorandum of Understanding between the GEF Standing Committee and the CBD COP.

Delegates then approved the draft recommendation as amended.

WORKING GROUP II

MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY: The Secretariat introduced the relevant document (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/11/11). Stressing that the UN General Assembly and the Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) are the appropriate fora to address these issues, MEXICO, supported by FRANCE and others, suggested deleting recommendations relating to proposed technical options, saying they prejudice the outcomes of the upcoming *Ad Hoc* Informal Working Group on Marine Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction. NORWAY said the need for new legal instruments should be considered by the UN and, with SWEDEN, called for prohibiting destructive practices in vulnerable areas. The NETHERLANDS, opposed by ARGENTINA, stressed CBD's role in protecting marine resources beyond national jurisdiction. GHANA proposed requesting the UN General Assembly and UNCLOS to resolve the legal impediments to establishing high seas marine protected areas (MPAs). CHINA considered the establishment of MPAs premature, stressing instead conservation and sustainable use of marine resources within national jurisdiction.

TUNISIA and the UK emphasized knowledge and awareness raising on deep seabed biodiversity. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA and MALAYSIA called for facilitating developing countries' access to information and technology on deep seabed exploration. COLOMBIA highlighted degradation of coastal ecosystems and marine macrofauna. JAPAN proposed a reference to UNCLOS article 244 (publication and dissemination of information and knowledge). Tanzania, for the AFRICAN GROUP, stressed potential threats by bioprospecting and, with the EC, urged applying the precautionary principle. CANADA said bioprospecting should contribute to biodiversity conservation. KIRIBATI and GREENPEACE called for a moratorium on deep seabed activities beyond national jurisdiction.

INLAND WATER ECOSYSTEMS: The Secretariat introduced relevant documents (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/11/12 and Add.1, and 11/13).

On national reporting of work programme implementation, the UK, supported by many, opposed establishing an *ad hoc* technical expert group, but supported enhancing collaboration between the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the CBD on this matter. He said the work in this area should take a strategic approach, taking into consideration findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and the second Global Biodiversity Outlook. The NETHERLANDS suggested the Ramsar Secretariat take the lead in streamlining reporting on the work programme's implementation. GERMANY suggested inviting the Ramsar Secretariat to develop ways and means for a joint reporting mechanism.

On criteria for the designation of Ramsar sites and guidelines for their application, SPAIN, supported by INDIGENOUS PEOPLES and opposed by ARGENTINA, requested reference to cultural values. Delegates agreed to defer this matter to SBSTTA-12.

FOREST BIODIVERSITY: The Secretariat introduced relevant documents (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/11/14 and 15, and INF/2, 3, 12 and 13). The UN FORUM ON FORESTS (UNFF) highlighted collaboration between CBD and UNFF, in particular regarding using common indicators and streamlining forest-related reporting. Many emphasized taking into account the outcomes of UNFF-6 to be held in February 2006.

AUSTRALIA called for compiling best practices on the sustainable use of forest biodiversity and equitable benefit-sharing. NORWAY and others highlighted strengthening collaboration with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. CANADA highlighted unauthorized harvesting of forest biodiversity and, with the NETHERLANDS, THAILAND and NEW ZEALAND stressed forest law enforcement. MALAYSIA, and Tanzania for the AFRICAN GROUP called for capacity building. SWITZERLAND and AUSTRIA suggested referring to regional processes. GHANA highlighted impacts of GM trees, and the FEDERATION OF GERMAN SCIENTISTS proposed banning their commercialization. Several delegates supported extending the mandate of the AHTEG on review of implementation of the forest work programme.

DRY AND SUB-HUMID LANDS BIODIVERSITY: Delegates considered draft recommendations submitted by WG-II Chair. Delegates agreed to remove the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture from a reference to relevant access and benefit-sharing provisions and add a reference to the CBD. They also added references to capacity building, proposed by BURKINA FASO, and to water bodies in dry lands, suggested by AUSTRALIA. The INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' CAUCUS emphasized indigenous and local communities' contribution to the development of indicators. Regarding incorporating climate-change considerations into the work programme, the EC suggested deleting a reference that SBSTTA's proposals do not imply obligations additional to those under the CBD. Delegates approved the draft recommendations as amended.

REFINEMENT OF THE FRAMEWORK OF THE GOALS AND TARGETS: Delegates discussed the draft recommendation submitted by WG-II Chair. Delegates disagreed on: the outcomes of the Friends of the Chair group; SBSTTA's mandate considering provisional framework goals; and, ways to proceed with the draft recommendation. A contact group, chaired by Asghar Mohammadi Fazel (Iran), was established to reach a compromise.

CONTACT GROUP

The contact group on the goal and targets on ABS met in the evening to continue discussions on the draft recommendation. A new proposal was tabled, deleting the paragraph transferring the matter to the ABS Working Group. On Goal 10, the proposal retains its original wording. On target 10.1, the proposal favors the option stating that all access to genetic resources is in line with the CBD. On target 10.2 on benefit-sharing, the proposal adds reference to the CBD's relevant provisions. Contact group Chair Fazel urged regional groups to consult on this proposal before the contact group resumes on Thursday.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Halfway through the meeting, delegates confronted both "ghosts from the past" and upcoming divergences. Unresolved issues relating to high seas MPAs from the first meeting of the PA Working Group consumed the best part of WG-II's discussions, serving as a test round before the UN *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Marine Biodiversity beyond National Jurisdiction in February 2006. As for the controversial goal on benefit-sharing, proposals continued to come and go, but consensus remained out of sight, providing, according to some, a foretaste of the ABS Working Group in January 2006.

The relevance of other processes to SBSTTA's work was fully acknowledged in discussions in both WGs and during the evening's informal joint meeting of SBSTTA and its UNFCCC counterpart, which was seen by many as cementing collaboration on linkages between biodiversity and climate change.