

SBSTTA-11 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 1 DECEMBER 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 their deliberations in two working groups (WGs) throughout the day. WG-I considered draft recommendations on: sustainable use; guidance to promote synergy; and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA). An informal evening session of WG-I also convened to consider draft recommendations on invasive alien species (IAS) and on incentive measures. WG-II addressed draft recommendations on: marine and coastal biodiversity; inland water ecosystems; and forest biodiversity. The contact groups on goals and targets on access and benefit-sharing (ABS) and on global outcome-oriented targets also met to consider relevant draft recommendations.

WORKING GROUP I

MILLENNIUM ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT: WG-I Chair Annemarie Watt (Australia) introduced a draft recommendation reflecting previous discussions.

Delegates debated several issues, including: a reference to each of the MA reports; a recommendation that the COP invite the financial mechanism to identify gaps and needs relating to financial resources to meet the 2010 target; references to the Rio Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation as relating to unsustainable patterns of production and consumption; linkages with relevant socioeconomic issues; the provision of resources for capacity building for integrated ecosystem assessments; and the development, for SBSTTA's consideration, of proposals on appropriate regionally-based scenarios.

Regarding the MA findings, CANADA suggested consideration, rather than use, of the findings in work programmes' implementation. Several parties suggested amendments to the listing of issues warranting urgent attention. AUSTRALIA, supported by others, favored not listing any particular findings, while CAMEROON, NORWAY, the CZECH REPUBLIC, BULGARIA and DENMARK preferred retaining such a list. After lunchtime consultations, Chair Watt introduced a compromise text to recommend that the COP recognize that main drivers of biodiversity loss differ among regions and countries, and decide to consider the MA findings in work programmes' implementation and future review. Delegates also agreed to note in particular the urgent need to address issues that the MA finds most significant at the global level in terms of impacts on biodiversity and human well-being.

Delegates debated a proposal by El Salvador, on behalf of LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, to delete a recommendation that COP-9 consider the need for another integrated assessment of biodiversity and ecosystems. ARGENTINA suggested retaining the recommendation, but removing a reference to the consultation process on options for a scientific mechanism for biodiversity advice. FRANCE and others opposed the proposed deletion.

After lunchtime consultations, Chair Watt introduced a compromise that recommends COP-9 to consider the evaluation of the MA findings and the need for another integrated assessment of biodiversity and ecosystems. Delegates also agreed to recommend that COP-9 consider taking into account the results of other relevant processes to facilitate SBSTTA's access to scientific information and advice on biodiversity.

WG-I approved the draft recommendation as amended.

SUSTAINABLE USE: Chair Watt introduced a draft recommendation reflecting previous discussions. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION suggested a reference to UNEP's biodiversity and sustainable use module as a helpful tool for implementation. The EUROPEAN COMMUNITY (EC) proposed that SBSTTA encourage new initiatives and processes on development of indicators. Delegates discussed a request to the Executive Secretary to take note of initiatives on developing indicators for sustainable use. Following interventions by CANADA, the EC, ARGENTINA and the UK, delegates agreed to request the Executive Secretary to take note of initiatives, processes and organizations and their efforts to further develop and consolidate indicators on the sustainable use of biodiversity, and report to COP-8. The draft recommendation was then approved as amended.

GUIDANCE FOR PROMOTING SYNERGY: Chair Watt introduced the draft recommendation on guidance for promoting synergy among activities addressing biodiversity, desertification, land degradation and climate change.

Delegates discussed several issues, including: whether SBSTTA should endorse, welcome or note the report from the *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Biodiversity and Adaptation to Climate Change; the need to devote further attention to the question of adaptation to climate change for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; the AHTEG guidance as an initial step in the design and implementation of climate change activities that interlink across biodiversity; a request that the Secretariat transmit the AHTEG report to relevant bodies of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and Ramsar Convention on Wetlands; and the promotion of research on mitigation and biodiversity.

On a recommendation that SBSTTA note knowledge gaps for including biodiversity considerations into adaptation planning and implementation, FINLAND noted that the climate change adaptation framework for biodiversity presented in the AHTEG report contains a useful approach in preparation of national strategies and plans. After extensive discussions on the wording of an invitation to the UNFCCC and the UNCCD COPs to collaborate with the CBD, delegates agreed to instead recall a similar invitation in Decision VII/15 (biodiversity and climate change). AUSTRALIA, opposed by SWITZERLAND, proposed deleting a recommendation to identify potential joint activities with the UNFCCC, and this issue was referred to informal consultations. WG-I approved the draft recommendation, except for the consideration of potential joint activities, which will be considered on Friday.

WORKING GROUP II

MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY: WG-II Chair Claudine Ramiarison (Madagascar) introduced the draft recommendation reflecting Wednesday's discussions.

On the protection of deep seabed genetic resources beyond national jurisdiction, KIRIBATI and PALAU, opposed by many, proposed to add a reference to a moratorium on deep sea bottom trawling. CHINA and THAILAND's suggestion to delete reference to the establishment of marine protected areas (PAs) was met with opposition.

Concerning the legal framework for regulating activities in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction and cooperation with other relevant organizations, CANADA requested deleting reference to a legal framework, while MEXICO, CHINA, ARGENTINA and ICELAND favored referring instead to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

On analyzing and exploring operational options for preventing and mitigating impacts of commercial activities to seabed habitats, delegates disagreed on SBSTTA's mandate to address the issue. COLOMBIA and ARGENTINA questioned the relevance of scientific information on genetic resources beyond national jurisdiction to the implementation of the PA work programme. Delegates agreed to KENYA's compromise text, stating that SBSTTA notes the existence of scientific information generated through other work programmes, including that on PAs. A drafting group was established to address unresolved issues.

INLAND WATER ECOSYSTEMS: The Secretariat introduced the draft recommendation, noting an amendment inviting the Ramsar Convention, subject to resources, to take the lead in reviewing threats to inland water biodiversity and the role of CBD work programmes in addressing these threats. Delegates approved the draft recommendation as amended.

FOREST BIODIVERSITY: The Secretariat introduced draft recommendations on the implementation of the expanded forest biodiversity work programme, and on actions in support of its implementation in accordance with Decision VI/22 (forest biodiversity).

Implementation of the expanded work programme: Delegates agreed to move paragraphs relating to targets and indicators to the draft recommendation on vision, mission and goals for the work programmes on dry and sub-humid lands, mountain and forest biodiversity. Regarding the proposal by the AHTEG on Review of Implementation contained in the Annex, NEW ZEALAND suggested including a reference to regional processes in the list of relevant sources of information. Delegates also agreed to AUSTRALIA's proposal to specify that the review should address: the status of, and trends in, forest biodiversity; effectiveness and constraints of the expanded work programme; and further consideration of actions in support of the implementation of the expanded work programme. The draft recommendation was adopted as amended.

Consideration of matters arising from the implementation of Decision VI/22: GABON requested deleting a reference to the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, and NEW ZEALAND asked to add a reference to the UN Forum on Forests. CANADA, opposed by GERMANY, suggested removing a reference to governance and trade, and the Secretariat clarified that Decision VI/22 refers to forest law enforcement and related trade. AUSTRIA emphasized making the best use of existing instruments, notably national forest programmes. AUSTRALIA requested references to bushmeat and lessons learned on sustainable use and benefit-sharing, and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION to the Addis Ababa principles on sustainable use. Delegates debated references to ecosystem approaches and sustainable forest management, agreeing to refer to continuing to integrate ecosystem approach and sustainable forest management policies and practices. Delegates debated GHANA's proposed text on assessing impacts of genetically modified trees, with CANADA and COLOMBIA noting that the COP needs to provide guidance on the issue.

CONTACT GROUPS

GOAL AND TARGETS ON ABS: The contact group, chaired by Asghar Mohammadi Fazel (Iran), reconvened at lunchtime to finalize the draft recommendation on refining the provisional framework of goals and targets. Participants agreed to remove Goal 10 from the text of the draft recommendation. They agreed on compromise language stating that SBSTTA-11 reviewed Goal 10 and recommends replacing the existing targets in Goal 10 by the following new targets: 10.1 - all access to genetic resources in line with the CBD and its relevant provisions, and 10.2 - benefits arising from the commercial and other utilization of genetic resources shared in a fair and equitable way with countries providing such resources, in line with the CBD and its relevant provisions.

VISION, MISSION AND GOALS OF THE WORK PROGRAMMES ON DRY AND SUB-HUMID LANDS, MOUNTAINS AND FOREST BIODIVERSITY: The contact group, chaired by Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (Ghana), convened to refine the vision, mission, and goals and targets contained in the Annex of the draft recommendation. The group continued its discussions late into the night, debating references to, *inter alia*: in the vision, "significantly reducing" versus "halting" biodiversity loss; target 4.3 (no species of wild flora and fauna endangered by international trade); unsustainable consumption; and forest fires.

IN THE CORRIDORS

For the most of the day, WG-II was deep in discussions on deep seabed biodiversity-related issues, as high seas biodiversity once again proved to touch upon legally complex and politically sensitive issues. Several delegates wanted to see CBD's role increased on this issue, while others feared that the debate was drifting beyond SBSTTA's mandate.

Meanwhile, some WG-I participants were frustrated by the protracted deliberations on "easy breezy" recommendations, and were disappointed at having to open discussions on the more contentious agenda items in an informal evening session. By 10 pm, delegates finally broached the recommendation on incentive measures, leaving for Friday two stubborn outstanding issues in the IAS recommendation: afforestation and reforestation activities under the UNFCCC, and preparations for the in-depth review at COP-9.

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of SBSTTA-11 will be available on Monday, 5 December 2005 online at <http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/sbstta11/>