

TWELFTH MEETING OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE AND SECOND MEETING OF THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY: 2-13 JULY 2007

The twelfth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 12) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) opens today at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France, and will continue until Friday, 6 July 2007. SBSTTA 12 will be immediately followed by the second meeting of the CBD *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation (WGRI 2) from 9-13 July 2007.

As the first intersessional meeting after the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD, SBSTTA 12 will address: strategic issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including improving SBSTTA's effectiveness; and scientific and technical issues of relevance to the implementation of the 2010 target, focusing on biodiversity and climate change, and dry and sub-humid lands. Participants will also consider the new and emerging issue of liquid biofuel production. In addition, SBSTTA 12 will conduct in-depth reviews of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) and the second edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO 2). SBSTTA's recommendations will be forwarded to COP 9.

For its part, WGRI 2 will focus on, *inter alia*: an in-depth review of implementation of the CBD Strategic Plan, including national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), and revising the Strategic Plan beyond 2010; preparation of GBO 3; and opportunities for streamlining guidance provided to the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CBD

The CBD, negotiated under the auspices of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), was adopted on 22 May 1992, and entered into force on 29 December 1993. There are currently 190 parties to the Convention, aiming to promote the conservation of biodiversity, 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 SBSTTA, which is mandated, under CBD Article 25, to provide the COP with advice relating to the Convention's

implementation. The WGRI was established by COP 7, with the mandate to address a range of implementation-related issues, including: progress in the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan and achievements leading up to the 2010 target, particularly at the national level; impacts and effectiveness of Convention processes and bodies; cooperation with other conventions, organizations and initiatives; stakeholder engagement; monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes; and means of identifying and overcoming obstacles to the effective implementation of the Convention.

COPs 1-4: At its first four meetings (November-December 1994, Nassau, the Bahamas; November 1995, Jakarta, Indonesia; November 1996, Buenos Aires, Argentina; and May 1998, Bratislava, Slovakia), the COP adopted decisions on, *inter alia*: the establishment of the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) and SBSTTA; the designation of the GEF as the interim financial mechanism; the designation of Montreal, Canada, as the permanent location for the Secretariat; and cooperation with other biodiversity-related conventions. Thematic programmes of work were adopted on: inland water ecosystems; marine and coastal biodiversity; agricultural biodiversity; and forest biodiversity.

COP 5: At its fifth meeting (May 2000, Nairobi, Kenya), the COP adopted a work programme on dry and sub-humid lands, and decisions on access and benefit sharing (ABS), Article 8(j) (traditional knowledge), the ecosystem approach, sustainable use, biodiversity and tourism, invasive alien species (IAS), incentive measures, the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI), and the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC). The COP also adopted further changes to improve the efficiency of the Convention's operations, and requested the development of a Strategic Plan until 2010.

COP 6: At its sixth meeting (April 2002, The Hague, the Netherlands), the COP adopted the Strategic Plan for the CBD, in which parties committed themselves to a more effective and coherent implementation of the three objectives of the Convention, to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national levels as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth. The 2010 target is supported by more specific goals and objectives, which address issues of global leadership and cooperation, national implementation, capacity building and stakeholder engagement. The parties decided that the Strategic Plan should be implemented through the CBD work programmes, NBSAPs and other activities, noting the need to develop better methods to evaluate progress in the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan.

WSSD: The World Summit on Sustainable Development (August - September 2002, Johannesburg, South Africa) adopted the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, which endorsed the 2010 target in paragraph 44, highlighting, *inter alia*: integration of the objectives of the Convention into global, regional and national sectoral and cross-sectoral programmes and policies; effective synergies between the Convention and other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs); and the contribution of all stakeholders to the implementation of the Convention's objectives.

MYPOW: The Open-ended Intersessional Meeting on the Multi-Year Programme of Work of the CBD COP up to 2010 (MYPOW-2010) (March 2003, Montreal, Canada) considered the WSSD outcome and, in assessing progress in achieving the 2010 target, made recommendations on national reporting processes, national implementation, review, and evaluation. MYPOW-2010 also recommended that each COP through 2010 address progress in implementing the Strategic Plan and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and consider refining mechanisms to support implementation.

COP 7: At its seventh meeting (February 2004, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), the COP adopted MYPOW-2010, and developed a preliminary framework for the future evaluation of progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The framework identifies: seven focal areas for action; indicators for assessing progress towards the 2010 target at the global level; and goals and subsidiary targets to facilitate coherence in the work programmes and provide a flexible framework for setting national targets. The COP established the WGRI, and requested the Executive Secretary to inform the WGRI of ongoing cooperation between the major biodiversity-related organizations, and to explore options for a flexible framework, such as a global partnership on biodiversity, to enhance implementation through improved cooperation.

SBSTTA 10: At its tenth meeting (February 2005, Bangkok, Thailand), SBSTTA adopted a series of recommendations, including on the suitability of various indicators for an assessment of progress towards the 2010 target and the integration of global outcome-oriented targets into the CBD work programmes. SBSTTA 10 invited the WGRI to consider a revised Operational Plan for SBSTTA and to assess progress towards the 2010 target.

WGRI 1: At its first meeting (September 2005, Montreal, Canada), WGRI adopted recommendations on: implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan; the 2010 target; impacts and effectiveness of Convention processes and bodies; cooperation with other conventions, organizations and initiatives; stakeholder engagement; and monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes.

SBSTTA 11: SBSTTA 11 (November-December 2005, Montreal, Canada) reviewed the programmes of work on the GTI and biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands, refined the goal and targets regarding ABS adopted by COP 7, and adopted recommendations on: sustainable use; synergy among activities addressing biodiversity, climate change, land degradation and desertification; and the MA.

COP 8: At its eighth meeting (March 2006, Curitiba, Brazil), the COP adopted decisions on, *inter alia*: island biodiversity; biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands; GTI; ABS; Article 8(j) and related provisions; and communication, education and public awareness. Participants also addressed strategic issues for evaluating progress or supporting implementation, including: progress towards implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan; implications of the MA findings; review of the effectiveness and impacts of the Convention bodies, processes and mechanisms; scientific and technical cooperation and the CHM; technology transfer and cooperation; and cooperation with other conventions and private sector engagement. Participants also addressed a range of other substantive issues, including: protected areas; incentive measures; and biodiversity and climate change.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

AFRICAN REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON

SUSTAINABLE USE OF BIODIVERSITY: Held from 12-15 December 2006, in Nairobi, Kenya, this workshop reviewed the CBD Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity (AAPG) and discussed their application to agricultural biodiversity.

G8 +5 ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS MEETING: Convened in Potsdam, Germany, from 15-17 March 2007, environment ministers from the G8 and five developing countries launched the "Potsdam Initiative – Biological Diversity 2010," which envisages, *inter alia*: conducting a global study on the economic significance of biodiversity loss; strengthening the scientific basis for biodiversity; improving the linkages between climate and biodiversity policies; and developing and implementing national targets and strategies in order to achieve the 2010 target and beyond.

ROUNDTABLE ON BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE: This workshop convened from 19-20 March 2007 in Montreal, Canada, and addressed interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change, including: assessments under the CBD and other organizations; biodiversity considerations under the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC); the science of climate change impacts and vulnerability; and biodiversity components in climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

EUROPEAN EXPERT MEETING IN PREPARATION OF SBSTTA 12: Biodiversity experts from 18 European countries met from 10-14 April 2007, on the Isle of Vilm, Germany, to discuss SBSTTA 12 agenda items on: the application of the ecosystem approach; GSPC implementation; GBO; biodiversity and climate change; dry and sub-humid lands; and liquid biofuel production.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIODIVERSITY: The International Day for Biological Diversity was celebrated worldwide on 22 May 2007. Many events focused on raising awareness about the linkages between biodiversity and climate change, highlighting climate change as an important driver of biodiversity loss, and natural habitat deterioration as a contributor to climate change.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY: World Environment Day celebrations were held, among others, in Berlin, Germany on 5 June 2007. Participants forwarded a message to the G8 Summit, held on 6-8 June 2007 in Heiligendamm, Germany, calling on G8 leaders to renew their commitment to address the linkages between climate change and biodiversity at future UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and CBD COPs.

FIRST MEETING OF THE CHAIRS OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BODIES OF BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS: Held on 1 July 2007 in Paris, France, the meeting addressed, *inter alia*: a review of processes and approaches of the conventions' scientific bodies in providing scientific advice; and strategic issues for future processes, including cooperation on climate change and biodiversity and the 2010 biodiversity target.

OTHER MEETINGS: A large number of biodiversity-related meetings convened since COP 8, including: the third GEF Assembly (28-30 August 2006, Cape Town, South Africa); regional consultations on an international mechanism of scientific expertise on biodiversity (IMoSEB) in the North American (30-31 January, 2007, Montreal, Canada), African (1-3 March, 2007, Yaoundé, Cameroon), and European (26-28 April, 2007, Geneva, Switzerland) regions; CITES COP 14 (3-15 June 2007, The Hague, the Netherlands); the eleventh regular session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) (11-15 June 2007, Rome, Italy); and the eighth meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (UNICPOLOS) (25-29 June 2007, New York).