

SBSTTA 12 HIGHLIGHTS:

FRIDAY, 6 JULY 2007

On Friday, SBSTTA 12 delegates met in Working Group II (WG-II) to finalize draft recommendations on dry and sub-humid lands, and biodiversity and climate change. A contact group also met in the morning to consider the draft recommendation on biofuels. In the afternoon, delegates convened in closing plenary to adopt SBSTTA 12 recommendations and the agenda for SBSTTA 13.

WORKING GROUP II

DRY AND SUB-HUMID LANDS: Delegates continued discussing the draft recommendation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/WG.2/CRP.1). ARGENTINA requested deleting reference to the Secretariat's note on land-use options (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/8), criticizing its limited number of case studies. Delegates agreed to request the Executive Secretary to report to COP 9 on progress in clarifying definitions of dry and sub-humid lands, liaising with partners to fill gaps in knowledge on establishing baselines, and strengthening collaboration on assessment of status and trends of, and threats to, biodiversity in dry and sub-humid lands. MALI, supported by ALGERIA and MEXICO, proposed text on: compiling case studies on sustainable use of drylands; carrying out a feasibility study for developing a toolkit on sustainable pastoralism; and preparing a compilation of experiences on adaptation to climate change and soil management. FRANCE proposed that the Executive Secretary explore, with the FAO, means to strengthen collaboration in pastoralism, and produce a report for consideration at SBSTTA 14.

The draft recommendation was approved with these amendments.

BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE: WG-II Chair Watt tabled a revised draft recommendation on biodiversity and climate change (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/WG.2/CRP.2/Rev.1). She announced that sections on mutually supportive activities with other relevant conventions have been removed, since the issue will be considered at SBSTTA 13, and that the last paragraph of the document sets out the procedural reasons for not considering it at SBSTTA 12. Delegates agreed to invite parties to submit their views on options for mutually supportive activities.

The BAHAMAS asked to reference the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions, while ARGENTINA and AUSTRALIA specified that its report was not discussed at SBSTTA 12. BELGIUM requested retaining references to deforestation, and SLOVENIA to the London Convention on the Prevention

of Marine Pollution regarding potential risks from ocean fertilization. WG-II Chair Watt said these issues will be referred to SBSTTA 13.

On adequate financial support, GERMANY highlighted the need to support capacity-building activities. CANADA asked for clarification on whether SBSTTA can address financial issues, and BELGIUM and FRANCE requested bracketing the paragraphs dealing with financial resources. Delegates agreed to delete specific references to financial and other resources, leaving a general call for support for capacity building and other actions.

SLOVENIA underlined the role of peatlands as a tool for climate change mitigation and adaptation. SWEDEN, ARGENTINA and others proposed, and delegates agreed, to broaden the reference to tropical forested peatlands to include all wetlands. FRANCE, supported by BELGIUM, FINLAND and the BAHAMAS, suggested referencing the impacts of deforestation, while AUSTRALIA, ARGENTINA and others requested more time for consideration. No agreement was reached on the content of a new paragraph on this issue, nor its potential location, and WG-II Chair Watt deferred the matter to informal consultations.

The Bahamas, on behalf of SIDS, proposed text on convening a workshop for SIDS to support the integration of climate change impacts and response activities within programmes of work and NBSAPs. SENEGAL and MALAWI requested an additional reference to developing countries, and COLOMBIA to megadiverse countries. AUSTRALIA opposed broadening the original reference to SIDS, and the matter was referred to informal consultations.

BRAZIL requested that parties be encouraged to identify vulnerable ecosystems and monitor climate change impacts "within their own countries." CANADA pointed to the need for monitoring climate change impacts beyond national boundaries, such as in Polar regions, and following informal consultations, delegates agreed to undertake monitoring activities in their countries and promote international cooperation in this regard.

The draft recommendation with bracketed text on outstanding issues was forwarded to plenary.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT: WG-II Chair Watt presented, and delegates adopted, WG-II's report (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/WG.2/L.1) with minor amendments.

CONTACT GROUP

BIOFUELS: Co-chaired by Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (Ghana) and Asghar Mohammadi Fazel (Iran), the group considered the draft recommendation on biofuels (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/COW/CRP.1). On providing information on impacts of biofuels

on biodiversity, some biofuel-producing countries preferred making reference only to relevant information, rather than specifying additional information on avoiding negative impacts, sustainability concerns and experience with policy frameworks. Delegates agreed to specify information on how impacts have been addressed. On options for considering biofuels in CBD work programmes, delegates agreed to do so "including" the work programmes on agricultural and forest biodiversity, rather than "in particular."

Many parties requested a scientific conference on biofuels to provide further information. This was opposed by biofuel-producing countries, who also opposed moving it to a section recalling issues discussed at SBSTTA 12. Delegates discussed a request to bring biofuels to the attention of the Article 8(j) Working Group, without reaching agreement. The draft recommendation with bracketed text on outstanding issues was forwarded to plenary.

CLOSING PLENARY

ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDATIONS: SBSTTA Chair Prip tabled the draft recommendations on the application of the ecosystem approach (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/L.3), the lessons learned from the preparation of GBO 2 (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/L.4), and the review of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/L.5), which were adopted with minor amendments.

Global Strategy for Plant Conservation: On the draft recommendation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/L.2), CANADA suggested, and delegates agreed, to note that emerging issues can be addressed through the achievement of existing targets. The recommendation was adopted with this and other minor amendments.

Dry and sub-humid lands: On the draft recommendation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/L.6), ARGENTINA requested that references to promoting biodiversity be modified to promoting "conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity." The recommendation was adopted as amended.

Biodiversity and climate change: On the draft recommendation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/L.8), WG-II Chair Watt noted that, following informal consultations, brackets were removed from text on holding capacity-building workshops in other countries besides SIDS, to support the integration of climate change impacts and response activities. She further noted that text requesting the Executive Secretary to contribute to discussions on deforestation in the UNFCCC remains bracketed.

AUSTRALIA requested bracketing all references to "climate change impacts and the impacts of climate change response activities," noting that this language was not consistent with relevant COP decisions. Opposed by BRAZIL, SLOVENIA and the NETHERLANDS requested retaining text on conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, and in particular peatlands, as a cost-effective tool for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Delegates agreed to delete reference to mitigation and adaptation.

The recommendation was adopted with these amendments.

Emerging issues: On the draft recommendation outlining the procedure for identification and consideration of emerging issues (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/L.7), delegates debated whether these issues should relate to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, or to the three objectives of the Convention as favored by BRAZIL and COLOMBIA. They agreed to language used in Decision VIII/10 (SBSTTA's *modus operandi*) and to reflect the concerns of Brazil and Colombia in the report of the meeting.

The UK and CANADA opposed limiting the number of emerging issues to be considered by each SBSTTA to one, while MEXICO reported the drafting group's agreement that SBSTTA should not necessarily consider an emerging issue at each

meeting. Several delegations opposed reopening text agreed in the drafting group, and the reference to one emerging issue per meeting was retained.

ARGENTINA requested clarification on the status of the recommendation's annex as it contained bracketed text. Chair Prip confirmed that the annex contains draft guidance to be considered at SBSTTA 13. Delegates then agreed to remove remaining brackets and adopted the recommendation.

The recommendation on biofuels (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/L.9), containing bracketed text, was adopted without further amendment and will be forwarded to COP 9.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Delegates elected the following new Bureau members for SBSTTA 13 and 14: Habib Gademi (Chad) for the African Group; Hesiquio Benitez (Mexico) for the Latin American and the Caribbean Group; Gabriele Obermayr (Austria) for Western Europe and Others Group; and Asghar Mohammadi Fazel (Islamic Republic of Iran) for the Asian Group. Shirin Karryeva (Turkmenistan) continues to serve as the representative for the Central and Eastern Europe Group.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT AND SBSTTA 13

AGENDA: Delegates adopted the report of the meeting (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/L.1) and reports of WG-I (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/L.1/Add.1) and WG-II (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/L.1/Add.2) with minor amendments.

The provisional agenda for SBSTTA 13 (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/10) was amended to include an item on climate change, namely options for mutually supportive actions on climate change between the three Rio Conventions. SBSTTA 13 will be held from 18-22 February 2008, in Rome, Italy.

CBD Executive Secretary Ahmed Djoghlaif congratulated delegates and the Bureau on their efforts, commending consideration of emerging issues at SBSTTA 12. Chair Prip thanked participants and the Secretariat for their work and patience in the learning exercise of introducing new ways of conducting SBSTTA meetings, and welcomed the incoming SBSTTA 13 Chair Asghar Mohammadi Fazel. Ghana, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, called for continued funding for African delegates to ensure balanced geographic representation.

Chair Prip gavelled the meeting to a close at 6:00 pm.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As SBSTTA 12 delegates applauded the adoption of recommendations on biofuels and climate change and biodiversity in closing plenary, many breathed a sigh of relief that these issues will not slip off the CBD's agenda. Several welcomed the biofuels deal achieved in Paris as a first step towards moving this issue forward at COP 9, while others regretted that some key elements, such as the proposed scientific conference on biofuels, remained in brackets or were deleted from the text. Some delegates from biofuel-producing countries were reportedly surprised with the high profile of the biofuel issue at SBSTTA 12. Another delegate commented that the arduous negotiations in the contact group on biofuels were in stark contrast with the much publicized high-level political agreement between the EU and Brazil made at the International Biofuels Conference in Brussels last Friday.

Looking to the week ahead, several delegates anticipated that access and benefit sharing (ABS) might hijack the agenda of the second meeting of the Working Group on Review of Implementation, noting big gaps in the implementation of the CBD's "problem child" third objective. Informal consultations on ABS held over the weekend might have added to this probability.

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of SBSTTA 12 will be combined with the summary from WGRI 2 and will be available on Monday, 16 July 2007, online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/sbstta12/>