

SBSTTA 14 HIGHLIGHTS:

MONDAY, 10 MAY 2010

Delegates met in plenary in the morning to hear opening remarks and a keynote presentation on GBO 3. Two Working Groups met throughout the day to start discussions on in-depth reviews of implementation of programmes of work.

PLENARY

SBSTTA Chair Amb. Spencer Thomas (Grenada) opened the meeting, noting that the International Year of Biodiversity marks a critical juncture in the life of the Convention. He urged delegates to set new ambitious targets and send a clear message to high-level meetings. Achim Steiner, UNEP Executive Director, highlighted the need to: communicate progress achieved, frame policy options in economic terms, and enhance synergies between multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), identifying the climate change regime as “game-changer” for biodiversity funding. Ahmed Djoghlaif, CBD Executive Secretary, emphasized the importance of SBSTTA’s contribution to the new strategic plan and IPBES as a complement to SBSTTA’s work, stressing the need for partnership between SBSTTA and IPBES.

Tom Lovejoy, President of the Heinz Center for Science, Economics, and the Environment, presented the key findings of GBO 3, calling for a “shift from a defensive mode to thinking and working proactively to address the scale of the problem.” Djoghlaif paid tribute to staff members involved in the preparation of GBO 3.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: Delegates appointed Shirin Karryeva (Turkmenistan) and Senka Barudanovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina) as rapporteurs; adopted the agenda and organization of work without amendment; and elected Tone Solhaug (Norway) and Asghar Fazel (Iran) as Working Group I Co-Chairs, and Hesiquio Benitez-Diaz (Mexico) and Gabriele Obermayer (Austria) as Working Group II Co-Chairs. SBSTTA Chair Thomas adjourned plenary until Friday, 14 May.

WORKING GROUP I

MOUNTAIN BIODIVERSITY: On the in-depth review of implementation of the programme of work on mountain biodiversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/2), MEXICO urged parties to incorporate the effects of climate change on mountain biodiversity in adaptation strategies. NEW ZEALAND highlighted the role of mountains for species migration in response to climate change. SWITZERLAND cautioned against connectivity and corridors, noting the importance of assessing the effects of migrating species on endemic species. FINLAND, MALAWI and SOUTH AFRICA highlighted the importance of connectivity.

CANADA proposed including reference to economic incentives for conservation and sustainable use, in addition to marketing opportunities. BELGIUM recommended coherence with CBD work on protected areas, inland waters and plant conservation. TURKEY called for linking mountain biodiversity with land use change, forestry and agricultural biodiversity, and UGANDA with water catchment. UGANDA and FRANCE called for better inventories of mountain ecosystems. FRANCE also suggested developing regional strategies on large carnivores, and mandating existing, rather than new, institutions with inter-sectoral coordination for sustainable mountain development. COLOMBIA suggested involving the private sector. YEMEN stressed the need for international cooperation and a clear financial mechanism to support the implementation of the programme of work. BURUNDI recommended revising national biodiversity strategies pre-dating the programme of work. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) expressed commitment to continue promoting information sharing and providing assistance on genetic resources for food and agriculture in mountain areas.

INLAND WATERS: On the in-depth review of the programme of work on inland waters biodiversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/3, UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/3/INF.1 and INF.3), BELGIUM expressed concern regarding the impact of agriculture, with NORWAY calling upon the COP to investigate ways for reducing irrigation. BRAZIL urged parties to realign water allocation policies. SWEDEN highlighted the linkages between the conservation of inland waters, poverty reduction and human development.

CANADA proposed deleting reference to additional financial resources for capacity building for improved implementation of the programme of work. INDIA suggested enhancing collaboration between MEAs on the carbon and water cycle. FINLAND pointed to synergies between freshwater biodiversity and climate change, with NEW ZEALAND cautioning that carbon and water cycles are only indirectly linked. BOTSWANA emphasized the role of economic valuation techniques in planning. HUNGARY proposed to improve the connectivity of inland water ecosystems, cautioning against invasive species.

JAPAN suggested strengthening the CBD partnership with the Ramsar Convention. The RAMSAR CONVENTION identified indicators and reporting as opportunities for improved collaboration, and separate consideration of inland waters and marine ecosystems under the CBD as a potential obstacle. FAO emphasized inland water aquaculture for food security, noting lack of reference to sustainable use.

MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY: The Secretariat introduced relevant documentation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/4 and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/INF/2,4,5,6,7,8 and 10). GERMANY called for applying the CBD scientific criteria to identify ecologically significant marine areas in need

of protection. SPAIN emphasized monitoring, environmental impact assessments, and strengthening work on marine protected areas (MPAs). CHINA suggested that the CBD focus on over-fishing and the relationship with UNFCCC on marine issues. MEXICO and ARGENTINA supported cooperation between the CBD and the UN General Assembly's Working Group on marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ). ARGENTINA opposed references to regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs).

AUSTRALIA supported increased emphasis on improving representativity of the global system of MPAs. INDIA called attention to marine micro-algae, FINLAND to semi-enclosed seas, and SWEDEN to methods for valuating marine ecosystem services. KENYA recommended building capacities in identifying ecologically and biologically significant areas (EBSAs) in ABNJ. CUBA called for institutional strengthening for implementing the work programme.

BELGIUM proposed a scientific overview of the spatial distribution of sites that meet the CBD criteria before designating protected areas. IRAN objected to identifying the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as the basis for action by CBD parties that are not UNCLOS parties. NORWAY called on parties to implement CBD scientific guidance through national and regional competent fisheries and environmental authorities.

PORTUGAL, SPAIN and BELGIUM favored extending the programme of work beyond 2010. NEW ZEALAND underscored the need to respect the CBD mandate, noting ongoing discussions in other fora. The US encouraged the identification of EBSAs. FAO considered collaboration between fisheries and biodiversity communities crucial. UNEP called for taking into account multiple sectors and interests and respecting indigenous communities in MPAs. IUCN urged parties to apply the CBD scientific criteria to expedite the identification of EBSAs. GREENPEACE welcomed the focus on ABNJ and warned that gaps in high seas governance will impede progress.

WORKING GROUP II

CLIMATE CHANGE: The Secretariat introduced relevant documents (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/6, Add.1-2, and INF/21-22). The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) noted the need for UNFCCC parties to agree on any joint action proposed. ARGENTINA requested compatibility between language adopted under the CBD and the UNFCCC, noting that the Copenhagen Accord was not adopted by the UNFCCC COP 15. BIOVERSITY INTERNATIONAL remarked that agricultural biodiversity conservation and use have been neglected in climate change discussions.

On geo-engineering, SWEDEN and ARGENTINA called for applying the precautionary principle. The ACTION GROUP ON EROSION, TECHNOLOGY AND CONCENTRATION (ETC) recommended a systematic assessment of geo-engineering techniques. NORWAY noted challenges in agreeing on mitigation measures that have "acceptable" effects on biodiversity, drawing attention to conservation tillage and possible increased pesticide use. PRATICAL ACTION pointed to major knowledge gaps in the production and use of biochar.

On reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD), GERMANY called upon the CBD to provide guidance on integrating REDD safeguards within national biodiversity programmes. CUBA considered it premature to make specific recommendations on REDD. MEXICO supported a joint expert workshop on REDD. The DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO called on the CBD COP 10 to welcome REDD. INDONESIA called for scaling up international finance for REDD. The INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORUM ON BIODIVERSITY (IIFB) urged reflecting indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination and prior informed consent in REDD planning.

On a joint work programme between Rio Conventions, SWEDEN called for developing it in a collaborative manner, while IRAN recommended clarifying arrangements between

the Conventions' independent governance bodies. The NETHERLANDS supported improved cooperation between the Rio Conventions at the national and international levels, and joint implementation at national and local levels. BELGIUM proposed elaborating the details of the joint programme in further negotiations between the Rio Conventions rather than at SBSTTA. COLOMBIA proposed that the CBD focus on ecosystem-based adaptation and on climate change as a driver of biodiversity loss. SPAIN supported a joint work programme. FINLAND proposed encouraging the Rio Conventions' focal points to begin joint activities. SWITZERLAND supported the joint work programme on areas of common concern, for adoption in 2012.

SWEDEN, IRAN, CHINA and INDIA cautioned against a proposed joint COP among the Rio Conventions as part of the celebrations for Rio+20, with BRAZIL cautioning against prejudging the Rio+20 agenda. CANADA favored convening a joint expert group of the Rio Conventions' scientific bodies. Regarding the next meeting of the Joint Liaison Group, GHANA proposed inviting the Secretariats of other biodiversity-related Conventions to share experiences on climate change activities.

Working Group Co-Chair Benitez-Diaz proposed eliminating the proposal for a joint COP of the Rio Conventions in 2012, and recommending a consultation procedure among the Rio Conventions for the development by 2012 of the joint work programme. He then established an open-ended group of the Friends of the Co-Chairs to address recommendations on REDD.

SUSTAINABLE USE: The Secretariat introduced relevant documentation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/7, SBSTTA/14/INF.34 and INF.28). FINLAND suggested applying sustainable use also outside protected areas, and FRANCE integrating sustainable use in the other programmes of work. KENYA urged to fully integrate sustainable use in the other Convention objectives and emerging issues such as bio-energy. SWITZERLAND and CANADA supported cooperation with FAO on analyzing linkages between biodiversity and agriculture.

After reservations from MEXICO, INDIA, BELGIUM, GERMANY and INDIA, parties agreed to "welcome" rather than "adopt" the recommendations from the Liaison Group on Bushmeat. NORWAY and SWITZERLAND favored including the valuation of ecosystem services and private sector engagement. MEXICO highlighted lack of financial resources for implementing the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines on Sustainable Use. SPAIN recognized the importance of sustainable consumptive use and more efficient trade measures like certification. The NETHERLANDS called for: cost calculations for countries with high ecological footprints; inclusion of payments for ecosystem services among market-based instruments; and an international incentive structure for sustainable use by the private sector.

On the Satoyama (socio-ecological production landscapes) Initiative, CAMBODIA, opposed by AUSTRALIA, proposed "welcoming" it, with GHANA highlighting its role in promoting a holistic approach in managing landscapes. JAPAN highlighted how the Initiative could assist in the further implementation of the Addis Ababa Guidelines.

NEW ZEALAND expressed reservations about convening an AHTEG on sustainable use. CANADA and BRAZIL stressed that its mandate was too broad. After informal consultations, parties agreed to request the Secretariat to draft more concise terms of reference.

IN THE BREEZEWAYS

At the opening of an uncharacteristic 10-day SBSTTA session, delegates were reminded of the 26-month interval since the last meeting in Rome. SBSTTA 13 concluded by forwarding extensively bracketed text to COP 9, and this recollection may have prompted delegates to quickly hunker down to work, in the face of a heavy agenda. For better or worse, some expect limited appetite for prolonged discussions on sensitive issues this time around.