

SBSTTA 14 HIGHLIGHTS:

THURSDAY, 13 MAY 2010

Working Groups I and II met throughout the day and into the night. A joint drafting group met at lunchtime to consider REDD and geo-engineering as cross-cutting pending items for the draft recommendations on PAs, climate change, forest and marine biodiversity. A contact group met to discuss pending issues on sustainable use. A Friends of the Co-Chairs' group discussed the proposed joint work programme between the Rio Conventions, relevant to the draft recommendations on climate change and on PAs, in the afternoon.

WORKING GROUP I

FORESTS: Delegates continued discussions on a draft recommendation. FINLAND preferred referring to "collaboration" rather than "joint work plan" with UNFF. On a proposed workshop on inadequacies in forest biodiversity reporting and monitoring, CHINA proposed "suggesting ways of improvement," while the UK, with SWEDEN and GERMANY, requested retention of language on "proposing revised definitions of forest and forest types." The relevant sub-paragraph was bracketed.

On capacity building on forest and climate change, COLOMBIA proposed taking into account "existing discussions" rather than "recent developments" under UNFCCC. On REDD, Co-Chair Fazel reported that Wednesday's contact group on climate change had identified three options that remained bracketed. He proposed that the joint drafting group consider these, with BELGIUM and the UK requesting reinstating an option providing for the CBD to "contribute to the development of biodiversity and other relevant safeguards."

MARINE BIODIVERSITY: Delegates continued discussions on a draft recommendation on marine and coastal biodiversity. On CBD-UNFCCC cooperation, BELGIUM preferred reference to a joint work programme, while COLOMBIA and BRAZIL favored promoting better understanding of issues of common interest. Delegates decided to forward three options to plenary.

IRAN introduced new language on collaboration regarding enclosed and semi-enclosed seas, with TURKEY adding "among riparian countries." On underwater noise, the US, supported by CANADA, opposed language on the CBD's role to "fill in providing global cooperation." BELGIUM proposed, and delegates accepted, that the CBD "support global cooperation."

On improving the coverage, representativity and other network properties of MPAs, COLOMBIA called for "greater efforts" instead of "further emphasis." AUSTRALIA suggested that the CBD only "develop scientific and technical guidance to the UN General Assembly." BELGIUM, the UK and SWEDEN preferred to retain a broad formulation to make progress on the identification of EBSAs "including" guidance to the General Assembly.

On climate change, AUSTRALIA called for work on ocean fertilization to be undertaken in collaboration with the London Convention. NORWAY cautioned that "addressing effects" of ocean fertilization and sub-seabed carbon sequestration could be interpreted as a call for promoting them. Following informal consultations, delegates agreed to "avoid potential adverse impacts" of human responses to climate change and to "ensure that no ocean fertilization takes place unless in accordance with Decision IX/16 C" (on ocean fertilization).

COLOMBIA called for "efforts to minimize" impacts of destructive fishing practices. CANADA preferred "managing by-catch and reducing discards" rather than avoiding by-catch. On collaboration on scientific research, CANADA requested, and delegates approved, reference to the Regular Process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects. COLOMBIA, BRAZIL, BELGIUM, ARGENTINA, NEW ZEALAND and CUBA considered reference to IPBES premature. GERMANY requested retaining "IPBES, when established" in brackets, which was agreed. INDIA proposed new language on marine and coastal biodiversity data sets, and COLOMBIA on IAS and on cold-water coral reef ecosystems, seamounts and hydrothermal vents.

AUSTRALIA, supported by JAPAN, NEW ZEALAND and CANADA, requested application of the "precautionary approach" to adaptation, with BELGIUM and ARGENTINA preferring "precautionary principle." Both options were bracketed. The RAMSAR CONVENTION proposed, and delegates accepted, reviewing opportunities to strengthen the coastal components of the programme of work in relation to action on inland waters biodiversity.

NORWAY proposed, and delegates agreed, to delete language inviting parties to ensure that EBSAs complying with MPA criteria are designated through regional seas conventions. CHINA, supported by TURKEY, proposed deleting text requesting UNCLOS to determine a specific authority for managing MPAs in ABNJ. NEW ZEALAND, supported by JAPAN, COLOMBIA and NORWAY, suggested inviting the General Assembly to encourage its Working Group on biodiversity in ABNJ to expedite work in this area. After informal consultations, delegates agreed to the latter, bracketing reference to a process towards designation of MPAs in ABNJ, which was supported by PORTUGAL and GERMANY, and opposed by JAPAN, TURKEY and CHINA.

CANADA, supported by PORTUGAL, proposed requesting the Executive Secretary to outline a process for creating and maintaining a global register of EBSAs. JAPAN, supported by CHINA and opposed by BELGIUM and PORTUGAL, preferred an information-sharing mechanism to a registry. Following informal consultations, delegates agreed to refer to a "CBD

global inventory,” requesting the CBD to “begin to provisionally populate” it and to develop information-sharing mechanisms with similar initiatives.

Delegates agreed to call for the *ad hoc* organization of joint expert meetings to review the extent to which biodiversity concerns are addressed in existing assessments and propose options to address them. On a sub-paragraph on minimizing the impact of human activities on biodiversity, delegates followed the suggestion of the joint drafting group to omit a reference to “geo-engineering” and refer instead to “other human activities.”

WORKING GROUP II

SUSTAINABLE USE: On a draft recommendation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/WG.2/CRP.2), delegates debated the scope of the mandate of an AHTEG on sustainable use on agriculture and forestry, with GHANA suggesting the inclusion of “other wild living resources” and BELGIUM “fisheries.” Parties settled on expanding the mandate to “non-timber forest resources.” NIGER proposed inclusion of the Paris Declaration on the Satoyama Initiative as an annex to the recommendation, opposed by NEW ZEALAND who stressed the non-binding nature of the Initiative. BRAZIL lamented excessive emphasis on the Initiative, with SOUTH AFRICA proposing deletion of language welcoming the Initiative as a useful tool. NEW ZEALAND, opposed by CAMBODIA, objected to text requesting the Executive Secretary to support developing countries promote sustainable use in the context of the Initiative. Outstanding issues on the Satoyama Initiative were referred to a contact group. In the evening, Co-Chair Benitez-Diaz informed delegates that the draft recommendation would be transmitted to plenary with bracketed text on the Initiative.

PROTECTED AREAS: On a draft recommendation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/WG.2/CRP.3), parties agreed to delete text on mobilizing all possible domestic resources, including local communities, to pursue the action plan of the programme of work. CANADA and NEW ZEALAND, opposed by MALAWI, suggested “noting” rather than “recognizing” UNDRIP in the further implementation of the programme of work. Parties agreed to “take into account as appropriate UNDRIP.”

On strengthening synergies with regional and global conventions, COLOMBIA, with ECUADOR and ZAMBIA, proposed including the involvement of indigenous and local communities, relevant international organizations and technical networks.

NEW ZEALAND proposed new text on invasive species management in PAs, with DENMARK highlighting the distinction between invasive species and IAS. On coverage and connectivity, CANADA proposed reference to the use of “existing designation mechanisms.” On increasing the effectiveness of PA systems, CANADA added reference to “stressors” other than climate change, with NEW ZEALAND proposing IAS as an example of such stressors. UGANDA proposed including biological corridors, with DENMARK suggesting that such corridors should be part of “connectivity tools.” CANADA, supported by INDIA and ECUADOR, proposed deleting text on appointing a national indigenous and local community focal point under Article 8(j).

On benefit-sharing mechanisms, CANADA, opposed by BURUNDI and IIFB, proposed deleting reference to UNDRIP. On indigenous and community conserved areas, NEW ZEALAND, supported by CANADA, suggested that the legal recognition of community rights to land and resources should be consistent with national legislation. IIFB requested, supported by MALAWI, adding reference to international obligations. CANADA requested replacing “prior informed consent” with “full and effective participation of local communities.”

GTI: Parties considered a draft recommendation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/WG.2/CRP.4). On urging parties and other governments to endorse GTI-related projects, MEXICO, opposed by SWEDEN and GERMANY, proposed urging the GEF to fund such projects. MEXICO subsequently agreed to withdraw this proposal.

On use of shareable taxonomic knowledge, GERMANY, supported by BURUNDI, proposed “enhancing the management and use of in-country collections.” INDIA, supported by CHINA

and MALAWI, proposed deleting text on biodiversity and taxonomic research. Parties were unable to reach an agreement. On capturing taxonomic knowledge of indigenous and local communities, PERU proposed requiring “prior informed consent.”

CLIMATE CHANGE: In the evening, Working Group II addressed bracketed text on biodiversity and climate change, including proposed language on unresolved items prepared by the joint drafting group (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/WG.2/CRP.1/Rev.1 Revisions). Parties adopted text on ocean fertilization acknowledging the work of the London Convention/London Protocol.

On funding initiatives, CHINA, supported by BRAZIL and INDIA, proposed text calling upon various existing initiatives including LifeWeb and others to provide funding, and inviting GEF to consult with the Executive Secretary on ways and means of providing adequate funding and technical assistance. Arguing with the UK and PORTUGAL that SBSTTA had no mandate to deal with the financial mechanism, SWITZERLAND proposed bracketing reference to GEF. BRAZIL with COLOMBIA observed that it is not possible to separate technical aspects from political and financial ones. BELGIUM noted that although SBSTTA could not decide on financial issues, it could advise the COP on this. Parties agreed to maintain three bracketed options on funding.

On REDD, parties accepted language: noting ongoing discussions under the UNFCCC and CPF; encouraging parties to communicate and cooperate on climate change and biodiversity; and including efforts as appropriate to promote the importance of biodiversity considerations in ongoing discussion. BRAZIL, opposed by GERMANY, the UK, the NETHERLANDS and CANADA, proposed to insert “taking into consideration developed countries’ obligations under land use, land-use change and forestry,” which was bracketed.

JOINT DRAFTING GROUP

On geo-engineering, delegates discussed, without reaching agreement, how to refer to decision IX/16 C on ocean fertilization, when ensuring that no geo-engineering takes place without adequate scientific justification and appropriate consideration of risks. Delegates also discussed how to refer to the London Convention and Protocol on ocean dumping, with one developed country expressing concern about giving precedence to the ocean dumping regime over the CBD. Delegates agreed to “acknowledge” the work of the London Convention/Protocol.

On REDD, delegates discussed whether to make reference to: contributing to the discussions for the development of, or contributing to the development of, biodiversity safeguards; monitoring, reporting and verification of biodiversity safeguards or ways to monitor impacts of REDD activities on biodiversity; or exploring opportunities to provide advice, as requested, to discussions on avoiding negative impacts on biodiversity, after consultation with parties and indigenous and local communities as appropriate.

IN THE BREEZEWAYS

The perennial issue of SBSTTA’s role as an intergovernmental scientific and technical advisory body surfaced in the Friends of the Co-Chairs’ group, mandated to resolve the thorny issue of the proposed joint work programme between the Rio Conventions. Friends discussed whether it is a political choice or a scientifically sound proposal to call for collaboration among MEAs whose activities are clearly linked. The same question also arose during consideration of PA funding and climate change financing. While some would like to maintain a firewall between science and politics, arguing that MEA cooperation, financing issues and the financial mechanism are outside the purview of SBSTTA and can only be addressed by the COP, others opined that this distinction is unrealistic, and that technical options simply cannot be separated from financial implications and political consequences. The fallout then is “parking” politically sensitive issues at the expense of providing “timely” advice on the implementation of the Convention.