

WGRI 3 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 24 MAY 2010

The third meeting of the Working Group on Review of Implementation (WGRI 3) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) opened on Monday at UN Environment Programme (UNEP) headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. Delegates met in plenary to hear opening statements, address organizational matters, and consider issues relating to: progress towards the 2010 biodiversity target, revision of the Strategic Plan for the post-2010 period and the multi-year programme of work (MYPOW) of the Convention for the period 2011-2022.

PLENARY

On Monday morning, Jochen Flasbarth, representative of the COP 9 Presidency, in his capacity as Chair, opened the meeting by highlighting the tasks of the WGRI, including: revising biodiversity targets and indicators, revising and updating the Strategic Plan and MYPOW; and resource mobilization.

Angela Cropper, UNEP Deputy-Executive Director, highlighted, *inter alia*: strengthening science-policy interfaces; business contribution to the green economy; increasing synergies between biodiversity-related conventions; and that an international regime on access and benefit-sharing (ABS) would recognize and reward good stewardship of biodiversity. Ahmed Djoghlafl, CBD Executive Secretary, recognized ongoing financial participation by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and urged countries to finalize national reports before COP 10.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: Delegates elected Somaly Chan, Cambodia, as rapporteur and adopted the agenda and organization of work (UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/3/1 and Add.1) without amendments.

PROGRESS TOWARDS THE 2010 BIODIVERSITY

TARGET: Chair Flasbarth introduced the documents on implementation of the Strategic Plan and in-depth review of goals 1 and 4 of the Strategic Plan and further consideration of needs for capacity building (UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/3/2, Adds. 1-3). On capacity building and poverty reduction, NORWAY noted that the secretariat should have a facilitating role. On business and the environment, she highlighted the role of governments in creating an enabling environment. The European Union (EU) noted that questions on integration of biodiversity and poverty reduction and the engagement of business in environmental issues would be dealt with at COP 10 together with other initiatives. JORDAN emphasized that initiatives involving the

private sector should be discussed in the framework of the Strategic Plan. JAPAN underscored assisting parties in the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

CANADA requested further clarification on the establishment of an *ad hoc* technical expert group (AHTEG) on poverty reduction and the environment. The PHILIPPINES highlighted that the AHTEG on biodiversity and poverty reduction should identify the root causes of poverty and how they should be removed.

In response to some concerns expressed, Executive Secretary Djoghlafl clarified that the idea of providing the WGRI with documents on items that will be considered at COP 10, such as on business and biodiversity, was to give the WGRI an opportunity to provide guidance to the secretariat on the further preparation of these documents for COP 10.

BRAZIL highlighted that the third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO 3) is an important tool to mainstream biodiversity and that technology transfer and cooperation have been very limited under the Convention. Malawi and Niger, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, noted that most African countries have undertaken implementation activities but the lack of resources and poor stakeholders' participation has hampered implementation efforts and mainstreaming. YEMEN cited insufficient financial resources, training programs, and political will as reasons behind the global failure to meet the 2010 biodiversity target. He called for increased regional, subregional and international cooperation to mobilize the financial resources and expertise necessary to achieve the new targets. The Cook Islands, for the ASIA PACIFIC GROUP and TURKMENISTAN, underscored the need for funding to support building capacity in developing countries.

INDIA noted the lack of sufficient progress on goal two on capacity building, and stated that the provisional framework for capacity building should not substitute binding CBD commitments. NEW ZEALAND suggested focusing on CBD core objectives to avoid overlap with the mandates of other conventions. MEXICO noted that financial and human resources must be commensurate to ambitions to implement the Strategic Plan. ARGENTINA called for establishing an AHTEG on capacity building and technology transfer and engaging the private sector in biodiversity initiatives. IRAN stressed the importance of linking biodiversity with poverty reduction and economic development. SWITZERLAND noted the importance of the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB)

study in generating awareness about the economic value of biodiversity. TANZANIA called for programs to explore the links between gender and biodiversity.

The INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORUM ON BIODIVERSITY (IIFB) highlighted the need to strengthen participation of civil society and noted that customary sustainable use can contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2010 biodiversity targets. ECONEXUS, on behalf of ECOROPA, emphasized that biodiversity protection does not require a balance in approaches, but rather the right approaches, including those that are cultural and socioeconomic.

REVISION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE POST-2010 PERIOD: Chair Flasbarth introduced relevant documentation (UNEP/CBD/WGRI/3/3, Add.1-2, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12 and 14). Highlighting the importance of this agenda item, he proposed a quick reading allowing for informal discussions to take place during the week.

Recalling pre-2010 history, SOUTH AFRICA emphasized benefit-sharing and capacity-building. NORWAY preferred a stronger emphasis on ecosystem services and benefit-sharing and, for communication, a concise slogan and clear links to the bigger picture. The EU underscored the importance of ecosystem services for humankind and that the mission and message of the Strategic Plan has to be clear. SWITZERLAND said the vision and mission should promote the public engagement and be time bound. Underscoring his commitment to send a strong message from COP 10, JAPAN drew attention to a circulated draft decision inviting the UN General Assembly to consider declaring 2011-2020 the decade of biodiversity. INDIA stressed the involvement of all stakeholders in implementation and awareness-raising, and proposed deletion of a reference to eliminating subsidies that are harmful to biodiversity by 2020. BRAZIL remarked on the scarcity of financial, human, technical, and technological resources in developing countries, and stated that CBD implementation must adapt to diverse national circumstances. He also noted the CBD's role in broadcasting and mainstreaming biodiversity through sharing "success stories."

KENYA, supported by MALAWI, highlighted the need for clear financial strategies to help developing countries meet targets. INDONESIA stated that some targets require "enormous" financial resources, and therefore should be moderated to levels more realistic for developing countries. BOSNIA called for "harmonizing baselines" to assess whether targets have been met in different countries. NEW ZEALAND noted that the loss of biodiversity is occurring, *inter alia*, because of limited baseline data and methodologies for measuring success. ETHIOPIA called for targets that reflect the need to restore and reclaim degraded landscapes. CANADA recommended measurable, achievable and realistic targets, stressing the engagement of specific sectors and sub-national governments. With AUSTRALIA, she expressed reservations regarding additional mechanisms and instruments for implementation and compliance. JORDAN stressed implementing support mechanisms and the importance of developing human resources.

IRAN highlighted focusing on the resilience of biodiversity and ecosystem services and requested to drop the collaboration between biodiversity related-conventions from the text.

CHINA stated that the Strategic Plan needs to: integrate biodiversity into sectoral and cross-sectoral policymaking; remove existing obstacles to reaching targets; support capacity building; and be flexible. CUBA highlighted the importance of national plans and strategies. ARGENTINA stated that the Strategic Plan should serve as a flexible framework accounting for local, regional and national conditions.

IIFB requested the inclusion of participatory mechanisms in the Strategic Plan that facilitate local and indigenous community involvement, and recognize and protect traditional knowledge and practices. IUCN reiterated the need to resist the pressure to reduce the level of ambition for the 2020 target, if objectives are to be met. The UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) highlighted the role of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) in addressing the targets and indicators through its global plan of action.

Chair Flasbarth concluded the agenda item by reminding that a contact group would be formed, co-chaired by Ashgar Fazel, Iran, and Finn Katerås, Norway, to assist the Chair in preparing a text for consideration by the plenary based on: document UNEP/CBD/WGRI/3/3, parties' interventions, and contributions by the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) in document UNEP/CBD/WGRI/3/3 Add. 2.

MYPOW 2011-2022, NATIONAL REPORTING AND PERIODICITY OF MEETINGS: Chair Flasbarth introduced documents on MYPOW 2011-2022 (UNEP/CBD/WGRI/3/5), national reporting (UNEP/CBD/WGRI/3/6, Add.1-2) and the periodicity of COP meetings (UNEP/CBD/WGRI/3/11). JAPAN highlighted the relation between the MYPOW and Strategic Plan and argued for consistent revisions to both. UGANDA proposed focusing on ecosystem restoration. NEW ZEALAND argued against the need for additional mechanisms to enable parties to meet their implementation commitments and, with IRAN and CHINA, noted it was premature to make specific references to the establishment of an IPBES. Echoing NEW ZEALAND, ARGENTINA reiterated that an implementation mechanism is not necessary, highlighting that work needs to be done under National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). CANADA prioritized a joint work programme between the Rio Conventions, with CHINA and IRAN expressing reservations.

Pointing to an increasingly complex agenda, BRAZIL suggested convening a COP every three years, with MEXICO stressing the importance of adding new and emerging issues. SWITZERLAND highlighted the need to address processes and activities likely to have significant adverse impacts and expressed preference for a three-year COP cycle complemented by a yearly working group meeting back-to-back with SBSTTA. Concerned about losing momentum, INDIA, supported by MEXICO, preferred to retain biennial COPs with two intersessional SBSTTA meetings. GRENADA proposed not to change the periodicity of meetings. Chair Flasbarth encouraged an informal discussion on the periodicity of meetings and invited the secretariat to prepare a draft recommendation on this matter.

LIBERIA drew attention to recent GEF projects assisting national reporting by least developed countries and small island developing states. The EU welcomed the draft guidelines on the format of national reports, noting these guidelines will benefit from inputs from the parties prior to COP 10.

IN THE BREEZEWAYS

A warm and sunny day greeted delegates as they returned to Gigiri to tackle yet another heavy agenda. Thanks to the efficient leadership of the Chair, optimism infused the conference room as delegates sailed through the first round of discussions on the post-2010 biodiversity target agenda items. But with several contact groups and timetables on standby, some delegates warned about possible late nights ahead. Beyond the official discussions, delegates wondered whether the WGRI would succeed in leading a "scientific debate" on biodiversity targets or succumb to a more "political discussion". With international ABS regime negotiations looming over the meeting like the ash cloud over Europe, North-South communication appears threatened in more ways than one.