

WGRI 3 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 27 MAY 2010

On Thursday morning in plenary, WGRI 3 participants considered: progress towards the 2010 biodiversity target, MYPOW 2011-2020 and BTI. Contact Groups met during the lunch break. Participants gathered in plenary in the afternoon to discuss the draft new Strategic Plan, strategic goals and 2020 headline targets. After an intermission during which delegates split into Contact Groups again, the plenary reconvened for a late evening session.

PLENARY

On Thursday morning, Chair Flasbarth noted that progress had been good, but more so in the Contact Group on revising the Strategic Plan. Cautioning against “kicking it to Nagoya,” he proposed to briefly reconvene the Contact Group on resource mobilization, with BRAZIL requesting to reconvene the other Contact Group as well.

PROGRESS TOWARDS THE 2010 BIODIVERSITY TARGET: On Thursday morning, Chair Flasbarth introduced the draft recommendation on business engagement (UNEP/CBD/WGRI/3/CRP.1). INDONESIA, supported by the EU, requested references to the Jakarta Charter, with CANADA and CUBA expressing reservations. The EU, opposed by ARGENTINA, requested stronger language on noting TEEB reports. MALAWI preferred to note rather than recognize work on corporate social responsibility and the greening of supply chains.

On government measures, the PHILIPPINES proposed clear criteria for participation in business partnerships, creating conditions for reporting and independent assessments. CANADA and JAPAN objected, requesting, with NEW ZEALAND, to delete language on work toward global corporate performance standards/criteria. BRAZIL added reference to certification schemes, with NEW ZEALAND and ARGENTINA preferring “voluntary.” On facilitating mainstreaming by business, NORWAY requested reference to “regulations,” with NEW ZEALAND adding “as appropriate” and stressing that incentive measures be “economically and socially sound.” BRAZIL proposed inviting parties to adopt sustainability criteria for government purchases, with JAPAN and NEW ZEALAND expressing reservations. ARGENTINA, supported by EU and opposed by JAPAN, requested dialogue with business in relation to all three Convention objectives.

On encouraging private sector activities to achieve the Convention objectives, JAPAN, opposed by MALAWI and MEXICO, suggested deletion of “clear and concrete”

commitments and “clear and measurable” indicators. On requesting activities from the Executive Secretary, SOUTH AFRICA queried about the qualifier “subject to the availability of resources.” Opposed by SWITZERLAND and JAPAN, the EU proposed deleting a request to develop programmes, such as logos, to enable recognition and support by consumers of business activities. IIFB requested taking into account the Akwe:kon Guidelines and the Tkarihwaierri Code of Ethical Conduct, with NEW ZEALAND inserting “as appropriate” and opposing to reference the latter.

MYPOW 2011-2020: Chair Flasbarth introduced the draft recommendation on the MYPOW 2011-2020 (UNEP/CBD/WGRI/3/CRP. 2). ETHIOPIA requested adding “indicators” after “targets” in the paragraph on reviewing targets and updating NBSAPs. On cooperation among international biodiversity-related organizations and agreements, GRENADA, CHINA, and IRAN suggested deleting “agreements” as well as the provision on preparing a joint work programme for the Rio Conventions, noting it is unclear how cooperation among agreements might work. The EU, SOUTH AFRICA, and BOTSWANA requested to keep the provision, with the latter noting that cooperation among the Rio conventions is especially relevant to the developing world.

KENYA, SOUTH AFRICA, UGANDA, TANZANIA, and SENEGAL requested the paragraph on the need for and development of additional mechanisms to enable parties to meet their commitments under the Convention, noting they would rather improve existing mechanisms than create new ones. The EU, MEXICO and GRANADA requested retaining the entire paragraph. ARGENTINA, supported by IRAN, NEW ZEALAND and ETHIOPIA proposed deleting at least the word “compliance”, if the paragraph is retained.

ARGENTINA requested that “targets and indicators” be added to the paragraph on resource mobilization. JAPAN suggested giving the Strategic Plan a specific name, and the Chair responded that this would be decided at COP 10. Many countries requested the WGRI be formally recognized as a subsidiary body, and that “capacity development” be replaced by “capacity building” throughout the draft.

Periodicity of meetings: On periodicity of meetings, after multiple interventions over the year proposed for COP 12, the Chair suggested keeping the date open.

Haiti, for the GROUP OF LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES (GRULAC) called, *inter alia*, for one intersessional meeting of WGRI held back to back with SBSTTA. On whether to now determine in the recommendation

when COP 13 and COP 14 will be held, or rather have the COP “keep under review” the periodicity of meetings beyond 2015, the EU, BURKINA FASO and MEXICO preferred the latter.

BTI: Chair Flasbarth introduced the draft recommendation on the BTI (UNEP/CBD/WGRI/CRP.6). The PHILIPPINES, supported by ETHIOPIA and NEW ZEALAND, proposed to insert a new paragraph providing that the BTI needs to create an enabling environment aiming to remove technical, legislative and administrative barriers to technology transfer and technology adaptation, inconsistent with international law. NEW ZEALAND proposed “in harmony and consistent with international obligations.”

ETHIOPIA proposed deleting a reference to biotechnologies and adding capacity building for technology assessments. NORWAY proposed introducing a specific focus on technology regulation and assessment. MALAWI, opposed by the EU, proposed deletion of “voluntary” with reference to the nature of the BTI. BURKINA FASO, supported by HAITI, proposed requesting the Executive Secretary to disseminate relevant information not only through the Clearing House Mechanism, but also through “other communication mechanisms.” TANZANIA highlighted the importance of best practices. The EU opposed that the BTI be hosted by the CBD Secretariat. KENYA proposed to take into account the approval and participation of women.

REVISION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN: Chair Flasbarth introduced the draft recommendation on revising the Strategic Plan (UNEP/CBD/WGRI/3/CRP.10) and opened the discussion on the draft of the new Strategic Plan annexed to the recommendation. On the mission of the Strategic Plan, the Secretariat presented three bracketed options: halting biodiversity loss by 2020 by taking immediate action provided a 50-fold increase in funding is made available in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities; taking urgent action by 2020 to halt biodiversity loss; and a list including the prevention of extinction, reduction of pressures on biodiversity and equitably sharing the benefits of biodiversity.

On goals and targets, delegates struggled to make progress, with CANADA asking for more consultation on the target on biodiversity awareness. NEW ZEALAND proposed, and parties agreed to, replace “ecological limits” with “sustainable limits,” emphasizing that the loss of biodiversity becomes irreversible when it reaches ecological limits. Delegates could not find agreement on the timeline, with BRAZIL proposing that governments take steps to achieve sustainable production by 2015 and at the latest by 2020. MEXICO, agreeing with BRAZIL on this target, suggested that for some targets, parties should have the flexibility on achieving them by either 2015 and 2020.

On a target to reduce the rate of loss, degradation and fragmentation of natural habitats, NORWAY, JAPAN and the EU requested emphasis on forests, with CHINA and MALAYSIA opposing it. PERU, opposed by CHINA, recommended bringing the rate close to zero by 2020. On a target to minimize pressures on coral reefs, MEXICO with NEW ZEALAND noted that the draft strategic plan only addresses the impacts of climate change in the context of marine and coastal ecosystems.

On access to genetic resources, there was consensus that there needs to be a target on ABS but that the final formulation of the target is pending the agreement on the ABS regime. UGANDA expressed concern that the EU, late in the evening, asked bracketing sharing benefits “consistent with national legislation,” which BRAZIL opposed since at no point during the Contact Group meeting such intention had emerged.

NATIONAL REPORTING: The draft recommendation on national reporting (UNEP/CBD/WGRI/3/CRP.3) was agreed with minor amendments, including references to developing countries,

least developed countries and small island developing states throughout the text.

PROGRESS TOWARDS THE 2010 BIODIVERSITY TARGET: A draft recommendation on the implementation of the Convention and Strategic Plan (UNEP/CBD/WGRI/3/CRP.4) was introduced. The EU proposed utilizing an explicit reference to the GEF instead of “institutional structure operating the financial mechanism of the Convention.” He also proposed to request the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with “parties, other governments and relevant international organizations,” to facilitate capacity building and to delete a paragraph on preparing an in-depth analysis of the reasons why the 2010 biodiversity target has not been met. GRENADA, CHINA, MALAWI, IRAN and others opposed deletion. The alternative language proposed by the EU for such a paragraph was eventually agreed.

In the preamble, IRAN, supported by CUBA and others, proposed expressing concern for the “financial, technical and human limitations in capacity.” The document was agreed with amendments.

UN DECADE ON BIODIVERSITY 2011-2020: Chair Flasbarth introduced a draft recommendation on the proposal by Japan to invite a UN decade on biodiversity. Noting the lack of agreement, the chair established a small contact group to resolve the issue.

IPBES: A draft recommendation on considering the outcome of the third intergovernmental meeting on establishing an IPBES (UNEP/CBD/WGRI/3/CRP.5) was introduced. IIFB, on behalf of several civil society groups, and supported by the PHILIPPINES, proposed adding an invitation to environmental and social science organizations and civil society to contribute to the preparation of the third meeting to establish an IPBES. The EU proposed noting the ministerial commitment to negotiating and reaching agreement on whether or not to establish an IPBES. The draft recommendation was agreed with amendments.

INTEGRATION OF BIODIVERSITY INTO POVERTY ERADICATION AND DEVELOPMENT: On the draft recommendation on integration of biodiversity into poverty eradication and development (UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/3/CRP.7), UGANDA asked that “capacity development” be changed to “capacity building” throughout the text. NORWAY, supported by the EU, added a paragraph on welcoming ongoing initiatives linking biodiversity, development and poverty eradication. On the proposed expert group on biodiversity for poverty eradication and development, the PHILIPPINES requested language to identify and remove the root causes of poverty.

IN THE BREEZEWAYS

As the Chair relentlessly pushed plenary through stacks of CRP readings, a delegate wandering the breezeways in search of the right document remarked that “the Chair drives a BMW today.” The need for speed was only curbed by a desire for balance, as issues on the Strategic Plan were re-opened to push for further progress on finance. As one delegate put it, what SMART and realistic targets are depends, to a large extent, on the means available for implementation. Recalling the basic rule of UN “traffic” regulation, that “nothing is agreed until all is agreed,” and supported by a “six country”-cylindrical engine running in the background, plenary steered clear of procedural obstructions on the road and managed to roar on towards more ambitious targets. The Chair was well-advised, however, to take some prophylactic medication to ease his hives from overexposure to brackets.

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of WGRI 3 will be available on Monday, 31 May 2010 online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/wgri3/>