

## SBSTTA 15 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2011

Plenary continued consideration of indicators related to the new Strategic Plan and addressed ways and means to support ecosystem restoration. In the afternoon, Working Group I discussed ways and means to address gaps in international standards on invasive alien species (IAS) introduced as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, as live bait and live food. Working Group II focused on the implications of changes in the water cycle and freshwater resources in the implementation of the work programme on inland water biodiversity. A contact group on indicators met in the evening.

### PLENARY

**STRATEGIC PLAN: Suggested indicators:** JORDAN considered it inappropriate to refer to the proposed indicator framework as “a sufficient basis.” THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO queried the establishment of facilitators to coordinate the production of national biodiversity information. COLOMBIA stressed the need to bring together existing initiatives. ETHIOPIA proposed to include alternative livelihoods as an overarching policy question. INDIA favored monitoring the further development and use of indicators before every COP. FRANCE suggested building on the work on indicators for the 2010 biodiversity target, and developing at least one indicator for each global target by 2014.

ARGENTINA and CUBA suggested continuing indicator development in the intersessional period, and facilitating exchange through an online database. GHANA suggested that the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership reconvene to facilitate monitoring and indicator development. The Russian Federation, for CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, recommended a technical assessment to determine national and regional capacity. MALAWI requested a clear timeline on sub-national indicator development. SOUTH AFRICA noted that local authorities can play a decisive role in the implementation of land use planning.

The IIFB recommended a headline indicator, associated with Target 18 (traditional knowledge), on benefit-sharing and customary sustainable use, noting that such an indicator should consider guidance from the Article 8(j) Working Group.

**Provisional technical rationale, possible indicators and suggested milestones:** INDIA invited the Secretariat to continue to develop explanatory guidance for the Aichi Targets. ARGENTINA underscored that some indicators are highly complex and may transcend the CBD purview. IUCN recommended communicating and translating the technical rationales. The CBD ALLIANCE stressed the importance of civil society participation in increasing understanding of biodiversity values and sustainable use. Chair Barudanovic established

a contact group, co-chaired by Tone Solhaug (Norway) and Larissa Maria Lima Costa (Brazil), to continue discussions in the evening.

**ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION:** The Secretariat introduced the document on ecosystem restoration (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/15/4). Steve Whisenant, Chair of the Society for Ecosystem Restoration, introduced the Society’s work and its call to action (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/15/INF/13). NEPAL underscored the role of indigenous and local communities in ecosystem restoration. PERU pointed to traditional knowledge, methods, practices and technologies in restoring ecosystems.

UGANDA opposed reference to “rehabilitation,” preferring “restoration” throughout the text. ETHIOPIA recommended clarifying the terms degradation, restoration and rehabilitation, and considering in-situ conservation in relation to restoration. THE PHILIPPINES highlighted the need to consider past problems with ecosystem restoration, including monoculture plantations, and expressed concern about the use of synthetic organisms and exotic and clonal species. FRANCE recommended in-depth assessments of degraded ecosystems prior to restoration. MEXICO, supported by PERU and ECUADOR, proposed to collaborate with the UNCCD and UNFCCC.

IRAN, supported by MEXICO, proposed considering socio-economic aspects and the development of subregional restoration programmes. ARGENTINA pointed to the economic consideration of ecosystem restoration, noting relevant discussions in other forums, such as Rio+20. COLOMBIA proposed stakeholder involvement and a comprehensive vision on conservation and restoration as a basis for land-use planning and governance processes. THE NETHERLANDS promoted consideration of socio-economic aspects, ecosystem services and the valuation of ecosystems in restoration and, supported by SWEDEN, proposed the development of a world degradation map to assess progress towards Target 15 of the Strategic Plan (restoring 15% of degraded ecosystems by 2020). The EU proposed integrating restoration into broader planning processes such as spatial planning.

THAILAND proposed exploring ways to prevent ecosystem destruction or rehabilitate destroyed ecosystems. JORDAN suggested restoration for climate change adaptation and fighting desertification. INDIA recommended restoration be environmentally and socio-economically sound, site- and species-specific, and address underlying causes of degradation. GUATEMALA called for recognizing specific territorial and demographic circumstances. BANGLADESH favored reference to minimal environmental flow from upstream to downstream ecosystems. The CZECH REPUBLIC called for more information on ecosystem resistance and resilience, carrying capacity and tipping points. JAPAN stressed that

restoration: focus on damaged and degraded ecosystems; engage various actors and local communities; and be based on scientific knowledge and best practices.

SWEDEN underscored lack of political will to restore damaged ecosystems in the face of competing land use interests. COSTA RICA suggested including restoration in NBSAPs. CANADA emphasized opportunities to work with the private sector, cities and local governments on ecosystem restoration. GHANA favored operationalizing issue-based models. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA cautioned that consolidating existing guidance may be too ambitious. The IIFB called for support to ILCs' restoration and for safeguards based on the ecosystem approach. IUCN and DIVERSITAS stressed that restoration should not allow ecosystem degradation. CIFOR pointed to: enhancing benefits for small holders, fostering socio-ecological resilience, and widening the range of available reforestation technologies in accordance with the diverse user needs.

UGANDA and GHANA supported the establishment of an AHTEG, emphasizing that experience should be drawn from both parties and international organizations. ECUADOR favored convening the AHTEG prior to COP 11. FINLAND, AUSTRALIA, INDIA and others preferred that the Secretariat, rather than an AHTEG, collect information on restoration. NORWAY emphasized that the Secretariat's role is facilitation rather than the development of new material. DENMARK and SWITZERLAND suggested using the Clearinghouse Mechanism to share experiences and best practices. CHINA supported the collection of information before COP11. Several opposed developing a *modus operandi*, roadmap and milestones for achieving restoration-related targets of the Strategic Plan and the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, noting this should be addressed under the agenda item on the Strategic Plan. Chair Barudanovic established a Friends of the Chair group to continue discussions.

#### WORKING GROUP I

**INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES:** The Secretariat introduced documentation on IAS (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/15/6 and 7, and INF/1). FINLAND, supported by SAINT LUCIA, SOUTH AFRICA, MEXICO and others, highlighted the need to identify and prioritize the most common pathways.

SWEDEN, supported by ESTONIA, MEXICO and BELGIUM, stressed that the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) Agreement under the World Trade Organization (WTO) does not provide for the precautionary principle and biodiversity conservation. BELGIUM, supported by NORWAY, INDIA and others, suggested the CBD renew its application for observer status to the WTO SPS Committee. DENMARK favored collaboration between CBD national focal points and other national actors, and strengthening collaboration between the WTO and CBD.

ARGENTINA, supported by BRAZIL, preferred "taking note" of the AHTEG report, emphasizing that standard-setting on IAS be done by the competent international organizations or tied with the SPS Agreement. INDIA underscored the need to control trade of ornamental IAS and ensure coordination among focal points for CBD, SPS, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and FAO. NEW ZEALAND favored combining approaches and strengthening links between local, national and international efforts. SWAZILAND proposed encouraging FAO to develop guidance on assessments of livestock IAS. SUDAN called attention to seaborne IAS, and SAINT LUCIA to construction and equipment as pathways.

PERU supported permanent mechanisms for information exchange and gap-filling among relevant international organizations, including the SPS Committee. THAILAND recommended capacity building for border officials on species identification. FRANCE noted the need for synergies with biodiversity-related conventions, especially CITES. The Cook Islands, on behalf of PACIFIC SIDS, highlighted: taxonomic capacity building; fungal conservation; and sharing expertise on taxonomy, biosecurity protocols and pest controls. THE

PHILIPPINES expressed concern about increased administrative burdens and compliance costs for developing countries related to SPS assessment procedures. CANADA called attention to the completion of tasks in previous COP decisions, in order to address high-priority gaps. The IIFB recommended the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in preparing guidance on drafting and implementing national measures.

#### WORKING GROUP II

**INLAND WATER BIODIVERSITY:** The Secretariat introduced relevant documentation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/15/8-11 and INF/15). Many called for enhanced collaboration with the Ramsar Convention and other relevant agreements such as the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS); and consideration of water as a cross-cutting issue across all CBD work programmes. POLAND and INDIA suggested using the Aichi Targets as a framework to that end. BOTSWANA, MALAWI and TANZANIA highlighted the importance of multilateral river basin management, with MEXICO supporting reactivating the River Basin Initiative between the CBD and the Ramsar Convention.

AUSTRALIA and CHINA proposed replacing "natural infrastructure" with "natural assets" in reference to the role of biodiversity for achieving water security. ARGENTINA, with URUGUAY, recalled the lack of an internationally agreed definition of the term "water security."

Several European countries suggested including text on increased eutrophication, regional frameworks for integrated water management and available tools at local and national levels; with SWEDEN proposing prioritizing wetland restoration. VENEZUELA cautioned against the commodification of nature. TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO called for capacity building for the economic valuation of water resources in developing countries. SOUTH AFRICA called for further effective transnational water management efforts, including by developing bilateral and multilateral agreements. PERU and COLOMBIA stressed the importance of groundwater for maintaining the water cycle, with COLOMBIA pointing to high-altitude forests.

On inland-coastal water interactions, INDIA proposed acknowledging human drivers of ecosystem degradation, considering inter-linkages among all water use sectors and avoiding a fragmented approach to water issues. With THAILAND, he called for using the definitions of the Ramsar Convention on these interactions.

FAO encouraged an ecosystem approach linking water to agriculture, forestry and other sectors. IIFB noted indigenous peoples' holistic approach to water management. The Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, for several NGOs, cautioned against possible threats to inland water biodiversity from genetic engineering, such as genetically modified fish and other emerging technologies.

#### IN THE CORRIDORS

Following the establishment of a contact group on indicators and a Friends of the Chair group on ecosystem restoration, delegates started taking bets on which issue would keep them up later in the coming nights. Meanwhile, on the sidelines of the discussion on invasive alien species (IAS), speculations emerged regarding the usefulness of renewing the CBD application for observer status to the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS). While many doubted prospects of success given the long-standing record of unsuccessful applications, others remembered the positive and collaborative atmosphere between the Secretariat and the WTO representative during the AHTEG on IAS. As a seasoned delegate opined, pragmatic collaboration on capacity-building activities may be a more significant contribution to controlling IAS than high politics.