

SBSTTA 15 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 2011

In the morning, Working Group I discussed sustainable use and Working Group II focused on Arctic biodiversity. Plenary then discussed ways and means to improve SBSTTA effectiveness and took up a draft recommendation on a capacity-building strategy for the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI). A Friends of the Chair group on ecosystem restoration, co-chaired by Horst Korn (Germany) and Krishna Chandra Paudel (Nepal), met at lunchtime. A Friends of the Chair group on IAS, chaired by Hesiquio Benitez (Mexico), and the contact group on indicators met in the evening.

PLENARY

SBSTTA EFFECTIVENESS: Chair Barudanovic introduced relevant documentation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/15/15). Neville Ash, UNEP, reported on the first plenary session of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). MEXICO, SWITZERLAND, the UK and CANADA proposed including activities to further improve SBSTTA effectiveness into the operative text of a recommendation.

MEXICO called for an interaction between SBSTTA and IPBES that reinforces SBSTTA. The UK opined that SBSTTA needs to adjust to the new landscape created by IPBES. SWITZERLAND asked that the Secretariat identify relevant issues from IPBES second plenary for discussion at SBSTTA 16 and COP 11. POLAND favored preparing a discussion paper on improving SBSTTA for consideration at SBSTTA 16 and COP 11. DENMARK and FRANCE requested the discussion paper address how SBSTTA and IPBES can complement each other and avoid duplication. Moldova, for Central and Eastern European countries (CEE), recommended clear demarcation of activities between SBSTTA and IPBES, including at the regional level. The CZECH REPUBLIC proposed that a SBSTTA Bureau member be present at IPBES meetings. GHANA favored exploring linkages between SBSTTA and IPBES after the latter is formally established.

The UK and CANADA supported holding AHTEGs in conjunction with related larger expert meetings, but advised against interference with AHTEG mandates. BRAZIL recognized AHTEGs as instruments for communicating with the scientific community and advancing technical work.

The CZECH REPUBLIC suggested that SBSTTA return to its main mission and better involve scientists. COLOMBIA recommended strengthening the quality and scientific level of SBSTTA discussions and stressed the importance of SBSTTA focal points.

MEXICO, supported by COLOMBIA and BRAZIL, cautioned against addressing additional emerging issues because of the already high number of CBD work programmes and themes.

FINLAND queried the scope and financing of regional and subregional centres for scientific knowledge management. PERU underscored the importance of regional centers and, with MALAWI, supported a virtual manual on the SBSTTA *modus operandi*. MALAWI also pointed to the relevance of national centers.

The CBD ALLIANCE urged embracing the relationship between science and civil society. The ETC GROUP highlighted the need for SBSTTA to maintain “early listening capacity” so that the Convention can effectively address new and emerging issues.

GTI CAPACITY-BUILDING STRATEGY: Delegates considered a revised draft recommendation. INDIA, supported by INDONESIA, urged focusing on practical aspects of capacity building, such as academic exchange programs. GERMANY and POLAND opposed reference to the strategy’s further refinement.

FRANCE and other European countries, MEXICO, CANADA, COLOMBIA and NEW ZEALAND preferred “endorsing” the strategy rather than “welcoming” it as “useful guidance.” ETHIOPIA, NORWAY, BRAZIL and PERU opposed endorsing the strategy, noting that it had not been negotiated by SBSTTA. After informal consultations, delegates agreed that SBSTTA should welcome the strategy, while establishing a process towards endorsing it at COP 11.

ETHIOPIA suggested incorporating Aichi Target 19 (improving the biodiversity-related science base and technologies) in the context of collaboration between taxonomic and other institutions. CHINA proposed encouraging also the “application of methodologies and techniques.”

On increasing the scientific standing of taxonomic research and strengthening taxonomic expertise, COLOMBIA suggested promoting the demand of taxonomic information to create new jobs for taxonomists. FRANCE proposed encouraging the scientific community to recognize taxonomic publications.

GERMANY, CANADA and NEW ZEALAND preferred efforts to build and maintain “publicly available” rather than “public” information systems and facilities for collections of genetic resources. BRAZIL, supported by ETHIOPIA and PERU, stated that such efforts should be subject to national legislation, with POLAND and NEW ZEALAND adding “as appropriate.” PERU and MEXICO opposed referring to facilities for “collections of genetic resources,” and delegates eventually agreed to refer to “biological collections subject to parties’ national legislation, as appropriate.”

WORKING GROUP I

SUSTAINABLE USE: The Secretariat introduced documents on sustainable use, including options for small-scale food and income alternatives in tropical and sub-tropical countries, revised recommendations of the Liaison Group on Bushmeat,

and on improving sustainable use in a landscape perspective (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/15/12-13 and INF/7 and UNEP/CBD/WG8J/7/L.6).

Small-scale food and income alternatives and bushmeat:

The NETHERLANDS, supported by POLAND, INDIA, ETHIOPIA and SWEDEN, proposed broadening the scope beyond tropical and sub-tropical countries. SWITZERLAND recommended an expansion to other ecosystems and, supported by NORWAY, POLAND, COLOMBIA, PERU and others, including bushmeat in the indicative list of tasks for the plan of action on customary sustainable use proposed by the Article 8(j) Working Group.

PERU highlighted sustainable use of bushmeat for subsistence use only. SWEDEN underscored the importance of mainstreaming sustainable use into other CBD work programmes. NEW ZEALAND pointed to linkages between IAS and bushmeat. INDIA advocated for biodiversity-friendly and socio-economically viable livelihoods alternatives. SAINT LUCIA requested a study on small-scale bushmeat harvesting and illegal trade in Caribbean SIDS.

CANADA cautioned against references to human rights obligations, preferring using language from Article 10(c) on customary sustainable use. GHANA proposed developing methods and improving capacity to determine sustainable levels of harvest, in partnership with CITES and relevant organizations. The NETHERLANDS and ETHIOPIA stated that sustainable use should not be limited to bushmeat. AUSTRIA suggested strengthening cooperation between the CBD and CITES on livelihood benefits from community conservation programs.

FAO supported the proposed collaborative partnership on wildlife management. TRAFFIC underscored the need to determine and monitor levels of sustainable harvest of wild fauna at national and other levels. The CBD ALLIANCE recommended involving small-scale food-providers' organizations in developing norms and programmes on sustainable use. The IIFB emphasized the participatory nature of the revision of the bushmeat recommendations following COP 10; requested assessing the impacts of unsustainable harvesting and illegal trade on biodiversity-dependent livelihoods; and, with TRAFFIC, called upon parties to support the adoption of the recommendations.

Landscape perspective: ARGENTINA and BRAZIL expressed concern about references to "multi-functionality" and possible inconsistency with WTO and, supported by URUGUAY and ETHIOPIA, proposed to "take note" of the recommended guiding principles on improving sustainable use in a landscape perspective. THAILAND recommended a landscape approach for climate change adaptation, including displacement of pressure. URUGUAY noted the lack of indicators and voluntary guidelines on landscape perspectives and biodiversity conservation. COLOMBIA stressed consideration of consumption patterns within sustainable use.

WORKING GROUP II

ARCTIC BIODIVERSITY: The Secretariat introduced relevant documentation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/15/14), with the International Secretariat of the Working Group on the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna of the Arctic Council (CAFF) presenting a report on Arctic biodiversity. Many parties encouraged further cooperation between the CBD and CAFF, with DENMARK, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION and the UK highlighting the need to also collaborate with the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program.

SWEDEN noted CAFF will release an Arctic biodiversity assessment and action plan in 2013. The US recommended cooperation between the CBD and the Arctic Council in accordance with the Arctic Council's rules and procedures for cooperation. MALAWI, with the US, supported that CAFF share information with SBSTTA on scientific data, trends and processes affecting biodiversity. ICELAND suggested recognizing CAFF as the lead partner for CBD implementation in the Arctic region. CANADA underscored the involvement

of aboriginal organizations in CAFF. Pointing to interlinkages between the Arctic area and other regions, MALAWI suggested CAFF incorporate countries from other regions as observers.

FRANCE and BELGIUM suggested promoting collaboration with the Oslo and Paris Conventions on the Protection of the Marine Environment in the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR), particularly in identifying protected areas. The UK and FRANCE encouraged cooperation with non-Arctic parties, especially in sharing data on migratory species. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION suggested sharing relevant information through the CBD Clearinghouse Mechanism. NORWAY favored compiling relevant information as input to the next Global Biodiversity Outlook and the Strategic Plan mid-term review.

SOUTH AFRICA suggested enhancing linkages with the CMS on protecting Arctic migratory birds and considering local communities' knowledge. POLAND proposed that relevant parties implement the CBD Strategic Plan and work programmes in the Arctic, with NEW ZEALAND emphasizing that some parts of the Arctic are beyond national jurisdiction. The IIFB, supported by MALAWI, suggested urging cooperation with Arctic ILCs, with their full and effective involvement and free PIC in all biodiversity-related studies.

FRIENDS OF THE CHAIR GROUP ON RESTORATION

Delegates considered a non-paper. Some parties objected to enhancing the use of ecosystem restoration as a means of carbon capture and sequestration, and ecosystem-based adaptation and mitigation, noting that these issues should be considered under the UNFCCC. One participant argued that restoration should not be considered merely a means for adaptation. Delegates eventually agreed to refer to the use of ecosystem restoration and its contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.

Participants then discussed the proposed development of a world degradation map as a reference tool, with some pointing to existing land degradation maps under the UNCCD. Delegates further discussed whether to take note of "emerging" technologies when compiling information for guidance on ecosystem restoration, and eventually agreed to refer to "relevant tools and technologies" and to compile information on "the application of new and emerging technologies such as synthetic biology and geo-engineering, among others."

FRIENDS OF THE CHAIR GROUP ON IAS

Delegates considered a non-paper. An emerging economy initially opposed text "recognizing IAS as a main driver of biodiversity loss." Delegates also debated: how to improve the ability of border authorities to recognize IAS; whether to renew the CBD application for observer status to the WTO SPS Committee; and whether to encourage the SPS Committee to develop and improve international standards to address the risks to biodiversity posed by IAS. Discussion continued into the night.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The smooth sailing of Working Groups had many wondering about the reasons for the unusually relaxed atmosphere at SBSTTA 15. Some pointed to agenda items that benefit from well-established cooperation arrangements with other organizations, such as inland water biodiversity and Arctic biodiversity, rather than issues associated with controversial debates about the distribution of work between the CBD and other bodies, such as climate change or marine biodiversity. Others noted that discussing the Aichi Targets in the context of indicators prevented an open but certainly more difficult discussion on the Targets' role as "the" framework for CBD implementation that is flexible but also ambiguous. While delegates were encouraged by progress made by the contact group in prioritizing indicators, some still wondered whether a final decision on indicators at COP 12 may be too late for the mid-term assessment of progress in achieving the Aichi Targets.