

## SBSTTA 15 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2011

Plenary met in the morning and evening. The Working Groups met in the afternoon. A Friends of the Chair group on the GTI capacity-building strategy met in the morning.

### PLENARY

**GTI CAPACITY-BUILDING STRATEGY:** In the morning, Chair Barudanovic established a Friends of the Chair group to continue discussions of the draft recommendation on the capacity-building strategy for the GTI. In the evening, Jo Mulongoy (CBD), reported that the Friends of the Chair group agreed that the draft capacity-building strategy be placed on the agenda of SBSTTA 16.

Delegates debated references to the Nagoya Protocol in the context of building taxonomic skills and raising awareness, movement of genetic materials involved in taxonomic research, and ILCs' taxonomic knowledge. On recognizing that taxonomic research may involve the movement of genetic materials between countries, CHINA offered compromise language on the need for consistency with the CBD provisions on ABS, the Nagoya Protocol and national ABS legislation. MEXICO referred to the movement of "biological specimens," the UK preferred "genetic material" and PERU favored "biological or genetic resources." Chair Barudanovic encouraged informal consultations.

COLOMBIA stressed the need for free PIC on indigenous taxonomic knowledge, with PERU also pointing to the relevance of CBD Article 8(j) and national legislation. NEW ZEALAND proposed recognizing that ILCs' holistic views on ecosystem management and related taxonomic knowledge can form an important contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Delegates agreed to bracket text on the need for free PIC on indigenous taxonomic knowledge.

**ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION:** Delegates discussed a draft recommendation. The UK expressed willingness to financially support compiling information on the application of new and emerging technologies, and, supported by COLOMBIA but opposed by the PHILIPPINES, suggested deleting reference to synthetic biology and geo-engineering as examples of such technologies. After informal consultations, delegates agreed to delete only reference to geo-engineering.

CANADA proposed "use of," instead of "adherence to," best practices for ecosystem restoration. MEXICO recommended adding reference to ecosystem fragmentation and deterioration in addressing underlying and direct causes of ecosystem degradation. CHINA, supported by INDIA, MEXICO and PERU, suggested deleting text on further enhancing the use of ecosystem restoration for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

BRAZIL, supported by GERMANY and GHANA, preferred facilitating the sharing of "knowledge and publicly available information," rather than "publicly available knowledge and information," adding that such sharing should be "subject to existing domestic legislation." The NETHERLANDS suggested requesting the Secretariat to facilitate the development of a tool for presenting baseline information on ecosystem condition to facilitate the evaluation of Aichi Target 15 (enhancing biodiversity contribution to carbon stocks through conservation and restoration, contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification).

**SBSTTA EFFECTIVENESS:** Delegates discussed a draft recommendation. ARGENTINA recommended requesting not only the Secretariat and the SBSTTA Bureau, but also the COP Bureau, to identify issues and modalities for collaboration with IPBES. The UK, supported by COLOMBIA, proposed to also identify "options" for such collaboration.

MEXICO, supported by COLOMBIA and PERU, proposed new language to recommend that the COP follow the established procedure to include new and emerging issues into the agenda of SBSTTA in accordance with Decision X/13 (new and emerging issues). COLOMBIA, supported by MEXICO, suggested inviting parties and organizations to facilitate the provision of "all relevant" scientific and technical evidence on matters for SBSTTA consideration. The PHILIPPINES added that the precautionary approach requires the provision of information, not evidence. CANADA objected to "collaboration in budgets" in exploring options for closer collaboration among the biodiversity-related conventions' bureaus. Delegates debated specific reference to the Consortium of Scientific Partners on Biodiversity. The evening plenary considered and agreed upon revised text from informal consultations.

### WORKING GROUP I

**IAS:** On a draft recommendation, PERU proposed referring to the potential risks of introduction and spread of animal IAS not only from commercial zoos and safari parks, but also from "breeding and trading centers." BRAZIL proposed the Secretariat "compile information and work with experts," rather than "develop guidance," on how to deal with such risks. The PHILIPPINES suggested, and delegates accepted, "to compile information in coordination with experts to avoid and minimize" such risks.

BRAZIL, opposed by SWEDEN and POLAND, proposed the Secretariat "compile information," rather than "develop guidance," on how to deal with the potential risks associated with the intentional and unintentional release and escape of pets, aquarium and terrarium species on native genetic diversity. BRAZIL then suggested deleting reference "to

develop guidance,” with delegates agreeing that the Secretariat “explore measures in collaboration with relevant international organizations on how to deal with such risks.”

ETHIOPIA, supported by BRAZIL, ARGENTINA and SENEGAL, preferred encouraging the members of the WTO SPS Committee “to further address” the risks posed by IAS that are a threat to biodiversity, whereas SWEDEN and DENMARK favored encouraging the Committee to “develop and improve international standards to address” these risks. ETHIOPIA, opposed by SWEDEN and DENMARK, proposed deleting reference to the CBD offering to collaborate on this matter. After informal deliberations, delegates agreed to encourage the SPS Committee to “further address, including by developing and improving international standards,” these risks and for the CBD to offer to collaborate on this matter.

NORWAY, supported by BRAZIL, preferred “inviting,” rather than “encouraging,” the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) to broaden its measures to plants in marine environments. SENEGAL, POLAND and SWEDEN, opposed by CUBA, supported encouraging the IPPC to clarify whether its mandate also applies to fungi. Delegates agreed to clarify if the IPPC’s mandate also applies to the health and protection of fungi, with a view to identifying and, if necessary, addressing possible gaps.

BRAZIL opposed that a toolkit on the application of existing international standards include information on developing strategies “into national policies.” SWEDEN underscored the importance of learning from national experiences to that end, so BRAZIL accepted that the toolkit include information on “how parties have developed, integrated, and strengthened national IAS strategies into national policy.”

BRAZIL, supported by ARGENTINA, proposed deleting a request to the Secretariat to renew the CBD application for observer status in the SPS Committee. The Secretariat clarified that it: has a pending request from COP to seek observer status; has renewed such application, which has not yet been accepted because the SPS Committee is developing criteria for observer status; and will continue to renew this application periodically. FRANCE, supported by DENMARK, FINLAND and other European countries, preferred retaining the request and referencing the relevant COP decision. MEXICO, supported by SWITZERLAND, BRAZIL, ARGENTINA, PERU and CANADA, proposed asking the Secretariat to inform the next COP on progress on the application. Delegates eventually bracketed the request.

**SUSTAINABLE USE: Landscape perspective:** On taking note of the guidance on improving sustainable use in a landscape perspective, BRAZIL, supported by ARGENTINA and SENEGAL, opposed referring to it “as useful complement to existing guidance under the CBD.” GHANA, supported by the NETHERLANDS and ETHIOPIA, proposed moving the text to the preamble. BRAZIL then proposed to “invite parties to consider” the guidance as useful complement, with delegates deciding against moving it to the preamble.

ETHIOPIA suggested, supported by TUNISIA and ARGENTINA, inviting governments to apply an “ecosystem” approach, instead of a “landscape” approach, in planning and implementing climate change adaptation activities. BELGIUM proposed inviting relevant intergovernmental organizations to integrate into their work not only the guidance on sustainable use in a landscape perspective, but also “other existing guidance on sustainable use.” ETHIOPIA proposed deleting reference to the guidance on sustainable use in a landscape perspective.

BELGIUM suggested that the UN Environment Management Group “promote,” rather than “assess and further develop,” existing guidance on sustainable use. AUSTRALIA, supported by CANADA, and opposed by JAPAN and THAILAND, preferred referring to the “potential” usefulness of the Satoyama Initiative. After informal deliberations, “potential” was bracketed.

CAMEROON, supported by SWITZERLAND, SENEGAL and PERU, proposed the COP urge parties to acknowledge ILCs’ important role in sustainable use to facilitate their full and effective participation in the design and implementation of policies and programmes at national and subnational levels. BRAZIL added “according to national legislation.”

## WORKING GROUP II

**INLAND WATER BIODIVERSITY:** Delegates addressed a draft recommendation. ARGENTINA and MALAWI suggested removing reference to biodiversity supporting natural infrastructure, natural assets or green infrastructure. CANADA and FINLAND supported retaining “natural infrastructure,” with CANADA highlighting that under the Ramsar Convention wetlands are considered “natural water infrastructure.” COLOMBIA underscored biodiversity’s role to “guarantee ecosystems’ self-support.”

TANZANIA, opposed by the UK, suggested that the “inappropriate” use of water affects downstream ecosystems. BRAZIL proposed, and delegates agreed, that the use of water “may” affect downstream ecosystems. On regional initiatives establishing a legally binding framework for integrated water management and serving as models for other regions, CANADA preferred referring to “frameworks by legal and other effective means.” INDIA suggested deleting that “resources for the effective implementation of transnational agreements remain a constraint posing a further threat to the already threatened water resources.”

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO suggested that the transfer of technical knowledge would enhance developing countries’ capacity to economically value aquatic ecosystems, while SOUTH AFRICA pointed to technology transfer. On nutrient loading, BRAZIL requested deleting reference to agriculture. COLOMBIA suggested agricultural production and “other sectoral activities.” NEW ZEALAND pointed to “unsustainable agriculture.”

On inviting the CBD and Ramsar Convention Secretariats’ cooperation on “natural solutions to water problems,” AUSTRALIA suggested referring to “solutions to biodiversity-related water problems,” not to exclude technical solutions. NORWAY favored “natural solutions.” Delegates eventually agreed to “solutions to water problems.” On using the Ramsar Convention’s definition of wetlands in addressing water-related biodiversity challenges, FINLAND asked to refer to “ecological interlinkages between inland, coastal and marine areas,” rather than “areas with inland-coastal interactions.”

## IN THE CORRIDORS

Despite the initial relaxed atmosphere, SBSTTA delegates were not spared the curse of “late-night Thursday,” with an evening plenary on numerous pending issues. Some expressed disappointment at SBSTTA’s inability to adopt a much-needed taxonomy capacity-building strategy. Others recognized that developing a comprehensive strategy would take some time given various approaches to taxonomy in different countries. This is not your typical “poor countries-rich countries” problem – one delegate explained. Both groups bear their own share of challenges: many developed countries face declining public funding to maintain and modernize their collections, while developing countries struggle to build programmes and facilities for training taxonomists in the first place. Another veteran noted, “many focus on the Nagoya Protocol as a constraint to taxonomic research, rather than as an incentive to renew interest in taxonomy as a basis for benefit-sharing.”

**ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:** The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of SBSTTA 15 will be available on Monday, 14 November 2011 online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/sbstta15/>