

WGRI 4 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 9 MAY 2012

Throughout the day, contact groups met on financing for biodiversity and the Strategic Plan and related issues. The contact group on financing for biodiversity considered a first reading of a non-paper on the Strategy for Resource Mobilization. In the afternoon, the group considered a non-paper on review of guidance to the GEF. The group reconvened briefly in the evening to review the revised non-paper on the Strategy for Resource Mobilization.

The contact group on the Strategic Plan and related issues considered non-papers on the Strategic Plan and the Clearing-House Mechanism; CBD's message to Rio+20; and biodiversity and development. The contact group reconvened in the evening to finalize text on biodiversity and development. Co-Chair Bignell announced that the non-paper on south-south cooperation would be forwarded to WGRI plenary as a CRP.

CONTACT GROUP ON FINANCING FOR BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY FOR RESOURCE MOBILIZATION:

In the morning, the contact group, chaired by Ines Verleye (Belgium) and M.F. Farooqui (India), considered a first reading of a non-paper on review of implementation of the Strategy for Resource Mobilization. Argentina, for GRULAC, said ongoing discussions on mobilization need to result in a clear commitment by parties, cannot be discussed apart from the Strategic Plan and are necessary for further discussion on mobilization and benefit sharing. JAPAN said it was vital to mobilize all public and private resources and explore all options, including innovative financing, and that recent global economic challenges must be taken into account when considering funding target levels. ECUADOR emphasized that countries need greater resources in developing countries to enhance capacity and increase effectiveness of international and national financial flows.

On country-level resource mobilization strategies, CANADA, with JAPAN, proposed replacing "funding targets" with "resource mobilization" since targets are only one component of COP 11 discussion. GUATEMALA noted the difficulty for finance ministries to mobilize resources for biodiversity rather than traditional outlets. On the proposal to establish a finance portal on biodiversity, GHANA highlighted that not everyone has internet access and thus it is important to find other means through which countries can have access to information on financing. Parties then debated the nature of the portal and what kind of resources need to be leveraged, whether solely financial or human and technical as well. On the funding gap for the

targets, SWITZERLAND proposed referencing synergies as a way of bridging the funding gap. On organizing regional and expert workshops, AUSTRALIA proposed adding "based on availability of resources."

On the operative text, on new and innovative financing mechanisms, CANADA proposed language from the Strategy on Resource Mobilization from CBD COP 9 calling for the exploration of new and innovative financial mechanisms to support the objectives of the Convention.

CANADA, MEXICO, GUATEMALA and BRAZIL said it was premature to encourage parties to consider the recommendations of the High-Level Panel on Global Assessment of Resources for implementing the Strategic Plan before those recommendations have been made. The EU suggested acknowledging the panel's "initial findings" instead of considering its recommendations. Delegates agreed to replace the use of the term "innovative financing mechanisms" with "biodiversity financing mechanisms." The EU said parties should be encouraged but not urged to integrate needs assessments into decisions on funding targets.

Countries differed over whether to invite parties to provide "continued" or "additional" funds, with the EU and CANADA favoring the former and ECUADOR, BRAZIL and ZAMBIA preferring the latter. UKRAINE said that resources should be directed to economies in transition, in addition to developing countries. CANADA, NORWAY and the EU, opposed by GUATEMALA, strongly supported the further use and development of existing systems for reporting resource mobilization, including the "Rio Markers" and systems for reporting overseas development assistance.

REVIEW OF GUIDANCE TO THE GEF: Co-Chair Farooqui introduced a non-paper on review of guidance to the GEF, saying it incorporated views from plenary. On the fourth review of the effectiveness of the GEF, CANADA suggested alternative text urging the Executive Secretary "to examine reallocating funds within existing resources and to complete this review before CBD COP 11." Regarding the request to revise NBSAPs, GHANA, supported by ECUADOR, highlighted that past amounts earmarked for NBSAPs were more than halved before delivery and so all future references to requests for "additional resources" should be considered in this context. DENMARK, with MEXICO, proposed that the programme priorities also take into account the Nagoya Protocol. Regarding capacity building, delegates agreed to "strengthening capacity building initiatives," based on GHANA and SOUTH AFRICA's proposals.

On the operative text, CANADA, supported by the EU, proposed to delete paragraphs inviting the GEF to diversify and intensify its contributions and prioritize funding of the Strategic Plan, given that the recommendation to adopt the four-year outcome-oriented framework of programme priorities for 2014-2018 incorporates such paragraphs. Discussions ensued on whether to recognize the increase of funds made available under GEF-5 while asking for an increase in financial contributions during the GEF-6 period.

On GEF allocation of financial resources, the EU expressed concerns regarding equity in the GEF resource allocation system. INDIA and NORWAY proposed adding language referring to allocating resources as a way to optimize global environmental benefits. BRAZIL and others proposed deleting the paragraph.

During the second reading of the paragraph on facilitating the mobilization of financial resources beyond the replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund, CANADA, backed by SWITZERLAND, favored replacing “GEF, regional development banks, and the Conference of the Parties” with “GEF, its network of implementing agencies, other international financial institutions and development organizations, national governments, and the private sector.” On the fourth review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism, MEXICO proposed, and delegates agreed, adding a paragraph to reflect the fact that regular reviews of the effectiveness of the mechanism have not been carried out because of a lack of funding.

CONTACT GROUP ON THE STRATEGIC PLAN AND OTHER MATTERS

STRATEGIC PLAN AND CLEARING-HOUSE

MECHANISM: During the morning’s contact group on the Strategic Plan, co-Chair Bignell opened discussion on the non-paper on the CHM and the Strategic Plan. A number of parties made suggestions to streamline the text, while others called for including that actions take place at “national, regional and sub regional levels” throughout the document. On the Secretariat and its partners’ efforts to support parties in implementing the Strategic Plan and achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, ETHIOPIA called for wording that reflects that training modules were prepared. Delegates agreed to these suggestions.

On the work programme of the CHM, MEXICO with GEORGIA and others, called for including the need to build the capacity of national focal points. On establishing information sharing on the CHM, CANADA proposed emphasizing connections between central and national CHMs. JAPAN requested the Secretariat “to implement the work program of the CHM and provide updates.” Delegates agreed to both suggestions. Delegates also agreed to ask the Secretariat to “continue to implement” the use of automated translation tools to facilitate information exchange.

UGANDA proposed deleting text noting the potential contribution of IPBES on cooperation and capacity building for the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan. NORWAY opposed, stressing the importance of noting such synergies and linkages. Delegates retained the paragraph, amended with language, *inter alia*, reaffirming the need for enhanced technical and scientific cooperation, and agreed to move it to the preambular text.

On facilitating technical and scientific cooperation to implement the Strategic Plan, CANADA requested the Secretariat develop “an implementation plan” and “submit” it to SBSTTA and WGRI for review.

KIRIBATI, on behalf of the Pacific Island states, proposed text on a capacity building network of national and regional centres of excellence on south-south and triangular cooperation

to support implementation of the Strategic Plan and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. MEXICO proposed referring to centres of excellence in “biodiversity.” Delegates welcomed the proposal. JAPAN requested bracketing reference to south-south and triangular cooperation. Delegates agreed to “take into account” such cooperation.

Brazil urged including text that emphasizes the linkages between the Strategic Plan, financial resources, technology transfer and benefit sharing. Delegates then agreed to address the merged text of the two non-papers on the agenda item on implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. A CRP will be prepared for plenary discussion.

MESSAGE TO RIO+20: In the afternoon, the discussion on a non-paper on the CBD’s message to Rio+20 focused on the relationship between biodiversity and sustainable development, with JAPAN and CANADA stressing simplicity. Delegates eventually referenced biodiversity as “the fundamental basis for sustainable development” and recognized “implementing the Strategic Plan and achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets as essential prerequisites to conserve biodiversity and achieve sustainable development.”

The EU and others supported referring to green economy. BRAZIL, EGYPT and INDIA opposed. PALAU preferred green/blue economy. Delegates agreed to delete references to green and green/blue economy. UGANDA requested text on financing for biodiversity, and ETHIOPIA called for text on climate change. Co-Chair Bignell asked the Secretariat to include one sentence on each, using agreed language. A CRP will be prepared for plenary.

BIODIVERSITY AND DEVELOPMENT: In the afternoon, co-Chair Bignell opened discussions on the non-paper on biodiversity and development. On the operative paragraph calling for the Expert Group on Biodiversity for Poverty Eradication and Development to continue its work, JAPAN urged including text on “mainstreaming biodiversity into poverty eradication and development processes by fulfilling the three objectives of the Convention.”

EGYPT queried the meaning of “customary and traditional user rights.” The PHILIPPINES noted that these are unwritten laws and customs that are still respected. Participants agreed to confer to reach an agreement.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As Montreal weather vacillated between gloomy rain and optimistic sun, so did the moods and pace of delegates. Delegates rapidly agreed on text during Wednesday morning, suggesting that Tuesday’s early ending may have allowed exhausted SBSTTA-WGRI delegates a bit of rejuvenation. While some delegates admitted to “counting down the days until I’m home,” referring to the long stretch of UN biodiversity events, participants generally showed a commitment to approve text and compromise when necessary. Colorful discussions on the green economy versus the blue economy dominated the afternoon’s discussions in the contact group on the Strategic Plan and the CBD message to Rio+20. However, there was no pot of gold at the end of this rainbow, due to the lack of clarity on what a green or blue economy actually is, and what it entails. Overall, while delegates occasionally got stuck in the mud, debating alternative text in non-papers in both working groups, the general sentiment was expressed by one large group member that said “we’re all very optimistic that, sooner or later, we will get to a nice agreement.”