

WGRI 4 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 10 MAY 2012

In the morning plenary, the chairs of the contact groups reported on progress in their sessions, with Co-Chair Bignell noting the “good spirit and humor” in CG I and Co-Chair Verleye commenting on CG II’s “good collaboration and good progress.” Co-Chair Bignell noted the completion of all issues in CG I, with the exception of some brackets that “are likely better addressed in COP 11.” Chair Hosino then encouraged delegates not to “go into details or heavy negotiation” on bracketed text. Before adjourning, Yeon-chul Yoo presented the REPUBLIC OF KOREA’s bid to host CBD COP 12. He emphasized the Republic of Korea’s commitment to contribution and balance in: terrestrial and marine conservation; traditional knowledge and modern science; and common ground between developed and developing countries in biodiversity conservation.

A Friends of the Chair group then met to discuss Somalia’s request to compile information on the impact of military conflicts on biodiversity.

In the afternoon, the contact group on financing for biodiversity met to review non-papers on the Strategy for Resource Mobilization and the Financial Mechanism.

In the evening, the plenary reconvened to consider CRPs on the engagement of business, cooperation with other conventions, the message to Rio+20 and south-south cooperation.

MORNING PLENARY

STRATEGIC PLAN AND AICHI BIODIVERSITY

TARGETS: The Secretariat introduced UNEP/CBD/WGRI/4/CRP.3 on implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. On WGRI’s recommendation to the COP, delegates’ interventions focused on a section on further support for revision and update of NBSAPs, which included brackets on “continued” and “additional” support. The EU preferred parties and other governments “continue to provide support for” revision and updating of NBSAPs “and to provide additional support” to enhance stakeholder consultations. BRAZIL proposed “to continue to provide and at the same time increase support for” the revision and update of NBSAPs. The Chair asked the EU, BRAZIL and ZAMBIA to consult on this issue. ZAMBIA proposed that all suggested language remain in brackets.

Delegates also discussed a link to IPBES in relation to capacity building, with the EU requesting the Secretariat to collaborate with IPBES as appropriate, opposed by CHINA, but supported by NORWAY, BRAZIL, ARGENTINA, MEXICO, PERU, AUSTRALIA, COLOMBIA and SAUDI ARABIA. CHINA proposed requesting the Executive Secretary to “strengthen North-South cooperation” in addition to helping to establish a capacity-building network of national and regional centers of excellence in biodiversity.

GUATEMALA suggested a new paragraph requesting the Executive Secretary to support the consolidation of IPBES, but the EU, JAPAN and others opposed, saying this issue was adequately covered in SBSTTA 16 and elsewhere. BURKINA FASO noted the Executive Secretary should be requested to “promote the implementation,” rather than “implement,” the strategy for the UN Decade on Biodiversity.

Following an informal consultation with JAPAN, CANADA, SOUTH AFRICA, YEMEN and the EU, SOMALIA proposed an additional paragraph requesting the Executive Secretary to “compile information on the impact of military conflicts on biodiversity.”

MEXICO, with BRAZIL, expressed concern with delays, lack of debate, and remaining brackets on text on further funding for NBSAPs and on urging effective commitment of developed country parties. He highlighted the need to make links between the Strategic Plan and resource mobilization, and the importance of removing brackets to have a clear direction on financing, with BRAZIL reiterating that discussions should not be avoided.

BIODIVERSITY AND DEVELOPMENT: The Secretariat introduced UNEP/CBD/WGRI/4/CRP.5 on the report of the Expert Meeting on Biodiversity for Poverty Eradication and Development.

ETHIOPIA, supported by the EU, noted that the title of the document should not be “Report of the Expert Group.” The EU proposed deleting “report” in the title. SOUTH AFRICA proposed deleting “when appropriate” from the paragraph asking parties to make available through the CHM best practices on integrating biodiversity into poverty eradication and development. ARGENTINA objected. They agreed to “as appropriate.” GHANA proposed, and delegates agreed, that the Expert Group complete its work by COP 12. BURKINA FASO suggested that the Executive Secretary “transmit” instead of “compile” the report on the progress of the Expert Group. With this amendment, the CRP was accepted.

CONTACT GROUP ON FINANCING FOR BIODIVERSITY

M.F. Farooqui (India) opened the afternoon's discussion on the revised non-paper on the financial mechanism, Ines Verleye (Belgium) then chaired discussion on the non-paper on the Strategy for Resource Mobilization.

FINANCIAL MECHANISM: On the text requesting the GEF to implement a four-year outcome-oriented framework of programme priorities for the period 2014-2018 and report back to COP 13, delegates agreed to delete text on the details of programme priorities, as this could be considered "micro management." Delegates also agreed to delete text that implied that GEF provides funds, as opposed to its true function of allocating funds provided by donors.

Delegates then agreed to text requesting consideration of the high-level panel on financing for biodiversity and other relevant technical information on the costs of implementing the Strategic Plan when further developing the report on the needs assessment of funds required from GEF-6.

STRATEGY FOR RESOURCE MOBILIZATION: On applying a preliminary reporting framework to be adopted by COP 11, delegates agreed to invite parties to submit information on applying the framework. The EU, supported by NORWAY and SWITZERLAND, proposed using a tentative baseline of either the average of annual biodiversity funding for 2006-2010 "or a single year during this period." NORWAY stressed flexibility. SWITZERLAND recognized a solid baseline would be needed in the future but highlighted that this baseline is tentative. ECUADOR and others preferred retaining an average only. CANADA proposed, and delegates agreed, including the EU's proposal and bracketing baseline language.

On urging parties to consider all possible resources to meet resource allocations, delegates considered three options, focusing on a previous Brazilian proposal. BRAZIL said "sources" include public and private resources. MEXICO suggested considering "all possible sources and needs." The EU preferred "mobilization" rather than "allocation" and proposed "resources" instead of "sources." ECUADOR, SOUTH AFRICA and BRAZIL preferred "required" rather than "adequate." MEXICO suggested "needed" resources as a compromise. ZAMBIA, supported by the AFRICAN GROUP, requested, and delegates agreed, deleting "mobilization." Delegates agreed to urge parties to consider all possible sources and means to meet levels of resource needed.

The EU, opposed by ARGENTINA, requested the Secretariat develop guiding principles and safeguards for the use of innovative financing mechanisms, taking into account the Quito Seminar and a forthcoming Montreal workshop. NORWAY agreed, noting a range of examples, experiences and the Quito outcomes that could be used. BRAZIL suggested that the Secretariat prepare a document, expressing concern about time needed to develop guiding principles. SOUTH AFRICA said there was not sufficient time before COP 11. CANADA supported the text and recalled Decision X/3 inviting parties and others to submit information on innovative financial mechanisms that have the potential to generate new and additional resources and requesting the Secretariat to synthesize submitted information. Following discussions over, *inter alia*, reference to the Quito Seminar on Scaling up Biodiversity Finance and the forthcoming Montreal workshop, delegates agreed to compromise on text requesting the Secretariat to prepare a synthesis report for COP 11, taking into consideration the party submissions and other sources of information.

EVENING PLENARY

MESSAGE TO RIO+20: Delegates considered document UNEP/CBD/WGRI/4/CRP.6 on the Message to Rio+20 and adopted it with minor amendments, including the addition of a title "Living in Harmony with Nature."

COOPERATION WITH OTHER CONVENTIONS: Delegates considered and adopted, with minor amendments, UNEP/CBD/WGRI/4/CRP.2 on cooperation with other conventions. The EU introduced two new paragraphs: one highlighting the contribution of the Environment Management Group; and another stressing the role of NBSAPs in developing a coherent approach at the national level, and encouraging parties to incorporate the objectives of the biodiversity-related conventions and Rio Conventions into NBSAPs, with ETHIOPIA adding "as appropriate." GUATEMALA proposed that parties should also "support the objectives with all sources and means available."

MEXICO proposed a paragraph welcoming the establishment of IPBES and encouraging the platform to support the implementation of the Convention by providing information. ETHIOPIA said that IPBES should also provide capacity building.

SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION: Delegates considered UNEP/CBD/WGRI/4/CRP.4 on the Multi-Year Plan of Action for South-South Cooperation on Biodiversity for Development and agreed to it with amendments. Some text remains in brackets. CHINA noted that the wording in the operative paragraph recalling Decision X/23 is not consistent with the Decision, since the Decision does not refer to the Multi-Year Plan of Action. ARGENTINA proposed "welcoming" the invitation to establish a trust fund for the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the Multi-Year Plan of Action. NORWAY and the Secretariat proposed alternative text, but no agreement was reached and the text was bracketed.

ENGAGEMENT OF BUSINESS: Delegates considered UNEP/CBD/WGRI/4/CRP.1 on engagement of business and agreed to most of the preambular paragraphs with minor changes. Discussion will continue on Friday morning.

IN THE CORRIDORS

On the eve of the final day, participants were left with questions: was WGRI 4 successful, and was substantial work left to COP 11? While the delegates' mood mirrored the weather, which turned rainy again, issues clouding progress on the financial mechanisms were resolved more easily than anticipated. Contentious issues, such as paragraphs on innovative financial mechanisms in the text on resource mobilization, were dealt with superficially and left largely for COP 11 to resolve. Some participants indeed suggested that this strategy of delaying contentious decisions to COP 11 was not accidental but a recognition of the political decision-making role of the COP. A flash flood of productivity won't save WGRI 4 from the doldrums. Decisions will leave the Secretariat with a hail storm of tasks in the months leading up to COP 11, and COP 11 participants with many outstanding substantial decisions. But hopefully the skies will clear for a successful COP 11, despite foreboding signs at WGRI 4.

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of WGRI 4 will be available on Monday, 14 May 2012 online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/wgri4/>