



CBD COP 11 HIGHLIGHTS WEDNESDAY, 17 OCTOBER 2012

WG I and WG II addressed several draft decisions. The budget group, and contact groups on resource mobilization and REDD+ met throughout the day. The high-level segment heard statements from ministers and high-level representatives, and held two panel discussions on implementation of the Strategic Plan, and biodiversity for livelihoods and poverty reduction.

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

On behalf of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, CBD Executive Secretary Bráulio Ferreira de Souza Dias called for innovative solutions, urging particular attention to protection of life in oceans. GEF CEO Naoko Ishii announced plans for a long-term strategy in concert with the Aichi targets, prioritizing targets that enable cross-sectoral action, valuation of natural capital, and mainstreaming biodiversity. UNDP Associate Administrator Rebeca Grynspan said biodiversity loss is undermining hard-won development gains, and announced the launch of the Biodiversity and Ecosystems Global Framework. World Bank Vice-President for Sustainable Development Rachel Kyte highlighted the use of natural capital accounting alongside gross domestic product (GDP), to replace short-term decisions based on ignorance with long-term decisions based on evidence.

WORKING GROUP I

MARINE BIODIVERSITY: Delegates addressed outstanding text in the draft decision and a non-paper. The EU proposed to “take note of the particular need for a regional workshop to be organized in the Mediterranean region to finalize the description of EBSAs in time for its report to be considered by SBSTTA prior to COP 12.” The EU, supported by NORWAY, but opposed by AUSTRALIA, proposed that the description of EBSAs allows continued updating “including the addition and/or withdrawal of areas.” Chair González Posse highlighted that “updating” already reflects the EU’s concern.

On the EBSA summary report transmitted by SBSTTA 16, JAPAN suggested, and many opposed, referring to “areas that could meet the EBSA criteria.” The EU insisted on “endorsing” the summary report. CHINA suggested reflecting that COP 11 could neither endorse nor approve the report. CANADA suggested reflecting progress made on the procedure for the consideration of EBSAs established by COP 10. Following informal consultations, delegates eventually agreed to: request the Secretariat to include the SBSTTA 16 summary report on the description of areas that meet the EBSA criteria in the repository “as referred to in decision X/29 and this decision,” with the EU requesting also reference to the “procedure set out in paragraph 42 of decision X/29”; and making future summary reports available for COP consideration with a view to including them in the repository “in line with the purpose and procedures set out in decision X/29 and this decision.” The decision was

adopted with these amendments, with CHINA requesting that the meeting report reflect that the COP did not endorse the summary report.

ARTICLE 8(j): Delegates considered whether to request that the next Article 8(j) Working Group consider changing terminology in COP decisions to “indigenous peoples and local communities” for COP 12 consideration. COLOMBIA, BOLIVIA, PERU, NORWAY, BRAZIL, ECUADOR, SWITZERLAND and the AFRICAN GROUP wished to make such decision at COP 11. The IIFB emphasized that the term “indigenous peoples and local communities” is already included in Agenda 21, the Rio+20 Outcome and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION: The EU requested bracketing text regarding financial resources to implement ecosystem restoration programmes in developing countries, pending decisions from the resource mobilization group.

BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE: Delegates debated whether to “endorse” or “take note with appreciation of” SBSTTA recommendation XVI/8 to strengthen knowledge and information on linkages between biodiversity and climate change. The EU requested bracketing references to resource mobilization, pending decisions from the resource mobilization group.

SUSTAINABLE USE: Delegates considered a draft decision (UNEP/CBD/COP/11/WG.1/CRP.9). On the annexed revised recommendations of the CBD Liaison Group on bushmeat, CANADA requested, and delegates agreed, reverting to SBSTTA 15 text on transferring access, rights and associated accountability to ILCs, rather than on “rights and tenure, and TK.”

The EU called for reinserting text calling on national REDD+ programmes to take into account the importance of wildlife for healthy ecosystems and ecological services. BRAZIL, supported by BOLIVIA, ECUADOR, SUDAN, QATAR, MEXICO, COLOMBIA, ETHIOPIA and ARGENTINA, opposed references to REDD+ and proposed to discuss it in the REDD+ contact group. Delegates could not agree on whether to “welcome” the revised recommendations on bushmeat.

IAS: Delegates considered a draft decision (UNEP/CBD/COP/11/WG.1/CRP.10). The EU preferred stating that the Guiding Principles on IAS continue to be relevant for addressing the risks “associated with,” rather than “of,” introducing IAS as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, live bait and live food.

The EU, opposed by COLOMBIA, requested that the development of a toolkit be subject to available financial resources. NEW ZEALAND, opposed by the PHILIPPINES and ETHIOPIA, questioned including in the toolkit information on the application of specific provisions of the SPS Agreement. ISRAEL suggested including in the toolkit countries’ experiences in risk assessment on IAS.

This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Kate Louw, Elisa Morgera, Ph.D., Dorothy Wanja Nyingi, Ph.D., Teya Penniman, Eugenia Recio and Elsa Tsioumani. The Digital Editor is Francis Dejon. The Editor is Pamela S. Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@iisd.org>. The Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James “Kimo” Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The Sustaining Donors of the *Bulletin* are the European Commission (DG-ENV), the Government of the United States of America (through the Department of State Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs), the Government of Canada (through CIDA), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), and the Government of Australia. General Support for the *Bulletin* during 2012 is provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Environment of Sweden, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, SWAN International, the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Japanese Ministry of Environment (through the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies - IGES), the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (through the Global Industrial and Social Progress Research Institute - GISPRI), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Specific funding for coverage of this meeting has been provided by the Belgium Federal Public Service for Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the Indian Ministry of Environment and Forests, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the Finnish Ministry of the Environment. Funding for translation of the *Bulletin* into French has been provided by the Government of France, the Belgium Walloon Region, the Province of Québec, and the International Organization of the Francophone (OIF and IEPF). The opinions expressed in the *Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD or other donors. Excerpts from the *Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications with appropriate academic citation. For information on the *Bulletin*, including requests to provide reporting services, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services at <kimo@iisd.org>, +1-646-536-7556 or 300 East 56th St., 11D, New York, NY 10022, USA. The ENB Team at CBD COP 11 can be contacted by e-mail at <elsa@iisd.org>.



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WORKING GROUP II**COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL**

ORGANIZATIONS: Delegates discussed a draft decision (UNEP/CBD/COP/11/WG.2/CRP.7). BOLIVIA and VENEZUELA proposed compromise text encouraging parties to promote the UN Decade on Biodiversity in ways appropriate to their national circumstances, for example the protection of “Mother Earth,” to create dialogues and to share experiences.

SWITZERLAND, supported by NEW ZEALAND and NORWAY, proposed new text welcoming collaboration between CBD and UNFF. CHINA requested deleting text inviting parties to collaborate with national health sectors to integrate biodiversity into national health strategies and programmes. On incorporating links between biological and cultural diversity into CBD implementation, delegates agreed, following consultations, to add language on consistency and harmony with the Convention and relevant international obligations.

BRAZIL and ECUADOR suggested inviting the World Tourism Organization and other relevant organizations to cooperate with the CBD on identifying critical tourism and conservation hotspots to support the integration of biodiversity aspects into sustainable tourism development.

On recognizing that international trade is an important factor in biodiversity conservation, BRAZIL proposed adding that parties should promote a supportive and open international economic system and avoid measures that constitute arbitrary discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade. Following informal consultations, delegates agreed to delete the paragraph.

Following consultations on references to centers of origin or genetic diversity, delegates agreed to remove all such references and insert a chapeau paragraph in the draft decision on monitoring implementation of the Strategic Plan recognizing the crucial importance to humankind of centers of origin and centers of genetic diversity.

BIODIVERSITY AND DEVELOPMENT: Delegates addressed a draft decision, including elements for terms of reference for an expert group on the issue (UNEP/CBD/COP/11/WG.2/CRP.8/Rev.1). ECUADOR proposed, and delegates debated, a preambular reference to “the rights of nature.” After informal consultations, delegates agreed to take note of “the concept of rights of nature.” Delegates did not reach agreement on a preambular reference to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

CONTACT GROUP ON RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Delegates proceeded with a first reading of the non-paper under discussion, aiming at an exchange of views for the drafting of a revised paper. Delegates discussed whether the target of doubling biodiversity financial resource flows from developed to developing countries by 2015 is meaningful, with developed countries noting that a baseline is necessary to determine the sum that needs to be doubled. Developing countries noted the target stems from the OECD Creditors Reporting System and the Rio markers, which establish a robust baseline.

Some developed countries also noted that their official development assistance (ODA) model does not include issue-specific targets but responds to needs and priorities set by recipient countries, underscoring the need for developing countries to identify biodiversity as a priority for ODA. A suggestion for “aspirational” goals, was rejected by developing countries, who called, in turn, for a concrete proposal to move forward.

Delegates then addressed a target of 75% of parties reporting domestic biodiversity expenditures and funding needs, gaps and priorities by 2014. Many developed countries stressed the importance of this target as a roadmap for improving baselines, while some called for taking into consideration national circumstances and constraints. Developing countries called for the obligation to be qualified on a best-endeavor basis and stressed many countries’ lack of capacities, pointing to interlinkages with the target on financial flows. Developing countries argued that reporting and assessment-related targets should not be a precondition for the target on financial flows.

Delegates also discussed: establishing a target on the removal, reform or phase out of subsidies harmful to biodiversity at COP 12, requesting using language from Decision X/3; a section on review of implementation of the Strategy for Resource Mobilization; and a section on a roadmap, including on adopting at COP 12 a global indicative target on aggregated financial flows.

Algeria, on behalf of G-77/CHINA and MEXICO, stressed that developing countries engaged in good faith and made significant commitments in Nagoya with the expectation that financial resources would be forthcoming. He underscored that, unless COP 11 address the issue of targets for the resource mobilization strategy, the gains of Nagoya will be negated and the momentum towards realizing the Aichi targets lost. He noted that developing countries made major concessions and agreed to work on interim targets, hoping that developed countries will reciprocate, agreeing on specific targets and commitments while addressing the roadmap. He feared that failure to reach agreement on a target will result in suspension of implementation of the Aichi targets until sufficient resources are available.

CONTACT GROUP ON REDD+

Delegates discussed a list of possible adverse impacts of REDD+ on biodiversity-related issues, noting they were identified by the Global Expert Workshop on Biodiversity Benefits of REDD+. One delegate remarked that the workshop was held before the UNFCCC meeting in Cancun.

Delegates discussed whether to refer to “lack of benefit distribution,” “lack of benefit-sharing” or “lack of equitable distribution of benefits” between relevant stakeholders as a possible threat to the success of REDD+ national strategies. One participant cautioned against using “benefit-sharing” due to its connotations under the Nagoya Protocol. Delegates then discussed whether the safeguard processes could also benefit from national experiences related to the ABS provisions of the Convention and Nagoya Protocol. Parties further considered text on land tenure, land planning, and the Convention’s contribution to the work of the UNFCCC, with discussions continuing into the evening.

BUDGET GROUP

Discussions focused on the merger of trust funds, increases in core budget programming, the use of indicators of achievements and performance of the programme budget, and attaining operational efficiencies in the budget. Delegates discussed options in the core budget given different budget growth scenarios, highlighting that the financial crisis will mean that activities carried out by the Secretariat will have to be prioritized.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As COP 11 entered its final days, discussions became increasingly intense. In the air-conditioned room of the budget group, deliberations heated up as concerns about the impact of the financial crisis on the budget were translated into “real numbers.” “With over 140 requests to the Secretariat on the table, we need to prioritize activities” commented a worried delegate emerging from the room. At the same time, progress in the Working Groups was painfully slow: more and more decisions were marred with bracketed language subjecting their implementation to availability of funding. “We do not wish to be bound by a list of tasks that the Secretariat will have no dedicated funds to carry out,” noted a seasoned participant. The dilemma remains, as a member of the budget group remarked, “should the budget dictate policy, or must policy dictate the budget?”

Meanwhile, copies of the G-77/China/Mexico statement on resource mobilization could be found all over the corridors of the conference center. One of its readers commented: “There is a clear message here: no implementation without resource mobilization.”