



SBSTTA 17 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2013

Delegates met in plenary throughout the first day of the seventeenth meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA).

OPENING PLENARY

SBSTTA Chair Gemedo Dalle Tussie (Ethiopia) encouraged delegates to identify specific needs and avoid focusing on additional tasks that may delay implementation. CBD Executive Secretary Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias urged delegates to use this meeting to: demonstrate that SBSTTA is primarily a scientific body that can provide concrete advice on how to address identified scientific and technical challenges; and better assess the effects of different types of measures and identify actions at national and sub-national levels to achieve the Aichi Targets.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: On the agenda and organization of work (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/1, Add.1 and Add.2), NORWAY reiterated continued support for the Convention but, with CANADA, raised concerns regarding the documentation and proposed format of the meeting, underscoring the need to respect relevant COP decisions and ensure transparency. BELGIUM proposed conducting a thorough evaluation of the meeting results to conclude whether the new format adds value. Liberia, for AFRICA, highlighted the need for consistency with COP decisions, but expressed willingness to test the new system. Mexico, for GRULAC, expressed support for the effort to ensure that SBSTTA becomes more scientific and technical in nature. Chair Tussie outlined the proposed new format and organization of work, noting that: the Secretariat will take note in the meeting report of the main issues raised; a limited number of recommendations could also emerge as SBSTTA 17 outcomes; and Friends of the Chair groups will facilitate the drafting of conclusions on Thursday. Plenary then adopted the agenda and organization of work without amendment.

FACILITATING IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL MEANS

The Secretariat introduced documentation on facilitating implementation of the Strategic Plan and Aichi Targets through scientific and technical means, and assessing the effects of measures taken in accordance with the Convention (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/2 and 3). He highlighted the Article 8(j) Working Group's recommendations concerning traditional knowledge indicators and the draft plan of action on customary sustainable use (UNEP/CBD/WG8J/8/L.2 and L.3), as well as the in-depth dialogue on connecting traditional knowledge systems and science (UNEP/CBD/WG8J/8/L.1/Add.1).

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES: Zakri Abdul Hamid, IPBES Chair, delivered a keynote speech on mobilizing science in support of policies to achieve the Aichi Targets. He stated that properly integrated efforts require dialogue and broad understanding of "planetary boundaries," as well as agreement on choices and solutions. Observing that SBSTTA has not given sufficient attention to "soft" sciences, he stressed the need to influence and change behaviors through ways other than scientific knowledge, and to strengthen the science-policy interface across knowledge systems under IPBES.

Joji Cariño, Forest Peoples Programme, reported on the Article 8(j) Working Group's in-depth dialogue, highlighting innovative ways used by the Working Group to integrate ILC participation as a replicable model for other UN bodies, such as IPBES, and experiences of community-based monitoring and women's wisdom-sharing.

PANEL ON BIODIVERSITY MONITORING: Bob Scholes, Chair of the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO BON), reported on the expert workshop on enhancing data and observing systems held on 12 October 2013, in Montreal, Canada (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/INF/14), highlighting difficulties to find data on particular areas and biodiversity aspects, including transboundary trade, safe ecological limits, climate change impacts on biodiversity and marine biodiversity. He prioritized the development of a regionally-tailored kit on biodiversity observation ("BON in a box") and of strategies to integrate data remotely sensed and collected *in situ*.

Eugenia Arguedas Montezuma (Costa Rica) reported that expert workshop participants lamented lack of training, financial resources and limited access to information to implement the Strategic Plan. She supported: capacity building for constant monitoring and harmonization of biodiversity indicators; "BON in a box"; and participation by a wide range of partners.

Marc Paganini, European Space Agency (ESA), highlighted the contribution of remote sensing and observation data in monitoring biodiversity trends. He explained how free, open and public data policies can help addressing lack of data continuity.

Reporting on managing and sharing biodiversity information, Donald Hobern, Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), stressed that data needs to be appropriately organized and digitally accessible. Noting non-technical barriers, he drew attention to recommendations to governments and funding bodies in the Global Biodiversity Informatics Outlook (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/INF/4).

Pernilla Malmer (Sweden) presented the Multiple Evidence Base approach as a framework for connecting indigenous, local and scientific knowledge systems. She highlighted benefits of community-based monitoring for assessing the state of traditional knowledge, biodiversity and climate change impacts.



In ensuing discussions, MEXICO stressed challenges in monitoring genetic diversity, particularly for species vital for food security, and, with URUGUAY, noted that monitoring should inform decision making, not be an end in itself.

TAJIKISTAN and YEMEN drew attention to limited access to satellite photographs due to high cost, with YEMEN stressing the importance of regional cooperation, and user-friendly and accessible monitoring systems. CANADA called for information on conflict-resolution mechanisms when different knowledge systems reach diverse conclusions. NEW ZEALAND called for information on the integration of ecological data with economic decision making.

Panelists highlighted: the need to acknowledge differing interpretations or lack of consensus; the review of the use of remotely-sensed data for monitoring biodiversity change (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/INF/16); ongoing attempts to develop guidelines on eliminating barriers to such use; and the need for policy guidance for monitoring activities.

COLOMBIA noted that coastal and marine ecosystems monitoring has not been properly covered. BOLIVIA called for: integrating monitoring systems to make available data on progress in achieving the Aichi Targets; focusing IPBES strictly on scientific issues, rather than on ecosystem services that would commodify Mother Earth; and using inter-scientific dialogue without undervaluing traditional knowledge.

The UK welcomed GEO BON activities and ESA's and NASA's commitment to an open policy regarding remote-sensing data; called for prioritizing a global indicator framework for achieving the Aichi Targets; and encouraged improving cooperation between SBSTTA and IPBES. The IIFB highlighted support by the Article 8(j) Working Group for community-based monitoring and information systems and called for harnessing expertise to extend coverage to other communities. ASIA-PACIFIC invited GEO BON to take note of different capacity needs in monitoring biodiversity status and trends.

The EU highlighted adoption of EU-wide targets in line with the Aichi Targets and a governance system to ensure their implementation, and a 2012 mapping assessment of ecosystems and services.

BIODIVERSITY MAINSTREAMING: Panel discussion: Panel Chair Risa Smith (Canada) opened the panel session on Strategic Goal A (addressing underlying causes of biodiversity loss through biodiversity mainstreaming). Tone Solhaug (Norway) reported on the 2013 Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/INF/5), underlining the need to: fully understand costs and benefits of policies; address externalities; adopt different values in national reporting systems, beyond GDP, to capture biodiversity values; and showcase positive examples to stimulate better involvement of the private sector. She stressed the opportunity to integrate biodiversity into the post-2015 Development Agenda process and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Somanegré Nana (Burkina Faso) presented on his country's biodiversity integration into national accounts and NBSAPs and a proposed think tank to promote green economy. Valerie Hickey, World Bank, underscored prioritization of biodiversity by the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and suggested consideration of an indicator for biodiversity resilience. Stanley Asah, University of Washington, presented on awareness and behavioral change. He called for understanding the motivations for, and drivers of, human behavior towards biodiversity, for producing sustainable changes in biodiversity protection.

The GLOBAL FOREST COALITION urged addressing policy incoherences. BOLIVIA cautioned against using a single development model and conceptualizing ecosystems only in terms of environmental services and markets. TUNISIA stressed that public-awareness and behavioural-change campaigns cannot

exist in isolation from supportive measures to benefit local populations. COLOMBIA recommended framing multicultural projects according to the Aichi Targets.

The IIFB emphasized the need for: greater coordination in awareness raising; behavioral change to forge equitable relationships with ILCs; and recognition of multiple knowledge systems. PACIFIC ISLANDS called for capturing both economic and non-economic incentives, and providing assistance for meaningful implementation of Aichi Targets in the region.

Statements: The Secretariat introduced the document on Strategic Goal A (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/2 Add. 1). PACIFIC ISLANDS called for innovative, targeted and practical capacity building and timely resource mobilization. JAPAN, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, LITHUANIA, FINLAND, BRAZIL and BELGIUM supported effective use of existing tools rather than developing new ones, with FRANCE suggesting establishment of an inventory and CANADA recommending a pilot study on assessing effects of measures and a compilation of self-assessment methods. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA expressed hope that the meeting's outcome will inform development of a Peyongchang roadmap for the achievement of the Aichi Targets. Liberia, for AFRICA, recommended that the Secretariat: assist parties in training activities; establish regional centers of excellence for biodiversity; and encourage strengthening South-South data-exchange collaboration. INDIA highlighted interoperability of scientific data as a challenge and supported further exchange of experiences on assessments among countries. The UK and NEW ZEALAND supported further work on behavioral change. CHINA called for further understanding of harmful incentives and indicators on sustainable consumption. LITHUANIA called for developing guidance on identifying harmful incentives, while FINLAND prioritized cooperation and information exchange.

LITHUANIA called for reviewing and synthesizing existing awareness-raising methods and developing new methods to translate biodiversity awareness into behavioral change. SWITZERLAND called for assessing and integrating biodiversity aspects into sustainable consumption information. JAPAN highlighted the challenge of translating general global guidance on sustainable production and consumption into tailored national policies. LITHUANIA pointed to effective sector-engagement methods to translate general guidance into national tools. SWEDEN highlighted the Ten-year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Uncertainty and anticipation were palpable as SBSTTA 17 opened with a "grand experiment" of restructuring deliberations to sharpen the Body's scientific and technical focus. "National-level preparations and consultations with stakeholders have been impossible without draft recommendations at hand," one delegate complained. Others expressed concern that the "experiment" had not been approved by the COP. More enthusiastic participants, however, were heard saying: "We have been asking for this as long as I can remember!" They appeared already satisfied with the brief and focused statements during the morning's plenary.

As the day's deliberations progressed, many were pleased to note earnest and productive engagement in discussions. "It may take some time," – an optimistic participant added – "but we've just been told that human beings are 'behaviorally modifiable organisms,' so we can adjust to the new format and ensure it leads to optimal results." He preliminarily concluded, "the meeting is off to an excellent start."