



SBSTTA 18 HIGHLIGHTS MONDAY, 23 JUNE 2014

SBSTTA 18 opened on Monday morning, with delegates meeting in plenary throughout the day to discuss the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-4), the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and obstacles encountered in implementing options identified for eliminating, phasing out or reforming incentives that are harmful for biodiversity.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

SBSTTA Chair Gemedo Dalle Tussie (Ethiopia), on pursuing the new format established in 2013, cited an Ethiopian proverb: "If you catch a leopard by its tail, do not let go." He said the outcomes from the coming week's discussions should provide COP 12 with whatever is needed to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and make sufficient progress in achieving the Aichi Targets by 2020. CBD Executive Secretary Braulio Dias urged delegates to bear in mind the "bigger picture" of reaching the SDGs when deliberating on recommendations to COP 12, and expressed hope that this will form the basis of concrete decisions that can collectively be known as the "Pyeongchang Roadmap 2020."

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: SBSTTA Chair Dalle Tussie introduced the agenda and outlined the proposed format and organization of work (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/1 and Add.1). Snežana Prokić (Serbia) was elected as rapporteur. SBSTTA then adopted the agenda and organization of work without amendment.

GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY OUTLOOK: MID-TERM REVIEW OF PROGRESS TOWARDS THE AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGETS

REVIEW OF THE DRAFT OF THE FOURTH EDITION OF THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY OUTLOOK: Paul Leadley, Université Paris-Sud, Group Leader for the Global Biodiversity Outlook Technical Study, provided a broad overview of the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-4), acknowledging the ambitious undertaking by several contributors. He said GBO-4 drew from, *inter alia*, national reports, NBSAPs and biodiversity indicators. Leadley underscored inclusion of: regional success stories, even where

global progress has been insufficient; and the link to the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs. He introduced the target "dashboard" in the Executive Summary, which illustrates that the significant progress made to date will probably be insufficient to achieve the goals set for 2020.

Reflecting on the report, Thomas Lovejoy, Professor in the Department of Environmental Science and Policy, George Mason University, member of the Advisory Group for GBO-4, noted, *inter alia*: contrasts to GBO-3; actions to address declining biodiversity that may contain mutually reinforcing or negative trade-offs, due to interconnectedness of the Aichi Targets; the need to transmit the goal of halting biodiversity loss beyond the bounds of the biodiversity community and involve of different stakeholders in integrated management; and the importance of rendering biodiversity a central theme in the SDGs.

Responding to the presentations, TIMOR LESTE identified the need to go beyond reporting on the current status, especially where no progress is apparent. The EU suggested that methodological underpinnings be made available for application during regional and national assessments. COSTA RICA urged reporting progress on a regional basis, and PAKISTAN noted that while information on endangered species may provide a satisfactory outlook at the global level, regional dissimilarities should be taken into account.

Reacting to delegates' comments, Leadley stressed, *inter alia*: availability of methodological underpinnings, including innovative statistical analyses; collaboration with IPBES to strengthen regional analyses; and the need to build capacity to collect, analyze and make available information at the regional level.

The Secretariat introduced UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/2 and Add.1, and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/INF/2, 8 and 9, with SBSTTA Chair Dalle Tussie noting that comments for the peer review of the draft could be submitted until 9 July 2014. MALI voiced concern regarding statistical validation of GBO-4, considering only 36% of countries have provided national reports and 13% revised NBSAPs, urging that the maximum number of reports be reviewed by experts before moving forward with GBO-4.

EGYPT called for parties to submit their reports to improve the comprehensive capacity of GBO-4. BURKINA FASO suggested that the themes contained in GBO-4 be included in



NBSAPs. MALAYSIA urged including country successes as part of the report. TIMOR LESTE suggested making GBO-4 available to parties before COP 12.

THAILAND proposed including language in the recommendations to improve actions towards achieving the Strategic Plan and the role of parties. The UK, CANADA and CHINA supported producing a list of concrete strategic actions. SWITZERLAND urged linking the GBO-4 and the Executive Summary more clearly, saying it was premature to reach conclusions and develop a detailed list of actions. The Secretariat noted, *inter alia*: a plan to incorporate actions and successes from the national plans into the report.

MEXICO, CUBA, UGANDA, BRAZIL and others highlighted the need for resource mobilization in advancing progress. Colombia, for GRULAC, supported by BOLIVIA, ARGENTINA, EGYPT and BRAZIL, expressed concern over the lack of financial resources that could prevent building effective linkages with relevant organizations, including IPBES.

UGANDA and CUBA proposed a specific recommendation on capacity building to enhance implementation at the national level.

Several parties voiced concern over the amount of time available to review reports, with JAPAN and CANADA requesting an extension on the peer review deadline. INDIA emphasized the importance of peer review to ensure robust data and scientific credibility, and the EU urged participation from all parties. FRANCE called for inclusion of: comments made during SBSTTA 18, and peer review.

PERU, BRAZIL, INDIA, NORWAY, JAPAN, ZAMBIA and others highlighted the need for advocacy to send a clear political message on GBO-4 outcomes to scientists and businesses.

In support of improved communication, ZAMBIA pointed to directing outreach to those formulating the SDGs to enhance linkages between biodiversity and the post-2015 development agenda. NORWAY, supported by BRAZIL, PERU and others, recommended that the COP acknowledge the link between biodiversity and sustainable development. The UK proposed setting the key findings in the context of the discussion on SDGs.

BELARUS called for including in the recommendation a call to parties to analyze the GBO-4 conclusions and plan to adopt measures that will impact biodiversity. CHINA urged parties to take actions and measures to realize the Aichi Targets.

DIVERSITAS reiterated commitment to supporting the Secretariat through cutting-edge science and research to finalize GBO-4. UNPFII called for the effective participation of indigenous peoples. IUCN highlighted UNEP/CBD/WGRI/INF/26 containing information to assist parties in making progress on Aichi Target 12 on the prevention of species' extinction.

A contact group on GBO-4 and the Pyeongchang Roadmap, chaired by Brigitte Baptiste (Colombia), was established to meet on Tuesday evening.

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR PLANT CONSERVATION 2011-2020: On Monday afternoon, the Secretariat introduced UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/3 and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/INF/10. Chair Jean-Patrick Le Duc stressed the importance

of plant biodiversity in addressing overall biodiversity loss. Several parties noted, *inter alia*: the significant contribution of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) to the overall achievement of the Strategic Plan and the Aichi Targets; textual amendments; and national progress on meeting the targets of the GSPC. INDIA cautioned that documents may conjure an incomplete picture based on parties' desire and capacity to disaggregate data on plants, urging the Secretariat to continue analysis of incoming national reports and NBSAPs to update the documents for COP 12.

Several parties expressed concern over limited progress on meeting targets, with Senegal, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, pointing out that only the first GSPC target on online flora of all known plants will be achieved by 2020, while stressing the lack of emphasis in the document on the reasons not meeting the rest of the GSPC targets.

MEXICO identified links between the GSPC and strategies at national and subnational level. CHINA and BRAZIL proposed integration of the GSPC into the NBSAPs. The UK supported reporting by parties to improve monitoring progress. THAILAND proposed including a call to urge parties to undertake actions for the GSPC realization.

MEXICO, SOUTH AFRICA and BRAZIL noted the significance of cooperation and the importance of sharing experiences and lessons learned. GREECE stressed the necessity for further mainstreaming and for a wider network of partners. MALAYSIA, NORWAY and SWITZERLAND underlined existing collaborations, with SWITZERLAND stating that certain targets may only be reached through coordinated actions by different institutions. INDIA, GREECE and BELGIUM noted the link between IPBES and the GSPC.

SOUTH AFRICA, MALDIVES and COLOMBIA underscored the need to involve multiple sectors and stakeholders to realize some of the GSPC targets, with ECUADOR, COLOMBIA and BRAZIL urging for engagement with ILCs.

THAILAND requested the Secretariat to prepare a synthesis report, and with UNESCO and others, to focus on capacity building for consideration by SBSTTA prior to COP 13. CUBA, supported by ECUADOR, COLOMBIA, BRAZIL, BELARUS and others, pointed out that the GSPC requires additional efforts and capacity, urging resource mobilization for implementation, in particular for developing countries, SIDS and LDCs. TIMOR LESTE emphasized the need for capacity building, and technological and financial support to identify species and causes of their extinction. SUDAN and GUINEA BISSAU, with the AFRICAN GROUP and SOUTH AFRICA, reiterated the importance of capacity building for the implementation of the Aichi Targets.

On the *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group on Indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (AHTEG), CUBA called for further analysis of the key indicators. GREECE requested addressing the needs for reporting on GSPC in preparation of possible elements for the terms of reference for the AHTEG on indicators for the Strategic Plan. The UK expressed concern over the AHTEG's potential workload, and proposed consideration of additional indicators at COP 12 and, with BELGIUM, proposed aligning GSPC reporting activities with the Strategic

Plan. NORWAY lauded monitoring and use of indicators, and FRANCE and SWITZERLAND proposed amendments to key indicators within the framework of plant conservation strategies.

The IIFB lamented the lack of emphasis on botanical education and stressed the need to involve ILCs in plant conservation.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL SCIENCE-POLICY PLATFORM FOR BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES:

The Secretariat introduced UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/12/Rev.1 and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/INF/19. Calling for stronger collaboration between the IPBES and SBSTTA in order to achieve the Aichi Targets and the Convention goals, Anne Larigauderie, IPBES Executive Secretary, provided an overview of the work of IPBES, including the establishment of expert groups on, *inter alia*: delivering an assessment on pollinators, pollination and food production; and scoping and delivering a methodological assessment and development of a guide on scenario analysis and modeling of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Many parties lauded the cooperation between SBSTTA and IPBES, and stressed that duplication of work between the two organizations should be avoided. THAILAND called on the CBD Secretariat to continue joint implementation efforts and disseminate these through the CHM.

MEXICO, supported by CANADA, FINLAND, AUSTRALIA and others, called for a more dynamic relationship between the CBD and IPBES, with MEXICO noting that the procedure for submitting requests to, and prioritizing requests for, IPBES, as proposed, may not favor the Platform, as the Programme of Work and budget for 2014-2018 have already been agreed.

On submitting requests to IPBES, FRANCE, with AUSTRIA, proposed that SBSTTA may initiate submission of a request to IPBES if quick action is required. The UK, with BELGIUM, preferred that, for routine requests, SBSTTA formulate requests to IPBES through the COP, and for issues for which SBSTTA has the mandate to provide scientific advice, that SBSTTA submit these requests to IPBES directly.

CHINA noted that transmission of proposals by SBSTTA to IPBES exceeds the role of SBSTTA under CBD provisions, and proposed that the COP assume this role. ARGENTINA, supported by ETHIOPIA, called for active participation in, and coordination with, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP). BRAZIL, with GERMANY, SOUTH AFRICA, and others, called for IPBES to develop strategies to ensure the voices of ILCs and civil society organizations are heard.

JAPAN, with CANADA, supported prior prioritization of requests by SBSTTA before transmitting them to IPBES.

COLOMBIA called for clarifications, including on the role of SBSTTA focal points in the peer review of IPBES work.

Cameroon, for the AFRICAN GROUP, with AUSTRIA, EGYPT, SOUTH AFRICA and TOGO, highlighted capacity building, with the AFRICAN GROUP supporting, *inter alia*: the need to address financial gaps; and the importance of strengthening collaboration, linking IPBES, CBD and SBSTTA focal points. The AFRICAN GROUP, with URUGUAY, stressed that timing constitutes a big challenge, as SBSTTA and IPBES are at different stages of development.

BELGIUM supported the involvement of SBSTTA national focal points in the peer-review process of IPBES deliverables. SOUTH AFRICA welcomed the peer review process but called for clarification on modalities.

IUCN supported knowledge generation, policy and capacity building, stakeholder engagement and strategic partnerships.

IIFB, with UNPFII, called for workshops and studies on traditional knowledge (TK), emphasizing the participation of indigenous women, with the IIFB stressing that scientific knowledge and TK should be complementary and that availability of biodiversity data based on traditional knowledge should be promoted.

INCENTIVE MEASURES: OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED IN IMPLEMENTING OPTIONS IDENTIFIED FOR ELIMINATING, PHASING OUT OR REFORMING INCENTIVES THAT ARE HARMFUL TO BIODIVERSITY:

The Secretariat introduced UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/11, noting that the issue was discussed at WGRI 5 (UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/4/Add.1). ARGENTINA proposed deleting the item from the agenda, but Chair Le Duc encouraged parties to add to WGRI discussions.

Burundi, for the AFRICAN GROUP, noted that: some subsidies in the development sector are not necessarily harmful; sometimes a negative incentive could be positive in development terms; and negative incentives could arise with respect to synthetic biology, necessitating a monitoring network to enhance transparency.

Noting that successfully eliminating harmful incentives requires commitment at the highest level, THAILAND called for incorporating the issue in the High-Level segment of COP 12.

INDIA, with QATAR, observed that harmful incentives, including subsidies, need to be understood in the context of their goals. INDIA, NORWAY, SWITZERLAND and NEW ZEALAND suggested that the Secretariat compile and present advice on overcoming obstacles. COLOMBIA noted that countries often do not develop the required capacity.

NEW ZEALAND said raising awareness among policy makers could support effective implementation of Target 3 on incentives. MALDIVES called for including: public awareness; and, with respect to eliminating subsidies, suggestions to provide alternatives.

SOUTH AFRICA noted a comprehensive range of opportunities for identifying perverse incentives is not yet available. ARGENTINA and BRAZIL called for incorporating agricultural subsidies that would benefit biodiversity.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As delegates gathered for SBSTTA 18 in Montreal on Monday, an air of excitement was pervasive in the hallways. Although some pondered which was denser – the agenda for the week or a 1,000 page-long GBO-4 draft report – the moderately brisk pace of Monday's session made delegates hopeful of making progress on the issues, and providing the COP with adequate guidance on the way forward to achieve its goals. One delegate questioned whether the CBD was the appropriate forum for addressing issues like synthetic biology, while another opined that this may “prove to be another sticking point, along with ecologically or biologically significant marine areas.”



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New posts to the knowledgebase are circulated via the *Biodiversity Update*, which is distributed exclusively through the BIODIVERSITY-L listserve.

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