



## SBSTTA HIGHLIGHTS: FRIDAY, 27 JUNE 2014

Throughout the day delegates considered draft recommendations on: GBO-4, incentive measures, IPBES, synthetic biology, IAS, marine and coastal biodiversity, and issues in progress. A contact group, chaired by Andrew Bignell (New Zealand), met during lunch to discuss textual amendments on synthetic biology.

**GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY OUTLOOK: MID-TERM REVIEW OF PROGRESS TOWARDS THE AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGETS:** Brigitte Baptiste (Colombia) reported on progress made in the contact group and delegates considered a draft recommendation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/CRP.4).

SWEDEN underscored the contribution to the post-2015 development agenda. NORWAY suggested identifying relevant stakeholders and youth in the communication strategy for GBO-4. AUSTRIA raised challenges faced and lessons learned by SBSTTA 18 with regard to the preparation and timely finalization of the draft GBO-4 to be reflected in the evaluation of scope and process of GBO-4, with BRAZIL clarifying that this be considered in the tasks of SBSTTA.

The EU requested that SBSTTA future meetings review the implications of the key findings of GBO-4 with additional information arising from, *inter alia*: guidance from cross-cutting programmes of work and the updated global indicators of the Strategic Plan, for consideration by COP 13.

Delegates approved the draft recommendation with minor amendments.

**INCENTIVE MEASURES: OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED IN IMPLEMENTING OPTIONS IDENTIFIED FOR ELIMINATING, PHASING OUT OR REFORMING INCENTIVES THAT ARE HARMFUL TO BIODIVERSITY:** Delegates considered UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/CRP.2 and approved the draft recommendation without amendments.

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL SCIENCE-POLICY PLATFORM FOR BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES:** Delegates considered UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/CRP.3. MEXICO suggested that the SBSTTA Chair, in his capacity as a MEP observer review elements of the IPBES programme of work that follow or incorporate requests from, the CBD to proactively identify products and deliverables that may be relevant for the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

After lunch, Hesiquio Benitez Diaz (Mexico), chairing the Friends of the Chair group, provided an overview of changes made to the draft recommendation. ARGENTINA noted that they were not in a position to follow parallel discussions, stressing that breezing through documents does not constitute a good practice for SBSTTA. A revised CRP document will be discussed on Saturday.

**NEW AND EMERGING ISSUES: SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY:** Andrew Bignell (New Zealand) reported on the work of the contact group, stressing that, despite the hesitant and cautious start,

significant progress was made. The contact group reconvened during lunch, after which delegates considered UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/CRP.7 on synthetic biology. Bignell reported back to plenary and, referring to text in brackets, suggested that the draft recommendation be approved as a whole, to avoid a long debate, and it was approved without amendment.

**INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES: Management of risks associated with introduction of alien species introduced as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, and as live bait and live food:** SBSTTA considered UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/CRP.6. Youngbae Suh (Republic of Korea) reported that the contact group on management of risks associated with introduction of alien species as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, and as live bait and live food, and related issues encountered no major controversies. The draft recommendation was approved without amendment.

**Review of work on invasive alien species and considerations for future work:** SBSTTA considered UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/CRP.8 in the morning and afternoon.

On a sub-paragraph on the COP calling upon parties and inviting other governments, when developing or updating and implementing their national or regional IAS strategies, to consider making use of the categorization of pathways of IAS introduction, EGYPT proposed inserting "under the provisions of the law of the sea and UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), taking into account the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities" (CBDR). CANADA opposed reference to CBDR. COLOMBIA, with PERU, suggested "under the law of the sea." ARGENTINA proposed "under UNCLOS and applicable international law." NEW ZEALAND, with MEXICO, SWEDEN, COLOMBIA and AUSTRIA, opposed reference to UNCLOS, explaining that the sea is but one IAS introduction pathway.

SWEDEN and COLOMBIA cautioned against discussions on policies and legislation.

ARGENTINA, with PERU, suggested an additional sub-paragraph referencing UNCLOS Article 196 on IAS, and stressing the voluntary character of making use of the categorization. Following lunchtime consultations, delegates amended the paragraph by inserting "on a voluntary basis."

SWEDEN proposed a new paragraph where the COP urges parties, other governments and others to recognize the need to increase knowledge and build capacity on IAS and biodiversity, and invites them to improve, harmonize and streamline the collection and dissemination of information on IAS, their threats to biodiversity and ways to manage these risks, especially in developing countries and island states. COLOMBIA stressed the need for financial resources. ARGENTINA noted that risks are not limited to developing countries and SIDS. The Secretariat suggested referencing previous decisions on capacity building without mentioning specific country groups. Following lunchtime consultations, SWEDEN withdrew its proposal.

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A paragraph on the COP requesting the Secretariat to develop or facilitate the development of an appropriate warning symbol or label that could be voluntarily used to warn of a potential hazard or risk to biodiversity when trading potentially IAS via the internet prior to COP 13, in collaboration with relevant partners, engendered much discussion.

ARGENTINA, with EGYPT and CANADA, opposed by FRANCE, FINLAND, SWEDEN and THAILAND, favored deleting the paragraph, explaining that the WTO, and not the CBD, was the appropriate forum for dealing with trade and trade-related labeling. SWEDEN emphasized that the CBD was the right forum to begin discussions. ARGENTINA said countries can develop labels nationally, while FRANCE observed that the issue needs to be addressed globally, underlining the voluntary basis of the use of such a label.

NEW ZEALAND proposed the Secretariat be requested to explore the feasibility of developing an appropriate warning label. MEXICO suggested referring to “managing or transporting” potentially IAS, with SWEDEN observing this could be a way forward. Noting that the paragraph was not in the original draft recommendation, ARGENTINA proposed bracketing the entire document. COLOMBIA observed that the document is based on scientific information and, cautioning against sending a negative message to the COP, proposed bracketing only the relevant paragraph.

Following extensive debate, delegates agreed to bracket the entire draft recommendation, with additional brackets placed around the relevant paragraph, including two alternative textual proposals by the Secretariat.

#### **MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY: EBSAs:**

Alexander Shestakov (Russian Federation), on behalf of the contact group Chair Renée Sauvé, proposed an informal group meet to consider the addendum to the draft summary report on the description of areas meeting the scientific criteria for EBSAs (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/4/Add.1). Shestakov reported square brackets around the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria in: two areas in the Arctic; specific areas in the Eastern Tropical and Temperate Pacific; and the North West Atlantic, noting that Iceland and Peru will prepare text describing their rationale. In the draft recommendation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/CRP.5), he highlighted: deleted brackets on text welcoming the scientific and technical information contained in the regional workshop reports; a request to the Secretariat to include SBSTTA 18 reports annexed to the recommendation in the EBSA repository; and a proposal recognizing that sharing the workshop reports does not prejudice the sovereign rights of coastal states.

Delegates agreed to maintain brackets on text calling for the Secretariat to explore ways and means to undertake scientific and technical analysis of the status of marine and coastal biodiversity in relation to the types and levels of human activity in areas described as meeting EBSA criteria, although BRAZIL, PERU, ARGENTINA and others remarked that this request constitutes a new step in the SBSTTA process, favoring its deletion.

With these and other amendments, delegates approved the draft recommendation.

#### **MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY: Other matters:**

Delegates considered a draft recommendation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/CRP.9). On transmitting the updated synthesis of the impacts of ocean acidification on marine biodiversity to the Joint Liaison Group of the three Rio Conventions, delegates agreed to include this as a request to the Secretariat, and not a request to the COP, in order to meet the deadline of the work of the Liaison Group. SWEDEN proposed requesting the Secretariat, UNEP and donors to support: development of understanding of the context-specific challenges and enabling factors that arise within marine spatial planning and implementation; as well as enhanced methods and guidance for measuring progress towards meeting marine spatial planning goals. Delegates agreed to bracket this text, and approved the draft recommendation with these and other minor amendments.

**CONSIDERATION OF ISSUES IN PROGRESS: Biodiversity and climate change:** In the evening, delegates considered UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/CRP.10, which was the subject of a lengthy debate.

On the COP welcoming the Warsaw Framework for REDD+, BELGIUM, supported by SWEDEN, NORWAY, SWITZERLAND, AUSTRIA and others, said the CDB should maximize the potential of REDD+ for creating biodiversity-related benefits, without

additional requirements; and proposed referencing all UNFCCC decisions on REDD+, and two new paragraphs reflecting this and requesting the Secretariat to provide an assessment report on REDD+ guidance. BRAZIL, with MALAYSIA, ARGENTINA, COSTA RICA, CHINA, MEXICO and others, opposed.

On the COP encouraging parties to integrate ecosystem-based approach into their national policies and programmes, the EU proposed encouraging “to promote and implement” ecosystem-based approaches to mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction. This was opposed by BRAZIL and ARGENTINA.

BOLIVIA, supported by EGYPT, BRAZIL, COSTA RICA, PERU, CUBA and URUGUAY and opposed by BELGIUM and CANADA, proposed a new paragraph promoting non-market-based approaches.

BELGIUM proposed requesting the Secretariat to keep in mind the mandate given in Decision XI/20, paragraph 16 (producing an update on the potential impacts of geo-engineering techniques on biodiversity, and on the regulatory framework of climate-related geo-engineering), and to deliver upon this request by a future meeting of SBSTTA prior to COP 13, which was opposed by BRAZIL and COSTA RICA, questioning the procedure.

Noting the amount of disagreement, BRAZIL suggested that no recommendation be forwarded to COP.

Delegates agreed to bracket insertions as well as the whole document.

**Ecosystem conservation and restoration:** SBSTTA Chair Dalle Tussie introduced a draft recommendation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/CRP.11).

BELGIUM urged that text on the link between ecosystem services and sustainable development send a scientific message from SBSTTA to COP. Although many parties supported this concept, NORWAY recalled a WGRI 5 decision in UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/L.9 that delivers a similar, more general message. The Secretariat offered, and delegates agreed, to amended text, that refers to the ongoing discussion in the post-2015 development agenda and the contribution of ecosystem conservation and restoration and related services to sustainable development and poverty eradication.

FRANCE highlighted the priority to avoid or reduce ecosystem losses, before promoting restoration activities. CANADA suggested requesting the Secretariat to consider the upcoming work of IPBES global assessment on land degradation and restoration, and report back to SBSTTA.

Delegates approved the draft recommendation, with this and other minor textual changes.

#### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

Despite lack of adequate sleep following a long night of negotiations, delegates arrived in plenary fully engaged and ready to plough through the CRPs and adopt final recommendations.

There seemed to be an impasse on review of work and considerations for future work on IAS, as one party called for bracketing the whole CRP document, rejecting a paragraph on developing a label to be voluntarily used to warn of potential risks to biodiversity when trading potentially IAS on the internet. While the same party insisted that the CBD was not the right forum to consider trade-related issues, one sober-minded delegate opined that this was not a good reason to bracket the entire document, “of scientific value to all of us,” with another querying: “How then do we inform the buyer of the dangers involved?”

Not all delegates were satisfied with progress made, as one was heard saying “a lot of words are flying, but the world out there is an entirely different ball-game,” mentioning “blatant” cases of unsustainable practices and calling for concrete actions, while another one wondered whether endless hours spent selecting between “taking note” or “welcoming” recommendations could be put to better use.

As delegates met into the night to make further headway, many calls were heard on the issue of duplication of work; yet all were determined to strive ahead towards more constructive recommendations to the COP – no matter how long it takes.

**ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:** The Earth Negotiations Bulletin summary and analysis of WGRI 5 and SBSTTA 18 will be available on Tuesday, 1 July 2014 online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/wgri5-sbstta18/>