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## SBSTTA 19 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2015

On Monday, 2 November 2015, SBSTTA 19 delegates met in plenary throughout the day to address organizational matters, and consider strategic scientific and technical issues related to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020: further consideration of the implications of the findings of the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO 4), including with respect to biodiversity mainstreaming across sectors; key scientific and technical needs, and related research; tools to evaluate the effectiveness of policy instruments; and indicators.

### OPENING PLENARY

SBSTTA Chair Andrew Bignell (New Zealand) opened the meeting, highlighting: the concurrent convening of SBSTTA and the Article 8(j) Working Group; the SDGs as an enabling framework for implementing the Strategic Plan; the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) resolution on the international arrangement on forests beyond 2015; the anticipated new climate change agreement; the need for coherent national land use policies; and opportunities to input into the draft global assessments coordinated by IPBES.

Balakrishna Pispupati, on behalf of UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner, called for improved financing, stakeholder participation and national biodiversity targets. CBD Executive Secretary Bráulio Dias urged for mainstreaming biodiversity into fisheries, agriculture and forestry, and underscored: references to food security in the SDGs; references to ecosystem management in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; and land-based progress indicators adopted under the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) of relevance to the Rio Conventions.

**ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS:** SBSTTA Chair Bignell introduced the agenda, proposed format and organization of work (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/19/1 and Add.1), which were adopted without amendment. Endang Sukara (Indonesia) was elected as SBSTTA 19 rapporteur. CANADA noted that, due to the transition period following federal elections, their delegation will follow deliberations without intervening.

### STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

**BIODIVERSITY MAINSTREAMING:** The Secretariat introduced the relevant documentation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/19/2). Several countries pointed to opportunities for biodiversity mainstreaming in the context of the SDGs, with FINLAND recommending using the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda as an opportunity to mainstream national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs). Some delegations recommended various means to share mainstreaming success stories. Mexico, for GRULAC, urged attaining the

Aichi targets that lag behind in implementation, and announced a workshop in Mexico to develop guidelines on biodiversity mainstreaming for review by SBSTTA 20 and SBI 1, supported by SWEDEN, SUDAN and FINLAND. GRULAC, JAPAN and the GLOBAL YOUTH BIODIVERSITY NETWORK recommended more focus on mainstreaming in the draft guidelines for sixth national reports.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, proposed developing an action plan for ecosystem restoration. BELGIUM, supported by SWITZERLAND, NORWAY, SWEDEN and FRANCE, proposed that the Secretariat explore opportunities for mainstreaming biodiversity with other relevant organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). NORWAY recalled the role of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in reviewing and monitoring the SDGs. SOUTH AFRICA, supported by SWEDEN, suggested considering achievements of, and synergies among, biodiversity-related conventions, including the ITPGRFA. Serbia for Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) underscored the socioeconomic dimensions of the ecosystem approach. INDIA recommended taking account of the inter-connectedness of species and ecosystems.

Guatemala for the Like-minded Megadiverse Countries (LMMCs) called for practical approaches, such as sharing lessons learnt and looking to IPLCs for successful conservation practices. The PHILIPPINES emphasized the importance of engagement with IPLCs and other stakeholders. COLOMBIA suggested taking into account mining activities and mining-related conflicts. CHINA underscored the need to change consumption habits.

BELARUS called for deeper policy analysis on agriculture, pollution and ecosystem degradation. PAKISTAN lamented that NBSAPs do not cover geoengineering or genetically modified organisms (GMOs). SWEDEN recommended taking into account the value of ecosystem services in all sectors. BOLIVIA emphasized indigenous peoples' collective action.

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) suggested addressing the Strategic Plan from the standpoint of collective rights, in cooperation with UN agencies and with indigenous peoples' direct participation. FAO said that the agriculture and biodiversity communities must work effectively together, welcoming the mainstreaming of biodiversity within and across agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

The International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB) stressed that: participation modalities of the Article 8(j) Working Group should be followed in SBSTTA and SBI; national multistakeholder approaches are insufficient and targeted action to include IPLCs is required; and the nexus between humans and nature, rather than just biodiversity, should be mainstreamed. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

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underscored the need to establish synergies between the Strategic Plan and related processes, and prepare an information note for SBI on ongoing activities and support for parties. The GLOBAL FOREST COALITION called for transformation rather than mainstreaming, emphasizing the rights of women and IPLCs.

**SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL NEEDS:** The Secretariat introduced the relevant document (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/19/3). Egypt for the AFRICAN GROUP stressed the need for: available and accessible data; involvement of social scientists; and further collaboration with relevant organizations, including the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO-BON) and Future Earth. BRAZIL expressed concern about the collaboration of CBD and Future Earth, noting that monitoring and reporting need to respect national sovereignty.

The UK emphasized social sciences tools for behavioral change and improved access to biodiversity-related data, including incorporating specific steps as an annex to the recommendation. The Marshall Islands, for PACIFIC ISLANDS, noted limited scientific and technical capacities in the region, and underscored the need to strengthen the science-policy interface. JAPAN cautioned against duplication of work between SBSTTA and IPBES. FRANCE, supported by BELARUS, urged implementing the Global Taxonomic Initiative (GTI) for meeting the Aichi Targets.

SOUTH AFRICA underscored the need for coordinated research, data quality particularly in relation to traditional knowledge, and capacity building regarding DNA bar coding for species identification. The NETHERLANDS and GERMANY cautioned against specific mention of tools such as DNA bar coding. The LMMCs called for applying CBD Article 12 (research and training) to the Strategic Plan implementation.

FINLAND underlined gaps in scientific knowledge and underscored the need for an action plan associated to Aichi target 12 (threatened species). THE PHILIPPINES called for technical guidance to establish a community monitoring system and make data compatible with other datasets. INDONESIA emphasized the need for accessible scientific and technical knowledge. COLOMBIA suggested more research on improving data processing and accessibility, including data generated through indigenous and citizen knowledge. The IIFB recalled COP 12 decision to consider how IPLCs can effectively participate in collecting and analyzing data.

**EFFECTIVENESS OF POLICY INSTRUMENTS:** The Secretariat introduced the relevant document (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/19/4). The UK and PACIFIC ISLANDS suggested sharing experiences by compiling case studies and lessons learned. JAPAN recognized the need to review national experiences and best practices. MEXICO suggested compiling practical methodologies. BELGIUM highlighted the usefulness to parties of case studies, including detailed descriptions of methodologies. INDIA noted the challenges of measuring effectiveness of policy instruments and the importance of policy coherence for mainstreaming biodiversity.

CHINA called for the consideration of national circumstances, technologies and different capabilities. The PACIFIC ISLANDS noted the need to streamline and harmonize reporting to the CBD and other conventions. SWITZERLAND recommended measuring both policy efficiency and effectiveness.

The NETHERLANDS and GERMANY cautioned against duplication of work with IPBES and, with FINLAND, the creation of additional reporting requirements by developing online reporting tools. TOGO called for technology transfer to conserve biodiversity and carry out inclusive and integrated scientific research. ECUADOR suggested systematically understanding the direct and indirect impacts of various policies on biodiversity. THE PHILIPPINES called for a protected area management effectiveness tool.

**INDICATORS:** The Secretariat introduced the relevant document (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/19/5). SWITZERLAND presented the report of the *ad hoc* technical expert group (AHTEG) on indicators for the Strategic Plan (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/19/INF/5).

The MALDIVES, SOUTH AFRICA, BRAZIL, the NETHERLANDS, the UK, BELGIUM and GERMANY supported peer-reviewing the list of generic and specific indicators identified by the AHTEG to monitor progress at the global level towards the Aichi targets. The UK underscored work on indicators for the SDGs, as well as under IPBES and other biodiversity-related conventions. FINLAND cautioned against duplication of efforts, calling for joint reporting between different conventions. MEXICO and FRANCE emphasized the need to align Aichi Targets' and SDGs' indicators, with NORWAY calling upon the Secretariat to seek synergies. The NETHERLANDS and GERMANY cautioned against lowering the level of ambition of the Aichi Targets' indicators because of other processes. ECUADOR noted that biodiversity-related SDG indicators should be developed on the basis of the Aichi Targets' indicators. The PHILIPPINES recommended further involvement by the Secretariat in the development of SDG indicators. MOROCCO called for prioritizing the updating of data to support the identified indicators.

CHINA noted the absence of indicators for target 20 (financial resource mobilization), and the need to enhance transparency, the scientific basis for indicators, and evaluation methods. BENIN stressed the need for measurable indicators regarding traditional knowledge.

JAPAN suggested ensuring flexible application of indicators in national contexts. INDONESIA noted that some indicators are incompatible with indicators in their NBSAP. ISRAEL requested clarity on how global indicators can be used at the national level. COSTA RICA proposed using national indicators to identify regional trends. PACIFIC ISLANDS called for specific training and technical assistance on indicators and monitoring.

NIGER noted that the indicators list needs to be regularly reviewed and linked with national indicators. NEW ZEALAND suggested prioritizing a small set of globally consistent indicators. BURUNDI noted the lack of quantitative data and the need for data exchange frameworks among countries and organizations. The EU and the REPUBLIC OF KOREA suggested streamlining indicators among relevant conventions. COLOMBIA noted the need to integrate biodiversity data into national statistic systems.

The IIFB welcomed IPBES' work on incorporating traditional knowledge, and noted the connection between SDG target 2.5 (seeds and traditional knowledge) and Aichi Target 18 (traditional knowledge), underscoring the need for incorporating customary tenure rights. The UNCCD called for aligning indicators and approaches on land degradation between Aichi Target 15 (climate change) and SDG 15 (terrestrial biodiversity). IUCN recommended using existing knowledge products such as the Red List Index as indicators for a number of targets. WWF called upon the Secretariat to engage with the SDG indicator process to ensure coherence and complementarity, and recommended including the Living Planet Index into the list of operational indicators for relevant Aichi targets.

### IN THE CORRIDORS

As delegates gathered for SBSTTA 19 in sunny Montreal, they were wondering about the new, denser format of this meeting, which is for the first time conducted concurrently with the Working Group on Article 8(j) on traditional knowledge. Some noted with slight concern that this will allow for only six, instead of the usual ten, sessions of deliberations. But the brisk pace of Monday's plenary discussions fuelled optimism that all agenda items may be sufficiently addressed nonetheless. "Let us see when we reach controversial agenda items," commented a veteran, however. Others were wondering whether the format will effectively integrate traditional knowledge in SBSTTA's work, and whether the three days left for the deliberations of the Working Group on Article 8(j) will suffice to tackle its own agenda.