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HIGHLIGHTS OF SBSTTA-2 WEDNESDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 1996

Working Groups 1 and 2 convened morning and afternoon sessions on the third day of the second session of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-2). Working Group 1 reconvened at 7:00 p.m.

WORKING GROUP 1

The CHAIR introduced a second revision on Agenda Items 3.1 (assessment), 3.2 (monitoring), and 3.3 (indicators). NEW ZEALAND said that taxonomy is essential for monitoring and indicators. GERMANY suggested an expert group. The US added a reference to the aggregate impact of agricultural practices and the need for understanding agriculture's role in the overall landscape context. MALAWI added institution building and enhancement to a call for capacity building for developing countries. SWEDEN added references to strengthening links between assessment of biodiversity and natural resource management.

The CHAIR introduced his draft on discussion of Agenda Item 3.9 (agricultural biodiversity). He advised Parties that there is no conflict between the policy role of the CBD and the FAO, and formed a contact group chaired by Zimbabwe to advance the text. The NETHERLANDS, supported by the EC, recalled discussion on a gap analysis work program regarding agroecosystems and agro-genetics. He favored a joint approach with the FAO. SWEDEN, supported by Denmark, suggested following the example of SBSTTA-1's work on marine biodiversity and recalled that Sweden and Brazil had submitted extensive inputs not reflected in the text.

The Secretariat introduced Agenda Item 3.10, terrestrial biodiversity (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/2/11, 2/12, 2/Inf.1, 2/Inf.3, 2/Inf.6 and 2/Inf.7). GERMANY called for priorities including CSD/CBD coordination and finances for combating desertification. MEXICO presented the Global Biodiversity Forum's Statement on Forests and Biodiversity. Delegations prioritized economic and non-economic benefits of forests, criteria and indicators, underlying causes of degradation, capacity building, and restoration of degraded lands. ZAIRE highlighted financing for countries with reserves.

A number of Parties recommended that SBSTTA await the outcome of IPF deliberations before deciding a work programme. Several countries highlighted the contribution of "working forests", a participatory ecosystem approach, integration of biodiversity into sustainable use policies, and effects of human disturbances. The AFRICAN GROUP recommended fertilizer impact studies. FINLAND highlighted harmonization of approaches. COLOMBIA

asked that SBSTTA limit analysis to technical forest/biodiversity conservation linkages.

FRANCE recalled a SBSTTA-1 recommendation that COP-3 respond to a request from the Forest Panel (IPF) for advice on biodiversity measurements. MALAWI called for assistance to national initiatives. The IVORY COAST highlighted recommendations from the Francophone Group on over-exploitation. NORWAY said knowledge gaps identified by the IPF would exist whatever the outcome of the IPF process. The PHILIPPINES recommended focus on *in situ* conservation and participation by indigenous communities. DENMARK and AUSTRIA supported a programme adaptable to IPF decisions.

GERMANY rejected the proposed medium-term programme and suggested that SBSTTA advise the IPF. CAMEROON supported an immediate programme of work and IPF guidelines. BURKINA FASO warned against delaying CBD implementation. The BIODIVERSITY ACTION NETWORK suggested that some Parties may want to slow progress. With the FUNDACION PRO-SIERRA NEVADA DE SANTA MARTA, he called for work on the international dimensions underlying forest biodiversity loss. THE INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE TROPICAL FOREST called for a standing forum for indigenous peoples.

The CHAIR introduced draft text on Agenda Item 3.12, coastal and marine biodiversity. SBSTTA-2 was to review work by an expert group created by COP-2 (Jakarta Mandate) but this work has not started. Delegations generally supported the text. AUSTRALIA proposed language on lack of progress, drafting rather than "setting" priorities, and on resources for implementation. The UK rejected the proposal for a global assessment. The MARSHALL ISLANDS called for equitable geographic representation at the expert meeting and acknowledgement of regional activities. CANADA urged that delegates to other fora acquaint themselves with the implications of the CBD. He favored the GBF's recommendation for a global state of knowledge assessment. SWEDEN noted that further COP guidelines to the Secretariat were redundant, and recommended postponing further work until SBSTTA-4. NEW ZEALAND objected.

GERMANY highlighted tourism's impact on marine biodiversity. JAPAN recommended an open-ended expert meeting to ensure transparency. The CHAIR explained that he wanted SBSTTA to urge the COP to implement the Jakarta Mandate (Decision II/10). He invited Parties to forward comments for the expert meeting to the Secretariat. SAMOA, MAURITIUS and the MALDIVES said the expert meeting should hear representatives from small island states. NORWAY and ICELAND supported using a full roster of experts. COLOMBIA and the US asked the Chair to ensure that his draft is consistent with the Jakarta

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Mandate. SWEDEN, supported by PAKISTAN, supported an overall research review, assisted by UNEP and independent scientists.

SOUTH KOREA said priorities should be based on a global assessment. The MARSHALL ISLANDS suggested that Parties and other organizations forward comments to the expert meeting. SWEDEN, supported by the UK, recommended that the Secretariat document should not be forwarded to the expert meeting. AUSTRALIA said the Secretariat's document on marine and coastal biodiversity could be critically examined by the experts. UNEP announced it is preparing documentation to help implement the Jakarta Mandate. UNESCO commended the DIVERSITAS research programme.

Working Group 1 reconvened in the evening to consider the Chair's revised text on Agenda Items 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/WG.1/CRP.1). An Annex to the text contained an indicative framework of activities that have a significant adverse impact on biodiversity. Delegates deleted the Annex, but added specific amendments from previous discussions. Delegates then considered a revised draft of the Chair's text on Agenda Item 3.12 (marine and coastal). Proposed amendments included consideration of the views of the wider roster of experts during the expert group meeting and the output of SBSTTA-3 based on the expert meeting.

WORKING GROUP 2

The Secretariat introduced the document on capacity building for taxonomy (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/2/5). Several countries called for funding and suggested the GEF. MALAYSIA, GERMANY, SWEDEN, THAILAND, COLOMBIA and CHINA suggested using the CHM to disseminate taxonomic information. GERMANY, INDONESIA, COLOMBIA, SWEDEN and the UK called for urgent capacity building. GERMANY called for priority setting and a maximum use of existing organizations. ITALY, NIGERIA and INDIA supported regional centres of excellence, which were opposed by COLOMBIA, the US and NEW ZEALAND. Joined by ARGENTINA, CAMEROON, BELGIUM and BRAZIL, COLOMBIA supported regional training programmes. The UK urged support for parataxonomist training. The NETHERLANDS considered basic systematic work in taxonomy not a matter for CBD, since it is already covered by UNESCO. NORWAY supported SWEDEN's call for developing national plans to prioritize taxonomic activity.

ARGENTINA offered technical assistance for regional training. CAMEROON highlighted training needs. FRANCE suggested telecommunications to disseminate information. NORWAY and NIGERIA called for national taxonomy action plans and GEF funding. MALAWI, for the AFRICAN GROUP, suggested resources for training and networking to attract young scientists.

SWITZERLAND called for long-term capacity building. BELGIUM said job opportunities will attract young scientists. AUSTRALIA offered to lead a global initiative, and, with NEW ZEALAND, suggested incorporating traditional knowledge into databases. INDIA and ZIMBABWE supported data repatriation. The US emphasized the value of taxonomic data for sustainable use. SOUTH KOREA stressed regional cooperation. DIVERSITAS proposed a liaison group of taxonomists. BIONET INTERNATIONAL emphasized GEF support. MALAYSIA and CANADA endorsed the need to educate policy makers. The AMERICAN PLANT SCIENCE NETWORK urged support for existing regional initiatives. The EXPERT-CENTRE FOR TAXONOMIC IDENTIFICATION urged sharing of knowledge.

The Secretariat introduced the document on economic valuation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/2/13). The narrow focus of the paper on genetic resources was criticized by some countries. CHILE reported on a workshop on economic incentives in Santiago. GERMANY, supported by numerous delegations, agreed that the issue should be a standing item. JAPAN and the US disagreed. SWITZERLAND urged specific policy recommendations. GERMANY noted work of other organizations on economic incentives. MALAYSIA, INDONESIA, NIGERIA and NORWAY emphasized that economic valuation should not be a prerequisite for policy action.

The AFRICAN GROUP recommended participatory and bottom-up approaches involving indigenous communities. UNCTAD stressed that the issue of valuation should not be seen in isolation. ITALY stressed the collective value of biodiversity and FRANCE, along with SOUTH AFRICA and CAMEROON, stressed symbolic and cultural values. NEW ZEALAND and FRANCE called on the CHM to collect empirical data. NORWAY called for an integration of economics into other CBD items.

The NETHERLANDS proposed focusing on genetic resources valuation. INDIA highlighted the commercial value of biodiversity and supported UNCTAD's BIOTRADE initiative. ZIMBABWE and the US cautioned against deferring action. COLOMBIA linked economics and biodiversity to the equitable utilization of genetic resources. SOUTH AFRICA suggested quantifying existence values. JAPAN suggested better valuation of PGRFA. URUGUAY underlined valuation as a policy-making tool. PERU recommended presenting the Santiago workshop results at COP-3. ZAMBIA said valuation instruments are inadequate. MOROCCO called for evaluation of negative impacts. The FOUR DIRECTIONS COUNCIL emphasized biodiversity values for agriculture.

The Working Group discussed several draft Chair's texts:

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER: The paragraph on liaison groups was deleted. CANADA and AUSTRALIA proposed adding the CHM to the list of technology transfer recommendations. MALAYSIA, COLOMBIA and ANTIGUA & BARBUDA objected to the proposal by JAPAN and AUSTRALIA to delete the paragraph on identification of appropriate technologies for genetic resource utilization. From the paragraph on private sector involvement, JAPAN, supported by NEW ZEALAND, the UK and the EC, proposed deleting the sentence urging all Parties to encourage private sector technology transfer. INDIA, INDONESIA, COLOMBIA, MALAWI and CAMEROON objected. NEW ZEALAND proposed compromise text. From the paragraph calling on the CHM to facilitate information sharing, COLOMBIA, supported by INDIA and the US, deleted specific references to putting "brokers" into contact with each other.

CLEARING HOUSE MECHANISM: ANTIGUA & BARBUDA added language on the financial mechanism, thematic foci and pilot projects to enable implementation of the CHM. GERMANY emphasized decentralization and training. CANADA added that information should be controlled by the providers. The US deleted a needs survey of Parties. MALAWI and INDONESIA proposed GEF support. CANADA proposed replacing "guidance from experts" with text calling for an advisory committee coordinated by the Secretariat. INDIA added guidance in a "transparent manner" and the UK called for an "informal" committee. The paragraph linking the CHM to National Focal Points, including national patent offices, was amended by AUSTRALIA to "for example, patent offices" at the suggestion of the PHILIPPINES. SWEDEN proposed that the CHM review case studies of scientific cooperation. This was incorporated as a possible topic of regional CHM workshops by INDIA and the US.

BIOSAFETY: ANTIGUA & BARBUDA, supported by NIGERIA, rearranged the paragraph on funding, emphasizing guidance to the GEF on capacity building. NEW ZEALAND proposed deleting reference to the Protocol on Biosafety. ANTIGUA & BARBUDA and MALAYSIA objected.

IN THE CORRIDORS

A number of delegations and NGO representatives expressed "disappointment" and "shock" at the brevity of the secretariat's draft summary of Tuesday's exhaustive discussion on agricultural biodiversity. One NGO participant said he had begun to wonder whether the process itself was preventing the realization of the CBD's objectives. Some delegations complained about lost discussion time. Reported explanations included a gap between the expectations of the Secretariat and those of the delegates.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Plenary will meet at 10:00 a.m. in room 407A.