



SBSTTA 18 HIGHLIGHTS:

THURSDAY, 26 JUNE 2014

On Thursday morning, delegates resumed plenary discussions on issues in progress. Three contact groups met in the afternoon on synthetic biology, marine and coastal biodiversity, and IAS. In the evening, SBSTTA reconvened in plenary to consider issues on health and biodiversity, and recommendations to COP 12 on: GBO-4; progress in achieving the targets of the GSPC; obstacles encountered in implementing options identified for eliminating, phasing out, or reforming incentives; and IPBES.

CONSIDERATION OF ISSUES IN PROGRESS: Delegates continued discussions on Thursday morning on issues in progress.

Integration of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into climate change mitigation and adaptation activities: FRANCE observed that climate change presents risks as well as opportunities to transition to low-carbon technologies, and, with INDIA, welcomed integration of climate change mitigation and adaptation in NBSAPs.

TIMOR LESTE underlined gaps in research on plant species vulnerability. BELGIUM, supported by NEW ZEALAND, suggested information sharing through the CHM, and requested that the Climate Change Adaptation Database be updated.

FAO reported that the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) will consider draft guidelines to support the integration of genetic diversity within national climate change adaptation plans.

Application of relevant safeguards for biodiversity with regard to policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to REDD+: Supporting GRULAC and others, BELGIUM explained that the CBD is not preempting the UNFCCC on REDD+, and requested advice from the Secretariat on maximizing countries' REDD+ activities without imposing additional requirements on parties. BOLIVIA noted that models coming out of relevant safeguards need to: rely on sustainability; share non-market benefits; protect Mother Earth; and strengthen forest management with respect for local customs. BELGIUM supported NEPAL on the need for further guidance on the implementation of safeguards, and the UK, on assessment of guidelines. INDIA stated that, given the Warsaw Framework on REDD+ under the UNFCCC, no additional recommendations are required.

ILCs urged for application of the precautionary principle to safeguards, calling for, *inter alia*: policies that strengthen their role; PIC for the use of natural resources; and, with GLOBAL YOUTH BIODIVERSITY NETWORK, monitoring safeguards.

Climate-related geo-engineering: BELGIUM supported the PHILIPPINES on the need for the precautionary approach, and welcomed amendments to the London Protocol on marine geo-engineering, with NORWAY encouraging its ratification.

SOUTH AFRICA, supported by TIMOR LESTE, reiterated the need to better understand the impact of geo-engineering socially, culturally and ethically and, with INDIA, underscored that previous decisions advocating the precautionary principle remain valid. BOLIVIA emphasized that all activities related to geo-engineering

must be based on scientific knowledge and PIC. The GLOBAL YOUTH BIODIVERSITY FORUM supported a moratorium on geo-engineering and urged full prosecution of violators.

Ecosystem conservation and restoration: BELGIUM supported THAILAND on the role of PPAs and stressed: that large-scale restoration is only equitable when local communities' needs are met; the need for a comprehensive land-use planning approach, and a policy mix involving governments, the private sector and civil society; and that ecosystem conservation and restoration need to be reflected in the post-2015 development agenda.

SOUTH AFRICA and NIGER supported the AFRICAN GROUP on the importance of involving ILCs in implementation of ecosystem conservation and restoration. BRAZIL and TIMOR LESTE reiterated statements from CAMEROON on the importance of capacity building.

FAO reported on the launch of the FAO Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism, aimed to support countries in their efforts to restore degraded lands, highlighting the role of the private sector. The BERN CONVENTION shared positive evaluations on awareness of impacts of climate change on biodiversity, outlining steps to, *inter alia*: identify vulnerable species and ecosystems; and implement management strategies and monitoring schemes.

Biofuels and biodiversity: The Secretariat introduced UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/15, noting that no draft recommendations have been prepared.

BRAZIL stated that information contained in the document is incorrect, unbalanced and prescriptive, questioning links to deforestation and land-use change as well as the food-fuel competition.

On definitions, ARGENTINA underscored lack of universally accepted definitions and a variety of production systems worldwide that render standardization of criteria unattainable. BRAZIL, with ARGENTINA, suggested definitions take into account the work of relevant organizations, including the Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP). TIMOR LESTE said a comprehensive review of the document is required. ITALY underscored the need to standardize definitions. The UK noted that definitions included in the document are a good reflection of the discussion within the UNFCCC and the Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials (RSB), but suggested that SBSTTA not recommend their adoption. CANADA called for improvement of existing definitions that are not agreed and are not binding, and, with NEW ZEALAND, suggested parties utilize existing definitions in their national context.

QATAR said sustainable use of biofuels is unfeasible, linking increase in biofuel production to escalation of food prices that undermines food security. NEW ZEALAND, with CANADA, noted there is no need for further guidance by the CBD on biofuels, as current decisions take into account both negative and positive impacts of biofuels on biodiversity.

CAMBODIA stressed that identification of criteria for sustainability regarding biofuels should include participation of ILCs and use of TK, while standards for identifying key biodiversity areas (KBAs) should take into account socioeconomic and sociocultural considerations.

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ITALY underscored, *inter alia*, the need to cooperate with other organizations, including FAO and the International Energy Agency (IEA) to review the document; remove emphasis from the RSB; and use certification schemes that assess sustainability of bioenergy production, including socio-economic dimensions.

CANADA called, among others, for further understanding on biofuels, and deletion of reference to subsidies as those are not unique to biofuels.

TUNISIA called for striking an appropriate balance on biofuels, describing the issue as a “double-edged sword,” and incorporating social, economic, environmental and cultural considerations.

The CBD ALLIANCE, with UNPFII, stressed that biofuels cause enormous harm to biodiversity, calling for the removal of related subsidies and perverse incentives.

Sustainable use of biodiversity: bushmeat and sustainable wildlife management: The Secretariat introduced UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/16 and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/INF/22.

MEXICO welcomed collaboration with CITES and IPBES, and INDIA suggested sending the IPSI progress report to CITES prior to its 17th COP. SWEDEN suggested incorporating sustainable wildlife management into NBSAPs.

THAILAND warned of the dangers of disease transmission through hunting and handling wildlife species, and urged prioritizing global discussions on illegal wildlife trade.

ALBANIA shared progress on its sustainable wildlife management programme, and highlighted a moratorium imposed on hunting through 2017 to introduce a sustainable pathway towards wildlife utilization.

TOGO, supported by TUNISIA, NAMIBIA and CAMEROON, lamented the increase in wildlife crime in Africa, and noted the important role of community-based wildlife management activities to conserve biodiversity.

IIFB welcomed the strengthening of regulation to ensure community-based wildlife benefits are devolved to the local level. UNU underscored that research indicates sustainable wildlife management has a beneficial impact on ILCs. FAO noted the complex associations of local communities with hunting practices, including cultural and religious connotations, and urged mitigation of human-wildlife conflict.

Health and biodiversity: The Secretariat introduced UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/17 and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/INF/15, noting the absence of a draft recommendation, and highlighting that the State of Knowledge Review on the Interlinkages between Biodiversity and Human Health is open for review until 10 July 2014.

FINLAND, with AUSTRIA, requested the Secretariat to establish a joint work programme with WHO. TURKEY, supported by SRI LANKA and THAILAND, requested the Secretariat to collaborate with WHO and other relevant organizations on these issues and report on progress to SBSTTA prior to COP 13.

FRANCE and COLOMBIA, supported by IIFB and UNPFII, called for full participation of ILCs, particularly women. BRAZIL and COLOMBIA supported the development of a roadmap to explore synergies with the Strategic Plan, highlighting the impact of IAS on human health. AUSTRIA and BELGIUM noted the link between health and biodiversity as a contribution to mainstreaming for the post-2015 development agenda. URUGUAY emphasized the interrelationship between biological diversity, climate change and health.

WHO welcomed joint activities between the CBD and WHO and called for information on biodiversity and health to be mainstreamed into national planning policies. IUCN stressed a proactive and integrated risk assessment to promote understanding of health and biodiversity.

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

Delegates considered UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/CRP.1 on progress in achieving the targets of the GSPC 2011-2020.

CANADA, supported by the UK and BELGIUM and opposed by SWITZERLAND and MEXICO, proposed deletion of a paragraph calling for preparation of indicators, including disaggregated information relevant to plant conservation by the AHTEG on Indicators for the Strategic Plan, with CANADA noting, *inter alia*, that this cannot be done before COP 12.

CANADA, MEXICO and SWITZERLAND proposed to invite the Global Biodiversity Indicator Partnership, in collaboration with the Global Partnership on Plant Conservation, to develop indicators for the GSPC aligned to the Strategic Plan 2011-2020.

Delegates approved the draft recommendation, with minor textual changes.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL SCIENCE-POLICY PLATFORM FOR BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES:

Delegates considered a draft recommendation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/CRP.3). BELGIUM, with MEXICO and SWITZERLAND, proposed that SBSTTA should, “in accordance with the procedures set out by IPBES”, prepare recommendations to the COP regarding issues that may be submitted as requests to the Platform, taking into account, *inter alia*, submissions from parties and other relevant information. Delegates will continue consideration of the draft on Friday.

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

Delegates considered a draft recommendation (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/CRP.2). CANADA questioned the scope of having another decision on the topic, since WGRI 5 has already dealt with it. Explanations were provided by the Secretariat. CANADA, opposed by NORWAY, asked for deletion of the paragraph requesting the Executive Secretary as part of his work pursuant to paragraph 1(a) of recommendation 5/10 of WGRI to compile and develop advice on options for overcoming obstacles. The text remained in brackets and the draft will be revisited on Friday.

CONTACT GROUPS:

Three contact groups met on Thursday afternoon. In the contact group on marine issues, chaired by Renée Sauvé (Canada), delegates considered a non-paper on underwater noise. The group examined 16 proposed measures to address the potential significant impacts of underwater noise, with one delegate opposing a reference to “offering incentives” for the development of quieter technologies.

During 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, chaired by Youngbae Suh (Republic of Korea), delegates considered a non-paper containing draft text of a SBSTTA recommendation to COP 12, and guidance on devising and implementing measures to address such risks contained in an annex, introducing clarifying amendments.

The contact group on synthetic biology, chaired by Andrew Bignell (New Zealand), addressed, *inter alia*: the nature of benefits and risks associated with the components, organisms and products resulting from synthetic biology techniques; the nature of existing national and international regulatory regimes; whether synthetic biology constitutes a new and emerging issue under the criteria set out in paragraph 12 of decision IX/29; and the nature of requests to the Secretariat in the recommendation to the COP.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Participants were slow to gather on Thursday morning, perhaps savoring the sunshine before tucking in to the challenging day of contact group meetings and a resumed plenary to consider CRPs at 8:00 pm.

Progress in the area of invasive alien species was generally appreciated. However, one participant cautioned that “progress is weighted on IAS management and not enough on the prevention of IAS,” opining the need to move the discussion forward on prevention.

The contact groups reported considerable progress, especially on marine issues, particularly on EBSAs, although this did mean meeting until 1:00 am on Thursday morning. Synthetic biology produced equally smooth results, although delegates labored at length over textual differences.

Several cross-cutting activities and issues have begun to surface among agenda items, challenging delegates to absorb scientific and technical data, summarized by one participant as “yes we see the cross-cutting issues, but are we able to actually transform them into synergies for progress?”