

WGPA 2 HIGHLIGHTS:

WEDNESDAY, 13 FEBRUARY 2008

Delegates to the second meeting of the *Ad hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Protected Areas (WGPA 2) convened in plenary throughout the day where they considered conference room papers (CRP) on Review of Implementation of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) and on Options for Mobilizing, as a Matter of Urgency, Through Different Mechanisms Adequate and Timely Resources for the Implementation of the PoWPA.

PLENARY

REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PoPWA: Ositadinma Anaedu (Nigeria) chaired the meeting and invited delegates to address the CRP on Review of Implementation of the PoPWA. BRAZIL, supported by MALI and opposed by Slovenia, on behalf of the EU, said the paper did not reflect previous WGPA 2 discussions.

Regarding finalizing the ecological gap analysis to achieve the 2010 and 2012 targets, BRAZIL, supported by URUGUAY and BURKINA FASO, noted the need to reflect that some countries will require assistance to perform this task and suggested promoting the application of “tools and policy measures” to better integrate PAs into broader land/seascapes as opposed to a reference on “spatial planning.” The EU preferred to retain reference to spatial planning. Turning to improving management effectiveness, BRAZIL suggested deleting reference to monitoring and evaluation, which others preferred to maintain, and agreed to the inclusion of “collaboration with parties and donors,” as proposed by several countries. SWAZILAND, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, agreed with the need for funding to support implementation of the recommendations, capacity building and the application of management tools. He also suggested the inclusion of a 2009 timeline for countries to finalize their ecological gap analysis. ETHIOPIA suggested requesting the GEF to make funds available to enable parties to finalize their ecological gap analysis.

Recalling elements of COP decision VIII/24 (Protected Areas) on financial support, BRAZIL, CANADA and the EU, proposed additional language on the need for parties and multilateral funding agencies to provide financial support to developing countries, particularly Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition.

Delegates then debated the designation of a dedicated national focal point (NFP) for the implementation of the PoWPA. URUGUAY, BRAZIL, CHAD, and others expressed concern regarding the potential proliferation of focal points and duplication of activities, while the EU, supported by the AFRICAN GROUP, COSTA RICA, the BAHAMAS, GUINEA and ARGENTINA, called for the designation of a dedicated NFP for PAs. Croatia, on behalf of the CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN REGION (CEE), clarified that this does not entail a unique structure or institution, but only the designation of a person to coordinate activities. MALI, ECUADOR and TAJIKISTAN recommended that parties put in place a flexible structure for managing PAs with countries determining the appropriate mechanism for CBD coordination at the national level. COLOMBIA emphasized the need to enhance the effectiveness of existing focal points.

BRAZIL, supported by CHINA, BURKINA FASO, SYRIA, and ARGENTINA, suggested deleting reference to transmitting information to the Secretariat on potential PA sites identified on the basis of a gap analysis. COSTA RICA, supported by ECUADOR, the EU, ETHIOPIA and the BAHAMAS, favored its retention, with MEXICO adding that it refers to “ecological” gap analysis. CANADA, supported by PAKISTAN and SWITZERLAND, proposed alternative text stating that parties should transmit to the Secretariat national reports on the implementation of the PoWPA. COSTA RICA, supported by ECUADOR, proposed additional text calling on multilateral and bilateral agencies to strengthen their technical and financial support for the implementation of the gap analysis, sharing experiences and creating financial mechanisms.

Delegates debated the type of committee required to advise on ways and means to accelerate implementation of the PoWPA: BRAZIL preferred a “supporting committee;” CHINA, supported by CANADA, included reference to a “committee and/or mechanism;” and SYRIA, opposed by ARGENTINA and others, called for a “high-level committee.” ARGENTINA opposed direct reference to the private sector being represented on the committee. Chair Anaedu offered “advisory committees” as a compromise, and the issue remained outstanding.

BURKINA FASO suggested moving a reference on datasets regarding PA relevance for carbon sequestration to the preamble, while BRAZIL requested its deletion. The EU, PERU and the CEE opposed this, with PERU and the CEE suggesting reference to carbon storage instead. Further proposals included adding language on the importance of functional ecological networks and improving technology transfer.

Delegates debated measures to support co-management of PAs and indigenous and local community participation. TURKEY, CANADA, BRAZIL, AUSTRALIA, ARGENTINA and COSTA RICA said that the COP should “invite” rather than “request” parties to implement such measures. NEW ZEALAND and CANADA requested deletion of references stating that co-managed PAs, private PAs and those managed by indigenous and local communities should be acknowledged “through national laws.” CANADA, KENYA and NEPAL said such PAs should be “recognized” as PAs rather than “incorporated” in PA management. TURKEY requested deletion of language stating that participation should be consistent with applicable international law. NEW ZEALAND, CANADA and ARGENTINA, opposed by the EU, requested deleting language stating that the participation of indigenous and local communities should be “in full respect of their rights and recognition of their responsibilities.” MALAYSIA said indigenous and local communities’ knowledge should be “integrated where appropriate.”

CANADA and AUSTRALIA, opposed by BRAZIL, suggested replacing a reference on instruments for benefit-sharing, with language on PA contributions to local sustainable development. INDIA and BRAZIL proposed replacing language on regional and subregional fora for establishing transboundary PAs with “bilateral or multilateral mechanisms for cooperation.” COSTA RICA proposed adding a reference to capacity building on the development of tools for monitoring progress in PoWPA implementation, while THAILAND asked to include revision of national policies and laws as an additional indicator.

On national reporting, NEW ZEALAND, supported by CUBA, called for the deletion of a reference to “continuous electronic reporting mechanisms.” AUSTRALIA, supported by CANADA, called for the deletion of language on the development of national and regional data networks, and CHINA suggested replacing it with a request to parties to develop a network to facilitate the exchange of information on national and regional progress in implementing the PoWPA.

On forming intergovernmental and interagency networks, CHINA, supported by BRAZIL, called for the deletion of the term “regional support networks” and for the clarification of the term “expert institutions.” CANADA stressed that only “public” information be shared, and NEW ZEALAND suggested adding that the PoWPA be implemented “as appropriate.”

BRAZIL called for clarification of “UNEP/IUCN TEMATEA,” which was provided by IUCN and CUBA who explained that it is an issue-based module on PAs, after which, delegates agreed to retain the reference.

Regarding financial and technical support for subregional workshops, BRAZIL and ARGENTINA called for workshops in all regions. On developing implementation tools, SYRIA, supported by ETHIOPIA, called for deletion of “subject to available funds,” and BURKINA FASO, supported by NEW ZEALAND and opposed by BRAZIL, called for providing the tools in “UN languages” rather than “major languages.”

OPTIONS FOR MOBILIZING FINANCIAL RESOURCES: Chair Anaedu introduced a CRP on mobilizing financial resources for PoWPA implementation, inviting parties to make general comments. Urging parties not to lose focus, BRAZIL reiterated that funding issues must be considered in the context of decision VIII/24, which calls for new and additional funding for PoWPA implementation, and other international agreements on financing for development. Discussions will continue on Thursday.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As WGPA 2 turned to the review of implementation, delegates in the corridors expressed little surprise concerning the day’s turn of events. “According to plan” commented one, with another saying that there were no surprises in the review of implementation of the PoWPA. But as the day drew to a close some were left wondering what had actually transpired. The Chair’s comments about the work being conducted in an “informal setting” resulted in confusion regarding the status of the day’s negotiations. The proceedings left a number of NGOs to infer that they did not have a right to speak under this setting with one noting that this contravened normal CBD practice. Others however argued that one had to take a broader view, noting that non-state delegates had greater freedoms than in the recent past and the precedence of parties had to be respected.

As delegates left the building, referring to the bumpy start of the discussion on a CRP on Options for Mobilizing Funding in the late afternoon, several participants commented that the working group’s “real work is about to start” and that some parties are “gearing up for another battle on funding.” Gazing over the document, one delegate noted that donor countries might be in for a surprise, having to address a document containing some of the strongest references to “new and additional funding,” in recent CBD history.