

SBSTTA 13 HIGHLIGHTS:
THURSDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2008

Delegates convened in the Committee of the Whole in the morning and in working groups in the afternoon and evening. The Committee of the Whole considered a conference room paper (CRP) on the in-depth review of the work programme on forest biodiversity. Working Group I (WG I) considered CRPs on inland water biodiversity and marine and coastal biodiversity, while WG II discussed CRPs on invasive alien species (IAS) and biodiversity and climate change. A contact group on forest biodiversity met in the afternoon and evening.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

FOREST BIODIVERSITY: Delegates considered a CRP on the in-depth review of the work programme on forest biodiversity. Chair Hesiquio Benitez-Diaz invited delegates to make proposals and refrain from negotiating the text. Reiterating the need for increased support to developing countries for implementation, BRAZIL called for new and additional resources, while SWITZERLAND proposed awaiting advice on whether SBSTTA has the mandate to consider financial matters.

On addressing threats to forest biodiversity, delegates debated major threats listed, with CANADA, opposed by AUSTRALIA, requesting the addition of "human-induced" forest fires, and SWEDEN suggesting that "human-induced" refer to all listed threats with the exception of extreme storms and hurricanes. Liberia, for the AFRICAN GROUP, called for the addition of "lack of monitoring systems" and MALI for "desertification and desert creep." On land conversion, BRAZIL proposed specifying "illegal" land conversion, or alternatively deleting the entire list.

NEW ZEALAND, opposed by the UK, proposed that obstacles to implementation should be addressed "as necessary." The INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORUM ON BIODIVERSITY suggested additional text on land and resource rights of indigenous and local communities, and support to their adaptive management practices. On strengthening efforts to establish forest protected area networks and ecological corridors, GERMANY, BELGIUM, NORWAY and the UK proposed taking into account the objective of having at least 10% of the world's forest types effectively conserved, with NORWAY requesting deleting reference to defining and specifying areas of particular importance. SWITZERLAND noted that it was not necessary to cite the 10% target.

BRAZIL and AUSTRALIA, opposed by DENMARK, requested deleting reference to mitigation in a paragraph on climate change and biodiversity research. Delegates further

suggested adding references to arid and semi-arid lands, degraded environments and ecosystem resilience, among other topics.

On strengthening law enforcement to minimize deforestation and forest degradation, ARGENTINA proposed deleting reference to forest landscapes. Delegates also discussed whether to "engage," and/or "partner with" the private sector exclusively or "with NGOs" or "with all relevant stakeholders," or "with a long list of relevant stakeholders," and how to specify collaboration with, *inter alia*, UNFF, CITES, and the World Bank.

BRAZIL opposed the term "illegal logging," with COLOMBIA suggesting substituting it with "unsustainable logging practices." CHINA and BRAZIL considered that logging and related trade should be addressed at the national level. The EC suggested that parties establish processes and mechanisms for ensuring that only legal timber products enter the market.

Delegates debated text on the use of genetically modified trees, with CUBA and CHILE asking to reference decision VIII/19 on adopting the precautionary approach, and the EC and the AFRICAN GROUP calling for reference to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

WORKING GROUP I

INLAND WATERS BIODIVERSITY: Delegates discussed a CRP on biological diversity of inland water ecosystems. Following proposals by TURKEY and ARGENTINA, delegates agreed to delete a paragraph on international cooperation towards allocating water to maintain ecological functions of inland water ecosystems. Opposed by GERMANY, FRANCE, COLOMBIA and ITALY, they also requested deleting reference to Ramsar/UNEP-WCMC joint work on the allocation of water to maintain ecosystem functions. BRAZIL, ARGENTINA and TURKEY, opposed by GERMANY, FRANCE, COLOMBIA and ITALY, requested deletion of a reference to decision VIII/27, paragraph 22, referring to the UN Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses.

The document was approved with these two sections bracketed.

DRAFT REPORT OF WG I: The draft report of WG I (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/13/WG.1/L.1) was adopted with minor amendments.

MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY: On collaboration to further develop technical guidelines, BRAZIL proposed specifying parties, other governments and relevant organizations, and deleting "experts," while ICELAND, with the US, CUBA and ARGENTINA, but opposed by CANADA,

the NETHERLANDS, AUSTRALIA and SLOVENIA, proposed deleting reference to the draft technical guidelines because they had not been reviewed.

On review of spatial databases, ARGENTINA called for the deletion of “regional fisheries management organizations” which remained bracketed, and delegates agreed to remove text regarding a list of activities to enhance the UNEP-WCMC Interactive Map. On options to prevent or mitigate adverse impacts of human activities to seabed habitats, ICELAND resolved a deadlock by suggesting deletion of the list of options. Turning to scientific criteria for identifying significant marine areas in need of protection, delegates preferred retaining a single paragraph listing the annexes to the recommendation, but remained divided about whether to “adopt” or “take note of” them, and kept reference to “open-ocean waters and deep-sea habitats” in brackets.

Delegates discussed inviting parties, other governments and organizations to submit views on scientific criteria and guidance in annex I and II and to make them available prior to SBSTTA 14, with BRAZIL saying that since the criteria have not been approved including them would be premature. CUBA sought to bracket the criteria list and submit it to COP for consideration. SLOVENIA maintained that the criteria have been finalized through a long process of elaboration and that parties should try to apply them while acknowledging that they may be revised in the future.

Discussions continued into the night.

WORKING GROUP II

INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES: Working Group II considered a CRP on gaps in international standards on IAS. NEW ZEALAND suggested that parties “consider applying” procedures and standards for quarantine pests under the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) rather than broadening their application, while the EC included reference to all IAS which impact on plant biodiversity, and not just pests of plants. On inviting the IPPC to expand its coverage of IAS which impact on biodiversity, COSTA RICA added specific mention of the aquatic environment.

Parties agreed on compromise text inviting the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) to consider whether it would need “to broaden its mandate” for the purpose of considering whether it could play a role in addressing invasive animals not considered as diseases under OIE. On inviting the FAO Fisheries Committee to consider ways and means to address gaps on IAS for fisheries and aquaculture, delegates rejected the proposal to consider formalizing relevant technical guidelines as international standards. Delegates discussed a formulation for referring to species currently not covered by the international regulatory framework, agreeing on “alien species as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, and as live bait and food.” Regarding the mandate of an *ad hoc* technical expert group (AHTEG) on IAS, delegates agreed that it should “suggest means” for addressing risks associated with IAS rather than “develop concrete means.”

On exploring the extent to which existing instruments recognize and address threats from alien invasive “genotypes,” BRAZIL suggested referring to “populations” and the EC to reference “hybrids.” PALAU and INDIA opposed, while CANADA suggested deleting “invasive.” After informal consultations, delegates agreed to retain the original reference.

Delegates then approved the draft recommendation.

DRAFT REPORT OF WG II: Delegates adopted the draft report of WG II (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/13/WG.2/L.1) without amendment.

BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE: Delegates then turned to a CRP on biodiversity and climate change. BRAZIL and SLOVENIA suggested recognizing the distinct

mandates and independent legal status of the respective conventions. AUSTRALIA sought to delete reference to the development of joint work plans.

CANADA clarified that SBSTTA should be requested to consider progress in the implementation of mutually supportive activities under the Rio conventions, prior to COP 10, in the in-depth review of the cross-cutting issue on biodiversity and climate change. SLOVENIA and GERMANY, opposed by AUSTRALIA and BRAZIL, encouraged parties to apply the ecosystem approach to climate change mitigation and not only adaptation measures. On ocean fertilization, delegates disagreed on whether to urge parties to act in conformity with the London Convention, and in accordance with the precautionary principle, with AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND and CANADA preferring reference to the precautionary “approach.” GHANA, SWAZILAND and BELGIUM endorsed a proposal by SEARICE calling for a moratorium on ocean fertilization. Both references remained bracketed.

Delegates also discussed: developing guidance to the GEF on ways and means to support the achievement of biodiversity and desertification co-benefits in climate change activities; encouraging or inviting the UNFCCC to take into account opportunities to provide benefits for biodiversity; and establishing an AHTEG on biodiversity and climate change with the mandate to develop biodiversity guidance relevant for the Bali Action Plan.

Negotiations continued into the night.

CONTACT GROUP

FOREST BIODIVERSITY: Delegates convened in an afternoon contact group on review of implementation of the programme of work on forest biodiversity, to propose amendments to the CRP.

The contact group reconvened in the evening to consider a revised document. Preambular references on the provision of adequate, predictable and timely resources, and on new and additional resources, remained bracketed. On promoting the sustainable management of forests and non-timber forest products, reference to improving forest biodiversity monitoring and reporting remained bracketed. Discussion on forest protected area networks, ecological connectivity and the objective of having a 10% target on the world’s forests types also remained outstanding. Debate also centered on merging references to strengthening forest governance, law enforcement and use of the term illegal logging in this context, which proved contentious.

Discussions continued into the night.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates were torn between exasperation and optimism as two parallel working groups and a contact group convened late into the night. As the first draft decisions with almost clean text were adopted, several commented that SBSTTA 13 would eventually prevail and complete the Herculean task placed before it. Others pointed to the fact that the most difficult issues – forest biodiversity and agricultural biodiversity – are still to a large extent unresolved. Looking at the passages on biofuels and avoided deforestation mired in brackets, one delegate sighed that these are exactly the topics that SBSTTA 12 should have dealt with as “new and emerging issues” a few months ago. Left by the wayside in Paris, they are now back with a vengeance to haunt delegates.

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of SBSTTA 13 will be combined with the summary from WGPA 2 and will be available on Monday, 25 February 2008, online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/sbstta13/>