



SBSTTA 18 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 25 JUNE 2014

On Wednesday morning, delegates reconvened in plenary to consider invasive alien species (IAS) and, in the afternoon, delegates continued delivering statements on synthetic biology, and considered issues in progress. In the evening, a contact group met on synthetic biology, chaired by Andrew Bignell (New Zealand), as well as a second group on marine and coastal biodiversity, chaired by Renée Sauvé (Canada).

INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES: Management of risks associated with introduction of alien species introduced as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, and as live bait and live food, and review of work on invasive alien species and considerations for future work: Session Chair Mustafa Fouda (Egypt) opened the session with a video titled “The Green Invasion – Destroying Livelihoods in Africa.”

Dennis Rangi, CABI Executive Director for International Development, presented on IAS in Africa, addressing: agriculture; IAS impacts; pathways of introduction; and biological control.

Piero Genovesi, Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA) and Chair of IUCN/SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG), reported on common pathways of IAS introduction, focusing on prioritizing pathways to enhance prevention.

The Secretariat then introduced UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/8, 9 and Add.1, and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/INF/20.

FRANCE and SWEDEN proposed inclusion of guidelines from the European Expert Meeting report, with FINLAND adding that these guidelines should be voluntary.

FRANCE, with MEXICO and BRAZIL, called for closer collaboration with IUCN and IPBES.

INDONESIA stressed the need for capacity building and public awareness at national and local levels. ALBANIA encouraged capacity building on low-cost methodologies and techniques. SAINT LUCIA emphasized resource mobilization and capacity building.

ECUADOR called for increased cooperation between institutions to reduce the risks that IAS pose for biodiversity, noting the potential of the Galápagos Islands as a socio-environmental laboratory to better understand processes associated with IAS.

CAMEROON urged consideration of measures needed to control dissemination of IAS through “uncontrollable and involuntary movements” of refugees.

On **management of risks associated with introduction of alien species introduced as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, and as live bait and live food**, NORWAY expressed concern on the use of non-invasive species used as live bait, highlighting that it is against their national legislation.

NEW ZEALAND, with BRAZIL, noted that measures to recognize alien species as potential hazards to biodiversity, human health and sustainable development, should be voluntary and not override existing obligations.

SWITZERLAND proposed including reference to IAS as infectious disease vectors.

THAILAND noted that the guidance proposed is lacking information on the transport of IAS. The UK requested that the document focus only on IAS, and called for greater collaboration with the pet industry. COLOMBIA supported strengthening regulatory standards, especially on release of IAS. ARGENTINA asked for clarification on whether recommendations on implementing national measures and standards are going through FAO for peer review, and through the International Plant Propagators’ Society (IPPS) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) for coordination of efforts.

Palau, for PACIFIC ISLANDS, with the COOK ISLANDS, stressed the need to incorporate the potential of IAS whose hosts are pets, aquarium and terrarium species, and live bait into risk assessments. SWEDEN, with NEW ZEALAND, cautioned against placing the financial burden on parties for carrying out extensive risk assessments. South Africa, for the AFRICAN GROUP, supported by many, called for international organizations to strengthen risk assessment guidelines and share those through the CHM. BRAZIL underscored the guidance on risk assessment highlighting the importance of species with assessed potential to become invasive.

BELGIUM noted the need to encourage participation of international private sector actors as well as the civil society in the management of IAS.

CANADA suggested the use of taxonomic serial numbers for classifying IAS, and proposed the inclusion of ILCs for coherent management of IAS. SWEDEN proposed including voluntary and regulatory measures between states, organizations and industries.

SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS, supported by ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA and SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES, called for resources to better address IAS in the Caribbean. CHINA underscored national capacities and resources should be taken into account regarding implementation, and called for capacity building to promote awareness of relative guidelines.

On **review of work on invasive alien species and considerations for future work**, Palau, for PACIFIC ISLANDS, with the COOK ISLANDS, requested assistance with: evaluating and strengthening capacity of border control authorities at the national and inter-island level. South Africa, for the AFRICAN GROUP, with others, called for increased stakeholder engagement and support to increase scientific, technical and financial capacity, and requested inclusion of guidance for transboundary communication as well as further sub-regional cooperation and harmonization. SWEDEN noted an imbalance of information from developing countries on the analysis of pathways, proposing, with MALDIVES and others, that future work include capacity building, and improving, harmonizing and



streamlining collection and dissemination of information on IAS. NEPAL underscored gaps and constraints in the legal institutional framework, international standards, institutional coordination and funding to mitigate adverse impacts of IAS on biodiversity and human livelihoods.

FINLAND, with SWEDEN, drew attention to e-commerce, suggesting voluntary labeling of IAS that pose threat to biodiversity. THAILAND, with ITALY, urged parties to continue work on IAS in PAs, in order to strengthen the implementation of Aichi Target 9. SWITZERLAND called for including information on bad management practices to help parties avoid mistakes made by others. BELGIUM stressed that the development of national strategies should be coupled with implementation.

BRAZIL highlighted assessment of economic consequences, including cost-benefit analysis for control and eradication of IAS.

NEW ZEALAND stressed the need to develop a guide to all existing decisions as well as tools for addressing the economic consequences of IAS.

On pathways of introduction, prioritization and management, MALAYSIA urged work on ballast water. SWITZERLAND called for addressing infrastructure as a pathway. EGYPT requested the deletion of a paragraph referencing the Suez Canal as an IAS pathway.

IUCN, CABI and others confirmed commitment to achieving Aichi Target 9 through introduction of various tools. DIVERSITAS requested that parties have risk assessments cover the probability of infectious diseases. ECONEXUS, YOUTH and WOMEN shared concerns on synthetic biology that can behave as IAS, urging application of the precautionary principle. YOUTH and WOMEN urged for analysis of social and economic impacts of IAS. UNPFI drew attention to the impact of IAS on traditional products, reiterating the need to acquire free PIC.

A contact group on management of risks associated with introduction of alien species introduced as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, and as live bait and live food chaired by Youngbae Suh (Republic of Korea) will meet on Thursday.

NEW AND EMERGING ISSUES: SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY: UGANDA noted that synthetic biology should not be considered a new and emerging issue, and underlined the importance of a definition and a regulatory framework.

GUINEA proposed that SBSTTA: conduct an in-depth study; adopt a new methodology to address synthetic biology; and develop guidelines based on knowledge of potential benefits and risks.

CANADA said parties can tackle synthetic biology at the national level and suggested the Secretariat compile and disseminate appropriate existing legislative frameworks to assist countries in developing their own legislation.

SOUTH AFRICA underscored the importance of risk assessment and called for a review of existing tools and mechanisms since risks associated with synthetic biology may present novel challenges.

IIFB expressed its socioeconomic, environmental and spiritual concerns regarding applications of synthetic biology, noting it will, *inter alia*: increase the gap between the rich and the poor; lead to loss of TK; and affect the spirit of Article 8(j) of the Convention.

The CBD ALLIANCE questioned whether applications of synthetic biology will produce any benefits for consumers, the environment or markets, calling for a moratorium due to lack of clarity. The FEDERATION OF GERMAN SCIENTISTS underscored that while development of synthetic biology has been explosive, knowledge of implications is lagging behind, calling for the development of guidance on regulation, including but not limited to the Cartagena protocol.

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH called for a moratorium on commercial use of applications of synthetic biology until a regulatory oversight and risk assessment methodologies, including gender impacts, are in place. The GLOBAL YOUTH BIODIVERSITY NETWORK underlined the importance of the precautionary principle noting lack of knowledge on interactions and evolutionary processes.

ECOROPA referred to a series of articles of the Convention, stressing the need to urgently address synthetic biology at the national and international level.

CONSIDERATION OF ISSUES IN PROGRESS: The Secretariat introduced the documents (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/13 and 14, and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/INF/5, 15 and 17), noting the absence of draft recommendations from these progress reports. Chair Lourdes Coya de la Fuente (Cuba) opened discussions.

Integration of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into climate-change mitigation and adaptation activities: Uganda, for the AFRICAN GROUP, highlighted mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into climate change policies, and the UK, supported by CHINA, suggested linking NBSAPs, nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs) and national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs).

The EU, with FINLAND, favored submitting a recommendation on the role of biodiversity in adaptation and mitigation actions to COP 12. JAPAN highlighted that the ecosystem-based approach: is important for adaptation and disaster risk reduction; should be mainstreamed; and, with ITALY, is cost-effective.

COLOMBIA, with COSTA RICA, stressed the need for a more integrated model for ecosystem restoration, including rehabilitation and accelerated recovery.

Application of relevant safeguards for biodiversity with regard to policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to REDD+: Emphasizing the REDD+ mechanism under the UNFCCC, Brazil, for GRULAC, with MALAYSIA, opposed a recommendation on this issue for consideration at COP 12.

The PHILIPPINES noted that upcoming REDD readiness projects must include PIC for ILCs, and THAILAND, supported by SWITZERLAND, added a request for a mechanism to strengthen implementation of REDD+ at the global level that would support participation of forest communities and ILCs.

The UK, supported by CANADA, proposed conducting an assessment of how effectively CBD advice from Decision XI/19 has been implemented through the UNFCCC and national actions.

Climate-related geo-engineering: The PHILIPPINES stressed the application of the precautionary approach on this issue. Uganda, for the AFRICAN GROUP, said that the potential impacts of climate-related geo-engineering on biodiversity and its wider socio-economic and transboundary impacts are not known and lack a legal framework. ITALY noted that governance and social perceptions should be explored as challenges to the use of geo-engineering.

Ecosystem conservation and restoration: CANADA encouraged the Secretariat to: link key biodiversity areas with EBSAs; and collaborate with IPBES.

THAILAND emphasized the role of private protected areas (PPAs) in rapid responses to sudden threats to ecosystems.

MEXICO, CHINA and CAMEROON called for capacity building and sharing of experiences and Uganda, for the AFRICAN GROUP, urged the involvement of ILCs to support the implementation of ecosystem conservation and restoration.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Wednesday morning's spirit was one of satisfaction with the progress made in refining draft recommendations for the COP. However, as participants gathered in plenary for another day filled with numerous agenda items with a series of lunchtime side events, more than a few delegates were overheard expressing frustration over the rigorous schedule that "leaves no time to develop and maintain a human connection over the issues."

In the contact groups, however, the pace slowed dramatically, allowing delegates to carefully craft the recommendations to the COP (as appropriate), and iron out some of the thornier issues, particularly regarding synthetic biology as a new and emerging issue. SBSTTA now has the uphill task on trying to agree on issues in order to forward productive recommendations to the COP on these long-term issues.