

CBD COP 12 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2014

WG I addressed the financial mechanism, biodiversity and sustainable development, gender mainstreaming and operations of the Convention. WG II considered the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC), synthetic biology, biodiversity and climate change, ecosystem restoration and bushmeat. Contact groups addressed resource mobilization, synthetic biology, the AHTEG on indicators, and EBSAs. A Friends of the Chair group on the “indigenous peoples” terminology also convened.

WORKING GROUP I

FINANCIAL MECHANISM: The Secretariat introduced draft decisions and relevant documentation (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/14). The GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY (GEF) presented its report (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/14/Add.1), noting a shift from historically prioritized funding for the management of protected areas (PAs) towards biodiversity mainstreaming and sustainable use. He further noted that the GEF-6 Strategy addresses the failure to price the full value of ecosystems.

The EU stressed the importance of involving the private sector and innovative financial mechanisms and, with CANADA and MOROCCO, of increased cooperation among conventions. THAILAND called for greater efforts to include co-financing schemes with regional banks and the private sector. COLOMBIA, with FIJI and URUGUAY, called for including multi-focal projects, particularly regarding poverty reduction and planning.

SWITZERLAND, CANADA and NEW ZEALAND suggested a joint contact group with the Nagoya Protocol COP/MOP 1. Liberia, for the AFRICAN GROUP, urged the GEF to take into account the guidance given by the Convention’s protocols. The PHILIPPINES noted GEF should provide an indication of additional funding needs, which can be relevant for the consideration of a new operating entity. Chair Solhaug said the contact group on resource mobilization will address the issue further.

BIODIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABLE

DEVELOPMENT: The Secretariat introduced draft decisions and relevant documentation (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/15 and 16, and INF/16 and 45).

Post-2015 Agenda: Many parties highlighted that biodiversity affects achievement of all sustainable development goals (SDGs), and supported continuous work on integrating the Strategic Plan and Aichi targets into the post-2015 development agenda and SDGs. COLOMBIA highlighted work on indicators; BOLIVIA suggested focus on harmony with nature; and ARGENTINA underscored TK. The PHILIPPINES suggested drawing attention to: the rights of ILCs; benefit-sharing; sustainable public finance; and supporting SIDS. BRAZIL proposed that future work take into account the work of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing. The UNPFII urged recognition of indigenous peoples’ rights to self-determination and self-government.

Poverty Eradication: INDIA said the Chennai guidance contains useful elements that parties should use in their national laws and policies. JAPAN suggested the Secretariat distribute information, rather than assist parties with implementation. THAILAND called for a strategy to implement the Chennai guidance, integrating it with the action plan on customary sustainable use. CANADA, the EU and JAPAN emphasized reference to national circumstances. UNCTAD and CITES underscored trade as a crucial enabler to maximize efficiency. A CRP will be prepared.

Human Health: Namibia, for the AFRICAN GROUP, stressed that species and genetic diversity is necessary for healthy ecosystems and populations. CAMEROON, with many African countries, said Ebola illustrates the linkages between biodiversity and health. GUINEA, with others, stressed the need for additional research on the links between human, animal and ecosystem health, and rapid response measures. Some drew attention to the Libreville Declaration on Health and Environment in Africa. On the State of Knowledge Review on biodiversity and health, COLOMBIA called for including health management by ILCs.

Many supported the “One Health” approach. JAPAN, BRAZIL and the UN UNIVERSITY drew attention to the CBD/World Health Organization (WHO) joint work programme. Many stressed the importance of traditional medicine. TRAFFIC drew attention to the ongoing revision of their guidelines on the conservation of medicinal plants.

GENDER: The Secretariat introduced the draft decision and background document (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/17). Several parties welcomed the 2015-20 Gender Plan of Action, supported the draft decision, and reported on their national gender strategies, with developing countries calling for capacity-building support.

INDIA called for replicating best practices on mainstreaming gender considerations, with the UNPFII, IIFB and INDIGENOUS WOMEN’S BIODIVERSITY NETWORK stressing the need to include the views of indigenous women. A CRP will be prepared.

OPERATIONS OF THE CONVENTION: The Secretariat introduced the draft decisions and documents addressing organization of concurrent meetings of the COP and COP/MOPs; a subsidiary body on implementation (SBI) to replace WGRI; voluntary peer-review of NBSAPs; retirement of decisions; and the IPBES (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/25 and Add.1-3, and INF/25 and 28). Anne Laurigauderie, IPBES Executive Secretary, presented the IPBES work programme.

Delegates welcomed the proposals, noting the need to ensure full and effective participation of developing countries in concurrent meetings. MEXICO stressed that SBSTTA is the CBD body to communicate with IPBES. The EU suggested that COP 12 establish an SBI and COP 13 adopt its revised *modus operandi*. SWITZERLAND proposed amending the SBI’s terms of reference to promote efficiency. NORWAY suggested voluntary peer-review could be useful for capacity building, technology transfer and increased cooperation.



WORKING GROUP II

GSPC: The Secretariat introduced the draft decision, highlighting results of the mid-term review. Many parties supported the draft decision and stressed the need for greater progress on *in situ* conservation. Parties also called for expanding partnerships, and welcomed progress on the development of an online flora of all known plants under GSPC Target 1.

Uganda, for the AFRICAN GROUP, supported by the ARAB STATES and many developing countries, called for allocating resources for capacity building in support of the GSPC. COLOMBIA stressed the need for international targets to be translated into national actions. The PHILIPPINES urged catalyzing cross-sectoral linkages among agricultural, seed management and health reform policies. IUCN and TRAFFIC called for sustainable sourcing of all plant-based products. BOTANIC GARDENS CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL said there is lack of information on which plants are of global conservation concern. A CRP will be prepared.

SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY: The Secretariat introduced the heavily bracketed draft decision, and relevant documents (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/20, and INF/11 and 12).

Many countries, including SAINT LUCIA, CANADA and CHINA, stressed the need to apply the precautionary approach, with MEXICO, the PHILIPPINES and BOLIVIA referring to the precautionary principle. The EU said it should be applied in line with previous decisions. NORWAY cautioned against watering it down in future COP decisions; and identified the need for more information on both positive and negative effects of organisms resulting from synthetic biology.

MEXICO, NORWAY, the PHILIPPINES and the DRC emphasized synthetic biology is a new and emerging issue. MALAYSIA regarded it as “an extension of modern biotechnology,” not to be approved for release into environment, including for field testing and commercial use. BRAZIL, supported by JAPAN, CANADA, ARGENTINA and CHINA, said synthetic biology does not meet CBD criteria on new and emerging issues. With the EU, BRAZIL opposed any moratorium on new techniques with potential positive impacts on the use of biodiversity. The PHILIPPINES recommended a definition of synthetic biology that can be updated as the field evolves.

ETHIOPIA, with SINGAPORE, stressed the need for a regulatory framework prior to field testing or release of organisms and products resulting from synthetic biology. MALAYSIA, with the PHILIPPINES, opposed by NEW ZEALAND, supported the establishment of a global international legal regulatory framework. The DRC called for building capacities for regulatory frameworks in developing countries. Many developing countries emphasized risks to human health. Noting that synthetic biology is a “game-changer,” COLOMBIA, with the PHILIPPINES, stressed including socioeconomic considerations.

The EU, MEXICO and Egypt, for the AFRICAN GROUP and ARAB STATES, urged consideration of synthetic biology in the context of the Convention and its protocols. NORWAY and the EU supported an open-ended online forum, followed by an expert workshop to consider differences and overlaps between genetic engineering and synthetic biology. CANADA supported an *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group on synthetic biology and proposed specific terms of reference. A contact group on synthetic biology was established.

CLIMATE CHANGE: The Secretariat introduced the draft decision and documents (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/21, and INF/13 and 15).

BRAZIL, with CHINA, noted that REDD+ is an incentive mechanism under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and treating it outside this context creates confusion and hinders implementation. Many expressed concern over possible duplication of work, saying the UNFCCC is the appropriate venue for discussion of REDD+.

The PHILIPPINES, with TURKEY, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA and others, supported referring to the Warsaw Framework on REDD+. INDIA said that since REDD+ has been covered by the Warsaw Framework, no specific decision is required.

QATAR supported development of advice on maximizing the biodiversity-related potential of REDD+ activities. CANADA favored CBD's role in providing information on REDD+ co-benefits. The EU recommended collation of relevant information and analysis of whether the biodiversity-related benefits of REDD+ are effectively delivered.

Zambia, for the AFRICAN GROUP, with Fiji, for PACIFIC ISLAND STATES, noted the importance of social and environmental safeguards, with the AFRICAN GROUP stressing that REDD+ implementation should not result in unintended negative consequences for IPLCs.

EL SALVADOR and QATAR, opposed by SWITZERLAND, favored a request to the Secretariat to promote non-market-based approaches as the only alternative mechanism to strengthen forest biodiversity conservation, while SINGAPORE preferred that these approaches be “in addition to” other mechanisms. AUSTRALIA stressed that promoting these approaches is a role for the UNFCCC, with NEW ZEALAND noting ongoing UNFCCC discussions on non-market-based approaches. NORWAY disagreed with the reference to REDD+ as a purely market-based mechanism, arguing that it contributes to institutional development and forest protection.

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION: The Secretariat introduced the draft decision and documents (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/22, and INF/18 and 19). Many countries described national restoration efforts, and expressed general support for the draft decision.

The REPUBLIC OF KOREA drew attention to their initiative on forest ecosystem restoration and the FAO's Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism. He called on the UN to designate 27 February as World National Parks and PAs day, and JAPAN requested this be noted in the decision.

MALAYSIA, supported by SWITZERLAND, suggested referring to promoting sustainable management practices in rehabilitation and restoration. BOLIVIA proposed recognizing the contribution of public PAs and community-based approaches to *in situ* conservation. The EU, with UGANDA, highlighted the cumulative benefits of small-scale activities. UGANDA requested acknowledgement that the use of well-tested fast-growing exotic species can be useful in relieving pressure on indigenous ecosystems. The IIFB, supported by SENEGAL and the PHILIPPINES, requested adding to text on supporting IPLCs in their efforts to conserve biodiversity “in their lands, waters and territories.” The GLOBAL YOUTH BIODIVERSITY NETWORK called for the rights of future generations to be respected in decision making. A CRP will be prepared.

BUSHMEAT: The Secretariat introduced the draft decision, which parties generally supported. Many shared information on their national actions, with several emphasizing the links between the CBD and CITES, and the role of the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management.

The AFRICAN GROUP stressed the need for additional funding for the establishment of local and national surveillance systems. The ARAB STATES called for the inclusion of wildlife management practices in NBSAPs. BOLIVIA called for: respect for ILCs' rights; recognition of the value of TK; and introduction of incentives limiting subsistence hunting.

The EU emphasized detrimental socioeconomic and environmental consequences of illegal killing and the trade in wildlife. CHINA called for global tracking of flora and fauna levels. FAO highlighted efforts to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts as bushmeat becomes an increasing source of food in some countries. A CRP will be prepared.

IN THE CORRIDORS

After some damp and cloudy days, sunshine finally flooded the Alpensia conference village, drawing groups of delegates outdoors to bask in the unexpected warmth. In the tents, the two Working Groups cranked up the pace of negotiating their way through the long list of draft decisions, reaching consensus on some matters, and referring the knotty issues of synthetic biology, EBSAs and resource mobilization to contact groups. Here, negotiations proceeded in earnest as meeting rooms filled to capacity; as one delegate noted, “The devil is in the detail – and always has been.”