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Item 13.9 of the provisional agenda*

INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES: PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PROGRAMME OF WORK

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its tenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties established an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) to address the risks associated with the introduction of alien species as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, and as live bait and live food (decision X/38 A), and, further to decision IX/4 A and earlier decisions, called for continued collaboration among relevant organizations to address the gaps and inconsistencies of the international regulatory framework relevant to invasive alien species (part A of decision X/38). Accordingly, the AHTEG was convened from 16 to 18 February in 2011 at the International Environment House in Geneva with generous support from the Governments of Spain and Japan.

2. At its fifteenth meeting, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), considered the report of the AHTEG (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/15/INF/1), and recommended that the Conference of the Parties take note of report and further work be undertaken to complete the tasks set out in the terms of reference for the AHTEG (annex to decision X/38), as well as to respond to some issues identified by the AHTEG (paragraphs 1-8 of part I of SBSTTA recommendation XV/4). The SBSTTA also requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the members of the inter-agency liaison group on invasive alien species, to prepare an information document on how the standards, guidance and relevant activities of the organizations could support Parties in addressing the threats from invasive alien species introduced as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, and as live bait and live food, and to make it available before the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Section II of this note provides a report of progress on these matters.

3. Section III of this note provides a report of progress on collaboration among relevant organizations to address gaps in the international regulatory framework, further to decisions IX/4 A (paragraphs 11, 12, and 13) and X/38. Pursuant to paragraph 2 of part II of SBSTTA recommendation

* UNEP/CBD/COP/11/1.

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XV/4, this section also includes an update on the status of the application of the Secretariat for observer status at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

4. Section IV provides an update on progress to strengthen information services relating to invasive alien species through the development of a global invasive alien species information partnership. Section V provides a progress report on capacity-building activities relating to invasive alien species.

5. Some elements for consideration by the Conference of the Parties, in addition to the draft decision prepared by SBSTTA in part I of its recommendation XV/4 (UNEP/CBD/COP/11/2) are provided in section VI.

II. ALIEN SPECIES INTRODUCED AS PETS, AQUARIUM AND TERRARIUM SPECIES, AND AS LIVE BAIT AND LIVE FOOD

6. In response to the request in paragraph 1 of part II of SBSTTA recommendation XV/4, the Executive Secretary has prepared an information document on how the standards, guidance and relevant activities of the organizations could support Parties in addressing the threats from invasive alien species introduced as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, and as live bait and live food (UNEP/CBD/COP/11/INF/33).

7. The main findings are:

(a) Risk of invasion needs to be addressed at three stages: (i) prior to importation; (ii) escapes/releases; and (iii) establishment;

(b) The International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures No. 11 (ISPM 11), “Pest risk analysis for quarantine pests including analysis of environmental risks and living modified organisms”, provides useful guidance if the introduced species are considered to be pests of plants;

(c) “Guidelines for assessing the risk of non-native animals becoming invasive”, published by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) provides useful guidance to assess risks of introduced animal species becoming hazardous to animals;

(d) Information sharing on alien animal species and improving public awareness on managing alien animal species is critically important to addressing their impacts after their importation and establishment;

(e) Issues related to internet sales and purchases could be addressed by information tags displayed via delivery services (post, courier, internet provider). The sales and purchases on the internet could be encouraged to display good advice;

(f) Application of the CITES framework or other national legislation can be an option to control entries of known invasive alien animal species as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, and as live bait and live food.

III. COLLABORATION AMONG INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO ADDRESS THE GAPS AND INCONSISTENCIES IN THE INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK RELEVANT TO INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

8. Building upon earlier decisions, the Conference of the Parties, in its decision IX/4 A, invited relevant organizations to consider how they may contribute to addressing the gaps and inconsistencies in

the international regulatory framework related to invasive alien species. This section reports on progress in those areas that are relevant beyond the specific area of addressing the threats from invasive alien species introduced as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, and as live bait and live food.

A. *Guidelines for assessing the risk of non-native animals becoming invasive*

9. Further to the requests in paragraph 3 of decision IX/4 A and paragraph 10 of decision X/38, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) organized an expert meeting in Paris, France on 30 November-1 December 2011 to provide guidance to assess the risk of non-native (“alien”) animals becoming invasive. The meeting included representatives from the Convention on Biological Diversity, the World Trade Organization, and technical experts selected by the OIE, including a member of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission.

10. The members agreed that in order to address the issue of invasive alien species, it is important to assess the risk of non-native animals introduced into a specified area becoming “invasive”. Since OIE has already developed an international standard on assessing the risk of pathogens being introduced through importation, the meeting focused on developing guidelines to assess the risk of non-native animals (other than pathogens) becoming “invasive”, as a complementary tool to the existing OIE standard.

11. The document “Guidelines for assessing the risk of non-native animals becoming invasive”, drafted by the group, was reviewed and endorsed by relevant OIE Specialist Commissions, namely the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission, the Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission and the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases. The guidelines were published on the OIE website.¹

12. These guidelines contain the components of risk analysis, which include hazard identification, risk assessment, risk management and risk communication to provide importing countries with an objective and defensible method of determining whether such imported animal species are likely to become harmful to the environment, to animal or human health, or to the economy. The guidelines are also useful in assessing the risks posed by “hitchhiker” organisms.

13. The guidelines can be applied by Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and by Member Countries of the OIE for risk analysis on alien animal species that are not pest of plants under the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

14. Further collaboration at national level between the CBD community and SPS (sanitary and phytosanitary) institutions is required to implement adequate SPS measures to prevent the introduction, spread and establishment of alien species through the trade pathway. Joining efforts at country level between the CBD and SPS community is likely to maximize the impact of the measures implemented (standards, guidelines and recommendations) and to contribute to achieving Aichi Biodiversity Target 9.

B. *International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs)*

15. The International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) 11, “Pest risk analysis for quarantine pests including analysis of environmental risks and living modified organisms”, was published in December 2011 with updates to cover risks associated with invasive alien species and living modified organisms.

16. The Commission on Phytosanitary Measures under the IPPC adopted new ISPMs relevant to addressing invasive alien species at its seventh session, in 2012:

¹ http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Our_scientific_expertise/docs/pdf/OIEGuidelines_NonNativeAnimals_2012.pdf.

- (a) ISPM 36: Integrated measures for plants for planting; and
- (b) ISPM 35: Systems approach for pest risk management of fruit flies (Tephritidae).

17. These ISPMs applicable for Parties to address invasive alien species require close collaboration of the CBD community and National Plant Protection Organizations for effective implementation at the national level. It is critical to facilitate collaboration between national authorities of the two Conventions to make sure effective measures are in place.

18. The IPPC invited the Secretariat of the CBD to the Expert Working Group and its online forum to develop a new ISPM on sea containers. The Working Group met in Johor, Malaysia, from 28 May to 1 June 2012, to draft the ISPM. The Secretariat submitted its comments to address potentially invasive contaminants on sea containers. The draft ISPM is under review by the Expert Working Group.

C. Inter-agency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species

19. Further to paragraph 10 of decision X/38, the Inter-agency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species (Liaison Group) has met twice since the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties: on 14-15 February 2011 (second meeting of the Liaison Group), and on 13 July 2012 (third meeting of the Liaison Group). Both meetings were hosted by the World Trade Organization and were held at its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. The meeting reports are available at <http://cbd.int/invasive/lg/>.

20. At its second meeting, on 14-15 February 2011, the Liaison Group discussed plans to collaborate in capacity-building workshops to address invasive alien species organized by the Secretariat and at other opportunities for capacity-building and information exchange organized by each of the organizations in the Liaison Group.

21. The Liaison Group provided information on the existing international standards and codes of conduct that can address invasive alien species, as inputs to the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) meeting which was held on 16-18 February 2011, that is, immediately after the meeting of the Liaison Group. The Liaison Group also provided information on the existing international standards and codes of conduct that may be applicable to addressing invasive alien species introduced as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, and as live bait and live food (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/15/INF/1).

22. The third meeting of the Liaison Group, held on 13 July 2012, reviewed the progress made by the relevant organizations on invasive alien species, which included the following:

- (a) New OIE guidelines for assessing the risk of non-native animals becoming invasive were published (see subsection A above);

- (b) A seminar on international trade and invasive alien species (IAS) was organized by the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) in collaboration with IPPC and OIE; it was held in Geneva on 12-13 July 2012 (see section V, below);

- (c) A new IPPC Strategic Framework, with four objectives: food security, trade, environment and capacity development;

- (d) The formation of the Capacity Development Committee (CDC) and adoption of a 6-year capacity development work plan by the seventh session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures;

D. Observer status of the Convention on Biological Diversity under the World Trade Organization

23. In paragraph 18 of decision X/20, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to renew the Convention's pending applications for observer status in relevant bodies of the World Trade Organization, including its Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Committee). The Executive Secretary renewed his requests accordingly by a letter to the Director-General of the WTO dated 24 November 2010. The renewed request for observer status was reviewed by the SPS Committee; to date, no decision has been made.

IV. STRENGTHENING INFORMATION SERVICES ON INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

24. During the meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group to address the risks associated with the introduction of alien species as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, and as live bait and live food, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) offered to organize a workshop to increase the interoperability of existing information resources, including databases and networks, of use in conducting risk and/or impact assessments and in developing early-detection and rapid response systems. Subsequently, the Informatics Expert Meeting on Invasive Alien Species was held on 5-6 September 2011 in Copenhagen by the GBIF as its generous contribution towards achieving Aichi Biodiversity Target 9 (invasive alien species). The meeting clarified user requirements and identified priority activities. The meeting also developed a roadmap for the development of a global informatics infrastructure for invasive alien species building on existing initiatives (see “Joint Work Programme to Strengthen Information Services on Invasive Alien Species as a Contribution Towards Aichi Biodiversity Target 9”, UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/15/INF/14).

25. In paragraph 18 of its recommendation XV/4, SBSTTA recommended that the Conference of the Parties welcome the joint work programme to strengthen information services on invasive alien species as a contribution towards Aichi Biodiversity Target 9.

26. Thanks to generous support provided by the European Union for inter-sessional work, the Secretariat has facilitated further collaboration among the organizations involved in the joint work programme and organized the Organizational Workshop for the Global Invasive Alien Species Information Partnership,² held at the Natural History Museum, London, on 9-10 July 2012.

27. Relevant organizations and experts nominated by Parties participated in the workshop. Participants discussed on Operational Plan for the Partnership (UNEP/CBD/COP/11/INF/34). The Operational Plan is intended to describe the coordination mechanism for sharing information in order to enable Parties and other stakeholders of biodiversity access and utilize invasive alien species information openly and freely. The workshop also delivered a detailed workplan on: (i) a global information gateway to access invasive alien species information; (ii) database interoperability and quality improvement; (iii) information synthesis and assessment; (iv) taxonomic information services; and (v) best practices for non-electronic information access and exchange.

28. The Partnership is planned to be launched in the margins of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties by signing a Memorandum of Cooperation,³ and currently an interim steering

² <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=5099>.

³ Memorandum of Cooperation between the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and information provider organization in support of the Global Invasive Alien Species Information Partnership.

committee, composed of GBIF, CABI, IUCN SSC ISSG⁴ and the Executive Secretary, is providing guidance on development of a prototype information gateway and other elements of the information specified by the workplan to demonstrate the progress to the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh meeting.

V. CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

(i) *CBD capacity-building workshops on Taxonomy and Invasive Alien Species*

29. The Conference of the Parties has encouraged Parties and the Secretariat, as well as partner organizations, to support and promote activities to enhance the capacity of countries to address the threats from invasive alien species (decisions VI/23,* VII/13, VIII/27, IX/4 and X/38 A). In organizing capacity-building workshops for the Global Taxonomy Initiative, in response to paragraph 7 of decision X/39, the Executive Secretary included in the programme the taxonomic capacity needs in addressing invasive alien species. Thanks to the generous financial support of the Government of Japan, workshops have been held as follows:

(a) A regional capacity-building workshop on invasive alien species and taxonomy for the Latin American countries was held in collaboration with the FAO Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture in Montreal, Canada, on 12-13 November 2011 (the recommendations and conclusions are available in UNEP/CBD/WS-IAS-GTI/LA/1/INF/1);

(b) An English-language African subregional workshop to strengthen capacity for the Convention on Biological Diversity programmes of work relevant to invasive alien species was held in collaboration with IUCN, OIE, National Museum of Kenya and ICIPE, in Nairobi, Kenya from 7 to 9 December 2011 (the report is available as UNEP/CBD/WS-CB-IAS-AFR/1/2);

(c) A GTI subregional capacity-building workshop to address invasive alien species and to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Targets in East and Southeast Asia was jointly organized with the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity and the Secretariat in Bangkok, Thailand from 30 July to 1 August 2012. CABI Southeast & East Asia provided technical information on risk assessment of invasive alien species at the workshop (the report will be available as UNEP/CBD/WS-CB-IAS-ESEA/1/2).

30. Each subregional workshop identified the existing taxonomic capacity within the region and discussed how to maximize the use of the existing capacity and possibly gain capacity through international collaborations with relevant organizations. Further information is available in the meeting reports.

31. The workshop for the countries of the Arab region and for francophone Africa will be held in November and 5-7 December, 2012, respectively. Additional workshops are being planned for other regions.

* One representative entered a formal objection during the process leading to the adoption of this decision and underlined that he did not believe that the Conference of the Parties could legitimately adopt a motion or a text with a formal objection in place. A few representatives expressed reservations regarding the procedure leading to the adoption of this decision (see UNEP/CBD/COP/6/20, paras. 294-324).

⁴ Invasive Species Specialist Group of the Species Survival Commission of the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

(ii) *The STDF Seminar on International Trade and Invasive Alien Species*

32. The STDF Seminar on International Trade and Invasive Alien Species (IAS), organized in collaboration with IPPC and OIE, was held on 12-13 July 2012 at the WTO in Geneva, Switzerland. The Seminar was attended by approximately 110 participants. The seminar sought to:

(a) Raise awareness about the mutually beneficial goals of the SPS Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the contribution of effective SPS systems to help protect against the entry of harmful species, including pests, diseases and other invasive alien species;

(b) Foster collaboration between the SPS and the CBD “communities” at both regional and national levels; and

(c) Review initiatives that aim to build national and/or regional capacities to manage the entry and spread of invasive alien species, including pests and diseases, and discuss common challenges, good practices, and additional capacity-building efforts required (e.g., needs assessments, pest risk analysis (PRA), surveillance, development of training toolkits and materials, etc.).

33. The STDF seminar was well received, with positive feedback from participants. Participants agreed on the following set of conclusions and actions to improve the management of trade-related invasive alien species:

(a) The international regulatory framework under the SPS Agreement covers almost all aspects of trade-related introduction of invasive alien species. Measures applied to prevent entry, spread and establishment of invasive alien species via trade, aiming to protect human, animal and plant life or health, and the territory are thus SPS measures and should abide by WTO/SPS rules. Risk-based approaches as applied in the SPS context are a key tool in preventing the movement of organisms that have potential to become invasive. It was suggested that WTO Members should decide on whether the SPS Committee needs to adopt a specific decision to clarify the status of the invasive alien species with regard to the SPS Agreement;

(b) A gap in standard-setting was identified in the area of invasive animals. The seminar called OIE Members to decide and evaluate the extent of the need for specific standards in this area. For this need to be properly assessed at national level, in-country consultations should be undertaken involving both SPS and biodiversity institutions. In the meantime, OIE issued guidelines on assessing the risk for non-native animals to become invasive, and countries are encouraged to use them;

(c) In view of the multiplicity of institutions involved in the area of invasive alien species at national level, coordination of policies and strategies should be sought to achieve common goals. Formulating common goals and visions is a prerequisite. This coordination can take several forms and should as much as possible use existing mechanisms and framework at national level (national SPS coordination mechanisms, etc.);

(d) National SPS systems are well equipped to deal with the vast majority of trade-related invasive alien species (whether it is related to border control, quarantine measures, risk assessments, control and eradication measures etc. as we saw in the case of aquatic plants). However, further building SPS capacity in countries is necessary. Building SPS capacity in building capacity to address invasive alien species is critical;

(e) Engaging stakeholders in early stages of development of policies and strategies is essential to ensure effective implementation of these policies and strategies. Stakeholders include the

industry, research and academia, and civil society including local communities, etc. Public-private partnerships should be encouraged in this area;

(f) Education and awareness-raising is important. Communication strategies, tools and channels adapted to the target audience (such as NGOs, civil society groups, community groups, school curricula, electronic fora and knowledge-networks, etc.) should be used;

(g) Conducting studies on economic costs and benefits of prevention vs. control and of both prevention and control vs. returns in terms revenue generation can help in advocacy and awareness-raising of decision-makers;

(h) Regional approaches can prove very effective in prevention and control. Establishing regional networks can help in sharing experience and knowledge;

(i) Capacity-building programmes on invasive alien species aiming to preserve biodiversity should be encouraged to take into account existing national SPS capacity and infrastructure. A sound assessment of the needs can be obtained by applying the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) and the OIE PVS Pathway related to the evaluation of veterinary services. Consultation with National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs), veterinary services, fisheries authorities and public health institutions from a very early stage of elaboration of programmes is a key element;

34. Efforts should be sustained at the international level to foster dialogue, collaboration and coherence in action of SPS- and biodiversity-related organizations. The role of the SPS community (the STDF and its partners, IPPC, OIE, the World Health Organization, etc., as well as other SPS technical assistance providers) and the CBD community (CBD the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Global Environment Facility, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, etc.).

(iii) Documentation in support of capacity-building

35. To assist capacity-building activities, taking into account the suggestions of the Liaison Group, the Executive Secretary produced a draft document, "Considerations for Implementing International Standards and Codes of Conduct in National Invasive Species Strategies and Plans"⁵ for Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in collaboration with the Liaison Group, namely CITES, FAO, IMO, the Ramsar Convention, WTO, OIE and IUCN. Comments on the draft document were received from the Government of New Zealand, and the draft will be updated with comments and information on other progress made by the Liaison Group to build national- and regional-level capacity to apply the up-to-date international standards and codes of conduct.

36. The STDF commissioned a background study on trade-related invasive alien species for the Seminar referred to above. The study was presented at the Seminar and will be finalized taking into account the deliberations and conclusions of the seminar.

VI. ELEMENTS FOR A DECISION BY THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

37. At its fifteenth meeting, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice prepared a draft decision for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties (part I of SBSTTA recommendation XV/4) (UNEP/CBD/COP/11/2).

⁵ <http://www.cbd.int/invasive/doc/cbd-invasive-species-strategies-en.pdf> .

38. Bearing in mind the progress made since the fifteenth meeting of SBSTTA, the Conference of the Parties may wish to consider the following additional elements, further to paragraphs 11 and 18, respectively, of SBSTTA recommendation XV/4:

The Conference of the Parties,

1. *Welcomes* with appreciation the Guidelines for Assessing the Risk of Non-native Animals Becoming Invasive published by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), and *encourages* Parties and other Governments to make use of the guidelines in addressing the risks from invasive alien animal species;

2. *Welcomes* the progress made in the development of a Global Invasive Alien Species Information Partnership, *invites* relevant organizations, experts in biological invasion and information science to participate in the Partnership, and *encourages* Parties, other Governments and donors to provide financial support to implement the plan of work.
