

## **Minutes of the meeting of the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to the Convention on Biological Diversity**

Trondheim, Norway 5 and 6 February 2010

**Present:** All SBSTTA Bureau members were present except Mr. Nabil Hamada from Tunisia. Mr. Balakhrisna Pisupati represented UNEP. Mr. David Ainsworth made a short presentation on the International Year of Biodiversity.

### ***1. Opening of the meeting***

1. Mr. Spencer L. Thomas, SBSTTA Chair, opened the meeting by welcoming all the participants. He congratulated the Bureau Members for the visibility during the Sixth Conference of Trondheim and thanked them all for their flexibility and availability, in particular Ms. Tone Solhaug for her assistance and presence during the whole meeting. He also welcomed the UNEP representative and highlighted the opportunity of holding SBSTTA 14 at UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi.

2. The agenda of the meeting was adopted as follows, noting that under agenda item 6 “Other matters”, the meeting will consider logistics at SBSTTA 14 in Nairobi (accommodation):

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Status of preparation for SBSTTA 14
3. Ways and means to improve the effectiveness of SBSTTA
4. CC and biodiversity
5. Role of SBSTTA Bureau and focal points in IYB
6. Other matters.

3. The Chair then requested Bureau Members to make comments on the minutes of the previous meetings held in November 2009.

### ***2. Preparation for SBSTTA 14:***

#### *Third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook*

4. Under this item the Bureau considered the status of GBO-3, the implications of its findings, the status of GSPC, the effectiveness of the peer review process, the organization of work at SBSTTA 14 including keynote presentations, the poster session, and side events. The Bureau was informed that all the pre-session documents for SBSTTA were expected to be on the website by the 10<sup>th</sup> February deadline.

5. Regarding GBO-3, the Bureau noted that there was a need for assistance or guidelines for media presentations in the respective countries of the Bureau members. The representative of SCBD informed the Bureau that the executive summary would be sent to Japan as soon as it is ready so that they can translate it for their launching of GBO-3 and their JBO on 10 May. It was agreed that the same summary will be sent to all SBSTTA Bureau members as well as to UNEP and its regional offices. Some Bureau Members informed about the launching activities planned in their respective countries. It was noted that Bureau members can participate in the launching of GBO3 in their respective countries by making arrangements and providing messages based on key messages identified by the CBD Secretariat.

6. The Bureau members recommended that findings of the Trondheim Conference be included in GBO-3 and requested copies of the full GBO3 as soon as possible so that they can

prepare for SBSTTA 14. However, they noted the need to clarify the time the full document could be made available without compromising its impact when it is launched on 10 May in Nairobi.

7. It was agreed that the long version of GBO-3 will be posted on the website and could be translated only if resources are available. For the information off the Bureau, the following GBO-3 products will be made available for 10 May:

(a) GBO-3 main report in 6 languages (previously called synthesis, i.e. a document of around 80 pages)

(b) Technical Series document in English on Scenarios for the 21st Century (also around 80 pages with summary descriptions of 9 terrestrial, 3 inland water and 3 marine tipping points)

(c) A CD (to be included in the GBO-3 main report) with references and supporting documentation providing the evidence for statements made in GBO-3, including evidence from national reports. This will also contain the scenarios document including a more detailed description of the tipping points (another 90 pages)

(d) A web portal with all of the above and more;

(e) A press release, possibly with additional press material of particular relevance to each region

(f) A Video News Release

(g) And possibly, PowerPoint presentations

8. The Bureau was informed that Dr. Tom Lovejoy will make the keynote presentation at the launching of GBO3, but the Chair requested the members to make suggestions on guidance to be given to the speaker with regard to the topic and emphasis of the presentation. The Bureau was informed that the Consortium of Scientific Partners is planning to organize a training on the main messages of GBO3.

9. The Bureau members were informed that the deadline for submission of additions to the larger GBO3 document had already passed and that that document would be made available as soon as the synthesis document is finalized. The larger document will take into consideration all the suggestions received to date.

#### *The Post 2010 Strategic Plan and GSPC*

10. The Trondheim Conference provided a lot of input for the drafting and finalization of the post 2010 strategic plan. Suggestions were made on goals, targets, baselines and indicators. A question was raised as to whether both SBSTTA and WGRI will consider the same document<sup>1</sup> and whether SBSTTA will send its recommendations to the COP through WGRI. It was decided that SBSTTA would send its recommendations to COP with information to WGRI. Bureau member re-examined COP 9 request and confirmed that SBSTTA should consider the scientific basis of the vision, the strategic goals, the targets and related indicators while WGRI would consider mainly the vision and the mission of the Strategic Plan. Bureau Members noted it was not very effective to have SBSTTA and WGRI to work in parallel. Regarding consideration of strategic goals, targets and indicators, it was noted that it could not be possible for SBSTTA to finalize its work during the May meeting because there were still a lot of discussions on the “SMARTness” of the targets and the set of indicators was not ready yet to be sure that the targets were measurable and how they could be measured.

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<sup>1</sup> SBSTTA and WGRI will consider different documents with hopefully similar contents. It is useful for SBSTTA Bureau to read the WGRI documents before they are finalized. **The Chair of SBSTTA could consult the Bureau of the COP on how and whether SBSTTA recommendations on the Strategic Plan would be considered by WGRI.**

11. Not everyone agreed with the targets in the Note by the Executive Secretary at the Trondheim Conference. Bureau members suggested that it could be useful to convene a group of experts (including the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP) and other experts) to examine further the proposed targets and discuss the related indicators taking into account indicators that were adopted in Decision VIII/15.

12. The note by the Executive secretary does not provide enough guidance on how to adjust targets and indicators to suit the updated and revised strategic plan. SCBD was requested to continue exploring if anything could be done between the Trondheim Conference and SBSTTA 14.

13. With regards to the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC), the Secretariat described the usefulness of the strategy (its quantifiable targets, very SMART, and its role in facilitating project funding in the area of plants). Bureau members emphasized that the GSPC needed to be in total agreement with the CBD Strategic Plan.

#### *Effectiveness of the peer-review process*

14. The peer-review process provided useful comments that enabled improvement of many pre-session documents. Some documents received more comments than others. In the future more time will have to be allocated for peer-review and possibly in a staggered manner.

#### *Organization of work at SBSTTA*

15. A table will be attached complementing the document attached to the report of the November meeting of the Bureau, indicating agenda items where contact groups or Friends of the Chairs groups may be needed and the names of SCBD staff that would service those groups.

16. A note by the Chair of SBSTTA (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/1/Add.2) will be prepared to provide guidance on the organization of work at SBSTTA 14. Some points that will be highlighted in that document include:

(a) Parties must not challenge the 10-day meeting. A budget was allocated for one 5-day meeting but the overloaded agenda required 2 meetings or a 10-day meeting;

(b) Items for consideration must be completed that week with adoption of recommendations on Friday. Even if there is a need for cross-referencing (particularly in the case of climate change) the following, items considered and recommendations adopted the first week will not be re-opened the following week

#### *Poster session*

17. The theme of the poster session for SBSTTA-14 as approved by the Executive Secretary is: “*Biodiversity and Climate Change: Achieving the 2020 Targets*”. Posters and extended abstracts will be requested on case studies and best practices on how climate change and biodiversity can be mutually supportive in achieving the post-Kyoto target and the new strategic plan of the Convention. Contributors will be encouraged to relate their topics to one of the goals of the draft strategic plan.

#### *Side events*

18. Requests for side events are being received. A few will be co-organized by the SCBD

**3. Ways and means to improve the effectiveness of SBSTTA (The discussions provided the substance of the document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/19)**

19. The Bureau members examined the functioning of SBSTTA and discussed ways and means to improve its effectiveness. Their conclusions were made bearing in mind the updated and revised Strategic Plan of the Convention currently under preparation, the mandate of other bodies, such as the Group on Earth Observations - Biodiversity Observation Network<sup>2</sup> (GEO BON) and the Conservation Commons<sup>3</sup>, and the discussions for the establishment of an Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services<sup>4</sup> (IPBES). These bodies can generate data needed by SBSTTA to fulfill its mandate, in particular the scientific and technical assessments of the status of biological diversity and of the effects of measures taken in accordance with the provisions of this Convention.

20. The Bureau Members noted that the ways and means of improving the quality of the scientific, technical and technological advice of the Subsidiary Body, recommended by the Conference of the Parties (COP) in annex III of decision VIII/10, were applied in preparation for and during the twelfth and thirteenth meetings of SBSTTA (see annex to this note) but that it was too early to assess their effectiveness. Nevertheless, the Bureau felt that additional measures could be considered in order to further improve the effectiveness of the Subsidiary Body. They decided to formulate their recommendations around the following points:

- (a) Number of substantive items on the meeting agendas;
- (b) Nature and content of meeting documents prepared by the Secretariat;
- (c) Identification of more efficient ways of addressing in-depth reviews;
- (d) Clarification of the mandate of SBSTTA vis-à-vis the Working Group on Review of Implementation with regard to the advice on implementation of the Convention;
- (e) Inter-sessional role of the SBSTTA Bureau;
- (f) Clarification of the role and responsibility of SBSTTA Focal Points;
- (g) Relation between SBSTTA and the suggested IPBES and other Bodies; and
- (h) The functioning of the clearing-house mechanism.

### ***3.1 Number of substantive items on the meeting agendas***

21. The agendas of SBSTTA 12, 13 and 14 had, respectively, eight, seven and 18 substantive<sup>5</sup> items. These are distinct items and thus cannot be addressed collectively. Such overloaded agendas barely provide time for each Party to make one intervention and do not allow enough time for a thorough scientific, technical and technological consideration of the items. The 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> meetings were held for five days each, and the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting is planned for ten days.

22. In order to keep manageable the number of items on the agenda of SBSTTA, the COP should revisit, before the end of its meetings, all its requests to SBSTTA and identify the items to be included on its agenda, also taking into account the financial implications. At its eighth meeting, the COP, in paragraph 7 of decision VIII/10, put in place a mechanism for this review by requesting the Executive Secretary to compile and regularly update during the meetings of the COP all requests to the Subsidiary Body contained in the draft decisions so that the Conference of the Parties could be aware of all the requests being made to the Subsidiary Body. The Executive Secretary usually shares the list with the Chairs and other Members of the SBSTTA Bureau

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.earthobservations.org/geobon.shtml>

<sup>3</sup> <http://conservationcommons.net/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://ipbes.net/en/index.asp>

<sup>5</sup> .Excluding opening ceremony, organization of work, dates and venue of the next meeting, and closure of the meeting

participating in the COP meeting. The Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Chair of SBSTTA, could be requested to submit a proposal to the COP on (a) manageable agenda(s) for the meeting(s) of SBSTTA planned between two consecutive meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

### ***3.2 Nature and content of meeting documents prepared by the Secretariat***

23. The discussions at SBSTTA meetings depend greatly on the documentation prepared by the Secretariat. In paragraphs 12 and 14 of annex III to decision VIII/10, the COP recommends that the documentation prepared for SBSTTA meetings be concrete and focused, include proposed conclusions and recommendations for consideration by SBSTTA, and be peer-reviewed, as appropriate.

24. Often, discussions during SBSTTA meetings are limited to the consideration of the recommendations suggested in the notes by the Executive Secretary. For the 12th meeting of SBSTTA, some documents (e.g., UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/1/Add.2 *Improving the Scientific, Technical and Technological Debate during SBSTTA Meetings*, UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/3, *In-Depth Review of the Implementation of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation*, and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/9 *New and Emerging Issues Relating to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity - Biodiversity and Liquid Biofuel Production*), in addition to suggesting some recommendations, drew a number of conclusions that could be translated into key messages to the COP and the world at large. Such messages can also be found in decision IX/7, on the ecosystem approach, and decision IX/2, on agricultural biodiversity: biofuels and biodiversity. In these cases, the key messages emerged from technical discussions that took place at a previous meeting of the SBSTTA. This experience is worth repeating whenever the Executive Secretary is drafting, for consideration by SBSTTA, documents on assessments of the status and trends of, and threats to, biodiversity and the ecosystem services it underpins.

25. Another option for encouraging scientific and technical discussions at SBSTTA would be that SBSTTA provides the technical and scientific rationales behind alternative recommendations that it suggests to the COP, when a consensus cannot be reached. Such technical and scientific rationales should include a summary of the background, the expected outcomes of the suggested actions and, as appropriate, their implications in space and time for biodiversity and human well-being, bearing in mind the ecosystem approach.

### ***3.3 Further clarification of the mandate of SBSTTA in Article 25 and decision VIII/27 (Operation of the Convention) and implications for the consideration by SBSTTA 14 of the "strategic objectives and the 2020 headline targets" contained in the Strategic Plan document for WGRI.***

26. In paragraph 1 of its mandate, in Article 25 of the Convention, the subsidiary body is expected "to provide the Conference of the Parties and, as appropriate, its other subsidiary bodies with timely advice relating to the implementation of this Convention." In order to fulfill this mandate, SBSTTA carries out the tasks listed in paragraph 2 of the same Article and, in accordance with the multi-year programme of work (MYPOW), regularly reviews in depth the implementation of the programmes of work and work on cross-cutting issues, on the basis of which it formulates its recommendations to the Conference of the Parties on how to address the obstacles to the implementation of the Convention, the drivers of biodiversity loss and how to promote the safeguard and restoration of biodiversity.

27. The handling of the updating and revision of the Strategic Plan of the Convention raised the need to clarify the mandates of SBSTTA and the Working Group on the Review of Implementation (WGRI). In decision IX/9, the Conference of the Parties requested

(a) WGRI to prepare, for consideration and adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its tenth meeting, a revised and updated Strategic Plan, including a revised biodiversity target, as well as a multi-year programme of work for the period 2011–2022 (consistent with the updated and revised Strategic Plan, and periodicity of meetings after 2010), and proposals for the periodicity of meetings after 2010 (paragraph 1);

(b) SBSTTA to examine, prior to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the outcome-oriented goals and targets, and associated indicators contained in the annex to decision VIII/15, with a view to recommending adjustments, if and where necessary, taking into account the third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, the analysis/synthesis prepared by the Secretariat and further work by the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership and the scientific community.

28. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties requested that the short-term targets or milestones and the long-term target or vision to be included in the updated and revised Strategic Plan be based on robust scientific evidence. This request was understood to be addressed to SBSTTA.

29. The Bureau therefore concluded that SBSTTA should continue to advise the COP on scientific, technical and technological dimensions of the implementation of the Convention, while WGRI would deal with the other dimensions. More specifically, with regards to the updating and revision of the Strategic Plan, the SBSTTA Bureau concluded that SBSTTA would consider the scientific, technical and technological dimensions of the vision (or long-term target), the short-term targets (milestones) and associated indicators, some of which are described in decisions VII/30 and VIII/15, and baselines needed to assess progress in implementing the targets.

### ***3.4 Identification of more efficient ways of addressing in-depth reviews***

30. Major difficulties in carrying out in-depth reviews have been (i) the limited number of national reports and voluntary thematic reports submitted in time; (ii) in the case of the 4<sup>th</sup> national report, differences/disparity in the metrics and nature of the data provided, which did not allow comparison and extrapolation at the global level. This situation would remain the same as countries adopt their own targets and indicators for assessing progress; and (iii) the fact that most of the data and information come from organizations, rather than Parties. The scope of national reports is very wide (including all plants, animals and microorganisms, and biomes/ecosystems, species and genetic resources) and their production requires significant resources, which are not always available.

31. In paragraph 10 of decision IX/21, the COP requested SBSTTA to undertake an in-depth review of the programme of work on island biodiversity at one of its meetings after the tenth meeting of the COP, to be sent for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh meeting. Voluntary thematic reports should be requested from all categories of stakeholders with some guidance on the types of data needed (e.g. on given sets of indicators). The SBSTTA Bureau as well as SBSTTA Focal Points should play a role in encouraging and/or channelling the submission of voluntary reports (see role of SBSTTA Bureau and SBSTTA Focal Points below). In addition, regional workshops (in line with those organised to collect data/information on the programme of work on protected areas) should be organised, where participants would contribute information on island biodiversity following a reporting framework. Information from regional workshops needs to be validated through national Focal Points or other acceptable mechanisms.

32. If the COP decides to carry out in-depth reviews of other programmes of work in the future, a similar approach to the collection of data/information can be used. The CBD clearing house mechanism, organisations such as, *inter alia*, the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) and

UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre, members of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership, Global Biodiversity Information Facility, the Conservation Commons and other relevant biodiversity-related information sources/services, should be involved.

33. In-depth reviews could also focus on the strategic goals and targets of the updated and revised Strategic Plan and, more specifically, on the drivers of biodiversity loss and on action targeting the safeguard and restoration of biodiversity across biomes. They could be limited to one or a set of targets with clear reference to the agreed indicators for use. The themes for in-depth reviews should always be made known well in advance so that data, including time-series data, can be collected. SBSTTA could evaluate progress towards the achievement of the selected targets across all programmes of work, i.e., across all biomes, and propose both specific recommendations unique to a biome or to a programme of work, and general recommendations for implementation at the national level or by the Secretariat. This approach would contribute to the promotion of the ecosystem approach in the planning and implementation of the Convention and facilitate the mainstreaming of biodiversity in broader national, regional and global mandates and across sectors.

34. In-depth reviews should also include a suitable reporting framework, clearly identifying indicators and issues that provide an objective assessment of the status of implementation of the Convention.

### ***3.5 Clarifying the role and responsibility of the SBSTTA Bureau intersessionally and SBSTTA focal points in preparing revised NBSAPs***

35. SBSTTA Bureau Members can steer work relating to scientific requests from SBSTTA or COP in their respective regions and liaise with SBSTTA and other Focal Points on relevant matters. They can encourage participation of their regional experts in peer-reviews and submissions of reports when requested. They can participate in, or contribute to, the organization of regional workshops.

36. SBSTTA Bureau Members can represent their respective regions in workshops and meetings organized within the CBD or by relevant organizations. They can also establish links with related bodies and initiatives.

37. The role of the Chair of SBSTTA in linking with other scientific bodies of biodiversity-related conventions in particular the Biodiversity Liaison Group has already been stressed in the *modus operandi* of SBSTTA (COP decision VIII/10, paragraph 20 of annex III).

38. The eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties adopted the terms of reference of SBSTTA Focal Points in paragraph 21 of decision VIII/10. These Focal Points are the national points of contact for the Conference of the Parties on matters relating to SBSTTA. They are also the links to the SBSTTA Bureau and the corresponding agencies or departments/divisions in countries or relevant regional, sub-regional and inter-governmental organizations. SBSTTA Focal Points receive technical information from SBSTTA and pass it on to relevant bodies within their country, and act as a conduit for technical comments to the preparatory processes for SBSTTA. They may also be asked to help locate technical expertise for work such as peer-reviews. Communication with SBSTTA Focal Points is usually copied to or summarized for the National Focal Points.

39. SBSTTA Focal Points are also essential for the nomination of experts for participation in ad hoc technical expert groups, and in ensuring that scientific evidence is taken into account in national reports, the development of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) and programmes.

40. There is a need to increase the capacity of SBSTTA Focal Points, where needed, so that they can play their role efficiently for the benefit of SBSTTA and its advice to COP. Regional workshops, such as those carried out for the programme of work on protected areas, can be used as platforms for gathering scientific, technical and technological data, information exchange and knowledge sharing.

### ***3.6 Relation between SBSTTA and the suggested IPBES and other bodies***

41. SBSTTA should cooperate with relevant international, regional and national organizations, under the guidance of the Conference of the Parties, thus building upon the vast experience and knowledge available. To facilitate such cooperation, the SBSTTA Bureau may hold meetings with equivalent bodies of other relevant biodiversity-related conventions, institutions and processes. In addition, the Chair of the Subsidiary Body, or other members of the Bureau authorized by the Chair, may represent the Subsidiary Body at meetings of the scientific bodies of such groups. More specifically, SBSTTA may establish through its Bureau and the CBD Secretariat, links with the GEO BON, the study of The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), and the Conservation Commons as well as with IPBES if and when the Panel is established. These initiatives will be generating free and open access data and information that will be useful to the Subsidiary Body. SBSTTA Bureau Members should therefore participate in these initiatives to ensure that the data collected, or to be collected, are useful to SBSTTA.

### ***3.7 The functioning of the clearing-house mechanism***

42. The Bureau noted that the role of the clearing-house mechanism (CHM), established to promote technical and scientific cooperation, should be further enhanced, in line with decision IX/30, *inter alia* by becoming more and more interactive. E-forums are efficient platforms for information exchange in preparation for SBSTTA. The CHM can be organized to promote joint research programmes and joint ventures. Online tools for use at the national level should be developed.

43. Since many of the CHM applications are relevant across conventions, further support for the on-going interoperability mechanism among the Rio Conventions should be encouraged. It would increase the extent to which the CHM is used by broadening the categories of providers and users of information, share the burden for management and upkeep among the three Rio Conventions Secretariats, and promote synergies at the national level by presenting a common tool to be used by Focal Points and implementers across Conventions. Possibilities of increasing interoperability with biodiversity-related conventions and various other organisations working on biodiversity should also be sought.

44. Bureau members noted, however, that the informal advisory committee of the clearing-house mechanism needed additional resources to work on effecting such developments.

## **4. Climate change and biodiversity**

### ***4.1 Implication of Copenhagen on SBSTTA activities on CC and oceans***

45. The CBD Secretariat drafted a document describing the implications of the Copenhagen UNFCCC meeting for SBSTTA and noted that these implications had been taken into consideration in the SBSTTA documents on climate change.



#### ***4.2 Elements of a joint work programme of the three Rio conventions***

46. The SBSTTA Bureau Members considered the draft document prepared by the Executive Secretary. They noted that the document contained more activities by the Rio conventions secretariat and recommended that the document includes more activities to be carried out jointly at the national and local level<sup>6</sup>.

#### **5. IYB : Role of SBSTTA Bureau and focal points in IYB**

47. A representative of the SCBD presented an overview of IYB activities including inter alia the statement of the UN Secretary General, the UNESCO meeting and the 6<sup>th</sup> Trondheim Conference. He noted that to date, close to 90 organizations committed to participating. Bureau Members exchanged ideas on how they can participate as well as SBSTTA focal points. They agreed to explore how to use SBSTTA 14 and GBO-3 to contribute to the IYB.

48. The Chair of SBSTTA noted that most national emblems originate in the natural world, such as animals or birds, and recommended that the SCBD conducts a survey of national emblems as a way to highlight the importance of nature/biodiversity in nations and as part of the IYB.

#### **6. Other matters**

49. Bureau Members expressed the need for assistance from the SCBD to book hotels for them in Nairobi. Bureau members are expected to arrive in Nairobi on 8 of May and participate in the Bureau meeting on 9 May. The meeting will be devoted to the organization of work and other issues. They also requested the SCBD to make PowerPoint presentations on each agenda item to facilitate their preparation and agreements on strategies to address the issues.

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<sup>6</sup> Since then, the document has been revised