



CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

Twelfth meeting

UNESCO, Paris, 2–6 July 2007

Item 4.3 of the provisional agenda**

REPORT OF THE SBSTTA BUREAU ON WAYS AND MEANS TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY

*Minutes of the first meeting of the Bureau of the twelfth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific,
Technical and Technological Advice*

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Bureau of the twelfth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) met on 26 July to consider the items on the provisional agenda of its first meeting (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/Bureau/1/1). All the Bureau members were present and the meeting was chaired by Christian Prip.

2. After the adoption of the agenda (see annex I below), the Bureau considered all the items on the agenda and drew some conclusions under each of the items.

II. CONSIDERATION OF SBSTTA CHAIRS PROPOSALS ON WAYS AND MEANS TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SBSTTA

3. The Bureau reviewed the proposals developed by the past, present and future Chairs of SBSTTA at their meeting on 24–25 July 2006 (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/BRAINSTORMING/1/4) and noted that a number of these proposals provided concrete suggestions on how to operationalize the consolidated *modus operandi* adopted by the Conference of the Parties in decision VIII/10. Some of these proposals could be considered for immediate implementation to enhance the effectiveness of SBSTTA as the subsidiary scientific, technical; and technological body of the Convention (see section IV below on “Organization of work for the twelfth and thirteen meetings of SBSTTA”). Some of the Chairs’ proposals represent innovations that somewhat depart from the SBSTTA *modus operandi* recently adopted by the Conference of the Parties and therefore require further discussion.

4. During the discussions, some responsibilities of the Bureau were highlighted, particularly in relation to the question in the report of SBSTTA Chairs on how scientific discussion can be facilitated or

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promoted during SBSTTA meetings. The Bureau emphasized that, among other responsibilities, the Bureau should:

- (a) Play a leadership role and steer SBSTTA meetings;
- (b) Encourage active and appropriate participation by the Parties in their regions in SBSTTA and related processes; and
- (c) Promote wider recognition of SBSTTA and the work of the Convention in the scientific community, Governments and relevant organizations.

III. PROVISIONAL AGENDAS FOR THE TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH MEETING OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

5. Under this item, the Bureau considered not only the provisional agendas for the twelfth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, but also the respective draft annotated provisional agendas prepared by the Secretariat for the purpose of the current meeting. They noted that the agendas reflect well all requests from the Conference of the Parties for consideration by SBSTTA prior to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. It recommended the following:

(a) All items, headings and sub-headings on the provisional agendas for the twelfth and thirteenth meetings of SBSTTA, as well as the annotations to these agendas should reflect the fact that the Convention has entered a phase of enhanced implementation. In particular, explanations should be given in the annotations on how each item under consideration will contribute at both the national, regional and global levels to the implementation of the Convention and the global targets and goals, taking into account the need for synergy and harmony with other ongoing initiatives, in particular in biodiversity-related conventions;

(b) The Secretariat should send to Bureau members, as soon as possible, the rationales for allocating the items to either the twelfth or thirteenth meeting, but not to the other;

(c) Among the new and emerging issues from the indicative list provided by the past, present and future Chairs of SBSTTA, priority should be given to: (i) the importance of biodiversity in biofuel production and the impact of biofuel production on biodiversity; (ii) the impact of the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus H5N1 on biodiversity, in particular wildlife (as a follow-up to the brainstorming meeting held on 19 March 2006 in Curitiba, Brazil, and reported on in document UNEP/CBD/COP/8/INF/47, and in close collaboration with the Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza established under the Convention on Migratory Species as the lead partner); and (iii) the decline of amphibians and other taxonomic groups, in light of the 2010 target. For each of the emerging issues, a task force, a brainstorming meeting, an AHTEG or any other initiative by the Secretariat and under the leadership of one of the SBSTTA Bureau members could prepare a report for consideration by SBSTTA.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF WORK FOR THE TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH MEETINGS OF SBSTTA

A. *Plenary, Committee of the Whole and working groups*

6. The Bureau members discussed the advantages and disadvantages of considering: (i) all agenda items in plenary and a Committee of the Whole (option I) and (ii) some items in plenary and the Committee of the Whole, and others in the usual Working Groups I and II (option II).

7. Option I would allow cost saving on interpretation and offer the possibility for single-person delegations to participate in the discussion of all agenda items. However, considering the large number of substantive items on the agenda, this option may lead to superficial consideration of the items. Option II would require two teams of interpreters but offers the possibility of considering some items in plenary and the Committee of the Whole and others in Working Groups. If interpreters are recruited locally, as it will

be the case at UNESCO for the twelfth meeting of SBSTTA, the cost difference for interpretation could be relatively low for one or two teams, air tickets being the most costly item.

8. The Bureau agreed that, at least for the twelfth and thirteenth meetings of SBSTTA, option II should be preferred with following allocation of items: (i) in plenary: opening of the meeting; election of officers, adoption of the agenda and organization of work; draft provisional agendas and dates of following meetings; and adoption of the report and closure of the meeting; (ii) in the Committee of the Whole. Items for in-depth review; and (iii) in Working Groups I and II, the remaining items.

B. Statements and introductory remarks

9. Drawing on the proposals developed by the Chairs of SBSTTA (considered under item 2 above) and pursuant to the consolidated *modus operandi* of SBSTTA adopted by the Conference of the Parties in decision VIII/10, the Bureau agreed that the following should be applied immediately with the aim of enhancing scientific inputs in the debates of SBSTTA:

(a) *At the opening of the meeting*, introductory remarks will be limited to short welcome addresses by the Chair of SBSTTA and the Executive Secretary of the Convention, followed by a statement by the host country or organization, if applicable. This implies that there will be no statements, at the opening of the meeting, by regional groups, intergovernmental organizations, representatives of indigenous and local communities and non-governmental organizations. The Bureau could consider at its next meeting whether the Secretariat should refrain from listing, in the procedural report, the names of countries making statements. The list has been an encouragement for delegations to make statements even when they did not bring much to the ongoing debates. When some delegations return home, they use the number of times their country name was mentioned in the report as an indicator and a gauge of their activity during the meetings. However, ways should be found to reflect important points brought to the debates by delegations;

(b) *Keynote and in-session presentations:*

- (i) Keynote presentations should continue to be organized on topics to be agreed upon at a next meeting of the Bureau;
- (ii) When needed and possible, through 15-minute presentations, scientific and technical experts will be invited to introduce certain topics with a view to setting the context and, as needed, ensure that all delegates have a clear and common understanding of the topic for consideration;
- (iii) These presentations could be preceded by side-events on the same topics;
- (iv) In order to save time, the Secretariat will not introduce the documents, but will stand ready to clarify questions from the floor, and names of relevant members of the Secretariat responsible for each agenda item should be provided to enable delegates to contact them when needed;
- (v) At the beginning of every session, the Chairs of SBSTTA and/or Working Groups will inform delegations about the time allocated to interventions (e.g. 5 minutes/intervention) with an understanding that they may interrupt any delegation exceeding the allocated time unless they believe that the intervention is contributing a lot to the debate. They will also have the prerogative to interrupt interventions going beyond scientific, technical and technological aspects;
- (vi) Every effort will be made to have interactive debates, with no prepared statements, in particular those of political nature or not contributing to the subject under consideration. Delegates should refrain from congratulating the Chair on his/her election or appointment. It is also desirable to reduce the diplomatic language but use more technical and scientific language so as to encourage participation by delegates with a technical background;

- (vii) Guidance on how to use microphones and a reminder to speak slowly and clearly for adequate translation will be pasted in front of each microphone and could be included in the information for participants;
- (c) *Side-events:*
 - (i) A Bureau side-event is planned for Monday, 9 July 2007. The Chairs of SBSTTA will present and discuss the proposals developed during the brainstorming meeting and follow-up meetings. The current Bureau will also present the results of their consideration of these proposals;
 - (ii) The Bureau will discuss at its next meeting a strategy on how to handle side events, bearing in mind that demand of side events has considerably increased at the past meetings.

V. OTHER MATTERS AND CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

10. Under other matters, the Bureau was informed about the two issues of *Gincana* that will be issued respectively for the twelfth and thirteenth meetings of SBSTTA. Those issues will follow the model of that provided for the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties but will be focused on scientific, technical and technological matters relevant to the Convention. The Chairs of SBSTTA have been invited to contribute, as well as the respective bureaux of the twelfth and thirteenth meetings of SBSTTA.

11. The Bureau members requested that their recommendations be disseminated through the clearing-house mechanism and be reflected in the notification inviting participants to twelfth and thirteenth meetings of SBSTTA.

12. The primary role of SBSTTA bureau members is to act during SBSTTA meetings as representative of their respective regions. Every effort will therefore be made to continue ensuring the participation of a second delegate from the Bureau members' countries.

13. The following issues will be considered at later meetings of the Bureau, to be held by teleconference and/or electronically:

- (a) Side-events and poster session;
- (b) Role of SBSTTA Bureau members including in particular responsibility for a work area, fostering interactions with SBSTTA focal points and others in the region, and possible chairs of the working groups to be nominated as soon as possible so that they can start undertaking preparatory work;
- (c) Further consideration of new and emerging issues;
- (d) Contribution of the Bureau to one and/or both issues of *Gincana* to be produced for the twelfth and thirteenth meetings of SBSTTA;
- (e) Possible role of SBSTTA in addressing scientific, technical and technological issues pertaining to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The issue needs to be raised even if there are political implications, starting with some discussion in a joint meeting of the bureaux of SBSTTA and the Conference of the Parties;
- (f) How the results of the discussions by the SBSTTA Chairs and Bureau can be drawn to the attention of SBSTTA, in addition to the side-event of SBSTTA Chairs and Bureau to be held on 9 July 2007 (see para. 9 (c) (i) above). An item could be included on the agenda of the twelfth meeting of SBSTTA in relation to appendix B of annex III to decision VIII/10.

14. At the closure of the meeting, the Executive Secretary paid tribute to SBSTTA Chair and other Bureau members for their commitment and fruitful debates as well as for the quality and nature of the recommendations adopted. He was of the view that the agreed conclusions of the SBSTTA Bureau constitute a solid foundation for enhancing the effectiveness of SBSTTA and elevating this unique organ into a vibrant forum for science and technology. He emphasized that this meeting had demonstrated the leadership role of the SBSTTA Bureau and reiterated his gratitude to the Chair of SBSTTA for his

leadership, his country, Denmark, for providing financial support, and the Muséum for hosting the meeting.

15. A tour of the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle (stuffed animal specimens and the great gallery of evolution, in particular threatened species) was then organized, guided by Pascale Joannot (Déléguée à l'outre-mer et chargée de la rénovation des collections, Direction des collections) and Jean-Patrick Le Duc of the Muséum.

Annex I

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Consideration of SBSTTA Chairs proposals on ways and means to improve the effectiveness of SBSTTA.
3. Provisional agendas of the twelfth and thirteenth meetings of SBSTTA.
4. Organization of work for the twelfth and thirteenth meetings of SBSTTA (including keynote and in-session presentations, poster session, side events, roundtable debates, and consideration of new and emerging issues).
5. Other matters and closure of the meeting.

Annex II

LIST OF SBSTTA BUREAU MEMBERS

1. Christian Prip, Denmark, Chair of SBSTTA-11 and 12
2. Claudine Ramiarison, Madagascar
3. Jorge Ernesto Quezada Diaz, El Salvador
4. Rawson Piniel Yonazi, Tanzania
5. Linus Spencer Thomas, Grenada
6. Chaweewan Hutacharern, Thailand
7. Angheluta Vadineanu, Romania
8. Shirin Karryeva, Turkmenistan
9. Joel E. Miles, Republic of Palau
10. Annemarie Watt, Australia
11. Asghar Mohammadi Fazel, Islamic Republic of Iran, Chair of SBSTTA-13 and 14
