



## Convention on Biological Diversity

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### SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

Fourteenth meeting

Nairobi, 10-21 May 2010

Item 4.7 of the provisional agenda\*

### NEW AND EMERGING ISSUES

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the functions of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) is the identification of new and emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The procedure for the identification of new and emerging issues and the review of proposals is described in decision IX/29. By 31 October 2009, eight submissions with a total of 22 proposed issues for possible consideration by SBSTTA had been received, including three from Parties. Four of the proposed issues were accompanied with the information and justification requested through paragraph 11 of decision IX/29 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. Three additional submissions with 17 proposed issues were received after this deadline, all including the required information. Four Parties responded to the notification inviting views and information on the proposals for new and emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity submitted to date. They recognized the pertinence of the proposals, noted the absence of supporting information in many cases and recalled that the Conference of the Parties underlined in paragraph 14 of decision VIII/10 the need to reduce the number of agenda items for consideration by the Subsidiary Body at each meeting in order to improve the effectiveness of its proceedings. On the basis of these considerations, all four submissions concluded that none of the proposals warrants the elaboration of a full scientific and technical analysis under a dedicated new agenda item. Suggestions were made how some of the issues identified as new and emerging could be appropriately dealt with under existing programmes of work and/or by other processes and forums.

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\* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/1.

## **SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATION**

The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice may wish to recommend that the Conference of the Parties adopt a decision along the following lines:

### *The Conference of the Parties*

1. *Decides* not to add any of the proposed new and emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity to the agenda of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice;

2. *Requests* the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to:

(a) Consider the subject of ocean acidification as part of the ongoing activities under the programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity, in accordance with the provision in paragraph 4 of decision IX/20;

(b) Include relevant information and assessments of Arctic biodiversity, in particular information generated through the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP) of the Arctic Council's Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Working Group, under all relevant programmes of work and cross-cutting issues of the Convention;

(c) Examine possible activities regarding the impact of ground-level ozone on biological diversity;

(d) Take into account, in the implementation of the programme of work on protected areas, the impact of ocean noise on marine protected areas;

3. *Invites* Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to consider the issues identified as possible new and emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity when implementing existing programmes of work under the Convention as well as under other forums and processes;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, when inviting future submissions of proposals for new and emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, to encourage Parties and other proponents to supplement their proposals with the information listed in paragraph 11 of decision IX/29.

## I. PROPOSALS FOR NEW AND EMERGING ISSUES

1. In decision IX/29, the Conference of the Parties complemented the consolidated *modus operandi* of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, adopted through decision VIII/10, with additional elements, including a procedure for the identification of new and emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. According to the agreed procedure, the Executive Secretary is requested to notify Parties and relevant organizations after each meeting of the Conference of the Parties to submit proposals for new and emerging issues and to provide supplementary information justifying these proposals based on the guidance in paragraph 11 of decision IX/29. After the deadline, the Executive Secretary is requested to invite Parties and relevant organizations to contribute relevant information and views related to the proposals taking into account a list of criteria contained in paragraph 12 of decision IX/29.

2. In accordance with the guidance provided through decision IX/29, the Executive Secretary invited, through notifications 2008-083 and 2008-084 dated 10 July 2008, Parties and other Governments as well as relevant organizations to submit proposals on new and emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Upon a request from one Party, the original deadline for the submission of proposals was extended from 30 November 2008 to 31 December 2008 (notification 2008-142 dated 24 October 2008) and then subsequently to 31 October 2009 (notification 2008-159 dated 9 December 2008).

3. By 31 October 2009, the Secretariat had received eight submissions, including four from Parties (Islamic Republic of Iran; Mexico; Suriname and United Kingdom), containing a total of 22 proposals for new and emerging issues. Three additional submissions with another 17 proposals for new and emerging issues were received after the deadline. Of the total of 39 proposals, 21 (from 5 submissions) were accompanied with information justifying their selection. The submissions received, accessible through the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention at <http://www.cbd.int/convention/emerging.shtml>, are included in the table below.

## II. VIEWS AND INFORMATION ON SUBMITTED PROPOSALS FOR NEW AND EMERGING ISSUES

4. Through notification 2009-159 issued on 19 November 2009, the Executive Secretary invited Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to submit, by 31 December 2009, views and information on the proposals for new and emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity received thus far. By 10 January 2010, four responses had been received (Australia; Canada; China; New Zealand). Responding to notification 2008-083 inviting proposals for new and emerging issues, [Mexico](#) had earlier proposed that the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice should not take up any new issues at this point and rather concentrate its efforts on the implementation of ongoing programmes of work.

5. [Australia](#) considered those proposals received by the deadline of 31 October 2009 and which were accompanied with additional information and found that the issues outlined in the proponents' submissions did not provide a case for further consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. In its submission, Australia indicated that:

(a) The impact of ground-level ozone on biological diversity, as outlined in the submission, would be more relevant and appropriate to the Montreal Protocol and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution, in particular its Working Group on Effects;

(b) Arctic biodiversity or ocean acidification, as outlined in the submission, would be best assessed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

6. [Canada](#) emphasized the need to follow the guidance provided through decision IX/29, including the strict application of the criteria laid out in paragraph 12 of that decision. In this context, Canada noted that most of the proposals lacked supporting information and several involved issues that are already being addressed under the Convention, at least to a degree, such as market-based incentives for conservation, ocean acidification, the effects of climate change effect on biodiversity, and impacts of invasive alien species. In Canada's assessment, none of the proposals therefore warrants the elaboration of a full "scientific and technical analysis with options for action". Canada however sees merits in considering the proposals in light of how the issues they raise might be addressed within the existing thematic programmes of work and cross-cutting issues of the Convention. In particular, Canada noted that:

(a) Arctic biodiversity is a priority issue, particularly in light of climate change, and it should be examined whether the work that is already under way adequately covers all major aspects;

(b) Ocean acidification is globally recognized as a problem for marine biodiversity and a lot of information can be expected from the European project on ocean acidification (EPOCA) funded through the Seventh Research Framework Programme of the European Union;

(c) Consideration of the effect of underwater noise on marine protected areas (MPAs) should focus on the additional use of acoustic monitoring technologies within marine protected areas to better identify and understand the potential impacts of ocean noise on those areas. An assessment of the use of buffer zones around marine protected areas to protect/mitigate these areas from noise pollution is less effective because of the long distance transmission of low frequency noise.

7. [China](#) noted that only five of the submitted proposals were accompanied with detailed information and none of these fulfilled the criteria set in decision IX/29. China reiterated the urgency to focus on the implementation of current programmes and activities.

8. [New Zealand](#) made reference to paragraph 14 of decision VIII/10 in which the Conference of the Parties underlined the need to reduce the number of agenda items for consideration by the Subsidiary Body at each meeting in order to improve the effectiveness of its proceedings. For this reason, New Zealand supported the view of Mexico – also expressed by China – that the focus of the Convention should be on the full and effective implementation of current activities rather than taking on new issues.

9. In considering those proposals that were accompanied with additional information and applying the criteria set forth in paragraph 12 of decision IX/29, New Zealand considered ocean acidification as the one having most relevance and merit, given its wide geographic coverage, uncertain and complex effects and potential to affect global marine food chains and communities.

### III. CONCLUSION

10. While recognizing the relevance of certain proposals for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, there appeared to be a general agreement that none of the issues submitted in time and with supporting information should be taken up by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice as a new agenda item. In general, any new subject considered by the SBSTTA should serve to underpin the provision of scientific and technical support to facilitate and promote the implementation of the Convention. It was also noted that several proposals are already being dealt with in ongoing programmes of work or could be attached to ongoing activities. Others could be brought to the attention of other relevant processes and bodies.

11. To ensure a more effective process of identifying new and emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity after the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties proponents should be encouraged to provide the information listed in paragraph 11 of decision IX/29.

**Table: Proposals** for new and emerging issues relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity received in response to notifications 2008-083, 2008-084, 2008-142 and 2008-159. Proposals which were accompanied by a detailed justification in accordance with paragraph 11 of decision IX/29 are printed in bold and the information is accessible through hyperlinks.

<i>Proponent</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Proposed issue(s)</i>
Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy	30-Jul-08	Nanotechnology; Biotechnology and GMOs; Increased use of market-based incentives for conservation, such as payments for ecosystem services and biodiversity offsets
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	24-Oct-08	Potential and actual impacts of the global financial crisis on biodiversity conservation and sustainable use efforts; Cultural and social drivers of biodiversity change; Climate change and its continuing effects, in particular: (a) Opportunities offered and risks posed by carbon offset schemes; and (b) Linkages between biodiversity and health; Assessing the nature and scope of processes and activities in the open and deep ocean
Corporación Colombiana de Investigación Agropecuaria	28-Oct-08	Collection, characterization, conservation, and development of native genetic resources (plant and microbial species) with potential for energy production; Collection, characterization, conservation and sustainable utilization in food security of tropical, native genetic resources emphasizing on species with high nutritional value (tuber crops, legumes, fruits); Cultivar development; Recovery and conservation of high value land races; Technology transfer, training and adoption of robust techniques for fingerprinting / protection purposes of high value native genetic resources
Mexico	20-Nov-08	No emerging issue this time: there is a need to focus on implementation of current activities
United Kingdom Global Biodiversity Sub Committee	15-Dec-08	<a href="#"><u><b>Ocean acidification;</b></u></a> <a href="#"><u><b>Arctic biodiversity;</b></u></a> <a href="#"><u><b>Impact of ground-level ozone on biological diversity</b></u></a>
Iran, Islamic Republic of	15-Dec-08	Effects of climate change on habitats, specifically the effects of drought on wetlands; Climate change effects on biodiversity; Endemic species; Effects of GMOs on genetic diversity of wild species; Effects of invasive alien species on genetic, species and ecosystem diversity of protected areas
Royal Society	19-Dec-08	<a href="#"><u><b>Impact of ground-level ozone on biological diversity</b></u></a>
Suriname	24-Aug-09	Factors that adversely influence on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity including large and small-scale mining, large-scale logging, habitat conversion, poaching, invasive alien species
Okeanos Foundation and Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society	23-Nov-09	<a href="#"><u><b>Marine protected areas and undersea noise</b></u></a>
Professor William J. Sutherland	08-Dec-09	<a href="#"><u><b>Microplastic pollution; Nanosilver in wastewater; Synthetic meat; Artificial life; Stratospheric aerosols; Promotion of biochar; Mobile-sensing technology; Deoxygenation of the</b></u></a>

<i>Proponent</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Proposed issue(s)</i>
		<u>oceans</u> ; <u>Changes in denitrifying bacteria</u> ; <u>High-latitude volcanism</u> ; <u>Invasive Indo-Pacific lionfish</u> ; <u>Trans-Arctic dispersal and colonization</u> ; <u>Assisted colonization</u> ; <u>Possible impact of REDD on non-forested ecosystems</u> ; <u>Large-scale international land acquisitions</u>
Applied Environmental Research Foundation, India	03-Jan-10	<u>Integrating high-conservation-value native species into biofuel production for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity</u>

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