Convention on
Biological Diversity

Secretariat

Ref: STTM/dc

8 June 2001

Sir/Madam,

At its fifth meeting held in Nairobi, 15 to 26 may, 2000, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention requested the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) to consider the impact of climate change on forest biological diversity, and to prepare scientific advice in order to integrate biodiversity considerations, including biodiversity conservation, into the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol. This was to be carried out, where appropriate and feasible, in collaboration with the appropriate bodies of the UNFCCC and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

In response to this request, SBSTTA, at its sixth meeting in Montreal, 12 – 16 March, 2001, in its recommendation VI/7, noted the inter-linkages between biological diversity and climate change, and decided to promote, on the basis of the ecosystem approach, a wider assessment of these inter-linkages.

As a first step in this wider assessment SBSTTA decided to carry out a pilot assessment to prepare scientific advice to integrate biodiversity considerations into the implementation of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol, and, for this purpose, established, an ad hoc technical expert group in accordance with its modus operandi. The full recommendation is attached, including, in the annex, the terms of reference of the expert group as adopted by SBSTTA.

I hereby invite you to submit the name of an expert from your country who may be called upon to participate in the expert group, together with a description of her/his expertise to contribute to the duties outlined in the terms of reference. Guidelines for the selection of nominees are also attached. All nominees will be included in the Convention's roster of experts. Nominations should be received by July 1, 2001.

To: All CBD National Focal Points

Cc: SBSTTA focal points, CHM focal points

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Once nominees are received, the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the SBSTTA Bureau, will select up to fifteen experts with due consideration given to geographical balance as well as to ensuring that the range of expertise on biological diversity and its inter-linkages with climate change is covered. In line with the wishes of the Conference of the Parties and SBSTTA, efforts will be made to include within the expert group some experts who have been involved in the UNFCCC and/or IPCC processes, and experts from indigenous and local communities. You are invited to take these points into consideration when nominating experts.

The work of the group will build upon, *inter alia*, previous relevant work of the IPCC, which is being integrated, by the IPCC, into a Technical Paper. It is envisaged that the ad hoc technical expert group will hold its first meeting in the second half of this year (tentatively 26 – 30 November, 2001) and its second meeting in the first half of 2002. The group's report is due to be completed by the time of the eighth meeting of SBSTTA. Further information is available on the Convention's web site at www.biodiv.org/cross-cutting/climate.

Thank you for your cooperation and continued support towards the work of the Convention.

Yours sincerely,

Hamdallah Zedan
Executive Secretary

Recommendation VI/7

Biological diversity and climate change, including cooperation with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice,

Recalling decisions V/3, paragraphs 3, 5 and annex, V/4, paragraphs 11 and 16-20, V/15, paragraph 6, and V/21, paragraph 3, of the Conference of the Parties,

Emphasizing the urgent need to take prompt action to address climate change as a major cause of loss of biological diversity, which is already evident, in particular in coral-bleaching, and its associated socio-economic consequences,

Also emphasizing that measures that may be taken to mitigate or adapt to climate change may also have important effects, positive or negative, on biological diversity,

Stressing the need for adaptation measures to ensure the long-term integrity of ecosystems, species and ecological processes under conditions of climate change,

Emphasizing also the impact of biodiversity loss on climate change and the contribution that the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, through, inter alia, avoided deforestation, could make to adapt to or mitigate climate change,

Stressing that overall emissions reduction is the main and most important measure to address climate change,

Recognizing the existence of reliable scientific data that climate change is already impacting on the biological diversity of coral reefs,

1. Recommends to the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting that there is a need to take immediate actions under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to reduce and mitigate the impacts of climate change on the biological diversity of coral reefs and their associated socio-economic effects;

2. Takes note of the discussion of the interlinkages between biological diversity and climate change, contained in the discussion note by the Executive Secretary submitted to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its sixth session and the Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technological Advice of that Convention at the second part of its thirteenth session, held in The Hague, from 13 to 24 November 2000 (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/11, annex I);

3. Welcomes the agreement of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technological Advice to consider this matter at its fourteenth session, scheduled for July 2001, and its invitation to the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to submit their views on the issues identified;

4. Promotes on the basis of the ecosystem approach a wider assessment of the interlinkages between biological diversity and climate change, in order to develop more comprehensive scientific advice to integrate biodiversity considerations into the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, including:

   (a) The impacts of climate change on biological diversity and the impacts of biodiversity loss on climate change;

   (b) The potential impact on biological diversity of mitigation measures that may be carried out under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, and identification of potential mitigation measures that also contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;

   (c) The potential for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity to contribute to climate adaptation measures;

5. Initiates, as a first step in the wider assessment referred to in paragraph 4 above, a pilot assessment to prepare scientific advice to integrate biodiversity considerations into the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, and, for this purpose, establishes an ad hoc technical expert group in accordance with the modus operandi of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the terms of reference provided in the annex to the present recommendation, to report on progress to the Subsidiary Body at its seventh meeting;

6. Invites the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to contribute to this assessment process by preparing a technical paper and identifying experts;

7. Invites the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment to incorporate the issues identified in paragraph 4 above, and to report on this matter at the seventh meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice;
8. Invites the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as the Convention on Migratory Species, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the Global Environment Facility, the United Nations Forum on Forests and other relevant organizations to contribute to this work;
9. Requests the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to explore the formation of a joint liaison group between the bureau members of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and their respective secretariats, for the purpose of enhancing coordination between the two conventions including exchange of relevant information, development of a joint work plan to address the interlinkages between climate change and biological diversity, and the organization of a joint workshop to further cooperation and collaborative action between the two conventions;
10. Requests the Executive Secretary to inform the secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment of these steps taken by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, to convey to them the urgency and importance of the matter, and to invite their continued collaboration, with a view to facilitating the integration of biodiversity considerations in the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol;
11. Requests the Executive Secretary to prepare a background paper for the pilot assessment referred to in paragraph 5 above, drawing upon the material in his note on biological diversity and climate change prepared for the sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/11);
12. Notes the importance of coordination of policies and programmes relating to climate change and biological diversity at the national level.

Annex

PILOT ASSESSMENT OF THE INTERLINKAGES BETWEEN CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Terms of reference of the ad hoc technical expert group established in paragraph 5 of recommendation VI/7

1. The ad hoc technical expert group established in paragraph 5 of recommendation VI/7 should, on the basis of the ecosystem approach:

(a) Analyse possible adverse effects on biological diversity of measures that might be taken or are being considered under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol;

(b) Identify factors that influence biodiversity's capacity to mitigate climate change and contribute to adaptation and the likely effects of climate change on that capacity;

(c) Identify options for future work on climate change that also contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

2. The ad hoc technical expert group should develop recommendations based upon a review of possible approaches and tools such as criteria and indicators, to facilitate application of scientific advice for the integration of biodiversity considerations into the implementation of measures that might be taken under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol to mitigate or adapt to climate change;
3. In carrying out these tasks, the ad hoc technical expert group should draw upon relevant documents prepared under the Convention on Biological Diversity (including decisions V/3, V/4, and V/6, and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/11) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (including the third assessment review and the Special Report on Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF)), as well as other available literature;
4. The ad hoc technical expert group should identify areas where further work is needed to improve scientific advice for the integration of biodiversity considerations into the implementation measures to mitigate or adapt to climate change, including (i) further assessment, drawing upon existing knowledge;

and (ii) further research; and should identify options for participation of the IPCC and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in this further work;

5. The ad hoc technical expert group will comprise a regionally balanced group with expertise in the fields of biological diversity and climate change. The experts will be selected by the Executive Secretary in accordance with the modus operandi of SBSTTA, in consultation with the SBSTTA Bureau, drawing upon experts nominated by Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, scientists involved in the IPCC processes, and experts from indigenous and local communities;

6. The work of the ad hoc technical expert group should be initiated as soon as possible. A progress report should be submitted to SBSTTA at its seventh meeting, and the results of the ad hoc technical expert group's work will be completed by the time of the eighth meeting of SBSTTA and considered by SBSTTA at a meeting prior to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Guidelines for the selection of experts for the ad hoc technical expert group on Biological Diversity and Climate Change

Nominees should have expertise and experience in one or more of the areas listed below It is envisaged that members of the ad hoc technical expert group will author and review the substantive report of the group, primarily during the inter-sessional period. Nominations should be accompanied by a short note outlining the nominee's strength in each of these areas.

1. Recognized expertise in biodiversity, ecology or related matters, including inter-relations with climate change, with particular expertise in the biological diversity of one or more of the following:

- Forest ecosystems;
- Marine and coastal ecosystems;
- Inland water ecosystems;
- Agricultural ecosystems;
- Dry and sub-humid ecosystems;
- Mountain ecosystems;
- Polar region ecosystems;

2. Expertise in areas such as:

- the role of ecosystems and biological diversity in mitigating climate change, including their role as carbon sinks;
- the role of biological diversity in adaptation to climate change;
- the effects of changes in biological diversity on climate change, mitigation of climate change, and adaptation to climate change;
- the impacts of potential measures to mitigate climate change, such as the promotion of carbon sinks, on biological diversity;
- the impacts of climate change on biological diversity and possible adaptation measures to mitigate such impacts.

3. Experience in practical means to monitor and/or address changes in biological diversity, ecological processes, and/or global change phenomena, and to analyse the impacts of policies and activities on these phenomena, using tools such as:

- Environmental impact assessment;
- Strategic environmental assessment;
- Indicators of biological diversity;
- Ecological and economic modeling;
- Methodologies to facilitate the participation of indigenous and local communities in biodiversity related activities;
- Incentive measures to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.