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ALIEN SPECIES THAT THREATEN ECOSYSTEMS, HABITATS OR SPECIES

Review and consideration of options for the implementation of Article 8(h), on alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its decision V/8, the Conference of the Parties adopted interim guiding principles for the prevention, introduction and mitigation of impacts of alien species, and made a number of requests to Parties, other Governments, the Executive Secretary and relevant bodies, in particular the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP). In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties decided to consider at its sixth meeting options for the full and effective implementation of Article 8(h) including the possibilities of:

- (a) Further developing the guiding principles on the prevention of introduction, and mitigation of the impacts, of invasive alien species;
- (b) Developing an international instrument; and/or
- (c) Other options for future work on invasive alien species.

2. At its sixth meeting, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), in its recommendation VI/4, revised the guiding principles and made recommendations containing advice to the Conference of the Parties for consideration, at its sixth meeting, of the items identified at its fifth meeting. The recommendation also contains a number of requests to the Executive Secretary.

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3. The present note has been prepared to provide information on activities requested of the Executive Secretary by the Conference of the Parties in its decision V/8 and by SBSTTA in its recommendation VI/4.

4. The Conference of the Parties is invited to consider SBSTTA recommendation IV/4 on invasive alien species. It may also wish to review the proposals of the Executive Secretary in response to the tasks requested by the Conference of the Parties at its fifth meeting and SBSTTA at its sixth meeting with regard to the pilot assessment of the impacts of invasive alien species, requested by SBSTTA in paragraph 6 of recommendation VI/5, and the targets for managing invasive alien species within the framework of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, referred to in paragraph 12 (b) (vii) of the draft Strategy annexed to SBSTTA recommendation VII/8.

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY IN RESPONSE TO PARAGRAPHS 5, 11, 14 AND 15 OF DECISION V/8

A. Case-studies and comments on the interim guiding principles

5. In paragraph 5 of decision V/8, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to take into account comments by Parties, other Governments and relevant bodies in the further elaboration of the interim guiding principles and distribute the comments through the national focal points.

6. In response to that request, a report on case-studies on assessment of invasive alien species and comments on the interim guiding principles as requested in paragraph 3 of decision V/8 was prepared for the sixth meeting of SBSTTA. The case-studies received by the Executive Secretary are posted on the Convention's website at <http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/cross-cutting/alien/default.asp>. A total of some 120 case-studies have been received to date.

B. Cooperation and joint programmes of work

7. In paragraph 11 of decision V/8, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to cooperate with other international bodies and other relevant international and regional binding and non-binding instruments with the aim of coordinating work on invasive alien species, and to report on potential joint programmes of work to SBSTTA.

8. In response, the Secretariat has continued the discussion on possible areas of joint activities with a number of organizations and conventions dealing with invasive alien species including, in particular, the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, the GISP, the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). On 13 March 2001, a memorandum of cooperation was signed with the secretariat of the Bern Convention. In June 2001, the Executive Secretary signed a memorandum of cooperation with the GISP, whereby the Convention clearing-house mechanism will provide relevant thematic information on invasive alien species.

9. At its twenty-sixth meeting, held in Gland, Switzerland, from 3 to 7 December 2001, the Standing Committee of Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat approved the finalization of a draft resolution and additional Ramsar guidance on the use of the Guiding Principles [Guidelines] on invasive alien species proposed under the Convention on Biological Diversity for consideration of the subgroup dealing with alien species at the eighth meeting of the

Conference of Parties to the Ramsar Convention, to be held in May 2002. This issue is addressed in the draft third joint work plan between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention.

10. Following a suggestion of the liaison group on invasive alien species (see para. 20 (b) of the report of the liaison group (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/INF/7)), possibilities of developing collaborative arrangements between UNESCO, Ramsar and other site-focused conventions are being explored for more effectively coordinated work with on-the-ground managers.

11. The Convention Secretariat also provided input to the United Nations Atlas of the Oceans. This Internet-based Atlas is a collaborative effort between a number of United Nations agencies, and the Secretariat of the Convention is a core member of the Atlas group. Written texts and selected Convention documents have been provided for inclusion to the Atlas on topics related to marine and coastal biological diversity, including invasive alien species.

C. Assistance to the Parties to the Convention

12. In paragraph 14 of decision V/8, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to collaborate with GISP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and other relevant organizations, and other relevant internationally and regionally binding and non-binding instruments to assist the Parties to the Convention in:

- (a) Developing standardized terminology on alien species;
- (b) Developing criteria for assessing risks from introduction of alien species;
- (c) Developing processes for assessing the socio-economic implications of alien invasive species, particularly the implications for indigenous and local communities;
- (d) Furthering research on the impact of alien invasive species on biological diversity;
- (e) Developing means to enhance the capacity of ecosystems to resist or recover from alien species invasions;
- (f) Developing a system for reporting new invasions of alien species and the spread of alien species into new areas; and
- (g) Assessing priorities for taxonomic work.

13. In response to that decision, the Executive Secretary has prepared a list of standard terms on alien species for submission to the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting as an addendum to the present document. He also prepared a report on existing international procedures, criteria and capacity for assessing risk from invasive alien species (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/INF/6) with input of experts from various relevant organizations. Section III of that document addresses the issue of risk assessment and its implication to the implementation of Article 8(h) of the Convention on Biological Diversity. In particular, this section reviews criteria used in existing risk assessment protocols and their relation to the receiving environment, as well as the threat, probability of entry, nature, survival, spread and impacts of introduced species, including living modified organisms. Section IV of the document describes the tools used to determine socio-economic and environmental impacts.

14. The information document on status, impacts and trends of invasive species that threaten ecosystems, habitats and species prepared by the Executive Secretary for the sixth meeting of SBSTTA (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/INF/11) provides baseline information useful for the consideration of the activities referred to in paragraphs 12 (c) and (d) above. It describes the nature and characteristics of invasive alien species, their mode of introduction and spread, and an overview of their status, trends and environmental as well as socio-economic impacts under the thematic areas addressed by the Convention and in additional vulnerable areas.

15. The Executive Secretary is exploring ways and means to carry out, in collaboration with relevant organizations and convention secretariats, the remaining activities listed in paragraphs 12 (e), (f) and (g) above.

16. In addition, in response to decision V/19, on national reporting, the Executive Secretary requested national focal points on 26 July 2000 to submit to the Secretariat, thematic reports on, *inter alia*, on invasive alien species. As of January 2002, the Secretariat had received 52 thematic reports on invasive alien species from Parties and other Governments. These reports have been posted on the Convention website at <http://www.biodiv.org/world/reports.asp>.

D. Report on current measures and future options for the implementation of Article 8(h) of the Convention

17. In paragraph 15 of decision V/8, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to develop, in collaboration with GISP, FAO, IMO, WHO and other relevant organizations and instruments, a paper for consideration by SBSTTA and the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting, comprising:

- (a) A comprehensive review on the efficiency and efficacy of existing measures for prevention, early detection, eradication and control of alien invasive species and their impacts;
- (b) A progress report on the matters listed in paragraphs 5 and 14 of decision V/8;
- (c) All options for future work on invasive alien species under the Convention on Biological Diversity, which would provide practical support to Parties, Governments and organizations in the implementation of Article 8(h) of the Convention and lead to the full and effective implementation of Article 8(h).

18. In response to that request, the Executive Secretary prepared, for the sixth meeting of SBSTTA:

- (a) A comprehensive review on the efficiency and efficacy of existing measures for the prevention, early detection, eradication and control of invasive alien species (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/7);
- (b) Progress report on matters identified in decision V/5, paragraphs 5 and 14 of decision V/8 and an analysis of national reports (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/6);
- (c) Options for future work (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/8).

19. To complement these documents, the Executive Secretary also prepared several information documents, including:

- (a) A comprehensive review of activities for the prevention, early detection, eradication and control of invasive alien species (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/INF/3);

(b) A review of the efficiency and efficacy of existing legal instruments applicable to invasive alien species (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/INF/5);

(c) Case-studies and country comments on alien invasive species (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/INF/2), which complements the progress report on matters identified in paragraphs 5 and 14 of decision V/8;

(d) The report of the liaison group meeting on alien species held in September 2000 (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/INF/7), which contains the advice of the liaison group on ways to coordinate work on invasive alien species at the international level, and on items listed in paragraphs 5 and 14 of decision V/8 (see paragraphs 5 and 12 above). Of particular importance is annex II to the document, which provides concrete guidance on ways and potential partnerships to address a number of identified needs to

- (i) Increase the understanding of needs and priorities;
- (ii) Promote capacity building;
- (iii) Develop national legal, institutional and economic arrangements;
- (iv) Enhance bilateral and multilateral cooperation;
- (v) Develop tools and take actions for prevention, early detection and early eradication of invasive or potentially invasive alien species; and
- (vi) Develop tools and take action for eradication and control of established alien species invasions.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS RELEVANT TO INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES MADE BY SBSTTA AT ITS SIXTH AND SEVENTH MEETINGS

20. At its sixth meeting, SBSTTA emphasized in its recommendation VI/4 that invasive alien species represent one of the primary threats to biodiversity, especially in geographically and evolutionary isolated ecosystems, such as small island developing States. SBSTTA also stated that risks may be increasing due to increased global trade, transport, tourism and climate change. Acknowledging the contribution of existing international instruments to the implementation of Article 8(h) and certain gaps and inconsistencies in the international regulatory framework from the perspective of the threats of invasive alien species to biological diversity, SBSTTA reaffirmed that full and effective implementation of Article 8(h) is a priority.

21. SBSTTA reviewed the interim guiding principles and developed Guiding Principles [Guidelines] for the Prevention, Introduction and Mitigation of Impacts of Alien Species That Threaten Ecosystems, Habitats or Species.

22. In its recommendation VI/4, SBSTTA also made a number of recommendations to the Conference of the Parties on invasive alien species. These recommendations are contained in the report of SBSTTA on the work of its sixth meeting (UNEP/CBD/COP/6/3), and address:

- (a) The status and trends of invasive alien species;
- (b) The guiding principles for the implementation of Article 8(h);
- (c) International instruments;

(d) National invasive alien species strategies and action plans, international cooperation, assessment, information and tools; and

(e) The need to strengthen national capacities and support relevant activities.

23. SBSTTA also requested the Executive Secretary, prior to the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to:

(a) Explore ways and means of cooperating with the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) and the international and regional organizations operating within the framework of the IPPC in the development and periodic review of standards recognized under the WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures;

(b) Explore, for biodiversity-related matters not covered by the above organizations, possible options for facilitating the development of standards, guidelines and recommendations for recognition under the WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

24. At its sixth and seventh meetings, SBSTTA made other recommendations of relevance to the issue:

(a) In paragraph 6 of recommendation VI/5, SBSTTA called for a pilot assessment project on the impact of invasive alien species, and, in paragraph 9 of recommendation VII/2, requested the Executive Secretary to inform the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting on the progress made in this pilot assessment;

(b) In paragraph 12 (b) (vii) of the draft Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (recommendation VII/8, annex), it is proposed that that management plans should be in place in 2010 for “[90 per cent] of major alien species that threaten plants, plant communities and associated habitats and ecosystems”. SBSTTA requested the Executive Secretary to refine this and the other quantitative targets in the draft Strategy by providing a scientific and technical rationale.

IV. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY IN RESPONSE TO SBSTTA RECOMMENDATIONS

25. Pursuant to SBSTTA recommendation VI/4, the Executive Secretary is working with the Office International des Epizooties and the International Plant Protection Convention to review their standards recognized under the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of the World Trade Organization. Additionally, for biodiversity-related matters not covered by these organizations, options for facilitating the development of standards, guidelines and recommendations for recognition under the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of the World Trade Organization are explored. At a meeting held in April 2001 at FAO, Rome, the IPPC Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures noted the need for strengthened cooperation between the IPPC secretariat and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and recommended the establishment of an expert group, in cooperation with experts from the Convention on Biological Diversity, to develop a detailed standard specification on phytosanitary aspects of living modified organisms.

26. With regard to SBSTTA recommendations VI/5, paragraph 6, and VII/2, paragraph 9 (see para. 24 (a) above, the Secretariat has explored possibilities of collaborating with GISP to carry out the pilot assessment project on the impact of invasive alien species requested by SBSTTA within the framework of

the memorandum of cooperation being developed on information management. Arrangements are being made to start implementing the pilot project as soon as GISP launches its phase II.

27. The Secretariat has further explored the possibility of collaborating with the IPPC secretariat and GISP to carry out the inter-sessional work requested by SBSTTA in its recommendation VI/4 and to implement decision V/8 of the Conference of the Parties.

28. The Executive Secretary is also convening a meeting of technical experts to refine the quantitative targets for the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, including the one relating to invasive alien species referred to in paragraph 24 (b) above.
