

## **ALIEN INVASIVE SPECIES: PROPOSED PRINCIPLES PRESENTED FOR DEBATE AT SBSTTA 4**

### **Background**

1. In its decision IV/1.C the COP requested SBSTTA to develop guiding principles for the prevention, introduction and mitigation of impacts of alien species. In addition, it requested SBSTTA to identify the priority work pertinent to the issue of alien species in geographically and evolutionarily isolated ecosystems.
2. New Zealand is a geographically and evolutionarily isolated ecosystem. Like other such ecosystems, alien species are a major cause of biodiversity loss. Predators have decimated birds, reptiles and large invertebrates, while browsers are destroying forests and have reduced many plants to the brink of extinction. Threatened species work is predominantly focused on controlling alien species, particularly through eradication on offshore islands. In addition, alien species represent a significant economic cost, particularly for the agriculture and forestry sectors.
3. Given the importance of the issue to New Zealand, and our internationally recognised expertise in this area, New Zealand developed an informal paper on the issue for distribution at SBSTTA 3. That paper had drawn on the results of the Norway/United Nations Conference on Alien Species, and other international work.
4. The paper was subsequently amended (jointly by Australia and New Zealand) following discussions within the Valdivia group of countries (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, New Zealand, South Africa, Uruguay). The principles presented in this paper have been drawn from that work.

### **Nature of Proposed Principles**

5. New Zealand considers that principles developed by SBSTTA should:
  - set out the key elements of a prevention and response programme applicable to all nations; and
  - identify key international actions to support those national programmes.
1. The principles should be high level statements, allowing countries to adapt them to meet their particular circumstances.

### **Hierarchical Approach**

2. In developing proposed principles on prevention and response, New Zealand identified a three-stage hierarchical approach:
  - Priority should be given to effective border control to prevent entry, and to actions which prevent the spread of species which have invaded. Prevention is generally far more cost-effective than subsequent response work.
  - If prevention has failed, eradication is the preferable response. Eradication provides a permanent solution, and is therefore likely to be more cost effective if it is reasonably practicable. Eradication is clearly easier if the species is tackled soon

after it invades. If full eradication is not possible, localised eradication may be (e.g. on offshore islands, within catchments).

- If eradication is not cost-effective, then pest management should be implemented where this is justified in terms of costs and benefits.

### **International Efforts**

1. New Zealand considers that this should focus on the following matters:
  - Sharing information and expertise between countries, and helping countries to develop the capacity to respond to alien species risks.
  - Encouraging states to recognise the risk which they pose to other states as a source of potentially invasive species, and to take appropriate actions to minimise that risk.

### **Geographically And Evolutionarily Isolated Ecosystems**

1. New Zealand considers that the proposed principles in this paper reflects the priority work pertinent to the issue of alien species in geographically and evolutionarily isolated ecosystems, i.e. prevention, eradication and control.

### **Proposed Principles**

2. New Zealand proposes the following principles as a basis for discussion at SBSTTA 4.

#### *Responses to threats*

1. A hierarchical response to the threats to biodiversity posed by invasive alien species should be adopted:
  - a) Where possible, invasive and **potentially** invasive species should be denied entry to new ranges (both between and within States), including adequate and co-operative border controls;
  - b) Where **an incursion of an invasive species** is identified, priority should be given to **eradication**, provided the benefits outweigh the costs. Benefits and costs should be examined on a long term basis, and should include costs to biodiversity and ecological processes of both intervention and non-intervention.
  - c) Where **eradication** is not **practicable**, **options for** containment and/or active population management should be **considered and implemented for priority species**.

#### *Intentional introductions*

2. **States should require risk-based assessment of proposed introductions and only allow the introduction of organisms which are unlikely to cause significant harm to indigenous ecosystems, habitats or species, unless the anticipated benefits strongly outweigh possible costs, and in these cases, environmental remediation plans should be developed before entry is allowed.**

### *Unintentional introductions and illegal introductions*

3. States should implement border control measures that:
  - a) minimise the risk of invasive species being introduced unintentionally via traded commodities, passengers and craft
  - b) where possible, move management of the risk offshore by requiring risk mitigation measures to be carried out in the country of origin prior to export
  - c) include surveillance of key pathways and entry points in order to intercept alien species or detect alien species incursions as early as possible
4. Border control measures between States should continue to endeavour to minimise the risks of **unintentional introductions** and deliberate illegal import of alien species, and particularly invasive alien species.
  - a) Where land boundaries are contiguous, States should co-operate to identify existing and potential invasive alien species, and seek to minimise their impact.
  - b) Where sea transport is used, States should support the development of international Protocols and other agreements on ballast water discharge, and hull fouling.

### *Information compilation and dissemination:*

5. Parties should support **development of appropriate databases for compilation and dissemination of information on invasive species, taking into account the outcomes of the GISP project on “Development of best practices and dissemination of lessons learned for dealing with the global problem of alien species that threaten biological diversity”, and potential use of the** Clearing House Mechanism (CHM) of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
6. States should facilitate education and public awareness of the risks associated with alien invasive species.

### *Bilateral Co-operation and Prior Informed Consent:*

7. Where an exporting State is aware that a species being exported has the potential to be invasive in the receiving State, the exporting State should provide information, where available, on the potential invasiveness of the species to **the** importing State. Particular attention should be paid where exporting Parties have similar environments.
8. States should support capacity building programmes for countries which lack the expertise and resources to assess the risks of import of invasive alien species. States should also consider the practicalities of some level of inspection of goods being exported, to minimise risks from alien species to importing countries. Source areas identified as being of high risk to least developed importing countries should be accorded priority.

9. Countries of origin of invasive species should provide assistance as appropriate to understanding the threat posed to other States by those species, including sharing information on taxonomy and ecology of the invasive species. |
10. Parties should continue to develop bilateral and multilateral agreements with other States for the prevention and control of invasive alien species. |