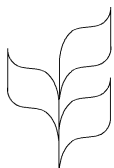




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Montreal, Canada, 21 - 25 June 1999

Item 4.2 of the Provisional agenda*

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUPS

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Conference of the Parties in its decision IV/16, paragraph 21, requested the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) to advise the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the terms of reference for the ad hoc technical expert groups on thematic areas. The terms of reference should take into account the need, inter alia, to provide a peer-reviewed scientific and technical assessment of the status and trends of, and impacts on, biological diversity, including the effectiveness of the types of measures for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

2. The present note has been prepared by the Executive Secretary with the purpose to assist the fourth meeting of SBSTTA in its deliberations on the terms of reference of the ad hoc technical expert groups as mentioned in the decision

* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/1/Rev.1

above. The note contains the rationale for the establishment of such groups, a proposed general structure of the terms of reference of the groups, priority thematic issues for which ad hoc technical expert groups are proposed, and recommendations to be considered by SBSTTA. These ad hoc technical expert groups are proposed for the period between the fifth and seventh meetings of the Conference of the Parties, covering a four years period. For the period up to the fifth meeting of COP, liaison groups will provide the Executive Secretary with advice in the preparation of the background documents.

3. In the light of the programme of work of SBSTTA, five specific priority issues have been identified for each of which an ad hoc technical expert group is required to assist SBSTTA in carrying out its work. The five themes are: (a) marine and coastal biological diversity; (b) inland water biological diversity; (c) biological diversity of dryland ecosystems; (d) alien species; and (e) forest biological diversity.

4. On the general note, the issue of the expert technical groups can be considered in conjunction with how to improve the operation of SBSTTA and ensure that science is the driving force for SBSTTA to advise the policy makers. The establishment of technical expert groups will allow SBSTTA to further draw on existing knowledge, as well as establishing linkages with relevant institutions, scientific processes and initiatives.

II. BASIC ELEMENTS

5. Annex I of decision IV/16, on the modus operandi of SBSTTA, allows for the establishment of a limited number of ad hoc technical expert groups on specific priority issues on the programme of work of SBSTTA, as required, for a limited duration. The establishment of such ad hoc technical expert groups would be guided by the following elements:

(a) The ad hoc technical expert groups should draw on the existing knowledge and competence available within, and liaise with, international, regional and national organizations, including non-governmental organizations and the scientific community in fields relevant to this Convention;

(b) The Executive Secretary will nominate scientific and technical experts drawn from the rosters for the ad hoc technical experts groups in consultation with the Bureau of SBSTTA. The ad hoc technical expert groups shall be composed of no more than fifteen experts competent in the relevant field of expertise, with due regard to geographical representation and to the special conditions of least-developed countries and small island developing States;

(c) SBSTTA will recommend the exact duration and specific terms of

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reference, when establishing such expert groups for the approval of the Conference of the Parties;

(d) Expert groups will be encouraged to use innovative means of communication and to minimize the need for face-to-face meetings;

(e) The ad hoc technical expert groups may also convene meetings parallel to the proceedings of SBSTTA;

(f) Reports produced by the ad hoc technical expert groups should, as a general rule, be submitted for peer review;

(g) All efforts will be made to provide adequate voluntary financial assistance for the participation of experts in the expert groups from developing countries and countries with economies in transition Parties; and

(h) The number of ad hoc technical expert groups active each year will be limited to the minimum necessary and will depend on the amount of resources designated to SBSTTA by the Conference of the Parties in its budget or on the availability of extra-budgetary resources.

6. The ad hoc technical expert groups should make full use of rosters of experts in the relevant fields of the Convention, compiled by the Executive Secretary on the basis of inputs from Parties and, as appropriate, from other countries and relevant bodies.

III. PROPOSED STRUCTURE OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE GROUP

7. The establishment of the ad hoc technical expert groups will follow the guidance provided in paragraph 12 of decision IV/16 on the modus operandi of SBSTTA, including the specific terms of reference of such expert groups.

8. It is proposed that the terms of reference of each group will contain the following outline: mandate; time frame; participation; type and frequency of the meetings; officers; secretariat; administrative and procedural matters; agenda; language; and, budgetary implications. A specific description for each group has been arranged separately, in Annexes I to V to this note.

9. A description of the above-mentioned outline is presented as follows:

(a) Mandate:

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Under this heading, relevant decisions of COP will be referred to and the main tasks of the group will be described.

(b) Time-frame:

The time-frame for each of the ad hoc technical expert groups will be determined by SBSTTA.

(c) Participation:

The Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Bureau of SBSTTA, will nominate the experts for each ad hoc technical expert group, drawn from the rosters of experts established under the Convention.

The ad hoc technical expert group shall be composed of no more than fifteen experts competent in the relevant field of expertise, taking into consideration, inter alia, indigenous and traditional knowledge, with due regard to geographical representation and to the special condition of least-developed countries and small island developing States.

(d) Meetings:

The ad hoc technical expert group should, as much as possible, be encouraged to use innovative means of communication and to minimise the need for face-to-face meetings. This can be arranged, inter alia, through electronic correspondence and teleconferences. The frequency of the meetings shall be determined by each group at its first consultation.

The ad hoc technical expert group may convene meetings in conjunction with SBSTTA.

(e) Officers:

The officers of the ad hoc technical expert group shall consist of one Chairperson and one Rapporteur. The Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Bureau of SBSTTA, will select the officers from among the fifteen members of the group.

(f) Secretariat:

The Secretariat of the Convention will provide the secretariat for the ad hoc technical expert groups.

(g) Administrative and procedural matters:

In carrying out its work, the ad hoc technical expert group shall draw on the existing knowledge and competence available within, and liaise with, international, regional and national organisations, including non-governmental

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organisations and the scientific community in the fields relevant to the Convention.

On a quarterly basis, the group shall submit progress reports on its work to the Bureau of SBSTTA through the Executive Secretary.

The Chairperson of each group shall transmit the final results of the work of the group to the Executive Secretary for peer review, based on a methodology to be prepared by the Executive Secretary.

At the end of its term, the Chairperson of the ad hoc technical expert group shall report to SBSTTA.

(h) Agenda

The Secretariat, in collaboration with the Chairperson of the ad hoc technical expert group, and in consultation with the SBSTTA Bureau, shall prepare a provisional agenda for the first consultation of the group.

(i) Language

The working language of the ad hoc technical expert groups will be English.

The final reports of the groups will be translated into the other official languages of SBSTTA.

(j) Budgetary implications:

Financial assistance should be provided to cover participation of the experts, in particular those from developing countries and countries with economies in transition Parties, in the activities of the ad hoc technical expert groups.

IV. PRIORITY ISSUES FOR WHICH AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUPS ARE PROPOSED

10. From the perspective of the programme of work of SBSTTA and the consideration of the priority themes for the sixth meeting of COP, the following themes are the priority issues for which ad hoc technical expert groups are proposed: (a) marine and coastal biological diversity; (b) inland water biological diversity; (c) biological diversity of dryland ecosystems; (d) alien species; and (e) forest biological diversity.

Marine and coastal biological diversity

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11. Based on decision II/10, a group of experts on marine and coastal biological diversity was established in 1997, in order to assist the Executive Secretary in the development of the Jakarta Mandate programme of work. The group has completed its task.

12. The current decision of COP on the establishment of two new ad hoc technical expert groups as referred to in the Annex to COP decision IV/5, on the Programme of Work on Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity, requested the Executive Secretary to select the names of members of issues-oriented ad hoc technical expert groups and elaborate their terms of reference for consideration by SBSTTA. The need for the establishment of such groups was mentioned under:

- (i) Programme element 3: Marine and Coastal Protected Areas, operational objective 3.1: to facilitate research and monitoring activities related to the value and the effects of marine and coastal protected areas or similarly restricted management areas on sustainable use of marine and coastal living resources; and
- (ii) Programme element 4: Mariculture, operational objectives: to assess the consequences of mariculture for marine and coastal biological diversity and promote techniques which minimize adverse impact.

13. To be cost-effective and efficient in carrying out the work, the group should liaise with similar groups under relevant bodies and processes, including partner organisations mentioned in decision II/10, paragraph 13, and the Convention of Wetlands.

Inland water biological diversity

14. Annex I to COP decision IV/4, on "status and trends of the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems and options for conservation and sustainable use", refers to the programme of work for inland water biological diversity. Part A of this Annex, "assessment of the status and trends of the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems and identification of options for conservation and sustainable use", contains a work plan of SBSTTA. Annex II contains a possible time-frame of a work programme pertaining to SBSTTA activities.

15. In paragraph 8 of Annex I to the above-mentioned decision, COP requested SBSTTA to carry out activities on the status and trends and conservation and sustainable use of inland water biological diversity. In this regard, in line with the time frame for the above-mentioned activities, it is envisaged that the establishment of a technical expert group is required to assist the work of SBSTTA.

16. In carrying its work, the group should draw on the existing knowledge and competence available within, and liaise with, relevant international, regional

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and national organisations. In accordance with the Joint Work Plan between CBD and the Convention of Wetlands, links should be established with this Convention and its partner organisations, especially with their roster of experts and their network.

Biological diversity of dryland ecosystems

17. In decision IV/16, Annex II, COP adopted the programme of work for the period from the fourth meeting to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties. It was decided that the biological diversity of dryland, Mediterranean, arid, semi-arid, grassland and savannah ecosystems will be one of the items requiring in-depth consideration at the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

18. Pursuant to this decision, and for the consideration of SBSTTA at its fourth meeting in preparation for the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Executive Secretary has prepared a note containing an assessment of the status and trends of dryland, Mediterranean, arid, semi-arid, grassland and savannah ecosystems (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/7).

19. As the issues related to these ecosystems are likely to need further development beyond the fifth meeting of COP, the establishment of an ad hoc technical expert group on the biological diversity of dryland, Mediterranean, arid, semi-arid, grassland and savannah ecosystems is proposed. The roster of experts on this thematic area should also be established.

20. The key relevant processes and institutions should be taken into consideration in establishing the ad hoc technical expert group, in particular the process under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD). Collaboration should be implemented with CCD, in particular with regard to its roster of experts.

Alien species

21. With regards to the alien species issue, SBSTTA was requested by the Conference of the Parties through decision IV/1(c), to develop guiding principles for the prevention, introduction and mitigation of impacts of alien species and to report on those principles and any related work programme to the COP at its fifth meeting. Furthermore, COP requested SBSTTA to identify the priority work pertinent to the issue of alien species in geographically and evolutionarily isolated ecosystems and to report thereon to COP at its fifth meeting. Finally, SBSTTA should also examine the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP), with a view to considering concerted action and developing proposals for further action.

22. According to decision IV/16, on institutional matters and the programme of work of COP, alien species will constitute an item for in-depth consideration by

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the sixth meeting of COP.

Forest biological diversity

23. The Conference of the Parties, through decision IV/7, endorsed the programme of work for forest biological diversity under the Convention on Biological Diversity, as contained in the Annex to that decision.

24. In addition, paragraph 12 of decision IV/7 also refers to the request to SBSTTA, in accordance with its mandate, to provide advice on the status and trends of forest biological diversity and the identification of options for the conservation and sustainable use of forest biological diversity to the Conference of Parties at its sixth meeting.

25. In view of the above mandate, the establishment of an ad hoc technical expert group is required to assist SBSTTA in carrying out its work.

26. The group should liaise with similar types of groups under relevant bodies, initiatives and processes dealing with forest issues, in particular the IPF process and other relevant forest initiatives.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

27. SBSTTA may wish to consider the priority of the following proposed thematic issues for the ad hoc technical expert groups and their terms of reference as contained in Annexes I-V to the present note, and recommend thereupon to the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

28. SBSTTA may wish to consider modalities for the expert technical groups to further support the operation of SBSTTA. In this respect, SBSTTA may wish to develop recommendations for the intersessional meeting on the operation of the Convention.

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ANNEX I

AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP
ON MARINE AND COASTAL BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

(i) Ad hoc Technical Expert Group on marine and coastal protected areas:Mandate

The Annex to decision IV/5 of the Conference of the Parties, on the "programme of Work on Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity" (Jakarta Mandate), programme element 3, on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas, operational objective 3.1, specifically requests the Executive Secretary, starting from the roster of experts, to select the names for an ad hoc technical expert group and elaborate the terms of reference for it, both to be endorsed by SBSTTA.

The ad hoc Technical Expert Group shall, in accordance with programme element 3, operational objective 3.1, of the Jakarta Mandate programme of work, assist SBSTTA:

- to review proposals to be submitted by Parties, countries or competent organisations, on research and monitoring projects on the value and effects of marine and coastal protected areas or similarly restricted management areas on sustainable use of marine and coastal living resources, with a view to identifying pilot projects;
- to assist in the preparation, and review, of a desk study on the value and the effects of marine and coastal protected areas or similarly restricted management areas on sustainable use of marine and coastal living resources;
- to identify the linkages between conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal living resources;
- to prepare recommendations for Parties, countries or international/regional organisations in conducting research on the effects of marine and coastal protected or closed areas on population size and dynamics, subject to national legislation.

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Time-frame

The Group shall endeavour to complete its work no later than the seventh meeting of SBSTTA.

(ii) Ad hoc Technical Expert Group on mariculture:

Mandate

The Annex to decision IV/5 of the COP, "programme of Work on Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity" (Jakarta Mandate), programme element 4, on Mariculture, refers to the need for the work under the programme element to be supported by the establishment of an ad hoc technical expert group under SBSTTA, taking into consideration the roster of experts.

The ad hoc Technical Expert Group shall, in accordance with programme element 4 of the Jakarta Mandate programme of work, assist SBSTTA:

- to evaluate the current state of scientific and technological knowledge on the effects of mariculture on marine and coastal biological diversity;
- to provide guidance on criteria, methods and techniques which avoid the adverse effects of mariculture and also subsequent stock enhancement on marine and coastal biological diversity and enhance the positive effects of mariculture on marine and coastal productivity.

Time-frame

The Group shall endeavour to complete its work no later than the seventh meeting of SBSTTA.

ANNEX II

AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP ON INLAND WATER BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Mandate

Annex I to decision IV/4, on the Status and trends of the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems and options for conservation and sustainable use, refers to the programme of work on inland water biological diversity. Part A of this annex, on "assessment of the status and trends of the biological diversity of inland water ecosystems and identification of options for conservation and sustainable use", contains a work plan for SBSTTA. Annex II to the same decision contains a possible time-frame of a work programme pertaining to SBSTTA activities.

The ad hoc Technical Expert Group shall, in accordance with the work plan of SBSTTA described in paragraph 8 of annex I to decision IV/4, assist SBSTTA:

- to develop an improved picture of inland water biological diversity, its uses and its threats, around the world, in order to identify areas where the lack of information severely limits the quality of assessments;
- to identify a core set of indicators/variables for monitoring and assessment of inland water;
- to identify options for conservation and sustainable use of inland water biological diversity to provide management and technical advice;
- to develop and disseminate regional guidelines for rapid assessment of inland water biological diversity for different types of inland water ecosystems;
- to develop methods and techniques for the valuation of goods and services of inland water ecosystems, incentives and policy reform, and the understanding of ecosystem function.

Time-frame

The Group shall endeavour to complete its work no later than the last

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meeting of SBSTTA prior to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

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ANNEX III

AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP
ON DRYLAND, MEDITERRANEAN, ARID, SEMI-ARID, GRASSLAND
AND SAVANNAH ECOSYSTEMS BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Mandate

Pursuant to the programme of work of the Conference of the Parties, and, in preparation for its fifth meeting, the Executive Secretary prepared a note containing an assessment of the status and trends of the biological diversity of dryland, Mediterranean, arid, semi-arid, grassland and savannah ecosystems (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/4/7).

As the issues related to these ecosystems will probably need further development beyond COP V, SBSTTA may wish to recommend to the fifth meeting of COP the establishment of an ad hoc technical expert group on the biological diversity of dryland, Mediterranean, arid, semi-arid, grassland and savannah ecosystems, taking into consideration the roster of experts.

The ad hoc Technical Expert Group shall, in accordance with the decision of the Conference of the Parties, assist SBSTTA:

- to evaluate the current state of scientific, technical and technological knowledge on dryland, Mediterranean, arid, semi-arid, grassland and savannah ecosystems, in particular with respect to the sustainable use of their biological diversity;
- to assess the ways and means of implementation of the CBD regarding these specific ecosystems, in particular with respect to indicators of biological diversity and the ecosystem approach.

Time-frame

The Group shall endeavour to complete its work no later than the last meeting of SBSTTA prior to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

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ANNEX IV

AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP ON ALIEN SPECIES

Mandate

The Subsidiary Body on the Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice was requested by the Conference of the Parties through decision IV/1(C), to develop guiding principles for the prevention, introduction and mitigation of impacts of alien species and to report on those principles and any related work programme to COP at its fifth meeting. Furthermore, COP requested SBSTTA to identify the priority work pertinent to the issue of alien species in geographically and evolutionarily isolated ecosystems and to report thereon to COP at its fifth meeting.

According to COP decision IV/16, on institutional matters and the programme of work of COP, alien species will constitute an item for in-depth consideration by the sixth meeting of COP.

The ad hoc Technical Expert Group shall, in accordance with decisions IV/1(C) and IV/16, on alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species, assist SBSTTA:

- to develop guiding principles for the prevention, introduction and mitigation of impacts of alien species, based on the guidance developed by SBSTTA at its fourth meeting;
- to analyze case studies on alien species, giving priority to small island developing States and other geographically and evolutionarily isolated systems;
- to review country-driven projects on alien species to be developed by the Parties, as called for in decision IV/1.C, paragraph 3, of the COP;
- to assist in the development of products and outcomes relating to the activities on alien species within the thematic programmes of work of the Convention, and to assist in making recommendations on the best use of products assembling the best information and approaches for prevention and management of invasive species to be compiled by the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP).

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Time-frame

The Group shall endeavour to complete its work no later than the last meeting of SBSTTA prior to the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

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ANNEX V

AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP ON FOREST BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Mandate

The Conference of the Parties endorsed at its fourth meeting a work programme for forest biological diversity, as contained in the Annex to decision IV/7. In paragraph 7 of this Annex, ways and means for carrying out the programme of work were identified, including, inter alia, workshops, regional meetings, scientific meetings and peer review mechanisms relying to the extent possible on existing electronic communication systems.

Decision IV/7 also refers to the request to SBSTTA, in accordance with its mandate, to provide advice to the Conference of Parties, at its sixth meeting, on the status and trends of forest biological diversity and the identification of options for the conservation and sustainable use of forest biological diversity.

The ad hoc Technical Expert Group shall, in accordance with decision IV/7 of the Conference of the Parties, assist SBSTTA:

- to evaluate the current state of scientific, technical and technological knowledge on forest ecosystems, in particular with respect to the ecosystem approach and indicators of biological diversity;
- to contribute to periodic reviews and the development of the work programme on forest biological diversity, as mentioned in Annex to decision IV/7, paragraph 5.

Time-frame

The Group shall endeavour to complete its work no later than the last meeting of SBSTTA prior to the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

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