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TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE**

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Item 3.1 of the provisional agenda*

AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUPS

***Progress report on the status of the ad hoc technical expert groups established by the
Conference of the Parties at its fifth meeting***

Note by the Executive Secretary

Executive summary

The present note provides a report on progress in the work of the four ad hoc technical expert groups established by the Conference of the Parties at its fifth meeting, namely the expert groups on:

- (a) Marine and coastal protected areas;
- (b) Mariculture;
- (c) Forest biological diversity; and
- (d) Dry and sub-humid lands.

To date, the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Forest Biological Diversity has held one meeting, in Montreal in November 2000, the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas is tentatively scheduled to meet in February 2001, while meetings of the expert groups on mariculture and dry and sub-humid lands will be organized as soon as the Secretariat receives an offer of financial support from Parties, other Governments and organizations.

Suggested action

The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice may wish to take note of the progress report of the Executive Secretary on the ad hoc technical expert groups.

* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/1.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its fifth meeting, the Conference of the Parties decided to establish ad hoc technical expert groups in the fields of marine and coastal protected areas, and mariculture (decision V/3, para. 15); forest biological diversity (decision V/4, para. 4); and the biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands (decision V/23, para. 7). The terms of reference for the expert groups on marine and coastal biodiversity are contained in annex II to SBSTTA recommendation V/14 (with the addition of “identification of best practices” for the group on mariculture), while the mandates for the groups on forest biological diversity and dry and sub-humid lands are set out in the annex to decision V/4 and in paragraph 7 of decision V/23, respectively. The Executive Secretary has prepared this note to inform the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) about the status of these groups of experts and their activities.

II. PROGRESS REPORTS

A. *Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas*

2. Preparations are under way for the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas, tentatively scheduled for February 2001, subject to the availability of resources. Financial support has already been received from the United States Government and New Zealand will make an in-kind contribution to cover the organizational costs. The provisional agenda for the meeting is presented in annex I below.

3. The Executive Secretary has prepared a background note for the meeting, in line with activity (c) of operational objective 3.1 of the programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity (decision IV/5, annex).^{*} The note gathers and assimilates available information from various international and regional partner organizations, national reports submitted under the Convention, as well as the current scientific literature to facilitate research and monitoring activities related to the value and effects of marine and coastal protected areas or similarly restricted-management areas, in the context of the programme of work. The background note also includes a discussion of the criteria used for the selection of protected areas taking into account the information previously presented in the information note prepared by the Executive Secretary on the subject for the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/8) and in light of the indicative list of categories set down in annex I to the Convention.

4. On 17 November 2000, the Executive Secretary sent a letter to all national focal points and relevant organizations to seek nominations of experts.

B. *Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Mariculture*

5. The meetings of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Mariculture will be organized as soon as the Secretariat receives an offer of financial support from Parties, other Governments and organizations.

^{*} Activity (c) under operational activity 3.1 of the programme of work is “to conduct a desk study to gather and assimilate information”.

C. *Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Forest Biological Diversity*

1. *Preparation for the first meeting*

6. The Executive Secretary sent a letter in July 2000 to international organizations and institutions which deal with forest biological diversity issues, including local and indigenous communities organizations, inviting them to contribute to the assessment of status and trends of forest biological diversity and to contribute data and information for the background documentation of the meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Forest Biological Diversity, in accordance with paragraphs 6 and 15 of decision V/4.

7. Pursuant to the *modus operandi* of SBSTTA (decision IV/ 16, annex I), the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body, reviewed the nominations provided by national focal points and selected 15 experts from: Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Cuba, Estonia, the European Community, India, Japan, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Mozambique, Poland, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom.

8. In addition, the Executive Secretary invited the following international organizations and international indigenous communities networks to take part in the meeting as observers: the members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF) (i.e. the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), IUCN-The World Conservation Union, the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Greenpeace, the Pacos Trust and the Indigenous Peoples' Biodiversity Network.

9. The Executive Secretary had prepared a background document in accordance with the terms of reference of the Expert Group in collaboration with members of ITFF, in particular FAO and CIFOR. The document gathered available information from various international forest-related bodies and non-governmental organizations as well as from the scientific community on the status of, trends in and major threats to forest biological diversity. It also provided information on past and current initiatives addressing forest biological diversity at the international, regional and national levels, including in the area of scientific research, as well as preliminary elements for options to address forest biological diversity.

2. *The first meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Forest Biological Diversity*

10. The first meeting of the Expert Group on Forest Biological Diversity was held in Montreal in the premises of the Secretariat from 27 November to 1 December 2000. It was attended by experts from Cameroon, Canada, Cuba, Estonia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Poland, the European Commission, and the United Kingdom. The following United Nations bodies and organizations were represented: FAO, GEF, the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests/UNFF secretariat (representing also UNEP), ITTO, CIFOR, IUCN, WCMC, and Greenpeace.

11. The Group elected Mr. Ian Thompson (Canada) as Chair and Mr. N. Manokaran (Malaysia) as Rapporteur, and agreed that Mr. Gordon Patterson (United Kingdom) would chair the second meeting, to be held in Edinburgh, United Kingdom.

12. The Group adopted its agenda for the meeting on the basis of the provisional agenda that had been circulated prior to the meeting and is attached as annex II to the present note. The agenda was

based on the sections of the background document prepared by the Secretariat for the first meeting. The meeting reviewed the background document, identified gaps in information and agreed on its programme of work for the inter-sessional period, mainly with a view to tentatively filling the gaps in information. It also initiated its work with respect to the identification of options for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity as requested in paragraph 2 (b) of its mandate.

3. Inter-sessional work

13. At its first meeting, the Expert Group agreed to carry out several tasks during its inter-sessional period with a view to developing and completing the background document that the Secretariat prepared and it reviewed. It will, in particular, develop studies on the status of forest ecosystems and their functioning, as well as the values of forest goods and services. During that period, the Group will also continue to prepare for the second meeting with respect to the identification of options for the conservation and sustainable use of forest biological diversity.

4. Second meeting of the Expert Group

14. The second meeting of the Expert Group is to be held in Edinburgh, United Kingdom, from 23 to 27 April 2001, with financial support from the Government of the United Kingdom. The Group is expected to finalize its work on the assessment of the status and trends of forest biological diversity, while concentrating on the identification of and suggesting actions, timeframes and relevant actors as well as the provision of advice on scientific programmes and international cooperation in research and development. It will also identify technologies and know-how relating to the assessment, planning, valuation, conservation and sustainable use of forest biological diversity and provide advice on ways and means of promoting the development and transfer of such technologies.

D. Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Dry and Sub-Humid Lands

15. The meetings of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Dry and Sub Humid Lands will be organized as soon as the Secretariat receives an offer of financial support from Parties, other Governments and organizations.

Annex I

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE FIRST MEETING OF THE AD HOC TECHNICAL
EXPERT GROUP ON MARINE AND COASTAL PROTECTED AREAS**

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
 - 2.1. Election of Chair and Rapporteur;
 - 2.2. Adoption of agenda.
3. Substantive issues:
 - 3.1 Identification of pilot research and monitoring projects, based on current proposals and ongoing projects aimed at assessing the value and effects of marine and coastal protected areas or similarly managed areas on sustainable use of marine and coastal living resources;
 - 3.2 Review and discussion of desk study called for in operational objective 3.1, activity (c), including:
 - (i) Value and effects of marine and coastal protected areas;
 - (ii) Criteria for selection of marine and coastal protected areas;
 - 3.3 Identification of linkages between marine protected areas and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity;
 - 3.4. Preparation of recommendations on types of research to be carried out to understand the effects of marine and coastal protected or closed areas on population size and dynamics, subject to national legislation.
4. Other matters.
5. Closure of the meeting.

Annex II

**AGENDA FOR THE FIRST MEETING OF THE AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP ON
FOREST BIODIVERSITY**

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
 - 2.1. Election of the Chair and Rapporteur;
 - 2.2. Adoption of the agenda;
 - 2.3. Organization of the work.
3. Substantive issues:
 - 3.1. Status of forest biological diversity;
 - 3.2. Forest ecosystem functioning and related goods and services;
 - 3.3. Threats to forest biological diversity including impact of climate change;
 - 3.4. Trends of forest biological diversity;
 - 3.5. Options to address forest biological diversity loss.
4. Preparation for the second meeting:
 - 4.1. Draft provisional agenda;
 - 4.2. Date and venue;
 - 4.3. Organization of inter-sessional work.
5. Other matters.
6. Adoption of the report.
7. Closure of the meeting.
