



CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/10/18
22 October 2004

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

Tenth meeting

Bangkok, 7-11 February 2005

Item 6.5 of the provisional agenda*

CLIMATE CHANGE: TERMS OF REFERENCE OF AN AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraph 14 of decision VII/15, the Conference of the Parties requested the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), as the next stage of its work on the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change to develop, for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties, advice or guidance for promoting synergy among activities to address climate change at the national, regional and international level where appropriate, including activities to combat desertification and land degradation, and activities for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Paragraph 15 of the same decision further invites the Conferences of the Parties to the United Nations Framework for the Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to collaborate with the Convention on Biological Diversity in developing guidance to Parties in implementing activities that are mutually supportive of the objectives of the three Rio conventions.

2. Following the offer by the Government of Finland at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to continue supporting further work on biodiversity and climate change, SBSTTA may wish to establish an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) that could prepare its work in line with decision VII/15.

3. The Executive Secretary has prepared this note to propose possible terms of reference of the AHTEG for consideration by SBSTTA. It is assumed that if SBSTTA established the AHTEG at its tenth meeting, it will consider the AHTEG report at its eleventh meeting and submit its advice or guidance for promoting synergy among activities to address climate change, combating desertification and land degradation, and conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for consideration at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

II. SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

4. SBSTTA may wish to establish an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change on the basis of the terms specified in the annex to the present note.

* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/10/1.

*Annex***PROPOSED MANDATE OF THE AHTEG****I. RATIONALE**

1. In response to the request of the Conference of the Parties in paragraphs 11 and 18 of decision V/4, SBSTTA decided to carry out a broad assessment of the links between climate change and biodiversity and established in March 2001 an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biological Diversity and Climate Change. Between 2002 and 2003, the Group produced its report on *Interlinkages between biological diversity and climate change: advice on the integration of biodiversity considerations into the implementation of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol* (CBD Technical Series no. 10).

2. In paragraph 1 of decision VII/15, the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting welcomed the report both as scientific advice and as a basis for future work. Pursuant to paragraph 19 of the same decision, the Executive Secretary transmitted the report to the Secretariats of the UNFCCC and UNCCD, the Secretariats of other relevant environmental conventions, and other international organizations and bodies. The report focuses on the links to, and impacts on, biodiversity in relation to mitigation options; in particular, through land-use, land use change and forestry activities of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol. However, it considers the integration of biodiversity into adaptation activities to a lesser extent.

3. At its fifth meeting, held in Bonn, Germany, on 30 January 2004, the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions further recognized that adaptation to climate change is an important area for the three Conventions, and agreed that activities that promote adaptation to climate change also contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and sustainable land management. The Joint Liaison Group further noted the potential for creating synergy among the objectives of the three Conventions through activities geared at adapting to climate change.

4. Despite the fact that adaptation activities were not assessed thoroughly, the above mentioned report makes a number of important conclusions with respect to adaptation, which provide the rationale for undertaking further work on this issue:

(a) Adaptation activities to climate change will be required in most countries and in most sectors. For example, they will be necessary for water management, agriculture, and forestry, and infrastructure development, and that their impact at the national level is likely to be maximized as part of an overall approach that includes national biodiversity strategies and action plans. Therefore, and in contrast to mitigation activities, adaptation activities involve a broader approach to sustainable development by explicitly including land degradation and desertification, climate change, and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;

(b) Although adaptation activities may be necessary to reduce the impacts of climate change on human well-being, they may have either beneficial or detrimental impacts on biodiversity. These potential impacts need further in-depth examination so that sound guidance can be provided to Parties, Governments, international organizations and other bodies;

(c) Biodiversity by itself is a necessary component of a climate-change adaptation strategy. The degree of ecosystem resilience—which in turn is dictated by biodiversity structure and function—is an essential element of social-ecological systems if they are to maintain their adaptive capacity. Therefore, adaptation and biodiversity are highly interlinked as more resilient ecosystems may be better able to cope with climate change while providing essential services to society. Detailed assessments of these relationships are, however, needed in order to both fully illustrate and tap the potential of biodiversity in adapting to climate change and to translate the findings into practical guidance.

5. Chapter 5 of the report examines approaches for supporting, planning, decision-making and public discussion concerning links between biodiversity and climate change. Together with chapter 4 of the report and the proposed supplementary assessment on adaptation, this chapter would provide a

comprehensive basis for the development of advice and guidance as requested in paragraph 14 of decision VII/15, and as noted in the mandate below.

6. Based on all of the above, the AHTEG could be requested to undertake an in-depth supplementary assessment focussing on options for adaptation to climate change and how these can contribute to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, and to combat land degradation and desertification.

II. PROPOSED MANDATE

7. Drawing on the report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biological Diversity and Climate Change (CBD Technical Series no. 10) ^{1/} and other relevant documents including the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, and guided by relevant outcomes from the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice and the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC on and other material as appropriate, and by decisions VII/15 on biodiversity and climate change and VII/26 on cooperation with other conventions and international organizations, the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group will:

(a) Undertake a supplementary assessment on the integration of biodiversity considerations in the implementation of adaptation activities to climate change at the national, regional, and international levels whenever appropriate; in particular, the assessment shall include:

- (i) Identification of the major factors that contribute to ecosystem resilience under the current and expected impacts of climate change, and of particular adaptation options;
- (ii) An assessment of the potential consequences for biodiversity of selected adaptation options, taking into account, but not limited to, technical and technological interventions.

Particular emphasis should be given to adaptation options carried out in ecosystems under the current thematic areas of the Convention: agricultural biodiversity, dry and sub-humid lands biodiversity, forest biodiversity, inland waters biodiversity, marine and coastal biodiversity, and mountain biodiversity.

(b) Examine the information contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biological Diversity and Climate Change (CBD Technical Series No. 10) and the above supplementary assessment, as well as other relevant sources, in order to prepare draft practical guidance, under the thematic areas of the Convention, for use at national, regional and international level when planning and/or implementing adaptation and mitigation activities that interlink across climate change, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, and land degradation and desertification. The draft guidelines shall include relevant tools, including those under the Convention, for further integration of biodiversity considerations in the design, implementation, and monitoring of projects aimed at mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

III. DURATION OF WORK

8. The work of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group should be initiated as soon as possible and completed on time for consideration of SBSTTA at its eleventh meeting.

^{1/} <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/publications/cbd-ts-10.pdf>