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Item 4.5 of the provisional agenda*

NEW AND EMERGING ISSUES RELATING TO THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF BIODIVERSITY

Modus operandi for addressing new and emerging issues

Note by the Executive Secretary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The consolidated *modus operandi* of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice lists among the specific functions that the Subsidiary Body should identify new and emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. During its twelfth meeting, different views emerged concerning the procedure that should be followed in identifying emerging issues, criteria for their inclusion in the agenda of the Subsidiary Body and the mandate to respond to such issues. Through notification 2007-081 dated 9 July 2007 the Executive Secretary invited Parties to comment on a proposal prepared by a drafting group. Six Parties had responded by 18 October 2007.

The current note is based on a proposal prepared by a drafting group and takes into account additional views submitted subsequently by Parties. After the identification of the range of possible emerging issues and the preparation of annotations based on a list of criteria for possible prioritization, three options are presented for deciding on the inclusion of selected issues on the provisional agenda and the way in which the Subsidiary Body can respond. According to option 1, typically a single priority issue would be selected by the Bureau following consultations with Parties and detailed documentation is prepared for the next meeting of the Subsidiary Body, which could identify immediate actions required to address the issue. In option 2, the first meeting of the Subsidiary Body after each meeting of the Conference of the Parties would examine the list of issues and decides which issue should be considered in detail at the second meeting. In option 3, the Subsidiary Body would examine the list of issues and recommends ways for the Conference of the Parties to prioritize and address them.

* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/13/1.

SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATION

The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) may wish to recommend that the Conference of the Parties:

(a) *Adopt* the procedure for the identification of emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity contained in section II and the criteria for their inclusion in the agenda of relevant meetings contained in section III of this note;

(b) *Adopt* the process for prioritizing emerging issues and preparing document for meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the mandate for the Subsidiary Body to respond to the issue(s) in accordance with [option 1] [option 2] [option 3] of section IV;

(c) *Decide* that the procedure for the identification of emerging issues, the conditions for their inclusion in the agenda of relevant meetings, and the appropriate ways and means to respond to new and emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity should be considered as a supplement of the consolidated *modus operandi* of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) contained in decision VIII/10.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In annex III of decision VIII/10 the Conference of the Parties adopted a consolidated *modus operandi* of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), which lists among the specific functions that SBSTTA should identify new and emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity (appendix A, paragraph (d)).

2. At its twelfth meeting, SBSTTA recognized the need to further clarify the procedure for the identification of emerging issues, the conditions for their inclusion in the agenda of relevant meetings, and the appropriate ways and means to respond to new and emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

3. Accordingly, SBSTTA, through paragraph 3 of recommendation XII/8, recommended that the Executive Secretary should:

(a) Seek, through established channels, the views of Parties on the suggested elements of the procedure for the identification of emerging issues, the conditions for their inclusion in the agenda of relevant meetings, and appropriate ways to respond to new and emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, as contained in the annex to this recommendation;

(b) Prepare, in consultation with the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, a document that incorporates the views received from Parties; and

(c) Present to the Subsidiary Body at its thirteenth meeting options for the identification of emerging issues, the conditions for their inclusion in the agenda of relevant meetings, and appropriate ways to respond to new and emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

4. Recommendation XII/8 also included in an annex developed by a drafting group possible elements for the procedure for the identification of emerging issues.

5. In response to the request in paragraph 3 (a) of recommendation XII/8, the Executive Secretary invited, through notification 2007-081 dated 9 July 2007, Parties to submit their views by 15 September 2007. By 18 October 2007, six Parties (Argentina, Canada, European Community, Germany, Mexico and Myanmar) had responded to the notification.

6. Section II of this note considers the procedure for identifying emerging issues. Criteria for their inclusion are contained in section III. Section IV provides options for their prioritization and the mandate of SBSTTA to respond to the emerging issue(s). An overview of the options for the identification, prioritization, and treatment of emerging issues is contained in the annex to this note.

II. PROCEDURE FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF EMERGING ISSUES

Step 1. Identification of possible emerging issues

7. After each meeting of the Conference of the Parties the Executive Secretary will invite Parties, other Governments, relevant organizations as well as indigenous and local communities to identify new and emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity to be considered by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and to bring these at any point in time to the attention of the Executive Secretary through their country's or organization's focal point. In doing so, the proposal should, where possible, be accompanied with information on:

- (a) Why the issue needs urgent attention by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (including how it impacts biodiversity), and;
- (b) How it affects the attainment of the objectives of the Convention (citing relevant articles);
- (c) Thematic programmes of work and/or cross-cutting issues that could contribute to the resolution of the issue;
- (d) Work already underway by relevant organizations addressing the issue;
- (e) Credible sources of information, preferably from peer-reviewed articles.

8. The Executive Secretary will maintain a list of identified issues for consideration by the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at one of its meetings. Given the necessary review and preparations, the time at which emerging issues are being brought to the attention of the Executive Secretary will determine at which meeting of the Subsidiary Body the issue can be considered.

Step 2. Screening of emerging issues

9. The Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, with the assistance of the Executive Secretary, will annotate the list of identified issues applying the criteria listed in section III.

III. CRITERIA FOR THE INCLUSION OF EMERGING ISSUES IN THE AGENDA OF RELEVANT MEETINGS

10. In annotating the list of identified issues resulting from the process described in section II above, the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice will apply the following criteria:

- (a) Relevance of the issue to the implementation of the objectives of the Convention and its existing programmes of work;
- (b) Relevance of the issue to the agenda of forthcoming meetings of the Subsidiary Body;
- (c) Urgency of addressing the issue/imminence of the risk caused by the issue to the effective implementation of the Convention as well as the magnitude of actual and potential impact on biodiversity;
- (d) Actual geographic coverage and potential spread, including rate of spread, of the identified issue relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;
- (e) Evidence of the existence and availability of tools to limit or mitigate the negative impacts of the identified issue on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;
- (f) Magnitude of actual and potential impact of the identified issue on human well-being;
- (g) Magnitude of actual and potential impact of the identified issue on productive sectors and economic well-being as related to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

IV. PRIORITIZATION OF EMERGING ISSUES AND MANDATE FOR RESPONSE

Option 1

Step 3. Selection of emerging issue(s) and inclusion in the provisional agenda of SBSTTA

11. The Executive Secretary will invite Parties through the established channels to comment on the proposal prepared by the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. Bureau members will also engage directly with their constituencies. The period for consultation will be limited in time (e.g. two weeks) to leave sufficient time for the remainder of the preparation process. The annotated list of identified issues and proposal may therefore initially be available in English only. The Secretariat will, however, undertake to make available language versions within its available capacity.

12. On the basis of views from Parties and direct consultations within the regional groups, the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice will decide whether to consider a new and emerging issue in a forthcoming meeting of the Subsidiary Body and whether this will be a separate agenda item or should be included under an existing agenda item. Typically, no more than one emerging issue will be identified for each meeting of the Subsidiary Body; yet there is no need to consider an emerging issue at every meeting of the Subsidiary Body. The Executive Secretary, in consultation with the members of the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, will seek to balance the placement of the emerging issue with the existing agenda of the meeting.

Step 4. Preparation of documentation for SBSTTA

13. The Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice will advise the Executive Secretary on appropriate sources of information to facilitate preparation of documentation for each emerging issue to be considered by the Subsidiary Body, in accordance with the process established in the consolidated *modus operandi* for the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice contained in annex III to decision VIII/10, including by setting up electronic forums and other appropriate means of consultation.

Step 5. Examination of provisional agenda by SBSTTA

14. The Secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice will prepare the provisional agenda for the meeting of the Subsidiary Body in accordance with the consolidated *modus operandi*. The Subsidiary Body will examine the provisional agenda and, in adopting the agenda for its meeting, may decide to add, delete, defer or amend items.

Step 6. Consideration of identified emerging issues by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice

15. During its meetings, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice will:

- (a) Assess the impacts of any emerging issue under consideration on the implementation of the Convention and achievement of its three objectives;
- (b) Identify any knowledge gaps on any emerging issue(s) and suggest how to fill those gaps;
- (c) Consider the relationship of the issue(s) to the existing work and explore the way to integrate it into the work of the Convention;

(d) Identify immediate actions that the Subsidiary Body can take within its mandate and those actions that require consideration by the Conference of the Parties.

Option 2

Step 3. Selection of emerging issue(s) and inclusion in the provisional agenda of SBSTTA

16. No selection or prioritization of emerging issues is done before the first meeting of the Subsidiary Body following each meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Step 4. Preparation of documentation for SBSTTA

17. The Executive Secretary will present the proposal prepared by the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice containing the annotated list of identified issues, and options whether, and in which form, these issues might be addressed, to the first meeting of the Subsidiary Body after each meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Step 5. Examination of provisional agenda by SBSTTA

18. The Secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice will prepare the provisional agenda for the meeting of the Subsidiary Body in accordance with the consolidated *modus operandi*. The Subsidiary Body will examine the provisional agenda and, in adopting the agenda for its meeting, may decide to add, delete, defer or amend items.

Step 6. Consideration of identified emerging issues by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice

19. During its first meeting, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice will review the list of issues, assess the impacts of each issue on the implementation of the Convention and achievement of its three objectives and recommend ways in which the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body should take up and address the issue(s), as well as ways in which the preparatory work should be conducted.

20. During its second meeting, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice will:

- (a) Assess the impacts of any emerging issue under consideration on the implementation of the Convention and achievement of its three objectives;
- (b) Identify any knowledge gaps on any emerging issue(s) and suggest how to fill those gaps;
- (c) Consider the relationship of the issue(s) to the existing work and explore the way to integrate it into the work of the Convention;
- (d) Identify immediate actions that the Subsidiary Body can take within its mandate and those actions that require consideration by the Conference of the Parties.

Option 3

Step 3. Selection of emerging issue(s) and inclusion in the provisional agenda of SBSTTA

21. No selection or prioritization of emerging issues is done before the meeting of the Subsidiary Body.

Step 4. Preparation of documentation for SBSTTA

22. The Executive Secretary will present the proposal prepared by the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice containing the annotated list of identified issues, and options whether, and in which form, these issues might be addressed, to the next meeting of the Subsidiary Body.

Step 5. Examination of provisional agenda by SBSTTA

23. The Secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice will prepare the provisional agenda for the meeting of the Subsidiary Body in accordance with the consolidated *modus operandi*. The Subsidiary Body will examine the provisional agenda and, in adopting the agenda for its meeting, may decide to add, delete, defer or amend items.

Step 6. Consideration of identified emerging issues by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice

24. During its meetings, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice will review the list of issues, assess the impacts of each issue on the implementation of the Convention and achievement of its three objectives and recommend ways in which the Conference of the Parties may wish to take up and address the issue(s), ways in which gaps in knowledge can be filled, and ways to integrate the issue into the work of the Convention.

Annex

OVERVIEW OF OPTIONS FOR THE IDENTIFICATION, PRIORITIZATION, AND TREATMENT OF EMERGING ISSUES

Process	Specific activity		
Step 1. Identification of possible emerging issues	ES invites Parties and other partners to identify new and emerging issues		
Step 2. Screening of emerging issues	Bureau annotates list of issues using criteria contained in section III above		
Step 3. Selection of emerging issue(s) and inclusion in provisional agenda	<p><i>Option 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureau makes recommendation for prioritization • ES invites Parties to comment and Bureau members consult with their constituencies • Bureau makes decision on selection and inclusion in provisional agenda 	<p><i>Option 2</i></p> <p>No prioritization is made before first meeting of SBSTTA</p>	<p><i>Option 3</i></p> <p>No prioritization is made</p>
Step 4. Preparation of documentation	ES prepares detailed documentation on selected issue for SBSTTA	ES presents the list of issues with annotations to first meeting SBSTTA after COP	ES presents the list of issues with annotations to SBSTTA
Step 5. Examination of provisional agenda by SBSTTA	SBSTTA examines provisional agenda		
Step 6. Consideration of the issue(s) by SBSTTA	SBSTTA reviews the issue in-depth by assessing impacts, identifying knowledge gaps, identifying immediate actions and recommending actions to be considered by COP	The first SBSTTA meeting after COP reviews issues and recommends which of these issues should be considered in-depth by the second meeting of SBSTTA	SBSTTA reviews issues, assesses impacts and recommends ways for COP to prioritize and address these