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INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES: REPORT ON HOW PARTIES, OTHER GOVERNMENTS AND RELEVANT ORGANIZATIONS ARE ADDRESSING GAPS AND INCONSISTENCIES IN THE INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Note by the Executive Secretary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Submissions from Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on national experiences and practices in addressing gaps and inconsistencies in the international regulatory framework in relation to invasive alien species are summarized in this report. Measures taken at the national level include: (i) the development of invasive alien species strategies through cross-sectoral dialogues amongst relevant agencies; (ii) the integration of such strategies in national policies; and (iii) contributions to the development of a regional legislative framework on invasive alien species.

The note further reports on coordination and collaborative activities amongst international organizations which set standards or develop guidelines relevant to invasive alien species, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Progress is ongoing within the IPPC and OIE on expanding of their coverage on plant pests or hazards to animals to include invasive species. A Liaison Group meeting of these organizations recognized the need to further promote and facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration between agencies responsible for conservation and these dealing with sanitary and phytosanitary measures. A number of options for joint capacity-building activities and the production of learning materials on how to apply international standards and guidelines were discussed.

SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice may wish to adopt a recommendation along the following lines:

The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice

1. *Takes note of* the report on how Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations are addressing gaps and inconsistencies in the international regulatory framework;
2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to make the submissions received from Parties in response to notification 2011-120 available through the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention and other means.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In decision VIII/27 on gaps and inconsistencies in the international regulatory framework on invasive species the Conference of the Parties recognized 14 distinct pathways for the introduction of alien species which were not adequately addressed through the international regulatory framework.
2. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties urged Parties and other Governments to be proactive in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive alien species within their territories and encouraged them, as well as regional bodies, to develop procedures and/or controls to ensure that cross-border impacts of potentially invasive alien species are considered as part of national and regional decision-making processes.
3. Through decision IX/4 A, the Conference of the Parties invited relevant organizations to expand their coverage and address gaps and inconsistencies in the international regulatory framework with regard to international standards covering invasive alien species, to include invasive animals that are not pests of plants under the International Plant Protection Convention and invasive animals that are not considered as causative agents of diseases by the World Organization for Animal Health (paragraphs 2-5), and encouraged Parties and other Governments to raise these issues formally through their national delegations to the World Organization for Animal Health, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization (paragraph 6).
4. In accordance with this decision, the Executive Secretary sent notification 2011-120 (SCBD/STTM/JM/JSH/cr/76478) dated 16 June 2011 inviting Parties and other Governments to report on how they are addressing gaps and inconsistencies in the regulatory framework in relation to invasive species. The information submitted from Parties is summarized in section II. Section III describes the progress on addressing decision IX/4 A by relevant organizations to fill gaps in the international regulatory framework relevant to invasive alien species.
5. An earlier draft of this note was posted for peer-review from 17 June to 19 July 2011 and the comments received have been incorporated, as appropriate.

II. ADDRESSING THE GAPS AND INCONSISTENCIES IN THE INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK ON INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES – ACTIONS BY PARTIES AND OTHER GOVERNMENTS

6. In response to notification 2011-120, submissions were received from Finland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in time to be incorporated into this report.

7. In Finland, the national strategy on invasive alien species puts forward the relevant measures including improving and harmonizing the legislation on invasive alien species; establishing a national invasive alien species board to oversee the implementation of the strategy; initiating communication and training actions on invasive alien species; establishing a national invasive alien species information portal and setting up a system for early warning and monitoring of invasive alien species, establishing a national risk assessment system for invasive alien species; and increasing research on invasive alien species especially related to risk assessments.

8. Sweden has developed a National Strategy and Action Plan on Alien Species and Genotypes which facilitates contact between national focal points for the standard setting organizations and the Convention on Biological Diversity. Sweden contributes actively in the development of the EU Strategy on Invasive Alien Species and in the revisions of the EU plant and animal health regimes, which are expected to have positive consequences for work to address invasive alien species at the national level. Nevertheless, some difficulty in communication between the competent authorities to the different international agreements and limited time to for consultations and decision-making regarding these different international agreements are noted. Sweden supports strengthening of the collaboration with the World Trade Organization, including in the standard-setting process.

9. The United Kingdom noted the significance of the European Commission's work on the development of the EU Strategy on Invasive Alien Species, expected in 2012 and anticipated as a new directive. A review of the Community Plant Health Regime recommended that the regime should embrace environmentally damaging plants (i.e. invasive alien plants) in addition to its current focus on plant pests and diseases. Meanwhile, the United Kingdom reports on good cooperation and coordination amongst the various government institutions responsible for plant health policy issues and those working on biodiversity and environmental policy.

III. ADDRESSING GAPS AND INCONSISTENCIES IN THE INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK ON INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES - ACTIONS BY RELEVANT ORGANIZATIONS

10. Pursuant to decision X/38, the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the World Trade Organization, organized the second meeting of the Inter-Agency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species which brought together secretariats of relevant international organizations, in Geneva, Switzerland from 14 to 15 February 2011. The report is available on the website of the Convention.¹

11. To continue to expand its coverage of plant pests, the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) prepared a discussion paper on invasive plants in aquatic environments which was considered by the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) at its sixth session. To further develop standards to protect plants in ecosystems, including aquatic environments, the IPPC is currently developing draft standards for "Minimizing pest movement by sea containers and conveyances in international trade" and "Minimizing pest movement by air containers and aircrafts" as International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs). In addition, a draft ISPM on "Integrated measures approach for plants for planting in international trade" is currently under consultation and is scheduled for presentation to the seventh session of the CPM in 2012. This ISPM covers invasive alien plant species.

¹ <http://www.cbd.int/invasive/doc/iaslg-02-03-en.pdf>.

12. The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) sets out standards for the improvement of animal health and welfare and veterinary public health worldwide, including through standards for safe international trade in terrestrial animals (mammals, birds and bees) and their products. These are adopted by the World Assembly of the Delegates of the OIE Members and published in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code, which is updated annually. The OIE currently explores options for strengthening work on diseases that primarily affect wild rather than domesticated animals and to address invasive alien animals species.

13. The Liaison Group recognized the need for capacity-building to identify and address the gaps in the international regulatory framework on invasive alien species to enable countries to efficiently implement the existing international standards worldwide and to harmonize the sanitary and phytosanitary measures across nations. As part of its efforts to support Parties to implement the Convention and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity includes invasive alien species as an agenda item in the series of workshops for updating National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. The Secretariat of the World Trade Organization Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (WTO-SPS) helps increasing awareness of invasive alien species by incorporating this issue in the agenda of various workshops for the members of the Agreement.

14. The secretariats of CBD, CITES, FAO, IPPC, OIE and WTO-SPS Agreement agreed to collaborate, subject to necessary resources, on the development of explanatory guides that would seek to facilitate collaboration of relevant ministries or agencies on the implementation of international standards for sanitary and phytosanitary measures and the Guiding Principles annexed to decision VI/23² to address the issue of invasive alien species. These guiding materials could serve as inputs to the NBSAP workshops and other relevant workshops and capacity development activities undertaken by the secretariats and relevant partners.

15. The Working Group of Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF)³ currently considers a proposal for an STDF seminar on international trade and invasive species in 2012. In preparation for such a possible seminar the secretariats of the STDF and the Convention on Biological Diversity have begun to share relevant information.

² One representative entered a formal objection during the process leading to the adoption of this decision and underlined that he did not believe that the Conference of the Parties could legitimately adopt a motion or a text with a formal objection in place. A few representatives expressed reservations regarding the procedure leading to the adoption of this decision (see UNEP/CBD/COP/6/20, paras. 294-324).

³ <http://www.standardsfacility.org/en/index.htm>