



**CONVENTION
ON
BIOLOGICAL
DIVERSITY**

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BRAINSTORMING MEETING OF
SBSTTA CHAIRS ON WAYS AND MEANS
TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS
OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY
Paris, 24-25 July 2006

**WAYS AND MEANS TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SBSTTA:
GUIDANCE FROM THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES**

1. At the closure of the 11th SBSTTA meeting held in Montreal in December 2005, a number of participants have called for enhancing the effectiveness of SBSTTA. The brainstorming meeting of the past chairs of SBSTTA has been convened with a view of benefiting of the experience of the participants and to exchange views on the ways and means to enhance the effectiveness of SBSTTA taking into account the experience of other related processes.
2. At its eight meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopted decision VIII/10 in which it endorsed the consolidated *modus operandi* of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and provided guidance on how to improve the effectiveness of this body.
3. In the core of the decision, the Conference of the Parties
 - (a) Underlined the need to reduce the number of agenda items for consideration by SBSTTA at each meeting in order to improve the effectiveness of its proceedings;
 - (b) Requested SBSTTA to ensure that assessments are carried out in an objective and authoritative manner, and that sufficient time is allocated for the consideration of results of assessments;
 - (c) Requested SBSTTA, whenever it convenes ad hoc technical expert groups, to provide oversight to ensure that terms of reference clearly indicate their mandate, duration of operation, expected outcomes and reporting requirements, and that their mandates are limited to the provision of scientific and technical advice and assessments;
 - (d) Requested Parties to give priority to the nomination of appropriate scientific and technical experts for participation in ad hoc technical expert groups and other assessment processes;

(e) Requested the Executive Secretary to develop and maintain a list of upcoming meetings of ad hoc technical expert groups, other expert groups and assessment processes that require Parties to identify experts, and to circulate the list to all national focal points after each meeting of the Conference of the Parties and SBSTTA;

(f) Requested the Executive Secretary and the SBSTTA Bureau of the Subsidiary to consider the options for facilitating information exchange and views on items on the agenda of the Subsidiary Body contained in annex IV of the decision when preparing for SBSTTA meetings;

(g) Recommended that SBSTTA focal points act as liaisons with the Secretariat on behalf of their Parties with regard to scientific, technical and technological matters related to the Convention and provided examples of tasks they could undertake; and

(h) Encouraged that Parties that have not already done so to appoint their SBSTTA focal points.

4. The Chairs of SBSTTA may wish to make concrete proposals on how to operationalize the requests and guidance of the Conference of the Parties in paragraph 2 above. The following questions are provided as guidance:

(a) How many items a five days meeting of SBSTTA can address in a substantive manner ?

(b) How SBSTTA organize its work so as to be elevated as a forum of science and technical issues;

(c) How SBTTA can identify and consider scientific emerging issues of relevance to the CBD in a timely manner?

(d) How can SBSTTA ensure that assessments are carried out in an objective and authoritative manner, in addition to the fact that sufficient time should be allocated to the consideration of results of assessments?

(e) How ad hoc technical expert groups can be convened in such a manner to assist SBSTTA in fulfilling its mandate?

(f) How can Parties be encouraged to nominate appropriate scientific and technical experts for participation in ad hoc technical expert groups and other assessment processes?

(g) What is the role of the SBSTTA focal points during the inter-session ? what role the SBSTTA focal points can play at national level? How to enhance the contribution of SBSTTA focal points?

(h) Is a roster of experts needed? What could be an improved format?

(i) How SBSTTA can mobilize the broader scientific community including from developing countries in support of its mandate ?

(j) How SBSTTA can enhance its relation with other relevant scientific bodies such as the scientific organs of MEAs, the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the GEF, UNESCO, FAO etc...

5. The Chairs may also wish to consider the consolidated *modus operandi* contained in Annex III to decision VIII/10 and formulate recommendations that could improve the effectiveness of SBSTTA. They may wish to consider the following questions:

(a) With regard to the functions of SBSTTA, how to ensure that SBSTTA fulfill its mandate contained in Article 25 of the Convention and the decisions of the Conference of the Parties in particular paragraphs 2 (b), (c) and (d) of Article 25 of the Convention?

(b) With regard to the operating principles, how can the scientific, technical and technological input into, debate at, and work of, meetings of the Subsidiary Body be improved in addition to the strategic ways and means listed in Appendix B of decision VIII/10?

(c) Are there recommendations that should be made in addition to the elements of the consolidated *modus operandi* of SBSTTA relating to:

- (i) The rules of procedure;
- (ii) The frequency and timing of meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice;
- (iii) Documentation;
- (iv) Organization of work during the meetings;
- (v) Scientific and technical assessments;
- (vi) Contribution of non-governmental organizations;
- (vii) Cooperation with other relevant bodies;
- (viii) Regional and subregional preparatory meetings; and
- (ix) Focal points?

6. Finally, the Chairs of SBSTTA may wish to make proposals drawing on the experiences of other scientific bodies. Document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/BRAINSTORMING/1/3 contains information on the operations of a few scientific bodies.