

## SBSTTA 25 Highlights: Monday, 16 October 2023

On the second day, SBSTTA 25 discussed assessments conducted by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC AR6), focusing on their implications on the Convention's work programme and the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

### Facilitating the Implementation of the GBF and the Monitoring of its Progress

**Plant conservation:** Many delegates welcomed the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. CANADA requested reference to traditional knowledge rather than local knowledge, in order to align with the Convention's Article 8j (Traditional Knowledge, Innovations and Practices).

SPAIN said conservation of genetic diversity should explicitly mention crops, their wild relatives, and other species of socioeconomic value. MEXICO emphasized the need to increase taxonomic information for more plant varieties. INDONESIA urged taking into account seed bank and germ plasm collections. COSTA RICA highlighted the contribution of edible species to food security, while BELGIUM acknowledged climate-robust plant species in urban and built environments.

SWITZERLAND called for coordination with the Committee on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, among others. BRAZIL supported language on international cooperation to promote capacity building in addressing plant diversity. NEW ZEALAND called for enhanced national coordination. ARGENTINA urged reference to language on complementary actions related to, among others, cooperation and gender equality.

JAPAN, supported by many, underlined the need for flexibility regarding the use of the strategy in national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs). SOUTH AFRICA called for a standardized reporting template to facilitate voluntary reporting on the implementation of the complementary actions. BRAZIL called for retaining reference to Invasive Alien Species (IAS), and inclusion of coastal and marine plant species. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC) underscored the need to conserve the genetic biodiversity of plants both *in-* and *ex-situ*. The AFRICAN GROUP noted that the complementary actions proposed ([CBD/SBSTTA/25/5](#)), are impractical, and cannot be achieved by the 2030 GBF timeline.

The WOMEN'S CAUCUS called for a forward-looking Strategy, stressing alignment with human-rights and gender-responsive approaches. BOTANIC GARDENS CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL highlighted their efforts to protect plant species from extinction. CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA (CITES) shared its plan to discuss plant conservation at its next Conference of Parties (COP). Chair Benítez Díaz requested the Secretariat to prepare a conference room paper (CRP).

### Findings from IPBES and IPCC Assessments and their Implications on CBD's Work

**IPBES assessments:** Anne Larigauderie, Executive Secretary, IPBES, highlighted three assessments adopted at the IPBES ninth and tenth session:

- [Methodological Assessment Report on the Diverse Values and Valuation of Nature](#) (Values Assessment);
- [Thematic Assessment Report on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species](#) (Sustainable Use Assessment); and
- [Thematic Assessment Report on IAS and their Control](#) (IAS Assessment).

The Secretariat presented SBSTTA's review of findings from these assessments (CBD/SBSTTA/25/6, 7, and 8/Rev.1). Helen Roy, Co-Chair, IAS Assessment, said this first comprehensive global IAS report presents compelling evidence of the need for immediate and urgent control of IAS. Mike Christie, Co-Chair, Values Assessment, said the analysis and tools presented will contribute to GBF implementation by shifting all decisions towards better values-centred outcomes for people and nature. Maria Emery, Co-Chair, Sustainable Use Assessment, presented key elements towards building a common vision for sustainable use and transformative change in human-nature relationships.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION said it was inappropriate at this point to endorse the assessments. UK noted the lack of implementation mechanisms to support the assessment findings, and with several others highlighted the need for alignment with the CBD work programme.

COTE D'IVOIRE and DRC requested IPBES to consider disseminating reports in other languages and called for a thematic IAS Assessment for Africa. PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES urged financial support for adaptive management that also addresses biodiversity loss and climate change. TÜRKIYE, with BELGIUM and DRC, called for inclusion of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in biodiversity-related decision-making.

On the **Values Assessment**, EU recognized the importance of the assessment for the entire planning, monitoring, and review process. COLOMBIA underscored the importance of including Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) and other knowledge systems.

On the **Sustainable Use Assessment**, BRAZIL stressed the importance of community-based monitoring. The AFRICAN GROUP noted the need to scale the assessment findings to national and regional levels.

GABON highlighted the importance of wild species to ecosystem health and suggested including reference to national legislation. MEXICO, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC and SOUTH AFRICA stressed the need to recognize and include traditional knowledge and IPLCs. AUSTRALIA proposed replacing, "plural knowledge systems" with "traditional ecological knowledge systems."

On the **IAS Assessment**, the NETHERLANDS underscored the importance of strengthening regulations on IAS at national level, regional and international levels.

BRAZIL emphasized the need for improved data collection for some regions. AFRICAN GROUP highlighted information gaps and supported taking into account national needs, capacities, and circumstances. SUDAN, supported by MALAWI and SAUDI ARABIA, called for capacity building and financial and technical assistance for national IAS assessments. EQUATORIAL

GUINEA called for collaboration with local communities. INDIA highlighted the links between IAS, human health, and trade. SWITZERLAND called for the consideration of other on-going IPBES assessments.

**IPCC AR6:** The Secretariat presented the document (CBD/SBSTTA/25/9) containing IPCC AR6 findings. Several countries, including COLOMBIA, UK, NORWAY, and SWEDEN, called for merging the discussion and decisions on the report with the agenda item on biodiversity and climate change.

NEW ZEALAND, BURUNDI, SPAIN, BRAZIL, SWEDEN and others urged promoting synergies in tackling climate change and biodiversity concurrently. EU noted the importance of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and Ecosystem-based Approaches (EBA) in these synergies. SOUTH AFRICA emphasized that EBA has gained more traction and already yielding positive impacts. SWITZERLAND noted the need to include information on IPBES-IPCC collaborations. Chair Benítez Díaz requested the Secretariat to prepare a CRP.

### ***Invasive Alien Species***

The Secretariat introduced the document (CBD/SBSTTA/25/10), developed pursuant to COP decision 15/27 requesting the Executive Secretary to organize a peer-review process to solicit advice on draft voluntary guidance and advice on various IAS related matters.

JAPAN highlighted the need for enhancing collaboration to minimize IAS and proposed language on strengthening collaboration with the tourism and trade sectors.

FINLAND, with the EU, BELGIUM, GERMANY, SWITZERLAND, MEXICO, CANADA, UK and others, called for a COP decision endorsing the voluntary guidance and advice. She also proposed highlighting its voluntary nature. UK called for merging IAS decisions with those on the review of the IPBES IAS assessment. BURUNDI suggested collaborative and cooperative measures instead of voluntary ones while INDONESIA highlighted the need for regional collaboration.

The AFRICAN GROUP lamented limited data from the region and highlighted gaps between the One Health approach and other existing approaches in IAS management in Africa. FRANCE supported the inclusion of One Health considerations.

NORWAY, with ARGENTINA, called for better linkages of the implementation of the GBF with findings of the IPBES IAS Assessment. ARGENTINA called for alignment with the World Trade Organization's Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures. FRANCE urged the inclusion of species experts to better understand scientific findings.

Several delegates emphasized the need for international cooperation to address the impacts of climate change. IUCN called for additions on enhancing coordination at regional and national levels to improve understanding on IAS pathways and improve knowledge sharing.

PERU proposed an expert group to develop a harmonized system of labelling for hazardous waste. BRAZIL said risk analysis should be science-based while considering Indigenous and local knowledge, adding that an international labelling system may lead to trade distortion.

Delegates also addressed the annex on cost-benefit, cost-effectiveness, and multi-criteria analysis methodologies that best apply to IAS management, with several, including EGYPT and CHILE, noting that it should not be open for discussion. NETHERLANDS stressed that the scope of the International Plant Protection Convention should not be extended beyond its mandate.

PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES with SUDAN, MALAWI, SEYCHELLES, and COLOMBIA, emphasized the need for sustained funding, capacity building, and technical and technological support.

International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB) lamented the exclusion of the role of IPLCs. CBD WOMEN'S CAUCUS underlined that the recommendation should recognize IPLCs, women, and youth as integral to IAS management.

Chair Benítez Díaz established a contact group, co-chaired by Senka Barudanovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Jean Bruno Mikissa (Gabon) to address the annex and requested the Secretariat to prepare a CRP on the recommendation.

### ***Sustainable Wildlife Management***

The Secretariat introduced the document (CBD/SBSTTA/25/11), which contains an analysis of areas beyond the wild meat sector that might require complementary guidance.

The AFRICAN GROUP pointed to the complementarities with the IPBES Sustainable Use assessment, and supported the thematic objectives identified by the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW), including: supporting countries to ensure that the use and trade of wildlife is legal, sustainable and safe; raising awareness of the links between sustainable use of wildlife, food security, livelihoods and wellbeing, culture and the integrity of landscapes; promoting the prevention, management and reduction of human-wildlife conflict and enhance coexistence; embedding sustainable use and management of wildlife in the One Health agenda; and advocating for sustainable and inclusive wildlife economies.

FINLAND called for in-depth consideration of sustainable wildlife tourism. JAPAN focused on small-scale fisheries and by-catch, reminding delegates of existing measures under the FAO and regional fisheries management organizations. INDIA encouraged collaboration with CITES.

TÜRKIYE, noting that increased threats of zoonotic diseases undermine the fragile balance between wildlife and humans, called for focus on all terrestrial animals affected by poaching. FRANCE supported this, and on the issue non-sustainable use of land-based animals, suggested replacing "land" with "wildlife".

CANADA, with others including AUSTRALIA, EU, SWITZERLAND, NEW ZEALAND, NORWAY, ARGENTINA, and RUSSIAN FEDERATION, noted that the list of areas for complementary guidance may be duplicative of the work of other conventions. BRAZIL stressed that the implementation of the Convention and its GBF is a party-driven process, and thus it was not the responsibility of the Secretariat to identify specific areas. SPAIN suggested that complementary measures be presented to SBSTTA before COP 16.

UK suggested strengthening the language of the recommendations, clarifying the process and timelines, and including the key elements of effective policy for sustainable use of wild species in the analysis and draft guidance itself. RUSSIAN FEDERATION and NORWAY supported this sentiment.

IRAQ noted that the recommendations do not consider international dimensions and urged for its inclusion, in addition to national and regional aspects. PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES and PERU stressed limited financial resources and capacity for effective implementation, calling for better measures, including monitoring and research.

IIFB called for a COP decision requesting the Secretariat to prepare draft complementary guidelines on respect and support for customary sustainable use of wildlife by IPLCs.

CBD WOMEN'S CAUCUS called for inclusion of the rights and needs of women and girls as custodians of biodiversity and ensuring gender disintegrated data.

CHINA BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND GREEN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION called for consideration of trade on all species besides those covered under other agreements.

### ***In the Breezeways***

The gloomy rainy weather on Monday threatened to dampen the spirits of delegates on the second day of SBSTTA 25. Their resolve to remain steadfast in their cause was rewarded as they almost completed opening all the agenda items. Synergies remained high in all deliberations and delegates endeavored to find a common thread in issues on climate change, IAS, and sustainable wildlife management. Global calls to address climate and biodiversity crises together gained traction as delegates pondered ways of bringing the two communities together. Approaches such as Nature-based Solutions, Ecosystem-based approaches and One Health made their way into discussions, as delegates agreed that restoring health to ecosystems provides resilience against adverse climate impacts and promotes harmonious coexistence between nature and humanity.

On the general agreement on discussions of synergies, one delegate happily quipped, "we are working together in the right direction!" Whether this sentiment will be rewarded in the end remains to be seen as delegates prepare to unpack and repack SBSTTA resolutions in upcoming contact group meetings.