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BUREAU OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON
SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND
TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE
Rome, 17 February 2008

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON
SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL AFFAIRS HELD IN ROME
ON SUNDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2008**

INTRODUCTION

1. The Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) met on 17 February 2008 at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Asghar Mohammadi Fazel (Iran). The following Bureau members attended the meeting:

Ms. Gabriele Obermayer (Austria)
Mr. Habib Gademi (Chad)
Dr. Spencer Linus Thomas (Grenada)
Mr. Hesiquio Benitez Dias (Mexico)
Dr. Joel Miles (Palau)
Mr. Rawson Piniel Yonazi (Tanzania)
Prof. Ahgheluta Vadineanu (Romania)
Dr. Shirin Karryeva (Turkmenistan)

With the agreement of the Bureau, Ms. Robyn Bromley (Australia) represented Ms. Annemarie Watt (Australia), who was unable to attend. Ms. Tone Solhaug (Norway), nominated by WEOG to replace Ms. Watt on the Bureau as of the end of SBSTTA 13, was invited to participate in the Bureau meetings during SBSTTA 13 as an observer in order to ensure continuity.

2. The meeting was also attended by the Executive Secretary of the Convention, Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Mr. Jo Mulongoy, Principal Officer of the Division for Scientific, Technical and Technological Matters of the Secretariat, and Ms. Dominique Kayser, Secretary of the Governing Bodies.

ITEM 1 OPENING OF THE MEETING

3. The meeting was opened by the Chair, who welcomed the participants and thanked Austria for having provided the financial resources for the face-to-face meeting of the Bureau held in Geneva in January 2008. The Executive Secretary stressed that the fact that SBSTTA 13 was being held at the offices of the FAO in Rome provided an excellent opportunity through which to further enhance synergies and cooperation with the FAO. He also informed the Bureau of the outcomes of his discussion with Mr Jacques Diouf the Director General of FAO on the issue of the full-time secondment of a staff to the SCBD as liaison officer of FAO in charge of the implementation of the work programme on agro-biodiversity.

4. The Chair on behalf of the Bureau thanked the Executive Secretary and his team for the enhanced collaboration with FAO and for the preparation of the meeting.

ITEM 2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

5. The Bureau then adopted the following Agenda, with the suggested addition of an Item 6, "Improving the peer review process":

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Organisation of SBSTTA 13
 - a. Use of terms: Committee of the Whole and Plenary
 - b. Co-Chair of the Committee of the Whole
 - c. Choreography
 - d. Status of introductory and keynote presentations
3. Alignment of tenure of chairmanship of SBSTTA and COP Chairmanship cycle
4. Side events and meetings involving the Bureau
5. Brief report on WGPA-2 and training workshop
6. *Improving the peer review process*
7. Other matters and Closure.

ITEM 3 ORGANISATION OF WORK FOR SBSTTA 13

ITEM 3 (a) Use of terms: Committee of the Whole and Plenary

2. The Bureau agreed that SBSTTA would meet in Plenary to discuss items 1, 2, 5 and 6 of its agenda. The Committee of the Whole would consider the two issues for in-depth review (agricultural biodiversity and forest biodiversity) under item 3, as well as item 4.5 on the modus operandi for selecting and addressing new and emerging issues. The two Working Groups would address agenda item 4, sub-items 4.1 - 4.4, relating to scientific, technical and technological issues of relevance to the implementation of the 2010 target. The Bureau agreed that the Committee of the Whole and the Working Groups should be understood to be the bodies that would consider CRPs and produce L documents for consideration and adoption by the Plenary.

3. With specific reference to the need to have clear guidance on the rules of participation, the Bureau reiterated the call for the full and effective participation of ILCs and NGOs, in the Working Groups, the Committee of the Whole and the Plenary. It was further agreed that recommendations made by observers could be reflected in the CRP documents, as long as they were endorsed by at least one (1) Party. If a Party objected to the recommendation submitted by an ILC or an NGO but was endorsed by another Party, it could be reflected in the document in brackets.

4. The Bureau members reiterated that there should not be more than two formal groups meeting at the same time and encouraged the chairs of the working groups to convene informal meetings in the evening immediately after the closure of the formal meetings. The Bureau stressed the need to use consistent terminology across the various fora (e.g. in Plenary, COW, WGs, Friends of the Chair).

ITEM 3 (b) Co-Chair of the Committee of the Whole

5. The Chair advised the Bureau that Annemarie Watt (Australia), who had been nominated by the Bureau to take on the co-chairmanship of the Committee of the Whole during its meeting on 26 January in Geneva, would not be able to fulfill this role given her new assignment in her country. The nomination of another co-chair for the COW was therefore considered. Following brief discussion which centred on the need to maintain an equitable regional balance amongst the Chair and Co-Chairs

at this meeting, the Bureau invited Mr. Hesiquio Benitez Dias (Mexico) to assume the role of co-chair of the COW. The invitation was accepted.

ITEM 3 (c) Choreography

6. The choreography proposed, as outlined in the organisation of work, and including the introductory and keynote presentations, was agreed upon by the Bureau. In order to make the most efficient use of time, the Bureau agreed that the Chair would encourage Parties to focus their interventions on substantive issues and suggestions to recommendations contained in the meeting's working documents.

ITEM 3 (d) Status of Introductory and keynote presentations

7. The Secretariat confirmed the list of introductory and keynote participants who would be present during the Opening Ceremony, as well as those who would introduce the issues for consideration in the in-depth review, as follows:

Opening Ceremony:

- ~ Minister of the Environment, Land and Sea, Government of Italy
- ~ a representative of the City of Rome
- ~ the Executive Secretary
- ~ a representative of the FAO, followed by the keynote address by,
- ~ Prof. Rosalia Arteaga Serrano, Executive Director of the Fundacio Natura Regional.

Agenda Item 3.1 – In-depth review of the programme of work on agricultural biodiversity

- a) a representative of the FAO;
- b) a representative of the Chairman of the International Technical Conference on Animal Genetic Resources, held in Interlaken from 3-7 September 2007.

Agenda Item 3.2 - In-depth review of the programme of work on forest biodiversity

- a) a representative of the FAO;
- b) a representative of CIFOR.

Agenda Item 4.1 - Marine and coastal biodiversity

- a) Professor Ricardo Serrao Santos, Chair of the Expert Working Group on Ecological Criteria and Biogeographic Classification Systems, held in the Azores from 2-4 October 2007.

Agenda Item 4.2 - Biological diversity of inland water ecosystems

- a) a representative of the Ramsar Convention.

ITEM 4 ALIGNMENT OF TENURE OF CHAIRMANSHIP OF SBSTTA AND COP CHAIRMANSHIP CYCLE

8. Further to an initial discussion on this issue at its Geneva meeting, the question of aligning the tenure of the chairmanship of SBSTTA with that of COP chairmanship cycle was addressed by the Bureau. Following discussion and clarifications, it was decided that the chairmanship cycle for SBSTTA would remain status quo. However, in line with the COP Bureau practice, it was agreed that when the Chair for SBSTTA 15 is elected, he/she would become an ex-officio member of the SBSTTA 14 Bureau, such that he/she would immediately be in a position to follow SBSTTA issues in depth and therefore, be fully prepared to take on his/her role at SBSTTA 15.

ITEM 5 SIDE EVENTS AND MEETINGS INVOLVING THE BUREAU

9. Following discussion, the Bureau agreed that in future, to the extent possible, the organisation of side events will be encouraged to focus on issues of relevance to the agenda items of SBSTTA. It was agreed that the only restrictive criteria for inclusion of side events was the availability of rooms and therefore, the principle of first-come, first-served would be used. While lunch hour events were

preferred, the Bureau agreed that no restriction for the organisation of evening side events should be imposed, except in cases where Bureau involvement was required.

10. The Bureau was also advised that a joint meeting of the SBSTTA Bureau and the Bureau of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture was in the process of being organised, and that the time and date would be confirmed to the Bureau in due course.

ITEM 6 BRIEF REPORT ON WGPA-2 AND TRAINING WORKSHOPS

11. The Secretariat, at the invitation of the Chair, presented to the Bureau a brief overview of the results of WGPA-2 and training workshops – one on protected areas, and a second on agricultural biodiversity and forest biodiversity – that had been organised in its margins. He advised the Bureau that both training workshops had been well attended and that participants had, based on the review of workshop questionnaires to date, expressed satisfaction with the quality and substance of the workshops.

12. In relation to the results of WGPA-2, a comment was received from a Bureau member that in regional consultations, it was the view that the Working Group had loaded work onto the COP and that there was a sense of disappointment that the issues were not resolved by the Working Group itself. In addressing this point, the Chair indicated that the SBSTTA needs to conclude its work as efficiently as possible, and stressed that, to the extent possible, draft decisions must be presented to the COP with as few square brackets as possible. In seconding this need, a Bureau member reminded the group that SBSTTA must remember that its mandate relates to scientific, technical and technological matters and that policy related issues should be systematically relegated to the COP.

13. The Executive Secretary took the floor to inform the Bureau that, for the first time, the Working Group Chairs for the COP had been nominated in advance. He further informed the Bureau that the Chair of Working Group I, which will address SBSTTA, would be chaired by Ms. Maria Mbengashe (South Africa). Her presence at SBSTTA 13 would allow her to be very familiar with the recommendations and pending issues that would come before the COP.

ITEM 7 IMPROVING THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS

14. Given time constraints, the Bureau decided to come back to this issue at one of its meetings during the week.

ITEM 8 OTHER MATTERS AND CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

15. Prior to closing the meeting, the Bureau agreed that it would meet every morning at 08:00, followed by regional consultations from 09:00 -10:00.

16. The Chair closed the meeting at 17:00.
