

COP7

Sustaining livelihoods

This is a brief account of the discussions at the recent CBD meet on Agenda Item 18.2 on marine and coastal biological diversity

Agenda Item 18 on the *Thematic programmes of work—review, further elaboration and refinement: biological diversity of inland water ecosystems and marine and coastal biological diversity* was first discussed at the Seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity on 13 February 2004 at Kuala Lumpur.

Several delegates, particularly from Small Island Developing States (SIDS), pointed to the high social, economic and cultural dependence of their States on marine and coastal biodiversity, and highlighted their extreme vulnerability to the impact of coral bleaching and climate change. They made a strong plea for a target and action-oriented work plan for increasing resilience to coral bleaching and stressed the importance of close coordination with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Ramsar Convention.

The discussion on marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs) was lively. Several delegates, including Japan, Tanzania and Senegal, pointed to knowledge gaps, and requested that the establishment of MCPAs be science-based. Iceland and Chile stressed the principle of sustainable use *vis-a-vis* protected areas, the fact that several approaches are available for conserving marine biodiversity, and that MCPAs need not be an *essential* tool, but one among the many that could be used. Several States, including Iceland, the European Union (EU), New Zealand and Norway, stressed the importance of adopting an ecosystem approach.

Many delegates and NGOs present stressed the importance of conserving high-seas biodiversity, proposing urgent

action to prevent the degradation and destruction of seamounts, cold-water coral reefs and other vulnerable and threatened ecosystems and resources. Some delegates called for a moratorium on deep-sea trawling. Most delegates stressed the need for consistency with international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), regarding biodiversity protection in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction and called for better regional cooperation. Some delegates opposed addressing areas beyond national jurisdiction and establishing a global network of MCPAs, noting that this falls under the scope of UNCLOS.

Several delegations, including Thailand, highlighted the role of community-based conservation, the importance of local knowledge and local and traditional practices. Several States stressed the importance of community participation, and Palau and the Philippines highlighted the need to apply programme element 2 of the programme of work on protected areas on *Governance, participation, equity and benefit sharing*, to work on marine and coastal biological diversity.

Trawling

Kiribati stressed the importance of community-based management approaches and the need to recognize sustainable fishing practices, including the use of traditional gear. Maldives pointed to the selectivity and sustainability of their traditional fishing practices and stressed that the main threat was from illegal industrial fisheries. Ghana pointed to the negative impact of trawling in the Gulf of Guinea, and its negative consequences on local fishermen, calling for a moratorium on the same. Russia opposed such a moratorium, pointing out that trawling may not be

harmful in all contexts. Thailand was of the view that greater emphasis was required on issues related to poverty alleviation, as outlined in the Millennium Development Goals. The EU emphasized the importance of socioeconomic considerations and of sustainable livelihoods in the context of indigenous and local communities.

The Philippines, drawing on its own experiences with community-based resource management, highlighted the importance of protecting preferential access rights of fishers and fishworkers, particularly those engaged in subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fisheries, to traditional fishing grounds and resources.

Argentina favoured removing references to the positive effects of mariculture, a position that was opposed by Russia. Many delegates, including the Philippines, stressed the urgency of addressing Invasive Alien Species (IAS) from ballast water, while some others highlighted the importance of adopting Integrated Coastal and Marine Area Management (ICMAM) approaches.

Several delegates, particularly from developing countries and SIDS, called for enhanced financial and technical support to implement the work programme.

Several other organizations, including IUCN-The World Conservation Union, the International Indigenous Forum for Biodiversity (IIFB), Greenpeace, ICSF and UNESCO also made interventions. 3

This piece by Chandrika Sharma (icsf@vsnl.com), Executive Secretary, ICSF, is not a comprehensive summary of the discussions on Agenda Item 18.2, since it covers only the first day. For the final decisions, please visit the CBD site at www.biodiv.org