

Report to JNCC

Attending SBSTTA 16 April 30th – May 5th 2012, including EU meeting Sunday afternoon 29th April 2012.

Activities

I had a particular role in developing the UK position on Island Biodiversity (paper number 16/4) Island Biodiversity: In-Depth Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Work) before the SBSTTA 16 meeting and at plenary, workshop and Friends of the Chair sessions (Monday and Tuesday). The L paper (final draft for the Conference of Parties in India) was completed on Wednesday. The paper was reviewed in the light of the UK's many islands, both within metropolitan UK (especially Scottish islands) and in the Overseas Territories. The issues for this paper included making sure the paper covered uninhabited islands (St Kilda, British Indian Ocean Territories as well as many other offshore islands) and avoid over emphasis on Small Islands Developing States (SIDS). We also added our concerns about unsustainable tourism (an issue in the Caribbean) and the difficulty of reporting on the many various Conventions for small administrations and the need for synergies, which were already recognised as requiring attention.

There were aspects of other SBSTTA papers of interest to the Isle of Man and potentially other Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories, although it was not always easy to devise specific wording which could be added to take account of OTs, especially in the light of the political sensitivity about the Falkland Islands. These papers included

- Marine and Coastal Biodiversity: Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (16/5)
- Addressing Adverse Impacts of Human Activities on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity, Including Coral Bleaching, Ocean Acidification, Fisheries and Underwater Noise (16/6)
- Marine and Coastal Biodiversity: Voluntary Guidelines for the Consideration of Biodiversity in Environmental Impact Assessments and Strategic Environmental Assessments in Marine and Coastal Areas (16/7)
- Global Strategy for Plant Conservation: Progress in implementing decision X/17 (16/11)
- Revised Draft Capacity-Building Strategy for the Global Taxonomy Initiative (16/12)

Value

After the unexpected departure of Vin Fleming (JNCC) Samia Sarkis (from Bermuda Government) and I attended meetings on the Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas – EBSAs 16/5) (Tuesday and Wednesday). This was an interesting case because of the complex status of the different workshop reports, esp the NE Atlantic and the relations with OSPAR and the NEAFC (North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission) roles. There was much discussion about the relationship between CBD and UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

I spent a considerable time following the capacity building strategy of the Global Taxonomy Initiative (Thursday). The remaining differences of opinion between parties were on some of the difficult papers; geo-engineering (16/100, biofuels (16/14) "New and emerging issues" 16/13. There were complex options for wording, with the UK facilitating the Friends of the Chair discussions. (I spent Friday following some of these).

Attending this event was of value to the Isle of Man, especially at this time when we are just about to formally have the Convention extended to us. It helped me to get a grasp of how CBD decisions are made, how parties participate, the role of specialists and the nature of the decisions. It enabled me to better understand some of the issues of the CBD secretariat and of the Convention more widely, including the lines taken by different countries, as well as how the Aichi goals and Nagoya protocol are being used in different contexts. It was a valuable insight into the way CBD decisions are achieved and the position the UK takes, how it negotiates, and its relationship with other EU countries in this context.

In terms of value to the delegation I was able to provide support in various ways and back up, especially since one delegate had to return to the UK. This ranged from document checking and distribution to getting emergency provisions for delegates involved in late night sessions. Having been to Ramsar COPs I had a grasp of the type of work involved and therefore was able to contribute my suggestions from an understanding of what some of the sensitivities are.

The side events gave me a substantial amount of technical information (non-native species, Blue carbon, MSP – ecosystem approach) as well as inspiration (Mexican Islands biodiversity work). I found that networking was quite difficult in this setting but did have some useful conversations with various delegates. Much valuable printed material was collected.

A Poster paper was put up about the Isle of Man's first nature reserve and the role of the Manx Fish Producer's Organisation. This raised some queries and stimulated discussion.

I am very grateful for this opportunity and for JNCC's support of this.

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