



Convention on Biological Diversity

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BUREAU OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE
PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Third meeting

Montreal, Canada, 19 November 2019

REPORT OF THE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

1. The third inter-sessional meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties since the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and concurrent meetings of the Protocols in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt 2018, was held on 19 November 2019, in the Joke Waller Hunter Conference Room at the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Montreal, Canada.

2. The meeting was attended by the following members, and substitute members, of the COP Bureau:

Presidency: Mr. Hamdallah Zedan (Egypt);

Africa: Mr. Melesse Maryo (Ethiopia);

Asia and the Pacific: Ms. Leina El-Awadhi (Kuwait); Mr. Vinod Mathur (India, replacing Ms. Sujata Aurora);

Latin America and the Caribbean: Ms. Helena Jeffery Brown (Antigua and Barbuda), Ms. Eugenia Argueda Montezuma (Costa Rica, representing His Excellency Mr. Carlos Manuel Rodriguez) and Mr. Joaquin Salzberg (Argentina, substitute for Costa Rica in matters related to the Nagoya Protocol);

Western Europe and Others: Ms. Gabriele Obermayr (Austria), Ms. Rosemary Paterson (New Zealand), Ms. Marie Haraldstad (Norway, substitute for New Zealand for matters related to the Nagoya Protocol);

Ex-officio: Ms. Charlotta Sörqvist (Sweden), Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation and Mr. Hesiquio Benitez (Mexico), Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Matters;

Mr. Francis Sabino Ogwal (Uganda) and Mr. Basile van Havre (Canada), Co-chairs of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework;

Observers: Mr. Liu Ning and Ms. Jing Xin (China), COP 15 host representatives; Ms. Inger Andersen and Mr. Rafael Peralta, UNEP representatives;

Regrets were provided by Mr. Eric Okoree (Ghana), Ms. Teona Karchava (Georgia), Mr. Dilovarsho Dustov (Tajikistan), Ms. Elvana Ramaj (Albania);

3. Ms. Elizabeth Mrema, Officer-in-Charge, together with Mr. David Cooper (Deputy Executive Secretary), Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp (Director, Implementation Support Division), Mr. Alexander

Shestakov (Director, Science, Society and Sustainable Futures Division), Mr. Worku Yifru (Senior Legal Officer), Ms. Catalina Santamaria (Special Adviser to the Executive Secretary), Mr. Wataru Suzuki (Global Coordinator of the Japan Biodiversity Fund), Ms. Gudrun Fosse (Chief, Administration, Finance and Conference Services), Mr. John Scott (Senior Programme Officer, Traditional Knowledge) and Ms. Kathryn Garforth (Officer-in-Charge, Biosafety Unit) were also present.

ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

4. The meeting was opened at 9:15 a.m. on 19 November by Mr. Hamdallah Zedan, representing the President of the Conference of the Parties. He extended a special welcome to Officer-in-Charge, Ms. Elizabeth Mrema and UNEP Executive Director, Ms. Inger Andersen. He acknowledged that Mr. Rafael Peralta, UNEP Acting Chief of Staff, was also able to join the meeting. Mr. Zedan provided a quick overview of the topics that would be discussed.

5. Ms. Mrema made brief opening remarks, conveying her preparedness to coordinate the work of the Convention in her new capacity, and reiterating the Secretariat's full commitment to achieving its mandates, particularly in relation to supporting the process for the preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. She also noted the recently convened thematic consultations for the post-2020 process on ecosystem restoration and marine and coastal biodiversity, held in Brazil and Montreal, respectively, as well as the Global Thematic Dialogue for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, held in Montreal.

6. The Executive Director of UNEP, Ms. Inger Andersen, also addressed the meeting, thanking members of the Bureau for their support in rendering the current work programme under the Convention, noting that their work was of critical importance at the current juncture in the life of the Convention, welcoming Ms. Mrema in her new capacity, and also conveying her appreciation to the Co-chairs of the Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework for continuing to ably lead the post-2020 process. Ms. Andersen also expressed the full support of the UN Environment Programme in the lead-up to Kunming as well as in the post-2020 implementation period, and highlighted the importance of developing a framework that was inspirational, measurable and realistic, drawing on valuable lessons from the experiences of the Convention and of the other conventions as well as the need for effective engagement from sectors that are the drivers of biodiversity loss.

7. Referring to the audit of the Secretariat, Ms. Andersen stated that she had accepted all the recommendations in the Final Report of the Audit of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, conducted by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, which was completed on 31 October 2019.¹ The information contained in the report clearly signalled that efforts needed to be stepped up on the sides of both UNEP and the CBD Secretariat. Since taking up her position five months earlier, she informed Bureau members that she had visited every UNEP MEA secretariat. She was intent on improving communication between UNEP headquarters and the MEA secretariats. While the MEA secretariats should maintain their independence, they should be enabled and supported by headquarters in their activities.

8. Mr. Zedan applauded the UNEP Executive Director's engagement in the work of the Convention and her support and participation in the Bureau. Mr. Zedan expressed to the Executive Director that she could be assured of the full support of the COP Presidency and the Bureau, as well as that of members of the Secretariat throughout the coming year, and expressed high hope for a strong future collaboration with her.

9. The Chair welcomed Mr Vinod Mathur of India to the Bureau and asked him to convey his appreciation to Ms. Sujata Arora for her long-standing support to the Convention and her service on the Bureau.

¹ The audit is addressed under Item 7.

ITEM 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

10. The Deputy Executive Secretary, upon the invitation of the Chair, introduced the provisional agenda and the annotations to the provisional agenda for its meeting prepared by the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Chair. The Bureau adopted the provisional agenda as presented.

ITEM 3. PREPARATIONS FOR THE ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON ARTICLE 8(J)

11. The Chair noted that, in accordance with established practice, the President of the Conference of the Parties or his representative would chair the Working Group, and the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties would serve as the Bureau of the meeting. The Bureau designated Mr. Vinod Mathur of India as Rapporteur for the meeting.

12. The Chair proposed that, as in past meetings of the Working Group, the representatives of the indigenous peoples and local communities would be invited to designate seven representatives to act as “Friends of the Bureau”, one of whom would act as a Co-chair of the Working Group and others as Co-chairs of contact groups, as needed. The Friends of the Bureau would participate in meetings of the Bureau. With the agreement of the Bureau, the Chair invited the representatives of the indigenous peoples and local communities to join the discussion under this item: Mr. Lakpa Nuri Sherpa (Asia), Ms. Lucy Mulenkei (Africa), Ms. Polina Shulbaeva (Russia), Mr. Aslak Holmberg (Arctic), Ms. Chrissy Grant (Pacific), Ms. Yolanda Teran (Latin America) and Mr. Ken Paul (North America). After a round of introductions from the representatives of the indigenous peoples and local communities, the Chair invited the Secretariat to provide an overview on preparations for the eleventh meeting of WG8J.

13. Mr. John Scott made a presentation on the programme of work on Article 8(j), and of the ad hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j), which had been established in 1998 with the mandate to provide advice to the Conference of the Parties and serve as the principal mechanism through which indigenous peoples and local communities could participate in the work of the Convention. The current programme of work, which was adopted in 2000, would come to an end next year.

14. The Secretariat proposed that the meeting of the Working Group would begin its deliberations of the substantive agenda items with item 4 on the in-depth dialogue, as the results of the dialogue along with item 3 on progress towards Aichi Biodiversity Target 18 on traditional knowledge and customary sustainable use of biodiversity, would provide appropriate context for consideration of item 5 on indigenous peoples and local communities and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The Bureau was informed that four speakers had been invited to lead the dialogue: Ms. Alejandra Loria Martinez, National Focal Point for Article 8(j), National Commission for Biodiversity Management, Costa Rica; Mr. Tim Badman, Director, IUCN Nature Culture Initiative; Ms. Eleanor Sterling, Jaffe Chief Conservation Scientist, American Museum of Natural History; and Ms. Josefa Isabel Tauli, Global Youth Biodiversity Network, Philippines.

15. The Secretariat further advised that the progress report that would be taken up under item 3 had been prepared on the basis of information contained in 97 sixth national reports and would be revised for the third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI 3). It was expected that consideration of item 5 would table a significant amount of work and that a conference room paper would be prepared. The same was expected for item 6 on possible elements of work on the links between nature and culture in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The Secretariat clarified that the results of the eleventh meeting of the Working Group on Article 8(j) would be submitted to SBSTTA 23 for comment and SBI 3 for its consideration.

16. The Bureau agreed with the Secretariat’s suggestions for the sequence of agenda items and other arrangements for the meeting.

17. The Chair stated that the Bureau would meet each morning, from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m., beginning on 21 November 2019.

ITEM 4. PREPARATIONS FOR THE SECOND MEETING OF THE OPEN-ENDED INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP ON THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

18. The Co-chairs of the Working Group on the post 2020 global biodiversity framework provided the Bureau with an update on developments in the post-2020 preparatory process and their engagements since the last meeting of the COP Bureau in August 2019. As mandated by the Working Group at its first meeting, a zero draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, including explanation on the mission and vision, targets, baselines, indicators and information on resource mobilization, will be made available mid-January 2020 in all UN languages, well before the second meeting of the Working Group.

19. Members of the Bureau expressed satisfaction with the updates provided by the Co-Chairs through e-mail communications following the first meeting of the Working Group. The Co-chairs agreed to include an updated calendar of events in their future e-mail communications to the Bureau.

20. The Co-chairs briefed the Bureau on the outcomes of the two recent thematic consultations on ecosystem restoration and marine and coastal biodiversity, noting with satisfaction that the Secretariat had been able to accommodate almost all of the funding requests received from eligible participants. They informed of the possibility to hold thematic consultation on sustainable use and access and benefit-sharing in March or April; the location was still to be determined. On the development of the communications strategy, as further work and consultation are still needed, it was suggested that the Bureau dedicate more time to this issue. It was also noted that the contribution of the MEAs to the post-2020 process was very important and that it would be good to build upon the process that has begun with the biodiversity-related conventions in Bern in June 2019. The Bureau was informed about Switzerland's interest in supporting the continuation of this process and the importance of joint collaborative work with UNEP and Switzerland to ensure a successful second meeting. The SBSTTA Chair added that FAO had already adopted a strategy on biodiversity, which would support the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

21. Mr. Ogwal briefed the Bureau on his participation in the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) in Durban, where he had made a presentation on progress in the preparation of the post-2020 framework, which was well received by the ministers who expressed their willingness to support the development and implementation of the post-2020 framework. It was suggested to give more thought to the role that such types of regional processes could play in the post-2020 period.

22. Mr van Havre noted the limits regarding the capacity of the Secretariat to support the work of the co-Chairs and suggested that the agendas of the future meeting of SBSTTA and SBI might be reduced with a view to reducing the Secretariat's workload. The Chairs of SBSTTA and SBI assured the Co-Chairs and the Bureau that they would be able to accommodate any request that might be received from the open-ended Working Group on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and that they would handle any such requests in as efficient a way as possible. However, it was noted that it would not be desirable to change the agendas of these bodies which have already been approved by the respective Bureaux, given the mandates of the COP and noting that preparations were already underway. The Officer-in-Charge also noted that the Secretariat was taking action to promptly fill remaining vacancies. The Chairs of SBSTTA and SBI also agreed to consider how the preparations for the SBSTTA 24 and SBI 3 meetings could be streamlined. It was noted that it would be useful to hold another joint meeting of the COP and SBSTTA Bureaux to consider how inter-related issues would be addressed by the various subsidiary bodies and the Secretariat would explore opportunities in this regard.

23. The Secretariat noted that a notification had been issued on 7 November specifying that the second meeting of the Working Group would take place in Kunming, from 24 to 29 February 2020. The Bureau member from Antigua and Barbuda, who had served as rapporteur at the first meeting of the

Working Group, agreed to continue in this role for the second meeting. The Bureau approved the provisional agenda for the meeting. Regarding the draft annotations to the agenda, it was noted that the meeting was due to end at 1 pm on 29 February 2020.

24. It was also noted that the second meeting of the Working Group would be preceded by a thematic consultation on transparent implementation, monitoring, reporting and review, and followed by a thematic consultation on capacity-building and technical and scientific cooperation.

ITEM 5. PREPARATIONS AND TESTING OF THE REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM AT THE THIRD MEETING OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON IMPLEMENTATION

25. Upon the invitation of the Chair of the Bureau, Ms. Charlotta Sörqvist, SBI Chair, introduced item 5 on preparations and testing of the review of implementation mechanism at the third meeting of SBI.

26. The SBI Chair informed the meeting that, following the second meeting of the Bureau held in Nairobi in August 2019 that had reviewed the proposed roadmap for this process, the Secretariat had revised the roadmap. The Secretariat clarified that the current format for the trial phase of the open-ended forum would allow five Parties to present their review reports, in a three-hour slot of the plenary. Another change related to limiting those who could comment on the review reports, which would be made available on the CBD clearing-house mechanism, to Parties only.

27. The roadmap had also been updated to reflect the timings of the thematic consultation and expert workshop. In response to a query from a Bureau member on how the thematic consultation that would be held in Kunming, before the second meeting of the Open-ended Working Group, would differ from the expert workshop, the Secretariat explained that it was expected that the thematic consultation would enable broad participation and provide an opportunity for a wide range of relevant issues to be discussed, while the expert workshop would focus on developing options in the light of the discussions at the thematic consultation.

ITEM 6. UPDATE ON THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE FIFTEENTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION, TENTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES SERVING AS THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL, AND THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES SERVING AS THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE NAGOYA PROTOCOL, AS WELL AS THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THESE MEETINGS (THE UN BIODIVERSITY CONFERENCE 2020)

28. At the invitation of the Chair, Mr. Liu Ning, the representative of COP-15 host, China, updated the Bureau on the progress in China's preparations for the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the concurrent meetings of the Parties to the Protocols. Mr. Liu Ning informed the Bureau that the proposed dates of the meeting (15-28 October 2020) were awaiting final confirmation. Mr. Liu Ning informed Bureau members that the High-level Segment would be attended by the President or the Premier of China. Mr. Liu Ning indicated that the Chinese delegation would hold further discussions with the Secretariat on the High-Level Segment in the following days.

29. The Secretariat provided information on its second mission to Beijing and Kunming, during which time the COP 15 theme of "Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth" had been announced by the Minister of Ecology and Environment of China and the CBD Executive Secretary. A site visit of the conference premises had been conducted, and the logistical preparations were well underway. Further discussions with the host country on other issues, including organization of parallel events, were ongoing. It was also noted that the negotiations on the Host Government Agreement were advancing as well.

ITEM 7. UPDATE ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

30. The Secretariat provided a briefing to the Bureau on the status of the following voluntary trust funds: the Special Voluntary Trust Fund (BE) for the Additional Voluntary Contributions in Support of Approved Activities for the Biennium 2019-2020, the Special Voluntary Trust Fund (BZ) for Facilitating Participation of Parties in the Convention Process for the 2019-2020 Biennium, and the Voluntary Trust Fund (VB) for Facilitating Participation of Indigenous People and Local Communities in the Convention Process for the 2019-2020 Biennium. Reference was made to the information document prepared for the Bureau meeting and which followed up on decision 14/37.

31. The Secretariat noted the substantial funding gaps for BE trust fund and indicated that, as a priority, funding had been prioritized for activities that are essential and time-sensitive, including those related to the post-2020 process and to the preparation of studies and meetings that would feed into the preparations for subsidiary bodies, COP and the MOPs (e.g. the studies and staff for digital sequence information (DSI) on genetic resources, among others). It was suggested that it would be good to know which issues were at risk so that countries might step up in their financial pledges.

32. Regarding the BZ fund for supporting participation in major meetings, the Secretariat noted that funding had peaked in 2010, and had declined since. An analysis had been prepared for SBI 2 and would be updated for SBI 3, in line with the COP mandate. Responding to the concern about the funding gap in the BZ trust fund and the impact this could have regarding participation in the post-2020 process, the Secretariat stated that despite contributions being well below the budgeted levels, the Secretariat had nevertheless been able to respond to all valid requests for participant funding to date. However, the funds would now need to be replenished to ensure full participation in meetings in 2020.

33. The Secretariat provided an update to the Bureau regarding assessed contributions. Invoices on pledges made by countries and organizations are being sent to them by UNEP. Although the Secretariat is not copied on this correspondence, it is informed afterward by UNEP that the invoices have been sent. It was suggested that the Secretariat, and members of the Bureau, follow up with relevant national focal points in their respective regions to encourage them to fulfil their pledges.

34. The SBSTTA Chair expressed concern that recruitment of a professional for the programme of work on health and biodiversity is still pending. While a close partnership existed with the World Health Organization, and a consultant was in place at the organization who could contribute to the preparation of SBSTTA 24 documents on this subject, this arrangement was not sustainable.

35. The Officer-in-Charge, Ms. Elizabeth Mrema, reported that action had already been initiated to address a number of the recommendations contained in the audit report conducted by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, related to: the completion of staff mission reports and accountability for travel; making available updated financial information available on the Convention website; preparation of a results-based budget ensuring that the requirement to have the budget document available 90 days in advance of COP 15 would be met. An evaluation policy and mechanism would also be implemented. The United Nations Enterprise Risk Management and Internal Control Policy would be implemented as well. Administrative arrangements were currently being worked out with UNEP, and lessons related to procurement would be put into practice. Meetings had been held internally regarding complaints and concerns about the prevailing work environment, and measures would be put in place in collaboration with the Staff Association. A number of interviews for vacant posts had recently taken place and UNEP was helping to fast-track recruitment. The filling of key positions would be given particular attention.

ITEM 8. OTHER MATTERS

36. The Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the ongoing discussions in New York concerning the date and modalities for the UNGA Biodiversity Summit, which would be held during the UN General Assembly in September 2020, as agreed by the General Assembly last year. Bureau members were encouraged to follow up with their respective missions in New York. to request their support for the Summit.

37. The review of the first draft communications strategy for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework was raised, with the proposal to allow Parties to be given another opportunity to review and

provide comments to the document. The involvement and contribution of the Chairs of the Subsidiary Bodies in the process of developing the communications strategy was also highlighted. The Secretariat advised that, in accordance with decision 14/26, the second draft of the communications strategy had been sent to members of the Informal Advisory Committee on Communication, Education and Public Awareness for review. The Secretariat further informed that an expert consultation on the draft strategy would be held at the Secretariat this week, and that it would be useful if the SBSTTA and SBI Chairs could participate in this consultation. An invitation had also been extended to the Co-chairs of the Open-ended Working Group as well as to the COP 13 President, Mexico, the current COP 14 President, Egypt, and to the incoming COP 15 President, China.

38. Members also noted a number of problems related to visa issuance for delegates that had been nominated to attend meetings in Montreal and requested that the Secretariat explore this matter with the Government of Canada. The Secretariat stated that it was aware of the situation, noting that there appeared to be a higher number of cases related to visa issuance than usual, and that it would follow up with the host government in this regard.

39. With the aim of promoting sustainability, the Secretariat informed Bureau members that, for the eleventh meeting of the ad hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and SBSTTA 23, the Secretariat would be issuing, on a trial basis, 100% recyclable paper badges to delegates.

40. A closed session was held during which the Executive Director briefed and consulted Bureau members on the arrangements for the appointment of the Executive Secretary.

ITEM 9. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

41. The Chair thanked the Bureau members and other participants for their constructive engagement and valuable contributions to the work of the Bureau, and closed the meeting at 1:15 p.m.
