



**Convention on  
Biological Diversity**

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

6:00am to 6:45am EST  
19 November 2020

**MINUTES OF THE BUREAU MEETING HELD DURING THE SECOND EXTRAORDINARY  
MEETING OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND FIRST  
EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES SERVING AS  
THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CARTAGENA AND NAGOYA PROTOCOLS**

1. The Bureau of the Conference of the Parties held a teleconference during the extraordinary meetings of the Convention and its Protocols on 19 November 2020 via GotoMeeting to consider progress in the extraordinary meetings.
2. The teleconference was attended by the following members of the COP Bureau and substitutes:
  - Presidency:* Mr. Hamdallah Zedan (Egypt); Ambassador Mohamed Gad (Egypt), Mr. Ayman Amin (Egypt);
  - Africa:* Mr. Eric Okoree (Ghana) Mr. Melesse Maryo (Ethiopia);
  - Asia and the Pacific:* Mr. Vinod Mathur (India); Ms. Leina El-Awadhi (Kuwait);
  - Latin America and the Caribbean:* Ms. Helena Jeffery Brown (Antigua and Barbuda); Ms Eugenia Montezuma (Costa Rica, representing H.E. Minister Andrea Meza Murillo); Mr. Joaquín Salzberg (Argentina, substitute for Costa Rica for matters related to the Nagoya Protocol);
  - Central and Eastern Europe:* Ms. Teona Karchava (Georgia); Ms. Elvana Ramaj (Albania);
  - Western Europe and Others:* Ms. Gabriele Obermayr (Austria); Ms. Rosemary Paterson (New Zealand); and 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; Mr. Hesiquio Benítez (Mexico), Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice; Mr. Basile van Havre (Canada) and Mr. Francis Ogwal (Uganda), Co-chairs of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework;
  - Observers:* Mr. Liu Ning (China) and Ms. Yueyu Zou (China), COP 15 host representatives;
3. The Secretariat was represented Ms. Elizabeth Maruma-Mrema, Executive Secretary; Mr. David Cooper, Deputy Executive Secretary; Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, Director of Implementation Support Division; Mr. Worku Yifru, Senior Legal Officer; Mr. Ide Ahmed, Finance Officer.

## ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

3. The teleconference was opened on 19 November 2020 at 6:07am Montreal time, by Mr. Hamdallah Zedan, representative of the President of the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Chair began by offering a warm welcome to the Bureau members and indicated that the meeting was convened to take stock of the proceedings of the extraordinary meetings of the Convention and its Protocols.

## ITEM 2. PROGRESS IN THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS

4. The Chair began by emphasizing the critical importance of the extraordinary meetings which have the sole purpose of adopting an interim budget for 2021 to allow the continued operations of the Convention and the Secretariat. He expressed appreciation to all Parties for supporting the convening of the meetings, and for submitting nominations and credentials, as well as for participating in the meetings. The Chair also thanked Ambassador Spencer Thomas and the members of the informal budget group, as well as the Secretariat, for all the hard work in ensuring the meetings were well prepared.

5. The Chair informed the Bureau that the extraordinary meetings of the Convention and Protocols had been opened by means of a communication from the COP Presidency on Monday 16 November 2020. He advised that shortly after this, the Secretariat received a communication from Ambassador Mitzi Valente da Costa of Brazil requesting the addition of a footnote to the draft decisions. The intention of the footnote was to state that there was currently no consensus among CBD Parties on the holding of online meetings and that references to possible virtual meetings should not be interpreted as implying there is agreement, and that references in the document were not meant to prejudge the outcome of continued discussions among CBD Parties on the matter.

6. The Chair informed the Bureau that the Presidency contacted Ambassador Valente da Costa with a view to avoid a change to the decisions which would break the silence that is being applied as a procedure for the meetings. He informed the Bureau that three options were proposed to Brazil. First, he reported that he had noted to them that the communication from Brazil did not directly address the Budget, but rather the organization of meetings which was being discussed in the Bureau. He also reported that he noted to Brazil that it was his understanding that the budget decisions were without prejudice to any decision on the format of the meetings in question, and that these matters were under the purview of the COP Presidency and the Bureau. He had therefore proposed that no further action would be needed. As an alternative option, the Chair reported that it was also suggested that he could reflect that understanding in the Second Communication from the President that would be issued on 19 November, again without introducing any changes to the Budget decisions. (The proposed statement for inclusion was “*The COP President notes that the adoption of the budget proposal (L.2) is without prejudice to a decision on the organization of work or format of the intersessional meetings. This matter is being discussed among Parties through the Bureau.*”). A third proposal was that Brazil’s full statement be reflected in the report.

7. The Chair reported that Brazil rejected all three options. Later, Brazil confirmed in writing that it was their intention to break the silence.

8. The Chair expressed disappointment with the situation and noted that the Presidency had made numerous efforts to resolve the problem. He emphasized that he had had two conversations with Ambassador Valente da Costa, and that Ambassador Mohamed Gad of the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had held a third conversation with her. He also noted that Brazil had participated in the informal budget group. Their representative was invited to all five meetings, participated only in two of them and, to the Chair’s knowledge, never took the floor or raised the content of their proposed language insertion.

9. The Chair informed the Bureau that given the circumstances, he had no alternative to indicating in the President’s second communication that would be issued later in the day at 8am EST, that the extraordinary meetings would be suspended and be re-opened next week on Wednesday 25 November at 7:00am EST for further 48 hours. He noted that the existing nominations and credentials would be deemed to remain valid until the final closure of the extraordinary meetings and asked for the Bureau’s agreement on this.

10. The Chair proposed that in the meantime, they would need further informal discussions to resolve the issue. He noted that he did not believe it should be a difficult matter, after all it was merely to note a fact that the cost estimates for the meetings included in the budget were without prejudice to a decision on the

organization of work or format of the intersessional meetings. He emphasized that there would not be re-opening of the budget negotiations as such, but simply addressing the issue raised by Brazil.

11. The Chair highlighted to the Bureau the critical importance of resolving this matter by reminding them that as per the United Nations financial regulations and rules (ST/SGB/2013/4) and the Secretariat Financial Rules for the Administration of the Trust Fund adopted by COP, the approval of the Secretariat program budget by the Conference of the Parties is required in order that the Executive Secretary has the authorization to incur commitments and make payments. Considering the expiry of the current budget of the Convention and its Protocols at the end of 2020, the lack of such authority in 2021, would result in a complete cessation of the Secretariat operations as of 1 January 2021. Moreover, he noted that such an unfortunate situation would also put the Secretariat in a situation where it could no longer honour its obligations towards its suppliers, landlord and staff members with the legal and financial implications of breach of contracts may imply, therefore, creating additional financial liability to the Parties to the Convention and the Protocols. Expressing hope that the Bureau was committed to avoiding this, he invited the members of the Bureau to provide comments or proposals.

12. Members of the Bureau also expressed disappointment with the situation and commended the COP Presidency and the Secretariat for their efforts to find a solution. They supported the proposal made by the Chair of suspending the extraordinary meetings, holding informal discussions between now and the following week when the meetings would be re-opened, re-opening the extraordinary meetings at 0700 Montreal time, 25 November for a new silence procedure of 48 hours and having nominations and credentials remain valid until the closure of the meetings. They agreed that this would be in an effort to address the issue raised by Brazil and not to re-open negotiations on the budget itself.

13. The Chair then proposed to convene a Bureau meeting on Monday 23 November 2020 to resolve this issue and stated that the outcome of the discussions in the Bureau would be prepared and circulated among Bureau members, allowing Bureau members to inform and seek consensus with their constituencies prior to the issuance of the opening communication by the President of the resumed session of the extraordinary meetings on Wednesday 25 November 2020.

#### **ITEM 8. CLOSING OF THE MEETING**

14. The Chair thanked the participants for the valuable discussion and closed the meeting on 19 November 2020 at 6:45am EST.