



**Convention on  
Biological Diversity**

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

7:00 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. EST  
25 January 2021

**MINUTES OF THE FOURTEENTH TELECONFERENCE OF THE BUREAU OF THE  
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES IN THE INTER-SESSIONAL PERIOD**

1. The fourteenth inter-sessional teleconference of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties since the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and concurrent meetings of the Parties to the Protocols in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, 2018, took place on 25 January 2021 via GotoMeeting.

2. The teleconference was attended by the following members of the COP Bureau and substitutes:

*Presidency:* Mr. Hamdallah Zedan (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 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);

*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 Sabino Ogwal (Uganda), Co-chairs of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework;

*Incoming COP 15 Presidency:* Mr. Liu Ning (China); Ms. Yueyu Zou (China)

3. The Secretariat was represented by: Ms. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary; Mr. David Cooper, Deputy Executive Secretary; Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, Director of Implementation Support Division; Mr. Alexander Shestakov, Director, Science, Society and Sustainable Futures Division; Ms. Wadzanayi Mandivenyi, Head, Biosafety Protocol Unit; Mr. Wataru Suzuki, Global Coordinator for the Japan Biodiversity Fund; and Ms. Catalina Santamaria, Senior Programme Officer.

### **ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING**

4. The teleconference was opened on 25 January at 7:00 a.m. EST by Mr. Hamdallah Zedan, representative of the President of the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Chair began by welcoming the Bureau members and expressing his best wishes for the new year ahead. He noted that this would be a very busy year for everyone with the informal meetings and meetings that were moved from 2020, as well as the COPs of sister conventions taking place this year too. After appealing for the continued support of the Bureau for the busy year ahead, he then invited the Executive Secretary to say a few words.

5. The Executive Secretary also expressed her best wishes to the Bureau for the new year. She noted that 2021 was going to be a super year for biodiversity with several biodiversity-related conventions holding important meetings throughout the year and which all have a bearing on the Convention on Biological Diversity. She highlighted the need to plan and coordinate the dates of important meetings as soon as possible due to the inevitable congestion of international events planned for the year and urged the Bureau for their support in this regard.

### **ITEM 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

6. The Chair introduced the provisional agenda, and after no objection from the Bureau, the provisional agenda was adopted.

### **ITEM 3. PREPARATIONS FOR THE INFORMAL SESSION OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON IMPLEMENTATION**

7. The Chair invited the Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) to preside over the discussions under this agenda item.

8. Ms. Charlotta Sörqvist, Chair of SBI, then gave a presentation to the Bureau members on the organization of work for the upcoming informal meeting of SBI 3, scheduled to start on 8 March. She highlighted that the Bureau had two decisions to take: the first was to discuss and finalize the organization of work, and for which she noted that it would be favorable to address as many of the 12 agenda items of SBI as possible; and the second decision was on modalities and frequency of the Bureau meetings during the informal session, and suggested the meetings take place on 4 March at 7:00 a.m., 9 March at 12 noon, and 13 March at 7:00 a.m.

9. The SBI Chair briefed the Bureau on the modalities of the informal session and outlined the proposed organization of work in detail, including an overview on the numerical order of the items. She proposed that agenda item 8 should not be addressed by the informal session due to the fact that the Bern II consultations were currently ongoing, and she would like the outcomes of that important meeting to be included in the pre-session document for discussion at SBI 3.

10. The SBI Chair described how agenda item 5 related to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework would be approached during both the informal and formal meetings of SBI, noting that specific issues related to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework be considered under the respective agenda item and not under agenda item 5. She emphasized that the discussions on agenda item 5 should focus on issues not covered by other agenda items and/or general, overarching or cross-cutting issues related to the post-2020 implementation plan and others. The SBI Chair also proposed to invite a first round of interventions on the implementation plan for the Cartagena Protocol and the capacity-building action plan, and for which priority would be given to Parties to the Protocol, followed by a second round on other issues. She further noted that, in order to facilitate the consideration of issues related to the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, the Co-chairs of the WG2020, had identified a set of questions (annexed to the document circulated for the Bureau meeting) for which they would like the input of SBI.

11. Finally, the SBI Chair requested the Bureau to consider inviting an inspirational woman to join and deliver a brief speech at the opening of the meeting on 8 March, as it would be the International Women's Day.

12. Members of the Bureau thanked the SBI Chair for the document and detailed presentation of the proposed organization of work for the upcoming SBI informal session. They also thanked the Secretariat

for the preparatory work for this meeting, including the ongoing series of webinars, as well as for successfully negotiating three-hour sessions with the interpreters for the informal sessions. Members of the Bureau generally agreed with the proposal from the Chair but made a few suggestions, including reducing the time allocated for the introduction of agenda items by the Secretariat, where possible. They also suggested readjusting the time planned for some agenda items, noting that opportunity will be provided for statements by Parties and a reasonable number of observers. With respect to agenda item 5 and other items related to the post-2020 framework, the Bureau suggested to reconsider the order in which the items would be addressed in order to avoid overlap and parallel discussions as much as possible.

13. Furthermore, the Bureau noted the need to clarify which agenda items would be also considered at WG2020 3 and suggested creating a scenario note that would clearly state what is the purpose of the informal session, outline the expected outcomes and indicate what is expected of the participants. They also suggested issuing a notification to Parties that noted that although it was important to stress that no formal decisions or recommendations were expected from the informal session, one outcome to highlight would be to have a common understanding of where everyone stands on the items, which can assist in addressing the issues during the formal session.

14. Bureau members highlighted the importance of making the most efficient use of time in order to allow as many Parties and observers to take the floor during the informal sessions. They also enquired on the status of the decision tracking tool, requested further clarification on what was expected to be discussed under Agenda Item 14 (Administration and Budgetary matters) as it did not have a draft recommendation/decision, and enquired as to which platform would be used for the regional consultations. They also requested that registered delegates be well informed of when and how these regional consultations would take place.

15. The Bureau also agreed to the suggested Bureau meetings during the informal session and to inviting an inspirational woman to deliver brief opening remarks on 8 March.

16. The SBI Chair thanked the Bureau for their comments and suggestions and agreed to provide the Bureau with a revised document the day after. She indicated that if no objection was received by the end of the week, she would then ask the Secretariat to issue a notification to Parties informing them of the proposed organization of work for the SBI informal session.

#### **ITEM 4. UPDATE ON SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2021**

17. The Chair thanked the SBI Chair and Bureau for the productive discussion and invited the representative of the COP 15 Presidency to address the Bureau as he moved on to agenda item 4.

18. Dr. Liu Ning, representative of the Government of China as COP 15 host, also expressed his well wishes to the Bureau for the year. He informed the Bureau that China supports the dates of scenario B proposed in the previous Bureau meeting, which includes holding the COP in October 2021. He noted that they were still waiting for final confirmation from his Government and looked forward to the Bureau's approval as soon as it is confirmed.

19. Dr Liu also informed the Bureau that China was organizing consultations on key issues, like digital sequencing information (DSI), which will have an impact on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and noted that more consultations organized by the Secretariat and Co-chairs would be useful as well.

20. The Chair thanked the Government of China for their flexibility and understanding regarding the change of dates for the meetings caused by the global situation. He then gave the floor to the Deputy Executive Secretary to provide an update on the schedule of meetings for 2021.

21. The Deputy Executive Secretary began by reminding the Bureau that they will have to come back and formally decide on how to proceed with the formal meetings of SBI, SBSTTA and the WG2020 3 once the informal sessions are over. He noted that given this, and the need for at least 9 weeks between sets of meetings, a workable timetable would be along the lines of Scenario B in which formal SBI and SBSTTA are held in May, WG2020 3 in August and COP 15 in October. He proposed the Bureau hold a meeting on the third week of March soon after the SBI informal session to decide on the modalities and preparations for the formal sessions.

22. The Deputy Executive Secretary stressed the importance of finding the best way forward despite the uncertainty of the pandemic and the busy year ahead. Furthermore, he informed the Bureau that the Secretariat had been organizing a series of webinars on specific issues, including DSI, and noted that the Secretariat stands ready to assist if any other consultation is needed.

23. The Bureau thanked the Deputy Executive Secretary for the update and requested more information on the options for a hybrid format. They also highlighted the need to plan for what may happen between WG2020 3 and COP 15, as further consultations may be needed.

#### **ITEM 5. OTHER MATTERS**

24. The Chair thanked the Deputy Executive Secretary and invited the Bureau to address any other issues.

25. Under this agenda item, the Bureau stressed the importance of using a platform that accommodates the participation of all Parties in the online meetings. The Secretariat assured the Bureau that for the formal sessions and associated regional consultations, it would use a platform that allows participation from all Parties.

#### **ITEM 6. CLOSING OF THE MEETING**

26. The Chair thanked the Bureau and all participants for the discussion and advised he would soon provide more information on the dates of future Bureau meetings. He closed the meeting at 8:45 a.m. EST.