



**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 9:00 a.m. (EST)
8 April 2021

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

1. The seventeenth 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 8 April 2021 via Microsoft Teams.

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);

Asia and the Pacific: 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); Mr. Dilovarsho Dustov (Tajikistan, substitute for Georgia for matters related to the Nagoya Protocol)

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), Ms. Guan Jing (China), Ms. Yueyu Zou (China), COP 15 host representatives; Amb. Mohamed Gad (Egypt), Mr. Ayman Amin (Egypt) and Mr. Omar Choukry (Egypt), COP 14 host representatives; and Ms. Laura Juliana Rojas (Colombia), WG2020 3 host representative.

3. The Secretariat was represented by: Ms. Elizabeth 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

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Mandivenyi, Head, Biosafety Protocol Unit; Mr. Taukondjo Shikongo, Head, Nagoya Protocol Unit; Mr. Wataru Suzuki, Global Coordinator for the Japan Biodiversity Fund; Mr. Worku Yifru, Senior Legal Officer; Ms. Gudrun Fosse, Head of Administration, Finance and Commercial Services Division; and Ms. Catalina Santamaria, Senior Programme Officer.

ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

4. The teleconference was opened on 8 April 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 provided a brief overview of the issues that would be covered in the meeting.

ITEM 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

5. The Chair introduced the provisional agenda, and after no objections from the Bureau, the provisional agenda was adopted.

ITEM 3. ORGANIZATION OF WORK FOR THE THIRD MEETING OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON IMPLEMENTATION

6. The Chair began by providing to the Bureau an update on the individual consultations that had been held the previous week with various Parties who had expressed concerns with the way forward for virtual meetings. He noted that the discussions had proceeded very well and he outlined some of the key points raised, including, among others, that the adoption of L-documents should be deferred to a physical meeting, CRPs should be available 24-48 hours before Parties consider them for approval, no sessions would be held in parallel, and the virtual modality would not establish a precedent for future meetings. He noted that with the understanding that these points would be incorporated into the approach developed by the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies, the countries that had previously expressed concerns, now supported going ahead with the virtual formal meetings of SBSTTA and SBI in the coming weeks.

7. The Chair then invited the representative of the host of COP 15 from China. Dr. Liu Ning took the floor and thanked Egypt for its leadership and the Secretariat for organizing the consultations. He noted that in addition to participating in those consultations, the Government of China had also used their diplomatic channels to consult with many of the Parties that had concerns. He reiterated the need for SBSTTA, SBI and the WG2020 to be transparent, inclusive and open.

8. The Chair thanked the Government of China and invited the Executive Secretary to provide brief remarks. The Executive Secretary reported they had reached out to a number of Parties to hear their concerns regarding the modalities of the formal meetings of the subsidiary bodies with positive results. She thanked the current and incoming COP Presidencies for their support and involvement in similar discussions. She noted she looked forward to the important discussion that would take place that day which would allow the Secretariat to finalize the annotations in a timely manner.

9. The Chair then invited the SBSTTA Chair to provide a briefing on the meeting of the SBSTTA Bureau that had been held the previous day. Mr. Hesiquio Benítez began by noting that the SBSTTA Bureau had considered the draft scenario note and welcomed it, expressing full support to move forward with the virtual formal meetings. He indicated that the SBSTTA Bureau agreed with the modalities and organization of work and that it would further discuss the organization of the contact groups proposed. He outlined a number of issues that were raised by the SBSTTA Bureau including that any later physical meeting to be held back to back with COP 15 or another meeting, the importance of the participation of observers in line with normal practices, that Parties would be requested to avoid repetition of statements, the need for timely upload of statements for the meeting, suggestion of candidates for chairs of contact groups, among others. He noted the SBSTTA Bureau had agreed to meet again on 15 April to discuss further preparations.

10. The Chair then invited the SBI Chair to conduct the meeting and lead discussions regarding the organization of work for SBI 3. Ms. Charlotta Sörqvist provided an introduction to the scenario note that had been circulated to the COP Bureau prior to the meeting. She highlighted that the document had been developed in consultation with the SBSTTA Chair and the Secretariat and was based on the earlier proposal that had been considered by the Bureau and regional consultations. She noted that efforts had been made

to ensure alignment of views in developing the principles of the proposal with the SBSTTA Chair and Co-Chairs of the post-2020 process.

11. The SBI Chair outlined the key principles for organizing the formal online meeting of SBI 3, as set out in the scenario note. She drew the Bureau's attention to how CRP documents would be considered and also highlighted the critical issue of providing information to the Co-chairs of the post-2020 process to enable them to develop the first draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. She highlighted some elements of the modalities and noted that the Secretariat would need to finalize the timetable in light of operational issues, including the availability of interpreters and the international calendar of meetings. The SBI Chair briefly explained to the Bureau how she planned to treat agenda item 5 and, in conclusion, addressed the trial and testing of a Party-led review process under agenda item 9 proposing that the Bureau delay a decision of the need to hold a physical meeting of the Party-led open-ended forum to a later date.

12. At the invitation of the SBI Chair, the Secretariat informed the Bureau of the organization of regional meetings that could be arranged by the Secretariat by providing a platform for regions to connect. A request was made to the members of the Bureau to advise on a schedule that would suit each region. It was also noted that no interpretation would be provided during these regional meetings.

13. The SBI Chair then opened the floor for comments or questions from the Bureau. Firstly, members of the Bureau expressed their appreciation to the current and incoming COP Presidencies and the Secretariat for the individual consultations carried out the previous week which had resulted in positive outcomes moving forward. They also thanked the SBI Chair and the Secretariat for the very thorough and detailed draft scenario note. Generally, the Bureau agreed with the scenario note and provided some comments and suggestions to further improve it. Regarding the time zones and timetables, the Bureau noted the need to carefully take into consideration the time zones for fair scheduling and to avoid back-to-back contact group sessions. They also stressed the importance of having sufficient breaks along the course of the meetings. Regarding decision-making, the Bureau agreed that L-documents would be deferred to a physical meeting unless otherwise decided by the Parties. The Bureau also requested CRPs to be available preferably 72 hours and at least 36 hours before their consideration in order to allow Parties to have enough time to review them. Furthermore, the Bureau also requested the Secretariat to ensure that all pre-session documents would be available for Parties at least six weeks in advance of the start of the meetings.

14. Regarding the participation of observers, the Bureau noted the importance of enhancing their participation, noting the importance of applying the same rules of participation of observers in the virtual setting as in physical meetings, including for contact groups. The Bureau requested coherence throughout the scenario note in this regard. Regarding the organization of contact groups, the Bureau noted the importance of clarity for the mandate and how they would function. The Bureau suggested to hold a separate discussion to focus on this issue. The Bureau further emphasized the importance of having safeguards to ensure Parties could participate effectively when encountering technical issues.

15. The SBI Chair and the Secretariat addressed many of the comments and questions made by the Bureau. The SBI Chair noted that, as far as possible, she would incorporate the suggestions in a revised version of the scenario note and circulate it to the Bureau as soon as possible on a no-objection basis. The Secretariat noted that as the timing to the start of the meetings was very close, it would issue a notification as soon as possible outlining the general parameters and the dates of plenary sessions so that Parties could have confirmation of the start date in May and make their preparations accordingly. The Bureau agreed with this way forward.

16. The SBI Chair then handed the meeting back to the COP 14 Presidency Chair, who moved on to the next agenda item.

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

17. Under this agenda item, the Chair invited the Co-chairs of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework process to provide the Bureau with an update on preparations for the WG2020 3.

18. The Co-chair from Uganda, Mr. Francis Ogwal, began by making reference to the written update that had been circulated to the Bureau earlier in the week. He noted that they had found the informal sessions to be very useful and that discussions would help them reflect on the first draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. He also emphasized that they looked forward to the advice that SBSTTA and SBI would provide which was of high importance for the preparation of the first draft. He noted that all the thematic consultations had been completed and that some open stakeholder forums had been organized to obtain reflections from Parties. He expressed a concern that not many Parties had attended the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Transition forum.

19. Mr. Basile Van Havre, Co-chair from Canada, suggested, in light of the full agenda over the coming weeks, and the time necessary to organize and attend webinars, to put the series on hold until the end of June or beginning of July. He informed the Bureau that Ms. Valeria Trendafilova would be replacing Ms. Elizabeth Kim as support to them during the process. He concluded by noting that they had taken the time to understand the issues collectively and would be providing the Bureau with a draft of the WG2020 3 agenda for their comments.

20. The Chair thanked the Co-chairs for their update and invited remarks from the representative of Colombia, WG2020-3 host government. Ms. Juliana Arcienagas took the floor and noted that Colombia is working on possible scenarios for the Working Group. They would take into consideration the evolution of the pandemic and outcomes of SBSTTA and SBI and would continue to consult with the Secretariat and the Presidencies. She noted there was a need to maintain flexibility on how to handle the decisions as it remained unclear when they would meet in person again.

21. The Chair then opened the floor for comments. The Bureau acknowledged and expressed appreciation to the Co-chairs, Secretariat, Presidencies and Colombia for their hard work in ensuring the process moves forward. They expressed their appreciation to Ms. Kim and welcomed her successor.

22. The Chair then moved on to the next agenda item.

ITEM 5. UPDATE ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE FIFTEENTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION, THE 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 2021)

23. Under this agenda item, the Chair made reference to the draft agenda items for COP 15, COP MOP 10 of the Cartagena Protocol and COP MOP 4 of the Nagoya Protocol that had been previously circulated for their review and approval, noting that the Secretariat would develop the annotations. Before opening the floor for comments, the Chair invited the representative of China as incoming COP 15 President to deliver a few remarks.

24. Dr. Ning began by informing the Bureau that China is ready to host COP 15 and that the finalization of the Host Government Agreement was underway with the Secretariat. He noted that as the pandemic situation remained uncertain, plans were being explored for the COP to be in a hybrid format. He also noted that some parallel events would take place virtually in advance of the COP, such as the Science Forum which would take place online next month.

25. The Chair thanked Dr. Ning, noting that the Bureau would consider the potential modalities for COP 15 and related meetings in depth at a subsequent meeting of the Bureau. He opened the floor for comments.

26. The Bureau began by thanking the Government of China for their strong efforts and hard work to organize COP during such challenging times. They requested further clarification on potential arrangements for a hybrid meeting as well as more information on the organization of the High-Level Segment (HLS). In response, the representative of the incoming COP 15 Presidency clarified that there was still no clear definition of the modalities and he indicated that the dates being considered for the HLS were 21-22 October 2021.

27. Regarding the draft agenda for COP 15, members of the Bureau made some comments and requests for clarifications on the agenda items related to the budget, mainstreaming and digital sequencing information. The Deputy Executive Secretary, in response, indicated that the agenda would be adjusted to clarify that the item on administration and budget was a substantive item, and that the item on mainstreaming would be moved to the section related to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. He noted that clarifications would be provided in the annotated agendas, including with respect to digital sequence information. He indicated that some preliminary annotations would be issued shortly, but the final annotation and the organization of work of the concurrent meetings would need to be developed following the formal sessions of SBSTTA and SBI.

28. The Chair noted that the Bureau approved the provisional agendas with the amendments discussed. The Secretariat would adjust the documents as needed and proceed to publish them on the website.

ITEM 6. OTHER MATTERS

29. No other issues were raised in this agenda item.

ITEM 7. CLOSING OF THE MEETING

30. After thanking the Bureau and all participants for the discussion, the Chair advised the Bureau it would be consulting with the Secretariat and the SBI Chair on the date of the next Bureau meeting. He then closed the meeting at 9:37 a.m. EST.