



**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)
22 April 2021

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

1. The eighteenth 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 22 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); Vinod Mathur (India);

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. Yueyu Zou (China), COP 15 host representatives.

3. The Secretariat was represented by: Ms. Elizabeth Mrema, Executive Secretary; Mr. David Cooper, Deputy Executive Secretary; Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, Director, Implementation Support Division; Mr. Alexander Shestakov, Director, Science, Society and Sustainable Futures Division; Ms. Wadzanayi 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; Mr. Markus Lehmann, Senior Programme Management Officer; Mr. Erie Tamale, Senior

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Programme Management Officer; Ms. Jillian Campbell, Senior Programme Management Officer; and Ms. Catalina Santamaria, Senior Programme Officer;

ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

4. The teleconference was opened on 22 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.

ITEM 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

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

6. The Chair then invited the Executive Secretary to deliver brief remarks. The Executive Secretary reported to the Bureau that the Secretariat team had been working very closely with the Chairs of SBSTTA and SBI to support them in the preparations of the meetings ahead. She recalled the announcement made by the Secretariat to Parties of the possibility to arrange for Parties to have access to meeting facilities in UN country offices with enhance internet connectivity and indicated that the Secretariat had only received one request so far. She urged the Bureau to follow-up with their regions and asked for feedback to be sent by the end of the week to ensure the request to the respective UN country offices is done with sufficient time. She concluded by noting that the Secretariat has been working hard and will continue to do so to support the Parties reach successful outcomes, but that the success will also depend on the cooperation and flexibility by all Parties and observers to adapt to the new ways of working.

7. The Chair thanked the Executive Secretary for her remarks and invited the Chair of SBSTTA to provide a brief update of the discussions held by the last meeting of the SBSTTA Bureau. Mr. Hesiquio Benitez, Chair of SBSTTA, began by informing that the SBSTTA Bureau had met on 19 April to discuss the scenario note and organization of potential contact groups. He noted that the SBSTTA Bureau discussed a number of items including regional statements, regional meetings, number of microphones per Party, etc. He further noted that the SBSTTA Bureau strongly reiterated the need to not repeat comments and statements made at the informal session, to ensure there is enough time to address all agenda items. The SBSTTA Bureau also stressed that although good participation of observers is important, this is an intergovernmental process and the priority would be given to Parties. The SBSTTA Chair also noted that the Bureau discussed potential organization of four contact groups and had fully synchronized the timeline with the SBI Chair. He concluded by announcing that the SBSTTA Bureau would meet again on the 29 April to decide on the SBSTTA Bureau meetings and finalize the Chairs of the contact groups.

8. The Chair thanked Mr. Benitez for the update and invited the Chair of SBI to preside the discussion of the next agenda item.

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

9. Ms. Charlotta Sörqvist, SBI Chair, began by outlining the three issues and decisions the Bureau would need to discuss today and which included the selection of a rapporteur, dates and timings of Bureau meetings during SBI 3, and any suggestions or comments on the contact groups to be held during SBI. She also noted she would inform the Bureau on how the report of the meeting would be developed and adopted.

10. On the proposal of the SBI Chair, the Bureau elected Mr. Eric Okoree of Ghana to be the rapporteur for SBI 3.

11. Regarding the dates of the meetings of the COP Bureau during the formal SBI session, the SBI Chair suggested that meetings take place either shortly before (6:00 a.m. EST) or after (10:30 a.m. EST) plenary sessions on the first day of each block of plenary sessions. She then proposed dates for the meetings take place on 16 May to go over the final preparations, 21 May to discuss progress in contact groups, 28 May to discuss outstanding issues, 4 June to discuss progress and any changes to the schedule, and 11 June as needed. She noted that additional meetings of the Bureau could be held as needed.

12. Members of the Bureau indicated a preference for meetings before the plenary sessions. They also noted that some meetings are on days that also have contact groups taking place and this may be challenging for some of them. The Bureau noted the need to remain flexible with the dates as things may change as the meeting proceeds, therefore they need to be prepared to meet when necessary. A suggestion was made to hold a joint meeting with the SBSTTA Bureau at some point as it would be useful given the interlinkages of both meetings. Finally, a suggestion was made to switch the date of 21 May to 20 May.

13. After clarifications offered by the Chair and Secretariat regarding some of the issues highlighted by the Bureau, the Bureau agreed to plan for meetings on the 16, 20, 28 May and 4 and 11 June and considering the need for flexibility in case changes arise. The SBI Chair requested the Secretariat to organize and communicate the meetings accordingly.

14. The Chair of SBI then turned to the discussion on contact groups. Referring to the information note prepared and circulated on 20 April to the Bureau, she noted that a need for four contact groups was expected, for each of which draft terms of reference had been prepared. She noted that if the need arose for additional contact groups on other agenda items, the Secretariat had made contingency plans for these. She noted that the proposed names for chairs for each contact group were only proposals at this stage and would be finalized in due course. She then invited the Secretariat to provide some information on the modalities of the contact groups.

15. Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, Director of the Implementation Support Division, proceeded to outline the main principles under which the contact groups would operate. Generally these included that two chairs would be appointed for each contact group, from different regions; the co-chairs of contact groups would be supported by the Secretariat; the sessions of contact groups would last up to three hours and one or two contact groups would be held per day but at different times; no parallel sessions of two contact groups would be organized; the timing of contact groups would be from 7:00-10:00 EST and 12:00-15:00 EST. She further noted that contact groups would be open to participation by all Parties, other Governments and observers, and as per practice these cannot be recorded or shared through social media. She noted that observers would speak at the discretion of the co-chairs, and any substantive changes proposed to the text would have to be supported by at least one Party. Non-papers could be developed, though some groups may start with a general discussion. She emphasized that where necessary, very limited sections of the text undergoing intense negotiations could be shared interactively to facilitate resolution. Finally, she concluded by noting that contact groups would work in English and non-papers would be in English, but as per usual practice, CRPs would be provided in all six UN languages. This information on contact groups would be made available to Parties for both SBSTTA and SBI meetings.

16. The SBI Chair then invited the Secretariat's Programme leads for agenda items on Resource Mobilization and the Financial Mechanism (agenda item 6), Capacity Building, Knowledge Management and Science and Technology (agenda item 7), Review Mechanisms (agenda item 9), and the post-2020 plan for the Cartagena Protocol (part of agenda item 5) to provide an introduction to the terms of reference for possible contact groups on these issues.

17. Each of the Senior Programme Management Officers provided a brief overview of their corresponding agenda item, outlining the general mandate of the contact group, major areas that would need further discussion and negotiation with Parties, as well as proposing options for names of delegates who could serve as co-chairs for the different issues. They highlighted that these terms of reference were preliminary and based on the information received from the informal sessions held earlier in March but could change after the first reading in the formal meetings.

18. At the invitation of the SBI Chair for comments or questions, the Bureau thanked the Secretariat and the SBI Chair for the document and information. The Bureau acknowledged that further changes were possible subject to additional comments that could be made by Parties at the formal meeting; they also requested, where possible, that the mandates of the contact groups be more focused. The Bureau noted that for some agenda items, more than two sessions of contact groups may be required. One Bureau member indicated they planned to send written comments to the terms of reference by close of business of the following day. The SBI chair concluded by thanking the bureau for useful comments, the secretariat will revise the terms of reference based on the discussion. The SBI chair also reiterated that the terms of

reference may also be revised based on the first reading of these agenda items and then shared with the co-chairs of the contact groups.

19. The SBI Chair then updated the participants on how the report from the different sessions of SBI would be handled. She noted that at the end of the third plenary on 4 June, the Bureau would approve the report for the first part of the meeting. The report would be procedural and would note the status of documents prepared, indicating any CRPs that could be approved; L-documents being deferred to a later resumed session to be held in person. She concluded by noting that the report would also note any procedural requests to the Secretariat for intersessional work that is within the frame of the existing mandates for the preparations of WG2020 3 and COP 15/COP-MOPs. The SBI Chair highlighted that, in line with the Bureau's previous discussions, she intended to indicate to the meeting that she would forward any interim outcomes necessary for the work of the Co-chairs and Parties in preparing for WG2020 3, and this would be noted in the report.

20. At the request of the Bureau of a status update on pending documents, the Secretariat clarified that only one document was outstanding (agenda item 8) as it would be finalized to reflect the outcome of the Bern II consultations. The Secretariat noted that the report of the Bern II consultation had been finalized just the day before.

21. Responding to a question regarding limits to the number of microphones for delegations, the Deputy Executive Secretary clarified that although there is no limit to the size of delegations and their registration, there is a limit of speakers/viewers per delegations, to ensure the stability of the platform and facilitate the smooth operation of the meetings. He further noted that if some Parties encountered difficulty with this limit, they should contact the Secretariat directly in order to find a reasonable solution. Regarding a concern that any additional amendments to text should be announced in plenary in order to ensure transparency, the Deputy Executive Secretary noted that while some Parties had already submitted some suggested changes to text at the informal sessions, others would likely do so, and some may wish to update their earlier submissions. He concurred that at least the general essence of the amendments should be introduced orally in plenary if the point had not already been reflected in their statements at the informal sessions.

22. The SBI Chair thanked the Bureau for their comments and discussion and the Secretariat asked the Bureau to indicate to the Secretariat as soon as possible any requests for regional meetings. The SBI Chair then handed the chairing of the meeting back to the COP Presidency representative.

ITEM 4. OTHER MATTERS

23. No other issues were raised under this agenda item.

ITEM 5. CLOSING OF THE MEETING

24. After thanking the Bureau and all participants for the discussion, the Chair closed the meeting at 8:50 a.m. EST.