



**Convention on  
Biological Diversity**

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BUREAU OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE  
PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON  
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY  
14 July 2021

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

1. A teleconference session of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties was held via MS Teams on 14 July 2021 at 7:00am EST, to discuss the way forward 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).
2. The teleconference was attended by the following members of the COP Bureau and substitutes:
  - Presidency:* Mr. Hamdallah Zedan (Egypt);
  - Africa:* Mr. Melesse Maryo (Ethiopia), Mr. Eric Okoree (Ghana)
  - Asia and the Pacific:* Ms. Leina El-Awadhi (Kuwait); Mr. Vinod Mathur (India)
  - Latin America and the Caribbean:* Ms. Helena Jeffery Brown (Antigua and Barbuda); Ms. Rita Zaghoul (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. Elvana Ramaj (Albania); 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 Ogwal (Uganda), Co-chairs of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework;
  - Observers:* Vice Minister Zhou Yingman (China), Mr. Liu Ning (China), Ms. Guan Jing (China), Ms. Zheng Zhao (China), and Ms. Yeuye Zhou (China), COP 15 host representatives; Ms. Laura Juliana Rojas (Colombia) and Ms. Paula Sanmiguel (Colombia), WG2020 3 host representatives, and Mr. Neville Ash (UNEP).
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; Ms.

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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; Ms. Gudrun Fosse, Head of Administration, Finance and Commercial Services Division; Ms. Catalina Santamaria, Senior Programme Officer; Ms. Gu Li, Liaison Officer for COP 15; and Mr. Patrick Toussaint, Associate Expert.

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

4. The teleconference was opened on 14 July 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 welcomed the members of the Bureau and gave a special welcome to Vice Minister Zhou Yingman from China.
5. The Executive Secretary offered welcome remarks and also welcomed Vice Minister Yingman to the meeting. She informed the Bureau that the first draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework was ready and posted online and that the Secretariat was working hard to put in place all the needed preparations for the upcoming meeting of the WG2020. She also made a reference to the notification sent out to Parties regarding financial and technical support to enhance the participation of countries and urged the Bureau to encourage their regions to apply promptly for this support. She also reported that she and her colleagues had held close discussions with the Government of China in preparation for the meeting.

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

6. The Chair introduced the provisional agenda for the Bureau session, and after no objections and changes from the Bureau, the provisional agenda was adopted.

#### **ITEM 3. 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).**

7. The Chair invited Vice Minister Zhou Yingman, as representative of the Government of China and incoming host of COP 15, to provide an overview of the proposal sent to the Bureau regarding the way forward for COP 15.
8. Vice Minister Yingman began by thanking the Bureau for their hard work and support to China during these challenging times. He noted that with regards to the modality of COP 15, China had held useful discussions with the Bureau in previous meetings, as well as communicated with relevant regional representatives and Parties and had taken into consideration the opinions and suggestions from all Parties and refined the proposal of scenario 3, which was circulated with the Bureau. He then provided an overview of the organization of the two phases as per the written proposal.
9. The Vice Minister then noted a few considerations on the proposal. Firstly, he highlighted that further delays of COP 15 would dampen the enthusiasm of the international community and that the two phased approach would ensure the maintenance of momentum and political impetus for biodiversity governance in the next decade. Furthermore, he noted China and the Yunnan province have invested heavily in the preparation of the meeting and further delays would bring more financial loss and human resource burden to China. Secondly, the Vice Minister noted that as clarified by the Secretariat, there were no procedural obstacles in opening COP 15 in October. He highlighted that China would continue to support the Bureau's work and the work of the Chairs of SBI and SBSTTA and the Co-chairs of the WG2020 until the holding of the second phase of the COP. Regarding the Kunming Declaration, he noted that the declaration would reflect the common will of the Parties and China would be consulting with all Parties for its finalization. Finally, he noted that once China takes over the Presidency, China would continue to carry out the good practices of the Bureau and would listen carefully to all Parties according to the principles of fairness, transparency, pragmatism and Party-driven, to ensure a good coordinating role.

10. The Chair thanked Vice Minister Yingman for the clear overview and expressed appreciation for all the efforts China had done towards this proposal. He also drew attention to the revised proposal circulated by China as well as the updated note on scenarios note prepared by the Secretariat. He then invited the Secretariat to further complement the presentation by the Vice Minister. The Executive Secretary reiterated the position of the Secretariat in support of China's proposal and expressed hope the Bureau could reach a decision. The Deputy Executive Secretary clarified that the correct dates proposed for the dates of the second phase of COP (25 April – 8 May 2022) and informed the Bureau that together with the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies and the Co-chairs of the WG2020, they had begun a detailed analysis of the remaining work to be done by the subsidiary bodies following the virtual sessions of these bodies. Noting that with the full package presented to the Bureau, a decision on this matter would be very important in order to proceed as soon as possible in order to make it operational.

11. The Chair then opened the floor for comments and questions from the Bureau members. The Bureau began by expressing its deep appreciation to the Government of China for its hard work, flexibility and commitment in ensuring a successful COP 15, and which was demonstrated by the detailed proposal presented to them. The Bureau also thanked the Secretariat for its efforts and support to China, and for the revised scenario note which addressed many issues previously raised by the Bureau.

12. In their discussion, the Bureau agreed with proceeding with scenario 3, as proposed by the Government of China and with the support of the Secretariat, with the understanding that there would be no legal, procedural or budgetary obstacles with opening the COP in the first phase and that this should be indicated in a notification to Parties. The Bureau also highlighted the importance of receiving more information on the agenda of the High-Level Segment (HLS) and the consultation process for the Kunming Declaration. The Bureau also indicated that there would also be a need for a High-Level Segment in the second phase of COP. The Bureau also noted the importance of proceeding in a transparent and inclusive manner for all Parties and stakeholders, this included ensuring that adequate financial support was available for Parties who needed it. Furthermore, the Bureau indicated that sufficient time would be needed to complete the work of SBI and SBSTTA, as well as the WG2020 in the in-person meetings planned for January 2022, and that the mandates of the Chairs and Co-chairs would remain until their work was completed at the second phase of COP 15. The Bureau welcomed the offer of vaccination support for delegates from China and requested that all vaccines recognized by the World Health Organization should be accepted to allow participation in the meetings. One member of the Bureau also requested that diplomatic representatives of Parties stationed in all cities in mainland China be accepted to participate in the first phase of COP. The Bureau also reiterated its appreciation to the Government of Switzerland for its generous offer to host the physical meetings of the subsidiary bodies and the WG2020.

13. The Secretariat assured the Bureau that it had taken note of all the points raised in their discussion and would be working very closely with China and others to ensure the preparations go as smoothly as possible. This included reaching out to donors to request for additional funds for supporting participation of countries who need it and supporting the vaccination efforts and other public health measures to ensure safe meetings.

14. The Bureau was then promptly informed that Switzerland had extended its offer for the meetings of the subsidiary bodies and WG2020 in January, such that the meeting facilities would be available as of 12 January 2022.

#### **ITEM 4. OTHER MATTERS**

15. Under this agenda item, a Bureau member requested clarification on the number of delegates that could be registered for the upcoming meeting of the WG2020 in August. The Deputy Executive Secretary responded that there was no limit to the number of delegates that could be registered for the meeting, nor the number of speakers. However, there would be a limit of active speakers per session, but each delegation would be able choose and rotate these speakers for each session.

**ITEM 6. CLOSING OF THE MEETING**

16. The Chair and Vice Minister Yingman thanked the Bureau for the active discussion and cooperation and understanding of the Bureau, which led to the decision made on the way forward for COP 15. Reminding the Bureau to encourage their regions to respond to the offer of support to Parties done by the Secretariat, the Chair closed the meeting on 14 July 2021 at 8:40 a.m. EST.