



## Convention on Biological Diversity

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

Sixth meeting

Montreal, 15 December 2023

### MINUTES OF THE SIXTH MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES IN THE INTER-SESSIONAL PERIOD

1. A meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties (COP) was held via videoconference on 15 December 2023 at 7:00 a.m. EST.
2. The meeting was attended by the following members of the COP Bureau and substitutes:  
*Representative of the President:* Ms. ZHOU Guomei;  
*Africa:* Ms. Hlobisile Sikhosana (Eswatini); Mr. Abderahmane Zino Izourar (Algeria).  
*Eastern Europe:* Ms. Teona Karchava (Georgia); Ms. Angela Lozan (Republic of Moldova); Mr. Sino Tohirzoda (Tajikistan, substitute for Georgia for matters related to the Nagoya Protocol).  
*Latin America and the Caribbean:* Ms. Maria Teresa Becerra Ramirez (Colombia), Ms. Corina Sarli (Argentina, substitute for Colombia for matters related to the Nagoya Protocol); Mr. Jesus Guerra Bell (Cuba, representing substitute for Jamaica for matters related to the Nagoya Protocol).  
*Western Europe and Others:* Mr. Eric Schauls (Luxembourg); Mr. Norbert Bärlocher (Switzerland).
3. The Vice-Presidents from Asia-Pacific sent their regrets and were unable to join the meeting.
4. The Secretariat was represented by Mr. David Cooper, Acting Executive Secretary; Ms. Wadzanayi Mandivenyi, Head, Biosafety Unit; Mr. Worku Yifru, Senior Legal Officer; Ms. Inonge Mweene, Legal Officer; Ms. Kathryn Garforth, Programme Management Officer; Mr. David Ainsworth, Public Information Officer, Mr. Ide Ahmed, Acting Head of Administration; and Ms. Li Gu, Programme Management Officer.

#### ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

5. The meeting was opened at 7:00 a.m. by Ms. Guomei Zhou who chaired the meeting on behalf of Mr. HUANG Runqiu, Minister of Ecology and Environment of China and the President of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Chair highlighted that the primary agenda item was to consider the offer from the Government of Colombia to host COP16. She expressed gratitude to the attendees for their presence despite the short notice given for the meeting.
6. The Chair updated the Bureau members on China's efforts in promoting the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. This included leveraging multiple opportunities to strengthen political commitment through exchanges and meetings, such as the discussions with the President of the United Nations General Assembly and the Executive Director of UNEP, participation in the African Climate Summit, and officially launching the Action Initiative for Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Action Initiative)

during the 28th session of the Conference of Parties to UNFCCC. The Chair extended invitation through the members of the Bureau, to welcome Parties in all regions to join the Action Initiative.

7. Additionally, the Chair highlighted Minister Huang's collaboration with the Presidents of the last COPs of the three Rio Conventions. Together, they signed a joint statement calling for a coordinated approach to address climate change, desertification, and biodiversity loss.

8. The Acting Executive Secretary expressed gratitude to the Bureau for their contributions to the successful meetings in Geneva, which laid a solid foundation for COP16, particularly regarding the new programme of work on Article 8(j) and the ongoing discussions on the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources (DSI). Additionally, he highlighted that during COP28, there was considerable focus on biodiversity, nature, and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. He mentioned that the COP28 Joint Statement on Climate, Nature and People emphasized the importance of establishing linkages between the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the NBSAP processes. He noted the growing momentum around the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework as we approached the one-year anniversary of its adoption.

9. The Acting Executive Secretary also shared that Her Excellency Ms. Susana Muhamad, Minister of Environment of Colombia, offered to host COP16 in 2024 on the same dates as originally foreseen, i.e. 21 October to 1 November 2024. He emphasized Colombia's status as a megadiverse country, leading in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and standing as an inspiring example of effective engagement with indigenous peoples.

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

10. The Chair introduced the provisional agenda for the meeting. The agenda was adopted as proposed.

## **ITEM 3. HOSTING OF COP16 AND THE CONCURRENT MEETINGS OF THE PARTIES TO THE PROTOCOLS**

11. Under this agenda item, the Chair invited Ms. Maria Teresa Becerra to address the meeting. Ms. Becerra expressed Colombia's keen interest in hosting COP16 to further the ongoing process initiated during the Chinese Presidency aimed at implementing the Framework. She highlighted that hosting COP could provide an excellent opportunity to further promote interlinkages between climate change and biodiversity. Additionally, she emphasized the importance of fostering productive discussions on DSI and Article 8(j). Ms. Becerra requested the Bureau's support in considering and accepting Colombia's proposal to host the meeting.

12. The Chair expressed her gratitude to the Government of Colombia for submitting its application to host COP16. The Acting Executive Secretary also extended his appreciation to Colombia for its generous offer. It was noted that upon acceptance of the offer by the Bureau, the Secretariat would provide the necessary support to Colombia to ensure the successful convening of these meetings.

13. The Acting Executive Secretary recalled the background to the current situation including the decision adopted at COP13 regarding the dates and venues for the subsequent three COP meetings and the rotation of the hosting and Presidency of the COP among the five regional groups thereafter, starting with Eastern Europe for COP-17 in a predefined sequence; Türkiye's withdrawal from hosting and presiding over COP16 due to the economic implications of the earthquakes in 2023; the Bureau's request for the Secretariat to explore expressions of interest for hosting COP16 from countries in WEOG, as well as other regions; decision 15/35 on date and venue of future meetings of the Conference of the Parties, adopted by the resumed

part II of COP-15 in Nairobi in October; and bilateral consultations undertaken by the Secretariat to identify a new host.

14. The Acting Executive Secretary stated that he was extremely pleased to receive the offer from the Government of Colombia. He also mentioned that he met with the Ministers who were exploring the possibility of hosting COP to inform them about Colombia's offer, and they had also expressed enthusiastic support.

15. Bureau members expressed their gratitude to the Chair for organizing this meeting, which would allow them to gather all pertinent information and effectively inform their respective regions about the plan moving forward. Members also extended their appreciation to the Government of Colombia for offering to host COP16, recognizing the considerable efforts involved in organizing the meeting with less than one year's notice. The Bureau agreed to accept Colombia's offer to host COP-16, COP-MOP 11 to the Cartagena Protocol and COP-MOP 5 to the Nagoya Protocol.

16. Some Bureau members sought additional clarification regarding the rotational arrangement among the five regional groups for future COPs. It was agreed that this matter would require further discussion in the future. The Acting Executive Secretary indicated that the Secretariat could prepare a background document on this matter for the next Bureau meeting.

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

17. The Acting Executive Secretary mentioned that during its first meeting, the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Benefit-sharing from the Use of DSI decided to establish an Informal Advisory Group. He added that the Secretariat had received some nominations from certain regions but very few from other regions. Therefore, he asked for the support of Bureau members to reach out to their respective regions and encourage them to submit nominations for the Informal Advisory Group.

18. At the request of some Bureau members for further information on the status of the process for appointment of the Executive Secretary, a brief consultation among members of the Bureau was held without the presence of the Acting Executive Secretary and other members of the Secretariat. Some Bureau members raised concerns that the process for the appointment of the Executive Secretary was not reported in a timely manner. The Chair highlighted that, China as COP15 Presidency attaches great importance to these concerns and has sent two notes to UNEP asking for further clarification on this matter. The representative of UNEP mentioned that the notes have been well received and UNEP would give feedback in the near future after completing the internal process.

#### **ITEM 5. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

19. The Chair and the Acting Executive Secretary expressed their appreciation to the Bureau members for their active participation and their acceptance of Colombia as the host country for COP16.

20. The meeting was closed on 15 December 2023 at 8:15 a.m.

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