

Geneva Biodiversity Conference Highlights: Tuesday, 22 March 2022

The Geneva Biodiversity Conference continued its work on Tuesday, with SBI holding a plenary session in the morning to take stock of progress and address cooperation, capacity building, and review of effectiveness. In the afternoon, a contact group under the Working Group on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (WG2020) continued its deliberations on a set of GBF targets, focusing on tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming. In the evening, a SBSTTA contact group started discussions on marine and coastal biodiversity addressing Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs). An SBI contact group continued its deliberations on review mechanisms.

This daily report includes the deliberations of the SBI plenary and the WG2020 contact group as well as the discussions of the two contact groups that met in the evening on Monday, 21 March. The remaining two contact groups will be summarized in the Bulletin on Wednesday, 23 March.

SBI-3 Plenary

SBI Chair Charlotta Sörqvist opened the session by wishing delegates a Happy Nowruz, the Persian New Year greeting, marking the beginning of the spring season.

Reports from contact groups' co-chairs: Melissa Laverde (Colombia), Co-Chair of the Contact Group on the draft gender plan of action, reported on progress achieved in two meetings. She noted that the group has, among others, resolved brackets on benefits derived from genetic resources; reached compromise on definition of gender, as “women and girls in all diversity”; and resolved references to women’s rights in regards to land tenure. She noted recommendations for an informal group to continue discussions on the Plan. SBI Chair Sörqvist announced that the informal group would be facilitated by Camila Zepeda Lizama (Mexico).

Contact Group on Resource Mobilization and the Financial Mechanism Co-Chair Shonisani Munzhezzi (South Africa) presented progress from three meetings. He reported discussions on a draft four-year outcome-oriented framework of the programme priorities for the GEF-8. He also highlighted a new section on additional elements on resource mobilization. The Group will continue deliberations on Wednesday, 23 March.

Haike Jan Haanstra (the Netherlands), Co-Chair of the Contact Group on capacity building and development, reported on progress from two meetings, which resolved several brackets in the section on the long-term strategic framework for capacity development and deliberated the annexes. He highlighted the resulting

document CBD/SBI/3/CRP.13/Rev.1 for further consideration by plenary.

Contact Group on Review Mechanisms Co-Chair Gillian Gunthrie (Jamaica), said the group met twice and addressed several indicators, exempting those on areas still under consideration by SBSTTA. She reported that the Group’s next session will discuss paragraphs on national reporting.

Cooperation with other conventions, international organization, and initiatives: Chair Sörqvist resumed the first reading on this item based on document CBD/SBI/3/10.

NEPAL highlighted the importance of strengthening international law enforcement. BOLIVIA objected to incorporating nature-based solutions (NbS) as an element of cooperation, calling for Mother Earth-centric actions to protect and govern ecosystems. PERU said research and data for national reports requires capacity building, and noted the need for coordinated actions in GBF implementation.

SERBIA, supported by MONTENEGRO, called for increasing financial support for regional initiatives, highlighting the Biodiversity Task Force of South-East Europe.

KENYA said cooperation mechanisms are key in achieving effective implementation at the national level and, with BURUNDI, ETHIOPIA, and CHAD, highlighted the importance of avoiding duplication and enhancing complementarities. THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO called for intensified efforts with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to address the triple planetary crisis. ECUADOR emphasized synergies should include financial resources for developing countries. TOGO stressed that biodiversity knows no borders and urged support for community-level implementation of the GBF.

NAMIBIA expressed concern regarding WHO’s attempt to negotiate an instrument on access to pathogens, which so far ignores the legal right of states to control access to their genetic resources. He proposed text reminding the WHO of the third objective of the Convention and of the need to fully consider fair and equitable sharing of benefits in its ongoing work on pandemic preparedness and access to pathogens.

IFB highlighted the need to consider cultural diversity alongside biodiversity, noting the importance of Indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) and various forms of knowledge. She called for recognizing the work of IPBES and UNESCO in the area of nature and culture. GYBN said the CBD must uphold human rights and the rights of nature, calling for language referencing the Human Rights Council decision recognizing the rights to a safe, clean, and healthy environment as a human right. The BIODIVERSITY LIAISON GROUP said the GBF provides

an avenue for cooperation and suggested inclusion of a paragraph inviting UNEA to support the secretariats of biodiversity-related conventions in synergies for implementation of the GBF.

UNEP highlighted the Data Reporting Tool for MEAs (DaRT), the UN Environment Management Group, cooperation with the Nordic Council of Ministers, and the recommendations from the Second Consultation Workshop of Biodiversity-related Conventions on the GBF (Bern II). The INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (ITPGRFA) underscored cooperation initiatives, encouraging CBD focal points to further liaise, especially regarding NBSAPs. The INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES (IFRC) stressed the need to broaden the understanding of the value of ecosystems, and risks associated with biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. FAO highlighted activities in areas of mutual interest, including the Global Plan of Action on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and the Framework for Action for Food and Agriculture, and called for strengthening cooperation with all relevant stakeholders. IUCN drew attention to the Bern II process and the Global Species Action Plan.

A CRP will be prepared for further consideration.

Capacity building, technical and scientific cooperation, technology transfer, knowledge management, and communication: Chair Sörqvist introduced a draft recommendation on the evaluation of the strategic framework for capacity building and development to support the effective implementation of the Nagoya Protocol (CBD/SBI/3/CRP.6).

The UK suggested, and delegates agreed, referring to “capacity building and development” in various parts of the document.

On a provision on expanding efforts to build and develop the capacities of developing countries to implement the Nagoya Protocol, taking into account priority areas annexed in the recommendation, BRAZIL, opposed by JAMAICA, the EU, and ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, suggested that the reference to developing countries “includes” LDCs and SIDS rather than refer to them “in particular.” The DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO noted that a general reference to developing countries would suffice. Compromise was reached by including a reference that the actions are “in line with the provisions of the Convention and the Nagoya Protocol.”

The EU proposed, and delegates agreed, that, in addition to priority areas, the recommendation also take into account the GBF.

On a paragraph on making available information on capacity building and resources on the ABS Clearing-House, the EU proposed to also make available capacity-building needs and, supported by SUDAN, to share best practices and lessons learned. ARGENTINA suggested that best practices and lessons learned be addressed in a separate provision.

On a paragraph requesting the Secretariat to prepare a revised strategic framework for capacity building for consideration at SBI-4, the EU suggested that it also be considered at the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol (NP COP/MOP 5). SUDAN added that NP COP/MOP 5 should also consider adoption of the revised strategic framework. BRAZIL requested consultation with parties in the framework’s preparation. ARGENTINA added that the findings of the evaluation of the long-term strategic framework for capacity development should also be considered.

Parties also discussed an annex on specific priorities for continued capacity building to support the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. Chair Sörqvist clarified that any additions

could only relate to those subjects raised during the assessment of priorities for the Nagoya Protocol.

On a paragraph concerning ABS and monitoring the utilization of genetic resources, NAMIBIA, supported by BRAZIL, ARGENTINA, MEXICO, ETHIOPIA, and CÔTE D’IVOIRE, proposed additional language concerning digital sequence information. SWITZERLAND, the UK, JAPAN, and the PHILIPPINES opposed the suggestion.

PERU suggested adding language on “national institutional frameworks.” MEXICO, opposed by the UK, recommended qualifying provisions related to “human rights and the defense of IPLCs.” INDIA proposed adding derivatives to the utilization of genetic resources. All suggestions remain bracketed.

On a paragraph on the measuring of reporting on monetary and non-monetary benefits related to genetic resources, URUGUAY, opposed by the EU, proposed language on capacities to develop mutually agreed terms and model contractual clauses. SUDAN suggested including “traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources.”

On a paragraph on strategic communication, BELARUS put forward text including “global, regional, and national levels.”

The CRP was approved with brackets. The Secretariat will produce an L document for consideration.

Review of the effectiveness of the processes under the Convention and its protocols: Chair Sörqvist highlighted progress achieved during the first part of SBI-3 and opened discussions on the draft recommendation (CBD/SBI/3/CRP.10).

Parties agreed to the preambular text and a section on experiences with concurrent meetings. The AFRICAN GROUP said the progress achieved in virtual sessions needs to be reflected in a more optimistic manner.

BRAZIL, supported by ARGENTINA, UGANDA, and SUDAN, said they cannot agree to the section on experiences with virtual meetings, as it does not take into account constraints and challenges experienced by developing countries during the first part of SBI-3. He preferred deleting references to opportunities of holding virtual meetings, including mention of potential financial benefits. ARGENTINA added that the mention of momentum gained by holding the virtual meeting does not represent reality. SWITZERLAND objected to deletion, suggesting referring to opportunities and inconveniences. GHANA suggested dividing the paragraph into two parts, one dealing with opportunities and another on limitations.

The UK suggested amending a reference to inconvenient time zones, to “delegations from countries where meetings are scheduled at difficult times.” UGANDA said that, at best, there was no more than 9% of African delegates attending the virtual meeting.

ARGENTINA suggested that an analysis of the meeting should be carried out in a different section.

Discussions will continue during the next SBI Plenary.

SBI Contact Group on Resource Mobilization

Co-Chairs Innes Verleye (Belgium) and Shonisani Munzhedzi (South Africa) guided the discussions, which took place on the evening of Monday, 21 March and focused on a non-paper on resource mobilization.

On a preambular paragraph recalling that the preparation of national finance plans in the context of NBSAPs is foreseen as sub-goal 2.2 of the strategy for resource mobilization, some delegates suggested noting that “parties are invited to prepare national finance plans or other similar planning instruments, in the context of NBSAPs, in line with sub-goal 2.2.” Some parties further proposed highlighting the need for further discussions

on possible elements to be considered under the preparation of national finance plans.

Regarding welcoming that the preparation of national finance plans will be supported by GEF-8 under its global programme on resource mobilization, a party suggested referring to GEF-8's strategy and programming directions.

A lengthy discussion took place on an operative paragraph inviting parties to develop and implement national biodiversity finance plans, and identify national and international resources and financial gaps to contribute, in accordance with their capabilities, and ensure adequate and timely mobilization of financial resources for effective GBF implementation. Delegates debated whether to refer to "potential" national and international resources "from all sources." They further discussed whether to: remove the reference to contributing according to national capabilities; "ensure" or "mobilize" adequate resources; and include reference to CBD Article 20.4 (on commitments by developed country parties related to financial resources and transfer of technology).

Regarding a paragraph encouraging developed parties to reflect in their national finance plans or similar instruments, their financial contribution for the implementation of the Convention in developing country parties, a number of developed country representatives expressed concerns about grouping their national finance plans. One delegate, opposed by others, proposed referring to the percentage of their GDP; and others proposed to also have the option of including similar arrangements in NBSAPs, with one adding the cost for their implementation. Another party requested consistency with Articles 20.2 and 20.3 of the Convention (on the provision of financial resources from developed to developing countries for implementation of the Convention).

Delegates discussed the first part of a paragraph on the work of relevant international organizations, postponing deliberations on harmful incentives. Delegates agreed to keep the reference to updating national finance plans and to delete the reference to sector-specific plans. Parties further debated whether to refer to capacities of implementing parties and whether to encourage parties in a position to do so to offer support.

Some parties supported a suggested paragraph including an invitation to the GEF to support the development and implementation of national biodiversity finance plans, and to maintain a reference on supporting the implementation of their NBSAPs and the GBF. Delegates debated whether to add references to countries with economies in transition in relation to developing countries, or whether to refer to "recipient" or "eligible" countries. Delegates debated deleting a proposed paragraph on disbursing funds towards the goals established in their NBSAPs.

Discussions will continue.

WG2020 Contact Group 4

Co-Leads Anne Teller (EU) and Jorge Murillo (Colombia) informed delegates of the non-paper on GBF targets 14-21, on tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming. The non-paper is based on the submissions received from the first part of WG2020-3 and the first session of the Contact Group, which took place on Thursday, 17 March.

On **Target 17** (establish, strengthen capacity for, and implement measures in all countries to prevent, manage or control potential adverse impacts of biotechnology on biodiversity and human health, reducing the risk of these impacts), discussion focused on whether the target should: focus on biotechnology or on living modified organisms (LMOs) resulting from biotechnology; also address the positive impacts of biotechnology

and, if so, how they should be reflected in the target; and be moved to the section on meeting people's needs through sustainable use and benefit-sharing.

Most delegates agreed that the target should remain under the current section. Opinions diverged on whether to focus on biotechnology or on LMOs. Those preferring LMOs pointed to CBD Article 8g (on adverse environmental impacts of LMOs); those opting for biotechnology stressed the need to keep the scope broad, including biotechnological advances such as synthetic biology.

Delegates also held differing opinions on whether positive impacts of biotechnology should be reflected. Those in favor suggested language to the effect of realizing the benefits of biotechnology towards achieving the objectives of the Convention. An observer cautioned that pharmaceuticals such as genetically modified vaccines fall outside the scope of the Cartagena Protocol unless environmental introduction is envisaged.

On **Target 14** (fully integrate biodiversity values into policies, regulations, planning and development processes, poverty reduction strategies, accounts, and assessment of environmental impacts, at all levels of government and across all sectors of the economy, progressively aligning all public and private activities and financial flows with the goals and targets of this framework), one party suggested replacing financial flows with "fiscal." Many objected, saying this is a big commitment for governments and expands the target's scope. They agreed to referring to multiple values.

Delegates suggested moving a proposed reference to taking into account tools available to each country and national circumstances into preambular text of the GBF. Several agreed that the target is about mainstreaming and objected to suggestions to delete "progressively aligning" with goals and targets of the GBF.

Delegates disagreed on the scope of the target, with some expressing concern that aligning "all public and private activities" would go beyond the scope of governments. A party suggested that, if the scope is governments, "private financial flows" should be removed.

On "fully integrating biodiversity values," one party, supported by others, suggested "ensuring" biodiversity values. Others opposed, noting potential repercussions for the rest of the target. Compromise text on "ensuring the integration" was bracketed. Another party, supported by some, argued for "biodiversity objectives" rather than "values." Others parties suggested "diverse values," or "multiple values."

On a reference to sustainable development processes, one party opposed on the grounds that it goes beyond the purview of the target. Others preferred "development processes." Co-Lead Murillo suggested language on "aligning with the goals and targets of the framework and the SDGs," but met resistance.

One party suggested streamlining the target by removing reference to the private sector.

Another noted, among others, that a discussion of "all sectors" is impossible without knowing the general composition of targets; and that deep-sea mining is already addressed by the International Seabed Authority.

On language on assessments of environmental impacts, parties suggested referring to "environmental impact assessments." An observer suggested defining environmental impact assessments in the glossary.

On **Target 15** (ensure that all businesses and financial institutions assess, monitor, disclose, and report on their dependencies and impacts on biodiversity across operations, value chains, and portfolios, reduce negative impacts by at least

half, and increase positive impacts, reducing biodiversity-related risks to businesses and financial institutions, moving towards the full sustainability of extraction and production practices, sourcing, supply chains, use, and disposal, following a rights-based approach), some delegates called for deleting “ensure all businesses,” arguing that the GBF is to be implemented by parties, and thus the GBF cannot compel the private sector to take action.

Several questioned the baselines used in regard to “reducing negative impacts by half.” Certain parties questioned the use of a numerical target, with some suggesting it should be aspirational.

Delegates also objected including references to legal responsibility, human rights, and rights of Mother Earth. There was also limited support for specifying “businesses with significant impact” or “large and economically significant businesses,” as some noted there is doubt on how these would be determined.

Some supported retaining reference to disclosure and reporting on dependencies and impacts on biodiversity.

One party proposed an alternate target to “ensure businesses and financial institutions adopt biodiversity-positive practices, and assess and report on their dependencies and impacts on biodiversity.” Another suggested supplanting “biodiversity-positive” with “sustainable.”

A party suggested language on “providing information needed for consumers to enable the public to make responsible consumption choices that are biodiversity-positive.” Parties also suggested, among others, insertion of circular economy; bracketing “transparent reporting”; and removing language on legal responsibility and accountability.

Co-Lead Teller said that the co-leads will produce a non-paper with a new version of targets 17, 14, and 15. The Contact Group will reconvene on Saturday, 26 March.

SBSTTA Contact Group on GBF Monitoring

In the evening session on Monday, 21 March, the SBSTTA contact group on the GBF monitoring framework resumed discussions of the remaining headline indicators guided by Co-Chairs Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (Ghana) and Andrew Stott (UK).

Regarding indicator 20.0.1 (biodiversity information and monitoring, including traditional knowledge, for management), some asked to include growth in species’ occurrence. Some urged transparent use and exchange of science; and others proposed measuring the extent traditional knowledge is applied in national decision making regarding biodiversity, with one adding to also monitor the FPIC of IPLCs.

Many delegates welcomed indicators 21.0.1 (degree of IPLCs, women and girls, and youth participation in decision making), with one asking to include human rights defenders in the list, and to refer to women and girls in all their diversity; and 21.0.2 (land tenure in the traditional territories of IPLCs), with some asking to also include land-use change. Delegates suggested determining the number of countries with legal frameworks that guarantee the rights of IPLCs as well as mechanisms in place for the full and equitable participation of IPLCs. Another party asked to differentiate between right-holders such as IPLCs and stakeholders to ensure more accurate data collection. Some asked to include the share of women by type of land tenure, and that women’s rights are guaranteed by law.

A number of delegates noted that the proposed indicators do not cover the whole target related to pollution, and some proposed to replace them with an indicator on the impact of pollution on all species and ecosystems, such as the IUCN Red

Lists. Regarding indicator 7.0.1 (index of coastal eutrophication potential; excess nitrogen and phosphate loading, exported from national boundaries), delegates asked to also consider effects on freshwater, land, and the atmosphere. One delegate asked to also reflect nutrient loss. On 7.0.2. (plastic debris density), some asked to include microplastics; others, to specify floating plastic debris; and a few, to refer to plastic waste more broadly. Regarding 7.0.3 (pesticide use per area of cropland), one delegate asked to focus on inorganic fertilizers, while another to also consider the concentration of pesticides in aquatic environments. A number of parties proposed to focus on the use of the most hazardous pesticides and their risks, proposing, *inter alia*, to collect information on and measure: the name and number of highly hazardous pesticides in use; how they are determined; and the number of countries phasing them out. A number of delegates welcomed a new proposed indicator on the percentage of parties with risk management and mitigation measures regarding off-site movements of chemicals that are harmful to the environment.

Some delegates welcomed, while others expressed concern about indicator 8.0.1 (national greenhouse gas inventories from land use and land use change) in relation to the broader target on the impact of climate change on biodiversity, which some considered outside of the scope of the Convention. Some proposed alternate text related to: ecosystem-based approaches; restoration of carbon-rich ecosystems; and the number of species vulnerable to climate change.

Delegates resumed consideration of the headline indicators related to the respective goals. Discussions started with the headline indicators related to Goal A on enhancing ecosystem integrity, namely: A.0.1 (extent of selected natural and modified ecosystems by type); A.0.2 (Species Habitat Index); A.0.3 (Red List Index); and A.0.4 (proportion of populations within species with a genetically effective population size greater than 500). While many delegates welcomed indicators A.0.1 and A.0.3, many expressed concerns regarding the other two. A number of delegates asked to include an indicator on species abundance, such as the Living Planet Index. Others called for capacity building and technical assistance. Discussion on the remaining indicators will continue at the next session of the contact group and non-papers will be prepared to summarize the indicators’ assessments and the alternative proposals.

In the Corridors

Nowruz is upon us, and the earth, says Rilke, “is like a child / that knows so many poems.” In Persian culture, the day marks the end of winter and the beginning of spring. Was it any surprise, then, that springtime vigor set delegates on the path of progress throughout the day? With the bright sun streaming through the venue windows, some laid out interventions to ensure equal visibility for cultural diversity and traditional knowledge in the GBF.

One of the traditions of the Persian New Year is to “shake down the house,” a great spring cleaning of one’s home that gets rid of the clutter and brings forth renewal. It may have been in that spirit that experienced observers called on parties to let go of what weighed them down. “We’re in the second week now, so we can’t afford the clutter of composite text,” they ventured. “We need clear eyes and compromise if we want to show up to the final plenary and avoid an impasse on the floor.” One can only hope that the spirit of the New Year, or at least of warmer weather, will buoy everyone’s moods and sharpen their editorial pens as the countdown to plenaries begins.