

SBI 4 Highlights: Friday, 24 May 2024

The fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI 4) focused on cooperation, mainstreaming, and the effectiveness of the processes under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Protocols. Contact groups met in the afternoon and evening on: mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting, and review; capacity building and development; and resource mobilization.

Cooperation with Other Conventions and International Organizations

Delegates continued Thursday's discussions. The RAMSAR CONVENTION ON WETLANDS highlighted the sixth joint work plan between the CBD and Ramsar Secretariats.

Major Groups and other stakeholders, among other things: highlighted the importance of policy coherence on cross-cutting issues, urging collaboration with relevant conventions and international organizations to develop common definitions and policies that prevent negative impacts on biodiversity from climate-related projects; and stressed the importance of cooperation and synergies in implementing multilateral environmental agreements at the national level, noting challenges in achieving national and subnational synergies.

SBI 4 Chair Chirra Achalender Reddy (India) noted a conference room paper (CRP) will be prepared.

Long-term Strategic Approach to Mainstreaming

The Secretariat introduced document [CBD/SBI/4/13](#), noting it contains an in-depth analysis of the mainstreaming process and draft recommendations.

Many delegates emphasized the importance of mainstreaming biodiversity across all sectors of government and society, and highlighted relevant efforts at the national and regional levels.

Togo, for the AFRICAN GROUP, UGANDA, CÔTE D'IVOIRE, and others noted that the long-term strategic approach to mainstreaming is already addressed within the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), adding, with INDONESIA and the PHILIPPINES, that it does not have clear added-value. The EUROPEAN UNION (EU) noted partial overlap with the GBF and ETHIOPIA pointed to inconsistencies. ARGENTINA, CANADA, and JAPAN cautioned against duplicating work.

The AFRICAN GROUP stressed including biodiversity mainstreaming within existing capacity-building and development mechanisms to facilitate its consideration in national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), and suggested, with the UK, MOROCCO, and others, the Secretariat revise the approach, based on issues identified in the global review. MOROCCO emphasized that certain mainstreaming elements are not addressed in the draft actions. ZIMBABWE urged producing a guidance document.

NORWAY and LEBANON highlighted the interplay between the global review's findings and NBSAP updates. AUSTRALIA urged analyzing mainstreaming-related gaps and challenges identified by parties. FIJI noted that the GBF lacks clear guidance and benchmarks to support parties in mainstreaming efforts. CHINA stressed that the long-term strategic approach could function as flexible guidance for parties, calling for adoption at the

16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16), following improvements.

ARGENTINA, supported by BRAZIL, suggested addressing the strategic approach in the global review and expressed concerns on its scope, including, with SOUTH AFRICA, on the regional imbalance in responses to the forum. SOUTH AFRICA suggested postponing decisions to SBI 5 for inclusive participation in the forum. BRAZIL recognized mainstreaming as a cross-cutting priority; urged a flexible approach respecting parties' differing priorities and capacities; and highlighted innovative solutions, and fair and equitable benefit-sharing.

The EU, CANADA, the UK, EGYPT, and others cautioned working in silos. The EU called for a "coalition of the willing" to promote biodiversity mainstreaming and suggested developing: a technical guidance document, including on yet unaddressed sectors; complementary voluntary actions; and a list of tools, approaches, and best-practices. SOUTH AFRICA called for establishing an expert group. ETHIOPIA suggested developing means to track mainstreaming across sectors.

MEXICO, CHILE, COSTA RICA, PERU, and COLOMBIA proposed a dedicated work agenda on mainstreaming until 2030, including developing toolboxes, allowing for gap identification. COLOMBIA suggested prioritizing specific mainstreaming actions, stressing the need to consider the entire value chain.

The PHILIPPINES, CÔTE D'IVOIRE, ZIMBABWE, SOUTH AFRICA, the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC), and others called for capacity-building activities on biodiversity mainstreaming. MEXICO called for explicit implementation means, suggesting establishing a dedicated platform. EGYPT underlined the need to strengthen national policies.

The PHILIPPINES, COLOMBIA, UGANDA, and FIJI highlighted the importance of full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women, and youth, calling for relevant capacity building, with COLOMBIA adding Afro-descendants.

Chair Reddy noted that a CRP will be prepared.

Review of the Effectiveness of the Processes under the Convention and its Protocols

The Secretariat introduced [CBD/SBI/4/11](#) and [Add.1](#).

On procedures for avoiding or managing conflicts of interest, the EU, the UK, NORWAY, and others welcomed the proposed procedures. Zimbabwe, for the AFRICAN GROUP, suggested periodically reviewing them. KENYA welcomed amendments to the interest disclosure form and, with EGYPT, urged independent administrative review.

On procedures for convening virtual and hybrid meetings, the AFRICAN GROUP highlighted issues that disadvantage developing country parties and opposed taking budgetary decisions virtually. Cuba, for the LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GROUP (GRULAC), supported by INDONESIA, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, NEW ZEALAND, and the DRC, requested that virtual negotiation-based meetings be a last resort. KENYA and INDIA stressed that COPs and subsidiary body meetings should take place in-person unless under extraordinary circumstances. INDONESIA and EGYPT suggested using hybrid meetings for urgent or special circumstances through a party-led process.

AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND said that extended online meetings led to physical and mental health challenges for delegates in their time zones. The EU recommended rotating time zones for virtual meetings. NEW ZEALAND noted that in the right circumstances and for non-negotiation-based sessions, hybrid meetings can enhance progress, save time, and reduce environmental harm. INDIA supported using virtual meetings for regional and interregional consultations.

On options to improve effectiveness of processes under the Convention and its Protocols, the EU called for more frequent virtual Bureau meetings; virtual presentations on the budget ahead of each COP; and, with INDIA, EGYPT, CHINA, SWITZERLAND, and others, ensuring that meeting documents are available six weeks prior to meetings in all UN languages. CHINA stressed use of technology to ensure that non-native English speakers can participate effectively in textual negotiations.

CANADA suggested first interventions be submitted in writing or virtually before meetings, with NORWAY calling to limit opening statements. The EU proposed major groups and stakeholders present statements in advance for parties' endorsement.

The AFRICAN GROUP stressed ensuring effective participation of developing country parties, urging funding for three participants rather than one. GRULAC, supported by many, requested: parallel contact group sessions be limited to the number of funded developing country party representatives; and limiting work hours per day and the number of consecutive meeting days.

ARGENTINA and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION called for training programmes to prepare and support delegates. The UK supported training for Bureau members, and with UGANDA, for co-chairs.

CANADA, NEW ZEALAND, the DRC, BRAZIL, MEXICO, and others lamented the negative impact of extreme workloads on the quality and effectiveness of decision making and negotiations. AUSTRALIA and the UK urged functional efficiency. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION stressed that additional requests to the Secretariat are not fit-for-purpose if they are not accompanied by necessary budgetary or staffing arrangements.

SWITZERLAND and NORWAY urged the need to undertake an external in-depth functional review by COP 17, to support efforts to improve efficiency of processes.

Major Groups and other stakeholders: requested the Secretariat to organize information webinars to facilitate preparing stakeholder positions ahead of meetings; and lamented not being able to deliver statements in plenary on some agenda items. They also called for periodic review of the conflict-of-interest procedure, and for a procedure verifying the accuracy of interest disclosure forms.

Chair Reddy established a friends of the chair group to discuss options to improve effectiveness of processes.

Contact Group on Mechanisms for Planning, Monitoring, Reporting, and Review

Co-Chairs Gillian Guthrie (Jamaica) and Carolina Caceres (Canada) invited delegates to continue Tuesday's discussions on a revised non-paper, starting with the annex on reporting commitments by non-state actors.

Delegates discussed to whom these commitments would be reported, with some suggesting this be done at the global level through an online platform, and others insisting on reporting to national focal points. Major Groups' representatives cautioned greenwashing. The co-chairs established a small, informal group to advance discussions.

The contact group then focused on the draft recommendation. On a paragraph noting that the global review of collective progress in GBF implementation, directed to COP 17 and COP 19, will culminate in a decision at these meetings, delegates discussed, without reaching consensus: whether COP 19 should address GBF implementation, since it is scheduled for 2030 and a new framework may be required; and references to identified challenges and opportunities, and means of implementation.

Regarding primary sources for the global review, delegates agreed on listing national reports and the global report on collective progress in GBF implementation. Further discussion will be needed on references to: information shared by major stakeholder groups; the global analysis described in [Decision 15/6](#); and a technical dialogue at the global level to discuss progress in implementation.

Contact Group on Capacity Building and Development

The contact group, co-chaired by Jesus Guerra Bell (Cuba) and Holly Kelley-Weil (UK), met to consider a non-paper on capacity building and development, technical and scientific cooperation, and technology transfer. The co-chairs noted that the elements under the clearing-house mechanism and the knowledge management strategy were being developed into a CRP. Delegates heard a report from the co-facilitators of the informal advisory group (IAG) on technical and scientific cooperation on options for the global coordination entity.

The contact group focused its deliberations on the draft recommendations, including on references to rights- and stakeholders, and on future regional support centers.

Regarding the annex, on operationalizing the global coordination entity, delegates deliberated on the need to pay particular attention to developing country parties' needs and the organizational structure of the entity, including its scope. On governance and oversight, discussions centered on the role of the COP or COP-Bureau, through the SBI, in providing strategic guidance and direction to the global entity, and roles of the SBI and the IAG in providing operational and technical advice. They further addressed operational modalities and procedures, and began considering the criteria for selecting the global entity host.

In the evening, delegates resumed discussions on the host of the global coordination entity. They renamed a section on "selection of the host" to "characteristics of the host," noting that the list of characteristics would be relevant whether or not the entity is selected at COP 16. Provisions on the term of service of the host and on assessing the host's performance were moved to the section on "governance and oversight." Discussions continued into the night, endeavoring to address outstanding elements of the annex on coordination and collaboration, financial arrangements, monitoring, and review; as well as the part of the draft recommendation concerning technical and scientific cooperation and technology transfer.

Contact Group on Resource Mobilization

The contact group on resource mobilization, co-chaired by Shonisani Munzhezzi (South Africa) and Salima Kempener (Belgium) resumed its work on the non-paper. Co-Chair Munzhezzi reiterated the three-step approach to the contact group's deliberations, which began on Thursday, consisting of: considerations on the review of the resource mobilization strategy; options for a potential global instrument on biodiversity finance to mobilize resources from all sources; and assessing the effectiveness of resource mobilization.

Discussions focused on potentially establishing a global instrument, with the Secretariat describing options on: COP 16 deciding to establish a global biodiversity fund and indicating the process for its development; the intersessional process proposed by the Advisory Committee, annexed to the document; and operating on the basis of the Global Environment Facility as the financial mechanism. In the ensuing dialogue, a number of regional groups and parties reiterated their preferred option, while others encouraged a broader discussion.

In the Breezeways

With one day to go before a well-deserved rest day, delegates tackled some of the remaining agenda items in morning plenary. Among these were the effectiveness of procedures under the Convention and its Protocols, with many delegates adding their personal experiences to negotiation points, requesting work continue on how to make procedures more efficient and effective, as one urged "to stop normalizing three weeks of 14-hour workdays."

Postponing plenary considerations of a few outstanding items to Sunday, delegates turned their attention to finer details during afternoon and evening contact groups, with a common refrain heard being "sorry Co-Chair, taking you back a bit," every time progress was thought to have been made. While some delegates had hoped that contact group discussions would provide a quicker path to compromise on contentious issues, this did not necessarily materialize, with some participants in contact group discussions expressing concerns about reopening long-standing issues, resulting in more brackets than less.