

## SBI 5 Highlights: Thursday, 17 October 2024

The fifth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI 5) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) continued a pilot open-ended forum for voluntary country review. A Friends of the Chair group met in the evening to address a draft recommendation on progress in national target setting and updating of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs).

### Pilot Forum for Voluntary Country Review

Chirra Achalender Reddy (India), SBI 5 Chair, resumed the forum, which included three thematic sessions.

Norbert Bärlocher (Switzerland) chaired the first thematic session on the **implementation of the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches and the integration of the Protocols and other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) into NBSAPs**. Bärlocher invited delegates to exchange experiences regarding the scope of the whole-of-government, society, and convention approaches in implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

Facilitators Natasha Walker and Martín Sánchez Vilchis engaged delegates in an interactive discussion on the main gaps regarding implementation at national level and which policy instruments and tools from other MEAs were integrated into the revised NBSAPs.

Opening the ensuing panel, Angela Lozan (Moldova) described her country's process of developing national targets and NBSAP, focusing on ongoing work to identify gaps in the implementation of the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols. She highlighted a regional dialogue hosted in Moldova aimed at exchanging ideas, visions, and experiences of how to implement a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach in the updating of NBSAPs.

Nicolas Laurent (France) stressed the importance of an integrated approach, addressing diverse sectors, and considering the interrelated stakes of health, environment, and biodiversity. He drew attention, among others, to "national environmental planning," as a transversal approach to policy and action coordination, facilitated through an inter-ministerial structure, as well as to the development of pilot projects and the appointment of managers responsible for different actions as a means to encourage ownership of the work.

Andrea Cruz Angón (Mexico) emphasized that political contexts impact efforts to define achievable national targets and NBSAPs; and described efforts to map and engage different stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), women, youth, and subnational governments, as well as to undertake dialogues with various economic sectors. She drew attention to an inter-sectoral mechanism for the coordination of MEA implementation at national level.

Krishneel Nand (Fiji) highlighted efforts to facilitate stakeholders' active participation, engaging key ministries, and conducting consultations with fisheries experts and managers of locally managed marine areas, IPLCs, women, and youth. He highlighted partnership efforts through the National Resource Owners Council and with protected area communities, underscoring the importance placed upon traditional knowledge.

Moustafa Fouda (Egypt) underlined that implementing whole-of-society and whole-of-government approaches is challenging, highlighting efforts to engage different sectors and groups through a national committee for biodiversity conservation. He stressed the importance of open communication and providing incentives to engage different sectors and groups.

Claudia Valeria Sánchez Flores (IPLCs) drew attention to experiences with subnational efforts in Mexico as well as regional dialogues in Latin America. She emphasized the importance of clear language, enabling the inclusion of traditional and biocultural knowledge and the full and effective participation of IPLCs, women, and youth, and taking vulnerabilities into account.

In the ensuing discussion, Walker invited participants to share experiences and good examples regarding use of whole-of-society, whole-of-government, and whole-of-convention approaches when reviewing or updating NBSAPs. They shared, among others:

- having focal points for all MEAs under the same ministry;
- having institutionalized coordination mechanisms in place, including among ministries, subnational and local governments, IPLCs, youth, women, the private sector, and academia;
- conducting thematic and expert working groups, as well as regional, national, and subnational workshops convening participants with different backgrounds and expertise;
- establishing institutional infrastructure, regulations, and laws;
- conducting citizen assembly processes for democratic deliberation of recommendations for government consideration; and
- considering IPLCs' context, languages, and needs to ensure their full and effective involvement.

Several delegates discussed efforts toward full and meaningful stakeholder participation, including using open formats of engagement that go beyond workshop settings. Some highlighted the role of non-governmental and civil society organizations as bridges between local communities and government institutions. One participant noted his country engages civil society from the outset to ensure the NBSAP process is fully consultative. Others noted the advantages of stakeholder mapping efforts in facilitating consultations.

Several participants pointed to cross-ministerial and -sectoral engagement, including with the ministries of agriculture, finance, and planning, through initiatives such as steering committees and focal point platforms. One delegate noted this led to more attention given to resource allocation and increased political commitment. Some delegates focused on synergy building and the need for adequate management structures for coordinating efforts across sectors of society and government.

Somaly Chan (Cambodia) chaired the second thematic session on **national target setting and monitoring**.

Ditta Greguss (Hungary) addressed her country's process of implementing obligations under both the GBF and the 2030 EU Biodiversity Strategy, which ensured compliance while respecting Hungary's social and environmental characteristics. She highlighted the need for flexibility in national target-setting and cross-sectoral collaboration. Jane Stratford (UK) focused on national target-setting in a decentralized system. She said the UK's four nations used the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, which

is an advisory body to all UK governments, to guide them on national target development.

Moumouni Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso) drew attention to Burkina Faso's dedicated target on communication, explaining that it is necessary to raise awareness of activities that lead to biodiversity loss and change behavior. Iemdaad Rodjan (Suriname) stressed that a mapping of stakeholders, national legislation, and international treaties, along with an inclusive process, ensured national targets are realistic, aligned with national circumstances, and include biodiversity concerns across various sectors.

Wataru Suzuki (Japan) noted that workshops on NBSAPs supported by the Japan Biodiversity Fund aimed to build capacity for NBSAP development, stressing that now peer-to-peer support is a priority. He stressed the need to address resource and capacity needs and explore innovative tools regarding public participation. Noting that titling and legal recognition of territories is needed for conservation action, Priyanka Pandey (CBD Women's Caucus) shared examples from Nepal on efforts to promote gender equality in land policy, including how a discount on the land registration fee had enabled a greater proportion of land to be registered to women.

Facilitator Sánchez Vilchis invited experiences on how countries are successfully mediating between national interest and the global agenda. Parties addressed:

- creating synergies among government and non-government agencies to avoid duplication;
- agreeing on collective regional implementation across geographical regions and sectors, including through legally-binding measures;
- identifying priority areas for national action to achieve the GBF; and
- developing resource mobilization strategies to ensure adequate financing of implementation.

Participants then shared critically important elements to ensure that national targets are set and well implemented on the ground, including ensuring environmental data and information availability and accessibility, and incorporating nature into government decision-making and budgets.

Some noted that effective inclusion of the legislative sector is key, alongside public awareness and communication to ensure citizen involvement.

On effective mechanisms for monitoring target implementation, participants shared, among others:

- use of participatory and citizen science monitoring tools;
- designation of lead agencies for data collection from collaborating institutions and partners;
- capacity building to all agencies involved to ensure robust and effective monitoring systems;
- application of lessons learned from successes in monitoring climate data;
- mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into national development planning;
- accompanying monitoring mechanisms with the development of the enabling conditions; and
- fostering the consideration of traditional IPLC decision-making structures.

Teona Karchava (Georgia) chaired the third thematic session on **means of implementation, including national biodiversity finance planning and capacity-development planning**. Noting different views exist on the topic, she stressed the common understanding that means of implementation are crucial to achieve the targets and fulfill the 2050 vision of living in harmony with nature.

Mauricio Cabrera Leal (Colombia) outlined Colombia's participatory process for updating their NBSAPs, which revealed the need for: sustainable financial models; articulation of climate change and biodiversity agendas; and nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based adaptation measures. He highlighted ongoing evaluations with the Ministry of Finance for differential economic instruments.

Francis Ogwal (Uganda) stressed implementation opportunities, including developing partnerships, sharing of data and information, developing a monitoring plan, and multilateral opportunities for resource mobilization. He described efforts to champion different institutions to lead on implementation efforts. On finance, he addressed ongoing work to develop a national

biodiversity finance plan and efforts to repurpose subsidies for conservation.

Camari Divuniwaqa (GYBN) noted increased participation of youth in NBSAP processes. Among opportunities for improving youth participation, she identified: encouraging youth engagement in consultations and implementing activities; ensuring participation of diverse youth groups, particularly marginalized groups; and providing financial means to enable participation.

Addressing finance, Yan Liu (China) emphasized both the allocation of specific biodiversity funding in the national government's budget and identifying innovative sources of funding. She highlighted initiatives addressing investment and financing as a priority action in the revised NBSAP, as well as green finance, green loans, and green bonds. She highlighted the establishment of the Kunming Biodiversity Fund as an effort toward mobilizing international public funding.

Anne Teller (EU) addressed work within the EU to identify biodiversity finance gaps, and innovative sources of funding, such as biodiversity certification and nature credits. On efforts to improve the biodiversity knowledge landscape, Teller emphasized the establishment of the Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity to provide a service to fill knowledge gaps, particularly for policymakers. She indicated efforts to replicate this work at the global level through a global knowledge support center.

Speaking on capacity building for the development and implementation of national targets and NBSAPs, Rashad Allahverdiyev (Azerbaijan) addressed his country's experience, including the hosting of workshops to share information and build capacity on the NBSAP process, identify gaps and necessary activities, and collectively develop national targets.

In the ensuing discussion, participants addressed national-level innovative funding sources, including:

- creating synergies with carbon funding by using carbon credits for biodiversity conservation;
- payment for ecosystem services schemes;
- unlocking green financing through green funds to achieve climate and environmental targets;
- development of biodiversity finance plans to tag biodiversity to national budgets; and
- application of the debt-for-climate swap, which offers debt relief in exchange for new commitments to invest in green initiatives.

On actions to improve coordination with ministries of finance, they noted the need for dialogue to ensure that these ministries are considered implementors and not mere supporters of the actions. They also mentioned the role of their respective ministries of finance in elevating biodiversity conservation as a key element for development funding.

On national capacity-building and development planning, participants shared experiences on what is being done to identify capacity needs at the national level, noting, among others, carrying out surveys in government agencies to identify gaps before designing capacity-building activities. Stakeholder workshops were also cited as useful in identifying knowledge gaps in technical issues. On actions taken to address capacity gaps, participants noted education, training actions, and courses aimed at matching academic and scientific research programmes with biodiversity-related implementation.

### *In the Corridors*

Delegates appeared to be warming up to the interactive dialogical format of the pilot forum for voluntary country review. Over the course of three thematic sessions, they engaged in an exchange of experiences and good practices on different aspects of national targets and NBSAP development. While many stressed the complexity of the work, some found it encouraging to learn from one another and to hear about the variety of approaches facilitating effective implementation. With much talk about inclusive participation, one nonetheless wondered, "should we not be giving more space to the stakeholders themselves?" Another quipped, "if things are really going this well, then why does biodiversity keep declining?"

Nevertheless, there was certainly no lack of creative ideas, as participants were invited to an "unusual break" between sessions with a short salsa dancing lesson for beginners, immersing themselves into Cali's tradition as the "salsa capital."