

Summary of the Informal Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity: 8-12 and 14 March 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic came at the worst possible time for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The restrictive measures caused significant delays, derailing work during 2020, which was expected to be a “super year” for biodiversity. An impressive array of meetings of its subsidiary bodies, the Open-Ended Working Group on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF), and other bodies would have culminated in the 15th meeting of the conference of the parties (COP 15), originally scheduled for October 2020. The pandemic violently disrupted this carefully crafted trajectory.

To maintain momentum and move towards the successful development of a post-2020 framework for global biodiversity governance, the CBD had to convene virtual meetings. The informal meeting in preparation for the third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI 3) focused on implementation-related matters with the GBF taking central stage. The informal character of the meeting meant that there were no negotiations, and no formal outcome was adopted. Instead, delegates exchanged views on a variety of issues, broadening common understanding and paving the way towards SBI 3, COP 15, and the successful completion and adoption of the GBF.

The meeting’s deliberations focused on:

- resource mobilization and the financial mechanism;
- mechanisms for reporting, assessment, and review of implementation;
- capacity building, cooperation, technology transfer, knowledge management, and communication;
- mainstreaming of biodiversity;
- the interlinkages of all the above with the GBF as well as cross-cutting elements;
- review of progress in the implementation of the Convention;
- assessment and review of effectiveness of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;
- international access and benefit-sharing instruments in the context of Article 4 of the Nagoya Protocol;
- a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism under Article 10 of the Nagoya Protocol;
- review of the effectiveness of the processes under the Convention and its Protocols; and
- administrative and budgetary matters.

The exchange of views was productive and sufficient time was provided to civil society and other stakeholders to express their views on most agenda items. However, it was evident that important differences in opinions persist, which will need to be bridged to reach consensus on the GBF.

Diverging opinions exist both on overarching issues, such as resource mobilization targets, as well as on sectoral issues, including modalities for reporting, review, and capacity development. Delegates will have to reach consensus on all these issues for a successful, ambitious GBF that will lead towards a more sustainable

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future. Many delegates pointed to the need for compromises, often referring to a package deal. The CBD meetings in the following months, notwithstanding the unique circumstances under which the Convention currently functions, will be crucial in deciding the level of ambition for future biodiversity governance.

The informal meeting convened from 8-12 and 14 March 2021. Over 2,000 participants registered for the meeting, representing 130 parties, civil society, and non-governmental and international organizations. The SBI Chair, the Bureau, and the Secretariat will prepare a brief procedural report from the informal meeting.

A Brief History of the Convention on Biological Diversity

The CBD was adopted on 22 May 1992 and opened for signature on 5 June 1992 at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (the Rio “Earth Summit”). The CBD entered into force on 29 December 1993. There are currently 196 parties to the Convention, which aims to promote the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. The COP is the governing body of the Convention, and there are currently four subsidiary bodies: Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA); the Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions; the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI); and the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

Key Turning Points

Three protocols have been adopted under the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (January 2000, Montreal, Canada) addresses the safe transfer, handling, and use of living modified organisms (LMOs) that may have adverse effects on biodiversity, taking into account human health, with a specific focus on transboundary movements. It entered into force on 11 September 2003 and currently has 171 parties. The Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (October 2010, Nagoya, Japan) provides for international rules and procedures on liability and redress for damage to biodiversity resulting from LMOs. It entered into force on 5 March 2018 and currently has 48 parties.

The Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing (October 2010, Nagoya) sets out an international framework for the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and technologies, and by appropriate funding, thereby contributing to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of its components. It entered into force on 12 October 2014 and currently has 129 parties.

Other major decisions include:

- the Jakarta Mandate on marine and coastal biodiversity (COP 2, November 1995, Jakarta, Indonesia);
- work programmes on agricultural and forest biodiversity (COP 3, November 1996, Buenos Aires, Argentina);
- the Global Taxonomy Initiative (COP 4, May 1998, Bratislava, Slovakia);
- work programmes on Article 8(j), dry and sub-humid lands, and incentive measures (COP 5, May 2000, Nairobi, Kenya);
- the Bonn Guidelines on Access and Benefit-sharing and the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (COP 6, April 2002, The Hague, the Netherlands);

- work programmes on mountain biodiversity, protected areas, and technology transfer, the Akwé: Kon Guidelines for cultural, environmental, and social impact assessments, and the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for sustainable use (COP 7, February 2004, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia);
- a work programme on island biodiversity (COP 8, March 2006, Curitiba, Brazil);
- a resource mobilization strategy, and scientific criteria and guidance for marine areas in need of protection (COP 9, May 2008, Bonn, Germany);
- the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and a decision on activities and indicators for the implementation of the resource mobilization strategy (COP 10, October 2010, Nagoya, Japan);
- an interim target of doubling biodiversity-related international financial resource flows to developing countries by 2015, and at least maintaining this level until 2020, coupled with targets aiming to improve the robustness of baseline information (COP 11, October 2012, Hyderabad, India); and
- a plan of action on customary sustainable use of biodiversity as well as the “Pyeongchang Roadmap,” a package of decisions on resource mobilization, capacity building, and scientific and technical cooperation linking biodiversity and poverty eradication, and monitoring implementation of the Strategic Plan (COP 12, October 2014, Pyeongchang, South Korea).

COP 13 (December 2016, Cancún, Mexico) considered: issues related to operations of the Convention, including integration among the Convention and its Protocols; progress towards implementation of the Strategic Plan and the achievement of the Aichi Targets, and related means of implementation; strategic actions to enhance the implementation of the Strategic Plan and achievement of the Aichi Targets, including with respect to mainstreaming biodiversity within and across sectors, particularly in agriculture, fisheries, tourism, and forestry; and biodiversity and human health interlinkages. It also launched consideration of a series of items on emerging technologies, including synthetic biology, gene drives, and digital sequence information (DSI).

COP 14 (November 2018, Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt) set up an intersessional OEWG on the post-2020 framework, and established an intersessional process, including an *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) to continue work on DSI on genetic resources under the Convention and the Nagoya Protocol. COP 14 further adopted the Rutzolijirixaxik voluntary guidelines for the repatriation of traditional knowledge relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity as well as voluntary guidelines and guidance: on the integration of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures into wider land- and seascapes; on effective governance models for management of protected areas, including equity; for the design and effective implementation of ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction; for a sustainable wild meat sector; and for avoiding unintentional introductions of invasive alien species associated with trade in live organisms.

Report of the Meeting

On Monday, 8 March, SBI Chair Charlotta Sörqvist opened the meeting with a moment of silence in memory of those whose lives have been lost to COVID-19. She stressed the importance of maintaining momentum and advancing work related to the development of the GBF.

Hamdallah Zedan (Egypt), on behalf of the COP 14 Presidency, noted exchanging views and perspectives during this online session will accelerate discussions during the formal session of SBI 3 and will contribute to the development of an ambitious and transformative GBF. He highlighted the importance of resource mobilization to ensure the means for implementation and the achievement of ambitious targets.

CBD Executive Secretary Elizabeth Maruma Mrema underscored that more than 1,830 participants representing 130 countries and many organizations registered for the meeting, and looked forward to their active participation. She provided an overview of the week's agenda, highlighting key items and reminding delegates that deliberations will support formal discussions during SBI 3.

In a keynote speech on International Women's Day, Izabella Mônica Teixeira, Co-Chair, International Resource Panel, underscored the relevance of women's leadership for achieving the Convention's objectives. She called for equal access to natural resources, underscoring the importance of natural resource management. She further stressed that the new gender plan of action is an opportunity to address current inequalities, emphasizing the important role of women and girls in decision-making at all levels of biodiversity governance.

SBI Chair Sörqvist explained that there will be no conference room papers produced, and that the Secretariat will prepare a brief procedural report. She outlined the organization of work and added that, as this is an informal session, parties have a right to change or add to their views during the formal session. She also noted that statements would be uploaded to the Convention's [website](#) and are publicly available.

Review of Progress in Implementation

On Monday, the informal meeting addressed the review of progress in the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The Secretariat introduced the relevant documents (CBD/SBI/3/2, and Add.1-Add.4), including: a review of progress in revising national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs); progress towards the Aichi Targets; review of implementation of the 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action; and progress towards Aichi Target 18 on traditional knowledge and customary sustainable use.

Several delegates noted with concern the lack of progress on achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, including Target 18 and poor implementation of the Gender Plan of Action.

The Democratic Republic of Congo, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, noted that the delays in financial resource mobilization had meant a postponement in the delivery of actions across the region. She asked for an in-depth analysis on the reasons for limited progress to inform future negotiations, including similar arrangements for the GBF.

Georgia, for CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE (CEE), emphasized the importance of partnerships with stakeholders, stressing their involvement at early stages of NBSAP development. She further drew attention to delays in accessing necessary funding, which led to time-lags in implementation.

Argentina, on behalf of the LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GROUP (GRULAC), called for balance between the three objectives of the Convention, and the use of traditional knowledge and science-based evidence in decision making. He highlighted the lack of means of implementation, calling for adequate financial resources, capacity building, and technology transfer to ensure that national capabilities align with the ambition of the GBF.

Portugal, for the EUROPEAN UNION (EU), noted particular concern at the lack of sufficient mainstreaming of biodiversity concerns across sectors and the limited efforts to address synergies. He emphasized the need to strengthen implementation of the Gender Plan of Action, stressing that targets and indicators must be adopted to support gender-responsiveness in the GBF.

Indonesia, on behalf of the ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN), highlighted the need for increased communication on biodiversity conservation to support transformative behavioral change and site-specific implementation. She also stressed the need for a more integrative and complementary approach for achieving targets.

NORWAY, SOUTH AFRICA, the UK, and others noted with concern that collectively the NBSAPs do not live up to the level of ambition of the Aichi Targets. SOUTH AFRICA underscored that taking lessons learned into account will ensure that the level of ambition between national and global targets is aligned in the GBF. NEW ZEALAND suggested the inclusion of lessons learned from the fifth Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-5) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Global Assessment. The UK proposed presenting each country's contributions to meeting the global commitments in the NBSAPs to facilitate comparability and aggregation, taking into account national circumstances. She further called for explicit links between national ambition and global objectives.

CHINA, UGANDA, ARGENTINA, THAILAND, BRAZIL, and others emphasized the need to support developing countries in terms of capacity building and resource mobilization to meet national and global targets. CAMBODIA called for adopting a resource mobilization mechanism to address those Aichi Targets that have not been achieved. ETHIOPIA proposed the creation of resource mobilization tools at national and international levels for effective implementation of NBSAPs, and an effective monitoring and evaluation system.

ARGENTINA stressed that raising the level of ambition needs to be accompanied by the provision of adequate resources. BRAZIL highlighted the poor implementation of Article 20 of the Convention reflecting the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

SWITZERLAND said that a robust, transparent review of progress is essential for informed decisions, calling for strengthening the review process. CANADA called for additional measures to address gaps in implementation. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA highlighted the need for timely submission of national reports and added that national circumstances should be thoroughly analyzed in the context of reviewing progress.

NORWAY suggested strengthening the review process through a global biodiversity stocktaking process that reflects progress during a policy cycle. The proposal includes consideration of all objectives and means of implementation, based on national reports, IPBES

reports, and best available science, to create a feedback loop that will gradually improve national efforts to achieve global goals.

CHINA called for the development of an ambitious and realistic GBF, taking into account lessons learned and reflecting in a balanced manner the three objectives of the Convention. He underscored the need to ensure national targets are updated in a timely manner.

COSTA RICA stressed the need to move holistically towards a transformative change, including sustainable consumption and production patterns. She called for stronger language in the suggested SBI recommendation to portray the level of ambition. CAMBODIA, COSTA RICA, and UGANDA drew attention to national efforts to conserve biodiversity.

Many delegates called for additional efforts for the development of an effective gender plan of action. SOUTH AFRICA supported a new gender plan of action, implementable at the national level with relevant targets. NORWAY called for further enhancing the understanding of gender and biodiversity linkages. CANADA highlighted gender equality both as a key element for biodiversity conservation and a national priority.

The INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORUM ON BIODIVERSITY (IIFB) and the WOMEN'S CAUCUS expressed concern that only a few national targets set by parties explicitly refer to the needs of women and Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs). Both stressed the need for inclusive decision making, underscoring that IPLCs, women, and girls are key partners and rights' holders in the implementation of the Convention and the development of the GBF.

The CBD ALLIANCE pointed out that parties have generally failed to adjust domestic legislation and incentives to the CBD objectives, with national budgets showing a lack of prioritization of environmental concerns, inhibiting the achievement of biodiversity targets. Frustrated by the lack of progress towards implementation, the GLOBAL YOUTH BIODIVERSITY NETWORK (GYBN) highlighted the need for systemic change across systems of governance, economics, subsidies, education, and cultures, imploring states not to fall back on "business as usual."

The UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY (UNU) suggested states adopt integrated landscape approaches for addressing gaps in implementation and holistic approaches to ecosystem governance. THIRD WORLD NETWORK (TWN) and IIFB highlighted that the pandemic should not be used as an excuse to avoid existing obligations, calling on renewed commitment by parties to implement their obligations under the CBD, including means of implementation.

Assessment and Review of the Effectiveness of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced the relevant documents (CBD/SBI/3 and Add.1).

Many delegates commended the Liaison Group on the Cartagena Protocol and the Compliance Committee for their contributions.

Malawi, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, noted with concern that just over half of parties have fully introduced the necessary measures to implement the Protocol, as well as the limited progress since the mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Plan. Attributing this, in part, to inadequate access to financial resources, the group supported the recommendation for assistance from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and called for increased support to enhance implementation of the Protocol.

Belarus, for CEE, emphasized the importance of capacity building in the region for implementation of the Protocol. She highlighted the need for support in developing and preparing national reports, ensuring comprehensive collection of information and strengthening intersectoral communication.

Portugal, on behalf of the EU, highlighted the alarming number of parties that still need to fully put in place a functioning biosafety framework and the low number of national reports available for the analysis. She further stressed the importance of capacity building and information sharing under the biosafety clearinghouse.

NORWAY emphasized the need for more research exploring socio-economic considerations arising from the impact of LMOs on biodiversity, including relevant indicators, across local and international levels. BRAZIL noted the voluntary character of the right to consider socio-economic considerations under Cartagena Protocol Article 26, taking into account national circumstances.

COLOMBIA said provisions on socio-economic considerations, public consultation, and international cooperation should be in line with national circumstances, legislation, and priorities. BRAZIL emphasized that the recommendation on risk assessment should stress the importance of compliance with Annex III of the Cartagena Protocol, which constitutes the major framework for identifying and evaluating potential adverse effects of LMOs.

THAILAND and others called for capacity building in risk assessment, risk management, and identification of LMOs. BRAZIL underscored lack of progress in addressing capacity-building needs. CHINA proposed inviting funders to provide assistance for implementation of the Protocol, capacity building, and timely provision of quality national reports. ECUADOR emphasized the need to increase capacity-building efforts, technology transfer, international cooperation, and funding flows.

UGANDA called for capacity building related to infrastructure and highlighted the resource mobilization component for successful implementation. COLOMBIA suggested leveraging resources from all sources, including international cooperation and the private sector, and called for GEF funds for timely submission of national reports. The UK called for the implementation plan to ensure support to those parties facing challenges in accessing sufficient financial resources and technical infrastructure.

NORWAY called for more parties to ratify the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol. ECUADOR and UGANDA noted the importance of public awareness for implementation. IRAN invited the GEF to continue assisting eligible parties, maintaining independence from unilateral sanctions imposed on Iran.

The IIFB noted a gap in involving Indigenous peoples in the compliance committee and the implementation of the Protocol at the national level. She added that one-third of parties have taken into account socio-economic considerations in decision-making on LMOs, inviting them to use the relevant guidance developed by the AHTEG on risk assessment and risk management.

The WOMEN'S CAUCUS called for a gender differentiated framework, enabling women, especially from IPLCs, to make informed decisions and avoid risks associated with LMOs. TWN stressed that, without robust international governance and oversight, the continued development of genome editing, engineered gene drives, and synthetic biology will pose an increased threat to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. She underscored that exporting parties have obligations and should accept liability and responsibility when there is harm from introduction of LMOs.

Resource Mobilization and the Financial Mechanism

This agenda item was discussed on Tuesday and Wednesday. On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced the relevant documents (CBD/SBI3/3/5 and Add.1-Add.3; and CBD/SBI3/3/6 and Add.1-Add.3).

Gustavo Fonseca, GEF Secretariat, introduced the GEF Report on activities linked to its biodiversity focal area (CBD/SBI3/3/6/Add.1). He emphasized improvements in programming efficiency, portfolio performance, and resource mobilization.

Many delegates commended the expert panel on resource mobilization for its work and contribution towards the development of the GBF. Many further emphasized that resource mobilization is an important component of the GBF and instrumental for meeting the Convention's objectives. Interventions further highlighted the work of the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) and stressed the importance of the GEF's eighth replenishment period (GEF-8).

Georgia, for CEE, said that the resource mobilization component under the GBF should be considered in conjunction with other targets, including those on mainstreaming and the elimination of harmful subsidies. She suggested aiming to close the funding gap through all possible mechanisms and drew attention to the role of financial institutions and the private sector.

Kenya, for the AFRICAN GROUP, emphasized the need to raise additional resources from all sources. She proposed, *inter alia*, that, by 2030: all parties set aside a given percentage of their gross domestic product (GDP) for biodiversity-related activities; developed countries set aside a given percentage of their GDP as official development assistance (ODA) for biodiversity-related activities in line with CBD Article 20; and all parties have policy reforms in place to increase domestic financial resources commensurate with the ambition and targets of the GBF.

Antigua and Barbuda, for GRULAC, underscored the challenges that the region faces due to the pandemic, which limit the resources for biodiversity conservation, traditionally provided by national governments. She encouraged developed countries and other donors to contribute towards effective capacity building, technology transfer, and increased financial flows. She further highlighted the need for increased cooperation and innovative solutions.

The EU called for the mobilization of human, financial, technological, and institutional resources from all sources. She stressed that both domestic and international resources should be increased, aligned, and used effectively.

The AFRICAN GROUP and GRULAC called for the elimination of incentives harmful to biodiversity and the promotion of positive incentives, including payments for ecosystem services. The EU noted that the target on harmful subsidies should focus on redirecting, repurposing, or reforming and eliminating them, so that by 2030 incentives are either positive or neutral for biodiversity. CHINA called for redirecting subsidies harmful to biodiversity.

BRAZIL noted that redirecting subsidies will not necessarily reduce the demand for natural resources, suggesting innovative mechanisms, such as payments for ecosystem services. He further called for additional targets on resource mobilization in the draft GBF. CANADA supported a single goal on resource mobilization. SWITZERLAND said that qualitative goals will lead to higher ambition than a numerical target.

AUSTRALIA, JAPAN, the UK, NORWAY, CANADA, COLOMBIA, MEXICO, SOUTH AFRICA, UGANDA, and others called for involving all relevant actors in resource mobilization, including governments, financial institutions, the private sector,

and civil society. NEW ZEALAND suggested a holistic approach, including reference to philanthropic funding. COLOMBIA proposed an allocation of 1% of parties' GDP for biodiversity conservation purposes. SOUTH AFRICA suggested the establishment of a global biodiversity fund.

JAPAN, the UK, SWITZERLAND, COLOMBIA, and MEXICO called for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of available sources. JAPAN added it is unrealistic to anticipate an increased flow of financial resources due to the pandemic. CHINA stressed the need to optimize resource allocation.

CHINA, BRAZIL, ARGENTINA, and ECUADOR highlighted the responsibility of developed countries to provide financial support according to CBD Article 20. SOUTH AFRICA drew attention to resources required for the effective implementation of the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols.

AUSTRALIA noted the importance of national biodiversity finance plans, reminding participants that domestic implementation remains the sovereign right of parties. NEW ZEALAND, the UK, and BRAZIL said that national biodiversity finance plans should take into account national circumstances. CANADA supported the plans in principle, but requested further discussions.

MEXICO called for approving the resource mobilization strategy at the same time as the GBF to ensure implementation. SWITZERLAND suggested first deciding on the goals and then adopting a strategy on resource mobilization.

NORWAY emphasized the importance of transparent reporting on financing under a simple and efficient relevant framework. CANADA supported a streamlined reporting framework, taking into account lessons learned.

UGANDA suggested multi-focal partnerships involving different multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). NORWAY called for synergies between the three Rio Conventions. GUATEMALA proposed including contributions by IPLCs in the suggested targets for resource mobilization so that they are fully recognized and valued.

IIFB stressed the importance of tenure security in protecting biodiversity. He called for an indicator on public-private partnerships, including a feedback mechanism for IPLCs. The CBD ALLIANCE stressed the importance of corporate accountability and responsibility for activities harmful to biodiversity. THE NATURE CONSERVANCY, representing many global environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs), emphasized the role and responsibility of the financial services' sector and financial institutions.

The WOMEN'S CAUCUS, GYBN, and the CBD ALLIANCE emphasized that policy reforms should eliminate incentives that harm ecosystems, biodiversity, and local livelihoods, noting that this especially concerns subsidies promoting extractive activities, monoculture tree plantations, and industrial agriculture. GYBN also asked for developing countries to receive debt relief during the post-pandemic period and stressed the importance of financial support to IPLCs.

ICLEI - LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FOR SUSTAINABILITY emphasized the key role of local and subnational governments in applying budgetary safeguards and procurement practices that promote biodiversity mainstreaming. The WORLD BANK GROUP asked for stronger recognition of the fact that GBF implementation will not only generate costs, but also economic benefits, strengthening the mainstreaming of biodiversity concerns

across financial sectors. The CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES asked for specific reference in the draft recommendation to the advice from other biodiversity-related conventions in relation to GEF's eighth replenishment cycle.

Capacity Building, Cooperation, Knowledge Management, and Communication

The informal meeting addressed the main part of this agenda item on Wednesday, with a final round of interventions taking place on Thursday. The Secretariat introduced the relevant documents (CBD/SBI/3/7, Add.1, and Add.2; CBD/SBI/3/8 and Add.1; and CBD/SBI/3/9). The documents, in addition to many relevant information documents (CBD/SBI/3/INF.1, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, and 17) address a wide array of topics, including:

- a draft long-term strategic framework for capacity development;
- draft terms of reference for an informal advisory group on technical and scientific cooperation;
- proposals for an inclusive process to review and renew technical and scientific cooperation, as well as strengthen it, in support of the GBF;
- a preliminary final report on the implementation of the short-term action plan 2017-2020;
- draft elements of a post-2020 work programme for the Clearinghouse Mechanism (CHM);
- the knowledge management component in the GBF and strategic elements to enhance it; and
- communication, education, and public awareness activities.

Many delegates noted that capacity development is crucial for the implementation of the GBF. Many further welcomed the long-term draft strategic framework for capacity development, and the proposals to strengthen technical and scientific cooperation.

Georgia, for CEE, noted that the long-term strategic framework for capacity development should be stakeholder-driven, meeting countries' needs. She added that lessons learned from the implementation of the short-term plan for 2017-2020 need to be taken into account.

The Democratic Republic of Congo, for the AFRICAN GROUP, lamented that initiatives on capacity building and technology transfer fall short of the parties' needs, suggesting diversification of modalities and methods.

The EU emphasized national capacity-building plans integrated in NBSAPs. She further called for addressing capacity development for the Cartagena Protocol with a stand-alone document.

Singapore, for ASEAN, underscored the importance of capacity building across different sectors, including biodiversity literacy, climate action, public health responses, and smart cities.

JAPAN emphasized the need to identify the missing elements in capacity development and related cost implications, prior to establishing new bodies, like the suggested biodiversity capacity development forum. He further noted the importance of tracking progress after the completion of capacity-building projects, and requested removing digital sequence information from related activities since the issue is contentious and still under discussion.

BRAZIL emphasized that capacity building should be tailored to national and regional needs and realities. He cautioned that the use of additional guidance and complementary indicators on capacity building could duplicate existing efforts, noting that adding specific categories of capacity building will add to the framework's complexity. NORWAY questioned the need to copy several mechanisms from climate action regarding capacity building,

calling for demand-driven and needs-tailored capacity development by competent institutions. The UK supported greater mobilization of networks of institutions and communities regarding capacity development, cautioning against duplication of efforts.

THAILAND, ETHIOPIA, CHINA, and others called for capacity development and financial resources to be channeled towards developing countries for effective implementation of the Convention. CHINA further highlighted its role in South-South cooperation. GUATEMALA asked for the new capacity development framework to be more inclusive, taking into consideration the participation of IPLCs, women, youth, and the inclusion of citizen science and its actors in processes.

On technical and scientific cooperation, CEE stressed that involvement of parties is key in the review process, calling for developing a better understanding of national circumstances. The AFRICAN GROUP noted that the region will present its priorities for new technical and cooperation programmes during the formal meeting of SBI 3.

The EU said that institutional arrangements for cooperation should be in line with the resource mobilization strategy. SWITZERLAND asked for caution regarding the establishment of a new institutional mechanism on technical and scientific cooperation, calling instead for more effective biodiversity mainstreaming across existing mechanisms for efficient capacity and resource use. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA emphasized the need for stronger relationships with other biodiversity conventions and existing knowledge mechanisms, such as the Consortium of Scientific Partners on biodiversity and IPBES.

THAILAND drew attention to the sharing of experiences and lessons learned among parties. PANAMA appealed to parties to step up efforts to further improve the outcome-based management methods of technical and scientific cooperation projects, in order to strengthen the assessments' relevance, quality, and impact.

CEE emphasized knowledge management as vital for implementation, adding the need for capacity development for parties in relation to knowledge generation and analysis, and pointed to language barriers as an obstacle. The EU and ASEAN stressed the important role of the CHM, calling for further development of a national clearinghouse mechanism tool.

CANADA noted the importance of including evidence from diverse knowledge systems, especially calling for the inclusion of IPLCs in the development of a knowledge management component in the GBF. THAILAND stressed the benefits of national ecosystem assessments. ETHIOPIA and UGANDA supported the establishment of a global knowledge center for biodiversity and regional sub-centers. UGANDA further highlighted the importance of a knowledge management component for enhancing the generation, collection, organization, sharing, and use of knowledge for the effective implementation of the GBF. ARGENTINA asked for more information on financial implications of establishing global or regional centers, as well more information on the strengths and weaknesses of the respective options.

On communication, CEE called for involving communication specialists and designing distinct campaigns for different stakeholder groups. The EU underscored the importance of communication strategies, noting that all relevant organizations should be included. NORWAY said that communication and outreach are essential to reach actors outside the biodiversity family.

IIFB, the WOMEN's CAUCUS, and the CBD ALLIANCE emphasized the significance and unique characteristics of Indigenous and local value and knowledge systems, calling on states to include these within capacity development programmes in culturally appropriate ways and in accordance with the free prior and informed consent of knowledge holders.

GYBN stressed that capacity development frameworks should include knowledge that fosters intergenerational partnerships. The CBD ALLIANCE highlighted the need to put technical cooperation into the context of state obligations tied to precaution, participation, free prior and informed consent, liability and redress, and the rights-based approach. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) underlined the importance of a partnerships approach to capacity development, highlighting relevant work under the IUCN PANORAMA initiative.

SUBNATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS emphasized the importance of North-South cooperation, and called for adequate resources to be made available for subnational and local governments to support cooperation and communication activities. The ASEAN CENTRE FOR BIODIVERSITY highlighted their work towards capacity development in the ASEAN region. UNU called for inclusive decision-making and governance for effective GBF implementation.

Mechanisms for Reporting, Assessment, and Review of Implementation

This item was addressed on Thursday. The Secretariat introduced the relevant documents (CBD/SBI/3/11, Add.1, Add.2, and Add.3/Rev.1), further drawing attention to information documents CBD/SBI/3/INF/3, 11, and 20.

Discussions focused on, *inter alia*, the role and revision of NBSAPs, modalities for national reports, reporting templates, processes to evaluate progress, and implementation reviews.

Delegates agreed that strengthening reporting, assessment, and review of implementation is crucial for achieving the objectives of the Convention and the GBF. Many emphasized that NBSAPs are the main tool for implementation at the national level, calling for respecting their central planning function and questioning the idea of national contributions. Some delegations stressed that efforts should focus on enhancing current review mechanisms and cautioned against creating new obligations.

Georgia, for CEE, stressed that implementation of the reporting and review mechanism will depend on access to adequate and predictable funding, noting that the pandemic leaves less time for implementation. Egypt, for the AFRICAN GROUP, CAMBODIA, CHINA, COLOMBIA, and others urged for timely financial support, capacity building, and technical and scientific cooperation.

Portugal, on behalf of the EU, highlighted the need for a whole-of-society approach. He noted that NBSAPs, the main tool for implementation at the national level, should be revised in line with the GBF. He further urged for a more transparent, comparable, and reliable review process for the GBF.

NORWAY and the UK said that NBSAPs should continue to allow for flexibility, but also be strengthened by introducing common elements. CANADA noted NBSAPs are at the center of the planning process, adding that improvements can be made to ensure they are comparable, reflect all targets, and include a cost component. COLOMBIA and MEXICO said NBSAPs should be standardized for comparability and assessment of collective progress.

SWITZERLAND supported a robust reporting and review mechanism, containing a country-specific component and agreed headline indicators. The UK called for a timely review to identify areas requiring additional attention and a ratcheting-up mechanism. CHINA noted that monitoring should take into account national circumstances and capacities. COSTA RICA highlighted the inclusion of commitments by non-state actors, calling for further discussion on relevant reporting and monitoring modalities. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA called for learning from past experiences and allowing for sufficient time between setting goals and reporting on progress.

BRAZIL and ARGENTINA noted serious concerns about the proposed multidimensional approach on planning, reporting, and review, including the notion of national contributions, adding it is a considerable departure from previous practice of the Convention. MEXICO said that the multidimensional approach should be revised in light of budgetary implications. ARGENTINA cautioned against introducing new obligations. BRAZIL expressed concerns for the suggested global biodiversity monitoring system and country-by-country review.

Regarding a global stocktake of progress and gap reports during the implementation cycle, CEE suggested that parties provide responses to the GEF to enable such a process and ensure transparency and accountability. The EU supported preparing a global gap report before each COP comparing aggregated national and regional data with the corresponding targets. He added that a global stocktake should be prepared for COPs 17 and 19.

NORWAY, the UK, SWITZERLAND, ETHIOPIA, UGANDA, and others supported a global biodiversity stocktake at regular intervals. NEW ZEALAND supported more cyclical reporting and review models, and a regular global stocktake, noting that further discussion is needed on the most useful information sources.

JAPAN said global gap reports can be included in SBI documents or the GBO for simplicity and efficiency. He stressed that, while supportive of the idea of a global stocktake, there is still room for improvement in terms of efficiency.

CEE emphasized that the structure and template of national reporting should be adopted at the beginning of the implementation cycle. The AFRICAN GROUP suggested a draft recommendation to develop a simplified and flexible template, and make it available through the CHM.

The EU underscored the use of standardized indicators. JAPAN called for ensuring that national reporting is carried out in line with a common format and indicators. Cautioning against broadening the scope of national reports, BRAZIL suggested simplifying the reporting process and providing parties the option to employ additional indicators.

CANADA supported the template for national reporting, noting small suggestions. NEW ZEALAND suggested further discussions on national reporting, and making use of existing data that can be efficiently collected at a global scale.

JAPAN supported country-by-country review of implementation, cautioning that an independent, objective peer review process needs to take into account national circumstances. NORWAY and SWITZERLAND opted for an independent, objective review process by technical experts, conducted against agreed standards.

On synergies, CEE underscored the need to involve the focal points of other biodiversity-related conventions at an early stage of the planning process and the use of common indicators where

relevant. The AFRICAN GROUP called for the promotion of partnerships with important stakeholders. The UK called for synergies with other MEAs to avoid duplication of efforts.

COSTA RICA underscored that planning and reporting under the GBF must improve linkages with other processes to minimize the reporting burden and maximize synergies and cooperation. CAMBODIA and SWITZERLAND suggested considering a joint reporting format for all biodiversity-related conventions. CAMBODIA further proposed establishing national multi-sectoral biodiversity steering committees, to monitor stakeholders' achievements.

CANADA called for strategic references in the GBF, highlighting the contributions made by IPLCs, women, youth, and subnational and local governments.

IIFB highlighted gaps in the inclusion of contributions of IPLCs in national reporting, including work under the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols. IIFB and the WOMEN'S CAUCUS stressed the importance of developing indicators in the GBF to ensure reporting is tied to gender mainstreaming and the use of traditional and local knowledges. GYBN and the CBD ALLIANCE asked states to ensure transparent and accessible mechanisms for consultation and feedback from all stakeholders in reporting, assessment, and review processes.

SUBNATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS called for a whole-of-government approach and the development of reporting templates and guidance for the further engagement of local authorities. The BUSINESS FOR NATURE COALITION called for incentivizing the participation of non-state actors and provided suggestions for strengthening the framework's ambition.

Biodiversity Mainstreaming

The informal meeting addressed the agenda item on mainstreaming of biodiversity between and across sectors, and other strategic actions to enhance implementation, on Thursday, Friday, and Sunday.

The Secretariat presented the relevant documents (CBD/SBI/3/13, Add.1, and CBD/SBI/3/19), further drawing attention to information documents CBD/SBI/3/INF/6, 10, 21, 25, and 26. The documents contain a draft long-term strategic approach to mainstreaming biodiversity and a relevant action plan.

Providing introductory remarks, Theresa Mundita Lim (the Philippines), Chair of the informal advisory group on mainstreaming, emphasized the need to recognize mainstreaming as the most transformative of the GBF components. She outlined five key areas: mainstreaming across all levels of governance; budgeting and incentives; involvement of economic sectors; the finance sector as a cross-cutting one; and empowerment and participation of all sectors of society, especially rights' holders.

The UK introduced a submission on the engagement of subnational governments, cities, and other local authorities in the GBF. She highlighted the Edinburgh process, a consultation led by the Scottish government for subnational and local authorities, and the relevant Edinburgh declaration, which will remain open for signature until COP 15.

Delegates stressed the importance of biodiversity mainstreaming for achieving the objectives of the Convention and its 2050 vision of living in harmony with nature, and its central role in the GBF. Many welcomed the draft long-term strategic approach to mainstreaming biodiversity and the corresponding action plan and commended

the informal advisory group for its work. They underscored the importance of integrating biodiversity and ecosystem services into policies and actions at all levels and sectors.

Morocco, for the AFRICAN GROUP, highlighted the need to identify potential obstacles to mainstreaming. He stressed that the implementation of a long-term approach calls for the mobilization of all relevant actors, as well as capacity building, technology transfer, and financial resources.

The Philippines, for ASEAN, drew attention to regional activities to strengthen biodiversity mainstreaming and cross-sectoral collaboration, stressing they demonstrate regional efforts in adopting a whole-of-community approach.

Georgia, for CEE, underscored that, despite progress, mainstreaming is still one of the weakest areas regarding implementation, noting different interpretations by parties and stakeholders. She added that mainstreaming is interlinked with targets related to resource mobilization and subsidies, emphasizing that they should be considered jointly.

Portugal, for the EU, noted that further work is needed in the long-term strategic approach and the action plan to include all economic sectors, their value chains, and cross-cutting activities. He suggested, with CANADA, the development of a revised draft following submission of comments by parties.

BRAZIL pointed varying approaches to mainstreaming and differing national socio-economic conditions, cautioning against a "one-size-fits-all" approach. He further cautioned against introducing unfeasible obligations when engaging the private sector. He called for further work on the long-term strategic approach and the action plan, noting that most actions in the draft prejudice the best instruments to promote mainstreaming.

CHINA proposed further clarifying the relationship between the indicators of the long-term strategic approach for mainstreaming and those of the GBF. JAPAN suggested aligning the two sets of indicators. He further cautioned against using the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) producer support estimates and the fishery support estimates, expressing concern about reference to fisheries subsidies while negotiations are ongoing under the World Trade Organization.

AUSTRALIA drew attention to the interdependence between biodiversity and human health, and called for fully recognizing the important role of IPLCs, women, and youth. UGANDA said that mainstreaming should include participatory and inclusive mechanisms, taking into account national capacities and conditions. THAILAND called for mainstreaming of biodiversity into the financial, banking, and insurance sectors, and, with CHILE and ETHIOPIA, suggested inviting parties to report on lessons learned and success stories from mainstreaming activities.

CHILE called for incentivizing the private sector towards nature-based solutions. COLOMBIA noted that the long-term strategic approach should include efficient use of water resources, efficient use of fertilizers, increased land productivity, and improvements in energy efficiency and the disposal of solid waste and sewage. ECUADOR urged taking into account varying national realities and cost-effectiveness in implementation. ARGENTINA called for retaining flexibility to adjust to national circumstances, based on social inclusion, gender responsiveness, and human rights.

CANADA called for a long-term approach that is not duplicative of existing initiatives, addressing mainstreaming in a tangible and practical way. SWITZERLAND called for enabling, open-ended

mechanisms to attract all sectors, organizations, and stakeholders, noting that many suggested measures, such as perverse incentives, should be addressed under the GBF. NORWAY suggested reporting on progress on mainstreaming through national reports, with links to goals and targets.

The AFRICAN GROUP, the UK, and COLOMBIA called for greater synergies between the three Rio Conventions and other international agreements in full alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SWITZERLAND said that mutually agreed programmes of work are the best way to build partnerships.

SINGAPORE, the UK, and CANADA emphasized the involvement of subnational governments, cities, and other local authorities, and highlighted the Edinburgh process. The UK called for adopting a dedicated decision on subnational governments at COP 15.

The AFRICAN GROUP and CANADA supported the extension of the mandate of the informal advisory group. The EU noted that renewal could be considered, adding that its members are open to further ideas. SWITZERLAND suggested amending the advisory group's terms of reference to allow for broader stakeholder engagement.

IIFB, GYBN, and the CBD ALLIANCE noted that IPLCs, women, and youth continue to be neglected and marginalized, resulting in the collective failure to adequately address biodiversity loss. They also stressed the importance of stronger regulatory mechanisms for actors and corporations driving biodiversity loss. The CBD ALLIANCE warned against corporate capture of negotiations, and the strengthening of business platforms across the Convention, given that their priority is profit over planetary health.

SUBNATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS highlighted that, at the time of speaking, 115 subnational and local governments had signed the Edinburgh Declaration, committing to play their part in mainstreaming biodiversity. They invited participants to consult relevant information documents on local experiences.

Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

This agenda item was addressed on Tuesday and Friday. On Tuesday, delegates addressed the sub-item on the implementation plan and capacity-building action plan for the Cartagena Protocol. They also heard introductory remarks from the Co-Chairs of the Working Group on the GBF. The main discussion on the GBF took place on Friday, following the conclusion of other agenda items.

The Co-Chairs of the Working Group on the GBF outlined questions pertinent to the development of the framework. SBI Chair Sörqvist invited delegates to address these questions during discussions of all relevant agenda items.

Co-Chair Basile van Havre (Canada) focused on questions related to resource mobilization, including needs, savings, source of funds, and national biodiversity finance plans.

Co-Chair Francis Ogwal (Uganda) addressed questions on: capacity building and development; knowledge generation, management, and sharing; technical and scientific cooperation, technology transfer, and innovation; and transparency and responsibility regarding reporting and review.

On Friday, the Secretariat introduced the relevant documents (CBD/SBI/3/4, Add.1, and Add.2). The documents contain an overview of the GBF process, including a draft decision on implementation, a communication strategy for the GBF, and a draft outline of the post-2020 gender plan of action.

Anne Teller, Co-Lead of the second consultation workshop of biodiversity-related conventions on the GBF (Bern II), provided a briefing on the workshop's outcomes. She noted that representatives from 13 MEAs attended the workshop, and addressed opportunities for cooperation on planning, monitoring, review, and implementation.

Many delegates noted that the GBF goals and targets need to address, in a balanced way, the three objectives of the Convention.

The EU emphasized the importance of gender responsiveness in implementation of the GBF, and promoted the One Health approach and the integration of biodiversity into national policies in the post-pandemic recovery.

Georgia, on behalf of CEE, reiterated the importance of a clear and strong communication strategy to ensure inclusive and holistic implementation of the GBF across society.

South Africa, for the AFRICAN GROUP, MEXICO, and others underscored that means of implementation are an integral part of the GBF. UGANDA called for financial support for review and reporting, including the preparation of national reports.

ARGENTINA emphasized the lack of necessary means to implement national and global strategies, and stressed that the level of ambition of GBF goals and that of resource mobilization targets must be commensurate and adopted as a package. BRAZIL highlighted the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Costa Rica, on behalf of GRULAC, stressed the need to consider approaches tied to intergenerational equity, One Health, gender responsiveness, and human rights in the development and implementation of the GBF.

The AFRICAN GROUP and BRAZIL called for addressing digital sequence information in the GBF, underscoring that lack of relevant provisions may render the Convention obsolete in the future.

The UK called for transparent reporting, monitoring, and review mechanisms that strengthen implementation and resource mobilization. JAPAN suggested further considering the timing of the global stocktake, asking for flexibility in planning.

SWITZERLAND emphasized that the Working Group on the GBF is where the entire package will be negotiated, adding that the work of subsidiary bodies enhances common understanding. He expressed concerns about the introduction of concepts not previously agreed, such as the idea of national commitments, and emphasized that adopting recommendations without prior knowledge of the content of the GBF makes sense for just a few agenda items.

The AFRICAN GROUP, MEXICO, NEW ZEALAND, the UK, ARGENTINA, and others supported the development of a gender plan of action. MEXICO highlighted the need to strengthen existing mechanisms and foster partnerships, and, with ARGENTINA, the communication strategy. CANADA stressed that both the gender plan of action and the communication strategy should be in the main decision text to portray their importance. Many delegates pointed to a participatory, inclusive process with the involvement of IPLCs.

CEE, NEW ZEALAND, and NORWAY asked for parties to remain flexible and open to considering differing options for continuing formal discussions on the GBF. NORWAY noted that the GBF Working Group's mandate is wide enough to respond to emerging situations, urging continuing work in an open-ended,

flexible way. CANADA emphasized the long-term benefits of virtual meetings, expressing optimism that discussions can continue in such a way, given the constantly evolving global circumstances.

IIFB, WOMEN's CAUCUS, GYBN, and the CBD ALLIANCE stressed the importance of ensuring that the GBF adopts a human-rights-based approach. They also asked for concrete steps to ensure effective and just implementation that is gender responsive and recognizes the key roles of IPLCs, women, and youth.

IIFB emphasized the need for activities and provisions that foster equitable access and governance of lands, resources, and data. GYBN called for considering digital inequality, which is hindering the participation of representatives from developing countries, IPLCs, women, youth, and other observers in virtual processes. The CBD ALLIANCE reiterated party obligations to address unsustainable production causing biodiversity loss. UN WOMEN argued that women's contributions to conservation and sustainable use need to be identified, mapped, valued, and tracked.

Implementation plan and capacity-building action plan for the Cartagena Protocol: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced the relevant document (CBD/SBI/3/18).

Belarus, on behalf of CEE, stressed the need for developing a specific post-2020 implementation plan for the Protocol that is anchored in, and complementary to the GBF.

Portugal, for the EU, noted with concern that an alarmingly high number of parties do not have fully functioning biosafety frameworks, and that few had joined the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress. She suggested including indicators to measure the success of capacity building and its contribution in implementation.

South Africa, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, noted that, so far, biosafety elements are not adequately integrated into the development of the GBF. He further stressed the importance of adequate resource allocation for implementation of the capacity-building action plan and the implementation plan, and highlighted the contribution of the GEF as the financial mechanism for the Protocol.

BRAZIL proposed the inclusion of an indicator on cooperation among parties with regard to risk management. CHINA pointed out that the targets on resource mobilization are largely domestic, asking for further mobilizing international support and cooperation between countries. NEW ZEALAND suggested additional objectives, indicators, and key areas for capacity building, stating that this will provide clarity and focus on gaps inhibiting effective implementation of the Protocol.

GYBN and TWN highlighted, *inter alia*, potential cultural, health, and socio-economic impacts, and called for access to information, full participation of rights' holders, and mechanisms to enable participation in decision-making.

Specialized International ABS Instruments

The informal meeting addressed the topic of specialized international access and benefit-sharing (ABS) instruments in the context of Article 4, paragraph 4, of the Nagoya Protocol, on Friday and Sunday. The Secretariat introduced the relevant document (CBD/SBI/3/14).

Malawi, for the AFRICAN GROUP, said that the criteria for specialized international ABS instruments should ensure recognition of provider countries of genetic resources, IPLCs, and compliance measures for legal clarity, cautioning against weakening the Protocol and potential fragmentation of ABS instruments. She highlighted

the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), noting with concern that discussions to enhance the functioning of the multilateral system under the Treaty has been ongoing for six years. She further drew attention to the World Health Organization's Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework (PIP Framework). UGANDA called for compliance measures and special attention to provider countries and IPLCs. TOGO highlighted special considerations, including inappropriate utilization, which currently fall outside the scope of specialized international instruments as well as cases of change of intent.

Belarus, for CEE, supported the draft recommendation included in the document, stressing that expanding areas of cooperation and coordination of measures of relevant international treaties is essential in achieving the three CBD objectives.

The EU and CHINA noted that paragraph 4 of Article 4 of the Nagoya Protocol should not be considered in isolation of the other paragraphs in the article. The EU added that any criteria developed should not be more stringent than the wording of Article 4 or discourage the recognition of future instruments. She further noted, supported by the UK, that the instrument must be agreed by an intergovernmental process, but not necessarily be developed by one.

The UK agreed that the indicative criteria for specialized instruments should strengthen coordination and mutual support between these instruments and the Nagoya Protocol, stressing, however, that the criteria should not narrow the scope of Article 4, nor run counter to the objectives of the Convention or the Protocol. ARGENTINA supported criteria with reference elements that guide the development and recognition of specialized ABS agreements, taking into account the obligations and responsibilities under the Nagoya Protocol, while also not undermining the sovereign rights of states.

SWITZERLAND stressed that Article 4 of the Protocol leaves the recognition of legitimate specialized ABS agreements open to individual countries. He suggested that the indicative criteria shall only serve as a general and non-prescriptive guideline for parties, and not limit future initiatives. JAPAN suggested requesting parties to include information towards the development or implementation of international ABS instruments not only in national reports, but also in the ABS Clearinghouse. NORWAY stressed that there is no "one size fits all" approach for such instruments, supporting developing guidance, while also allowing for a customized approach when necessary.

IIFB cautioned against the promotion of any instruments with lower standards than those set by the Nagoya Protocol. She emphasized the need for complementarity and mutual support on the recognition of IPLCs' rights and traditional knowledge under the Nagoya Protocol, the ITPGRFA, and the World Health Organization. TWN highlighted the PIP Framework as a potential model. She emphasized that for many human pathogens not under the PIP Framework, including zoonoses, current regulations and practices are not Nagoya compliant, highlighting instances of biopiracy by actors across the pharmaceutical industry.

ITPGRFA highlighted joint activities under the CBD and the Treaty since the Nagoya Protocol's adoption, calling for not creating a hierarchy of instruments. He welcomed IIFB's suggestion for joint activities with the Protocol on IPLCs and traditional knowledge.

Global Multilateral Benefit-Sharing Mechanism (Article 10 of the Nagoya Protocol)

On Sunday, the Secretariat introduced the relevant documents (CBD/SBI/3/15 and Add.1). The documents include a study to identify specific cases of genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources that occur in transboundary situations or for which it is not possible to grant or obtain prior informed consent.

South Africa, for the AFRICAN GROUP, stressed that establishing a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism could increase legal certainty and ensure that benefits currently falling outside the bilateral model are taken into account and contribute to the objectives of the Convention. She highlighted cases of ecosystems and genetic resources shared by parties as well as ex situ collections of unknown origins. UGANDA reiterated the need for a global mechanism, including for users with no contractual obligations under the bilateral approach.

ARGENTINA called for continuing relevant work on the need for a global mechanism, including establishing an AHTEG. BRAZIL highlighted that a growing number of parties recognize the instances where a global agreement is relevant, and supported the implementation of a global mechanism. He appreciated the suggestions for an AHTEG, hoping that this will further the understanding of cases within the scope of Article 10.

Belarus, for CEE, emphasized the need to strengthen the ongoing implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. She noted that the conditions under which a global mechanism is preferable should be further explored, including innovative solutions for genetic resources in transboundary situations.

The EU and the UK emphasized that the collection of cases does not establish the necessity for a global benefit-sharing mechanism, thus discussions on modalities are premature. The EU, the UK, and JAPAN stressed that marine genetic resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction fall outside the scope of the Convention and the Nagoya Protocol and are currently addressed in the ongoing negotiations under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The EU, SWITZERLAND, and JAPAN further noted that genetic resources in transboundary situations can be addressed under relevant provisions on cooperation. SWITZERLAND added that many of the submitted cases fall outside the geographic, temporal, or subject matter scope of the Nagoya Protocol. The UK added that provisions under the Nagoya Protocol are not the appropriate way to address potential benefit-sharing arising from the use of digital sequence information. NORWAY noted that while they don't see any value in establishing a global mechanism, they are open to discussing its need and potential modalities, depending on support by other parties.

CEE and the EU called for working closely with the ITPGRFA, learning from mutual experiences. The EU added lessons learned from the PIP Framework and discussions under UNCLOS.

IIFB stressed that transborder peoples have been forced to move due to varying laws and contexts within states, noting that many IPLCs have suffered a violation of their rights in this regard. She suggested establishing a global mechanism to address transboundary knowledge. She also reminded participants of the importance of setting up cultural and financial redress for IPLCs that have had their traditional knowledge taken and used against their rights under free prior and informed consent, including in the case of "traditional knowledge of unknown origin."

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

On Sunday, the Secretariat introduced the relevant document (CBD/SBI/3/12). Discussions focused on experiences on holding concurrent and virtual meetings.

Regarding holding concurrent meetings of the Convention and its Protocols, delegates stressed benefits associated with increased integration, cost-effectiveness, ability to address cross-cutting issues, and improved coordination and synergies among focal points. They further emphasized associated challenges, especially for small delegations, stressing the need to ensure appropriate, full, and effective representation. SWITZERLAND invited all parties in a position to do so to contribute to the trust fund for facilitating participation of parties from developing countries.

On virtual meetings, Egypt, for the AFRICAN GROUP, noted that the region remains flexible on continued participation in virtual meetings, noting the need to enhance capacities and make available the technological facilities for effective participation.

The EU and the UK stressed that virtual meetings could prove crucial for advancing the CBD agenda and preparing the GBF. The EU underscored that, despite limitations, several benefits exist including reduced environmental impact and financial costs, and increased participation. He further called for an assessment of financial implications of holding meetings virtually, in full or in part, and develop similar suggestions.

The UK and SWITZERLAND supported holding formal meetings in virtual settings. SWITZERLAND pointed to successfully holding the first part of the UN Environment Assembly online.

ARGENTINA and CHILE welcomed virtual meetings to facilitate common understanding prior to formal meetings, but called for postponing any decision-making bodies until conditions are met for in-person meetings. They outlined connectivity problems, time zone-related difficulties, and problems in coordination of both regional and stakeholders' positions.

IIFB, GYBN, and TWN highlighted that many people across the world face significant barriers to accessing virtual meetings. In light of this, they warned that a move towards formal virtual negotiations for the GBF would mean undermining the CBD's principles of inclusivity and participation. TWN noted that although smaller meetings, such as consultations and workshops should continue, they should be convened in a transparent, inclusive, and participatory manner.

Administrative Matters and Closure of the Informal Meeting

On Sunday, the Secretariat introduced the relevant document on administrative and budgetary matters (CBD/SBI/3/17). The meeting took note of the document without further comments.

In closing remarks, CBD Executive Secretary Elizabeth Maruma Mrema thanked everyone for contributing to a successful meeting, which enhanced mutual understanding of key issues on the SBI's agenda.

SBI Chair Charlotta Sörqvist said that the meeting succeeded in maintaining the required momentum, noting it attracted more than 1,200 daily participants. She thanked all delegates and observers for their contributions towards the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and towards ensuring meaningful recommendations at the formal session of SBI 3. She closed the meeting at 2:53 pm GMT.

A Brief Analysis of the Meeting

2020 was expected to be a “super year” for biodiversity. It was not. A busy, carefully crafted, and interrelated meeting schedule, culminating in Kunming, China, for the 15th meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Conference of the Parties (COP 15), collapsed under the pressure of the COVID-19 pandemic. Admittedly, the conditions were unforeseeable. Planes grounded and meetings postponed left the Convention, and the world without a post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF), which was originally scheduled for adoption in October 2020 at COP 15.

The urgency to maintain momentum under continued pandemic-related restrictions led to the convening of virtual meetings, such as this informal meeting, in preparation of the third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI 3). This brief analysis focuses on the week’s deliberations, which provided an important, albeit informal, platform for exchanging views and promoting mutual understanding on the development of the GBF.

It’s All About Implementation

Throughout the week, the informal meeting addressed the SBI’s agenda, including the review of progress of the Strategic Plan 2011-2020, and issues concerning the Convention’s Protocols, such as the assessment and review of the effectiveness of the Cartagena Protocol or specialized access and benefit-sharing instruments and a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism under the Nagoya Protocol. Still, most items directly interlinked with the GBF, including resource mobilization, mainstreaming, capacity building, and mechanisms for reporting, assessment, and review of implementation.

These interlinkages were evident as these items fall directly under the mandate of the Open-ended Working Group on the GBF. The Working Group’s Co-Chairs presented a list of relevant questions, seeking inputs from the informal meeting and ultimately SBI 3. Some delegates stressed that final decisions on the GBF can only be taken by the Working Group, given its mandate. However, this creates a potential problem for the SBI. Many of the recommendations that the formal SBI 3 session needs to adopt are linked to the GBF so their content will ultimately depend upon the framework’s successful development. In the words of one delegate, “there are few areas where it makes sense to adopt recommendations without knowing the GBF.” This creates a chicken and egg situation: the GBF needs SBI inputs for its successful development while the SBI needs the GBF to adopt meaningful recommendations.

While the majority of participants called for raising the level of ambition in the GBF to address serious threats to biodiversity, some emphasized that it is not ambition that is lacking, but rather adequate means of implementation. Throughout the meeting, developing parties underscored the need for support, including capacity development, financial support, and technology transfer.

During the meeting, delegates discussed both general ideas, such as capacity development or mainstreaming, as well as more specific suggestions. The latter included proposals for establishing a global knowledge center and regional sub-centers for biodiversity under the agenda item on knowledge management or proposals for periodical gap reports and global stocktakes, under the agenda item on review of progress.

Other items, such as the proposed multidimensional approach on planning, reporting, and review generated concerns, with most delegates questioning the notion of national contributions. Many reaffirmed national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) as the main tool for planning and implementation at the national level. In that respect, participants exchanged views on standardizing the structure and formats of national reports to facilitate comparability and aggregation.

A Glass Half Full

The informal meeting allowed for maintaining momentum and enhancing mutual understanding. It renewed the sense of urgency and reconnected the biodiversity community. Its proceedings will greatly assist the formal discussions at SBI 3, allowing additional time for negotiations and augmenting the chances of a positive outcome, as long as the more than 200 interventions during the informal meeting do not get repeated at the formal session. The informal meeting was well-organized, punctual, and faced few technical challenges. It further provided ample time for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and relevant bodies to express their views on all agenda items. Thus, it can be considered a success.

Civil society’s full and effective participation was a point of discussion during the informal meeting in preparation for the 24th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 24) in February 2021. At that meeting, time constraints often led to curtailing the participation of NGOs and civil society, including one day when 20 NGOs were unable to speak on synthetic biology. Providing appropriate space for civil society is central for maintaining the unique, open, and inclusive character of the Convention. At the SBI informal meeting, statements by both parties and civil society representatives made increasingly clear the indispensable role of local actors, especially Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs), women, and youth, in the development and implementation of the GBF and post-pandemic recovery.

Interventions by civil society throughout the week stressed that issues of substance continue to plague and threaten the GBF’s potential for achieving true transformative change. In the words of a youth representative, the draft is “not inspiring enough, not transformative enough, nor brave enough.” Civil society pointed out that the zero draft of the GBF fails to embrace more diverse perspectives that can move us away from the status quo. These perspectives include structures that respect human rights, take economic transformation seriously, appreciate the linkage between biodiversity and cultural diversity, including in knowledge and value systems, and recognize front line actors as key partners in the development and implementation of the GBF. Civil society participants noted that many of these issues are cross-cutting, and should be reflected in the targets and indicators across the framework.

Echoing calls by civil society, many parties recognized the importance of strengthening the participation of civil society actors, especially IPLCs, women, and youth. Many also emphasized the importance of human rights, gender considerations, and inter-generational equity. While many civil society participants welcomed this support, they will look to the formal sessions to see if parties continue to champion their concerns, and whether the development of the GBF upholds principles of participation and inclusivity.

A Glass Half Empty

While the informal meeting was successful in terms of organization, enhancing mutual understanding, and involving civil society, it was also evident during the week that a significant amount of work lies ahead to reach agreement on the GBF. Differing, often opposing, positions exist on a number of issues, ranging from umbrella items, such as the resource mobilization goals and targets, to details of the reporting format. While everything, including minor disagreements, will eventually need to be agreed upon, the fact that fundamental differences in opinion persist on major issues is cause for concern.

All delegates were on the same page regarding the need to mobilize resources from all sources and sectors to curb biodiversity loss, including innovative financing, but the modalities for this mobilization and the allocation of the required financial flows are still to be decided. Many developing countries emphasized obligations under CBD Article 20, which, *inter alia*, calls on developed parties to provide financial resources to developing ones, in accordance with priorities and eligibility criteria, to fulfil their obligations under the Convention.

In that regard, the African Group tabled a proposal where an agreed percentage of each party's gross domestic product (GDP) would be devoted to biodiversity conservation. In addition, an agreed percentage of each developed party's GDP would be provided as official development assistance for biodiversity-related purposes. On the other hand, interventions from developed parties emphasized the need to increase efficiency and effectiveness of existing resources, noted the domestic component of resource mobilization, and highlighted biodiversity mainstreaming and the need to bring everyone on board, including the finance sector. Some interventions focused on setting qualitative rather than numerical targets, noting this would lead to higher ambition. Others added it is unrealistic to anticipate an increased flow of financial resources due to the pandemic.

Striking a balance on resource mobilization will not be easy; in the words of one participant, "Proposals on GDP percentages and others on qualitative targets are a world apart." Decisions on financial resources have led to lengthy negotiations and stressful conditions at past COPs. Reaching consensus on this part of the GBF, which is crucial for any implementation plan, will require significant compromises.

Other topics surfaced as "make or break" issues as well. Digital sequence information, although not directly on the meeting's agenda, led to interventions both by regional groups and parties, emphasizing that benefit-sharing from the use of such information must be included in the GBF. Given that this discussion is taking place under the *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group on digital sequence information, SBSTTA, and the Working Group on the GBF, interventions during this informal meeting reiterated the general feeling that the topic will lead to strenuous negotiations.

Different approaches also exist on other items under consideration. Whether it is the reporting template or the timing and modalities of global stocktakes of progress, parties have distinct opinions. Even on relatively simpler things like the peer-review process, counter arguments were presented. Some parties supported country-by-country review of implementation, cautioning that an independent process needs to take into account national circumstances. Others opted for an independent, objective review process by technical experts, conducted against agreed standards.

As one delegate noted after the conclusion of the meeting, "To move forward, we need to find common solutions to everything, big or small, in the spirit of compromise, but maybe more importantly, under the joint objective of identifying the best way forward."

Uncharted Territory

The pandemic has halted many things, but not the biodiversity crisis. The urgency to address the challenges on the one hand and the continued pandemic-related restrictions on the other, make flexibility essential. Delegations exchanged opinions on how to move the process forward in light of these extraordinary circumstances without reaching any conclusion.

Delegates expressed their flexibility for continued participation in virtual meetings. Many emphasized that they could prove crucial in advancing the CBD agenda and preparing the GBF, noting environmental and financial benefits, and increased participation. In that regard, some parties called for holding formal meetings in virtual settings, pointing to the success of the first part of the UN Environment Assembly, which was held online.

Other delegates, however, underscored connectivity problems, time zone-related difficulties, and problems in coordination of both regional and stakeholders' positions. They recognized the value of virtual meetings to facilitate common understanding prior to formal meetings, but warned that decision-making bodies will need to be postponed until conditions are met for in-person meetings. Representatives of civil society also emphasized digital inequalities that may prevent the participation of certain stakeholders.

The way forward remained unclear and depends on parties' wishes. It is evident that virtual meetings, notwithstanding their benefits, pose many challenges, especially when it comes to negotiating formal policy outcomes in decision-making bodies. However, given the uncertainties and the slow, uneven vaccine distribution around the world, parties may need to consider virtual meetings, in full, in part, or in hybrid forms, to proceed with their urgent work.

Delegates often say during CBD meetings that the biodiversity crisis is so acute that we need to act now, implying that time is nearly up. The uncomfortable reality, however, is that time has been up for a while. The fifth Global Biodiversity Outlook reminds us that unprecedented biodiversity and ecosystem loss is eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health, cultures, and quality of life worldwide. The review of implementation shows that parties and humanity as a whole have collectively failed to fully meet every single one of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, further threatening the very fabric of life on the planet. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic can be directly linked to the biodiversity crisis.

As we now realize the enormous cost of inaction, many participants underlined not only the strong economic incentives to conserve the natural world, but the equally powerful, moral and intergenerational imperative. They stress that the months to come and the decisions to be made are of historic significance for biodiversity governance. For better or worse, they are also extremely important for the future of life on Earth.

Upcoming Meetings

CBD Stakeholder Open Webinar: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Transition: Linkages to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework:

This webinar provides space for participants to explore issues, exchange views, and enhance their understanding of key topics. **date:** 23 March 2021 **location:** online **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/POST2020-OM-2021-03>

CBD Webinar: Training Materials on Gender and Biodiversity in South-East Asia and the Pacific: This session will introduce training materials resulting from two regional workshops held in 2017 and 2019. **date:** 25 March 2021 **location:** online **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/GB-OM-2021-01>

IUCN One Nature, One Future Global Youth Summit: The summit seeks to strengthen connections between young leaders and their existing global networks, encourage interdisciplinary learning, provide a space for broader storytelling on conservation and add further momentum to the growing youth movements for nature and climate. **dates:** 5-16 April 2021 **location:** online **www:** <https://www.iucnyouthsummit.org/home/en>

World Environment Day: This year's observance of World Environment Day will be on the theme of ecosystem restoration and focus on resetting our relationship with nature. It will also mark the formal launch of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030. **date:** 5 June 2021 **location:** Pakistan **www:** <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/pakistan-host-world-environment-day-2021>

60th Meeting of the Global Environment Facility Council: The Council is the GEF's main governing body, and meets twice annually to develop, adopt, and evaluate the operational policies and programmes for GEF-financed activities. **dates:** 15-17 June 2021 **location:** TBC **www:** <https://thegef.org/council-meetings/gef-60th-council-meeting>

Eighth Session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES): This virtual meeting of the Plenary will consider for approval the scoping report for the nexus assessment and a thematic transformative change assessment. It will also consider interim work plans of the IPBES task force for the intersessional period 2021-2022, as well as financial and budgetary arrangements. **dates:** 14-24 June 2021 **location:** online **www:** <https://ipbes.net/event/ipbes-8-plenary>

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2021: The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will convene the 2021 session of the HLPF under the theme "Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development." Following the first five days, the HLPF's three-day ministerial segment takes place jointly with ECOSOC's high-level segment. **dates:** 6-15 July 2021 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2021>

IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020: The IUCN Congress will be a key milestone for nature conservation and the development of a new global framework for biodiversity. **dates:** 3-11 September 2021 **location:** Marseille, France **www:** <https://www.iucncongress2020.org/>

2021 Food Systems Summit: Convened by the UN Secretary-General, the Summit aims to maximize the co-benefits of a food systems approach across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development and address the challenges of climate change. The Summit will provide a platform for ambitious new actions, innovative solutions, and plans to transform food systems and leverage these shifts to deliver progress across all of the SDGs. **dates:** September 2021 (TBC) **location:** UN Headquarters, New York (TBC) **www:** <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit>
SBI 3, SBSTTA 24, OEWG 3, and COP 15: The formal meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the CBD, the third meeting of the Working Group on the GBF, and COP 15 will be rescheduled, due to pandemic-related restrictions. Discussions on the best way to proceed with formal meetings are ongoing. **dates:** TBC **location:** TBC **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

For additional meetings, see <https://sdg.iisd.org/>

Glossary

ABS	Access and benefit-sharing
AHTEG	<i>Ad hoc</i> technical expert group
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CHM	Clearinghouse Mechanism
COP	Conference of the Parties
GBF	Post-2020 global biodiversity framework
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GRULAC	Latin American and Caribbean Group
GYBN	Global Youth Biodiversity Network
IIFB	International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPLCs	Indigenous peoples and local communities
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
ITPGRFA	International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
LMOs	Living modified organisms
MEAs	Multilateral environmental agreements
NBSAPs	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
PIP	World Health Organization's Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework
SBI	Subsidiary Body on Implementation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TWN	Third World Network
UNU	United Nations University