**Opening of the Meeting**

Working Group Co-Chair Ning Liu, China, on behalf of COP 15 President Huang Runqiu, Minister of Ecology and Environment, China, opened the meeting emphasizing the importance of supporting the collective and local actions of Indigenous Peoples (IP). The Global Biodiversity Forum (GBF) met throughout the day focusing on cultural diversity, current and future work under the Working Group, including potentially establishing a subsidiary body, and the knowledge management component of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

**Organizational Matters**

Delegates adopted the provisional agenda (CBD/WG8J/12/1/Rev.1) without amendments and the organization of work (CBD/ WG8J/12/1/Add.1). Polina Shulbaeva (Russian Federation) was elected rapporteur. Six IPLC representatives were designated as “Friends of the Bureau,” representing the geo-cultural regions recognized by the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII). June Rubis (Asia) was designated as Working Group Indigenous Co-Chair.

**In-depth Dialogue on the Role of Languages in the Intergenerational Transmission of Traditional Knowledge, Innovations, and Practices**

David Ainsworth, CBD Secretariat, introduced the document (CBD/WG8J/12/2) and moderated the dialogue. An expert panel provided introductory remarks. Dario Meija, President, UNPFII, emphasized the need to safeguard intergenerational traditional knowledge transfer and provide adequate financing for the protection of Indigenous languages. Yolanda Teran, Indigenous Women’s Biodiversity Network (IWB), emphasized that Indigenous languages are intrinsically associated with nature, metaphors, and medicinal knowledge. Mohamed Handaine, Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee, stressed that “if Indigenous languages disappear, traditional knowledge disappears,” and called for establishing national-level traditional knowledge registries, and an international database for experience exchange. The INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORUM ON BIODIVERSITY (IIFB) proposed amendments, including: using language from GBF Target 21 (data, information, and knowledge for decision making); making Indigenous concepts, cosmovisions, and epistemologies more accessible; and adding reference to UN Resolution A/74/396 and the International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022-2032. On the topic for the next thematic dialogue on strategies for mobilizing resources to ensure direct access to funding by IPLCs, she suggested also focusing on financial mechanisms. Some delegates proposed focusing further on direct access to funding by women and youth.

Many delegates supported the draft recommendation, including the IIFB’s amendments. They stressed the need to support the use and revitalization of Indigenous languages as part of the GBF.

**The DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO** queried the main threats facing traditional and Indigenous knowledge and the mechanism for IPLCs’ direct access to financing. SOUTH AFRICA suggested reflecting that through languages, IPLCs preserve their history, customs, traditions, memory, unique modes of thinking, meanings, and expression. UGANDA and NAMIBIA highlighted languages as providers of identity and belonging, and NAMIBIA underscored discrimination experienced by Indigenous communities.

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Progress in the Implementation of the Priority Tasks of the Multi-Year Programme of Work

The Secretariat introduced documents CBD/WG8J/12/3 and CBD/WG8J/12/INF.3. IIFB welcomed progress, noting that 12 out of 17 tasks of the programme of work are either implemented or ongoing.

The DÉMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, SOUTH AFRICA, AUSTRALIA, and others welcomed the report. NORWAY, MEXICO, NEW ZEALAND, SWITZERLAND, BRAZIL, UGANDA, ARGENTINA, and others acknowledged the progress in implementing priority tasks, and emphasized the need for further analysis of the proposal, including on the strengthening of Indigenous Peoples’ participation in decision making; and fine-tuning initiatives for financing Indigenous Peoples’ efforts. Maiguas underscored the need to understand Indigenous Peoples’ internal policies and customary laws, and for adequate funds at grassroots level for promoting social justice. Handaïne proposed establishing a global fund for the promotion of Indigenous languages and continuing the exchange of ideas.

Co-Chair Rubis thanked delegates for their contributions and noted that a CRP will be produced.

Development of a New Programme of Work and Institutional Arrangements

The Secretariat introduced document CBD/WG8J/12/5, drawing attention to the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group’s meeting in July 2023 in Manaus, Brazil, which elaborated possible elements, tasks, and modus operandi for a proposed subsidiary body. Many delegates supported the new programme of work. IIFB supported establishing a subsidiary body, embodying the same principles and characteristics of the Working Group. Regardless, energy was high as this meeting put the focus on addressing existing gaps and enhancing IPLCs’ capabilities and knowledge, and suggested establishing a portal on IPLCs’ efforts in GBF implementation.

Network (GYBN) stressed that Indigenous language loss results in detachment from communities and loss of a sense of Indigenous identity. The CONTINENTAL NETWORK OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN OF THE AMERICAS underscored the intersection between languages, culture, and food production. Panelists responded to participants’ comments. Montalvo highlighted the need for: energy transition incorporating the vulnerabilities of Indigenous Peoples; strengthening Indigenous Peoples’ participation in decision making; and fine-tuning initiatives for financing Indigenous Peoples’ efforts. Maiguas underscored the need to understand Indigenous Peoples’ internal policies and customary laws, and for adequate funds at grassroots level for promoting social justice. Handaïne proposed establishing a global fund for the promotion of Indigenous languages and continuing the exchange of ideas.

Co-Chair Rubis thanked delegates for their contributions and noted that a CRP will be produced.

Knowledge Management Component of the GBF

The Secretariat introduced document CBD/WG8J/12/4. IIFB underscored the need to fully and effectively engage IPLCs and acknowledge their contributions. COLOMBIA underscored the importance of strengthening dialogue among different knowledge sources, in line with GBF Target 21. The WOMEN’S CAUCUS, supported by Colombia, proposed amendments to the recommendation, including: explicitly recognizing Indigenous and local women; inviting dialogue with the technical and scientific cooperation advisory group; and facilitating engagement with the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore of the World Intellectual Property Organization.

In the Corridors

Despite the Sunday gloom outside Geneva’s convention center today, its plenary and corridors were alight with sincere expressions of readiness for identifying, reviving, safeguarding, and transmitting Indigenous languages as key components in preserving biocultural diversity. Some delegates may have been wearier than others, following a two-day preparatory dialogue among IPLCs and other stakeholders that took place prior to this Working Group. Regardless, energy was high as this meeting put its money where its mouth is, with Indigenous delegates taking center stage and speaking before the parties to the Convention, in a show of respect and acknowledgement.