

Summary of the 26th Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the 4th Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity: 13-29 May 2024

“Starting a new era for biodiversity conservation and governance,” as is the case with the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), comes with great promises and increased responsibility. As a senior negotiator noted, “Looking at our unsustainable world and putting it on a path towards living in harmony with nature is not a trivial task.”

With this in mind, delegates gathered for two key meetings of subsidiary bodies of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) had similar aspirations—to lay the foundations for robust implementation of the GBF, its 23 targets for 2030, and its four long-term goals for 2050. To achieve this, the 26th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 26) focused on providing the scientific and technical bedrock and the fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI 4) focused on key parameters, including: the provision of means of implementation, including financial resources; and mechanisms for review of implementation, reporting, and monitoring.

Both SBSTTA 26 and SBI 4 proved challenging. An ever-broadening agenda led to time pressure and lengthy draft recommendations directed to the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16), scheduled for October-November 2024, did delegates few favors. The sheer lack of time meant that significant parts of the draft recommendations were not discussed, particularly at SBI 4. Seasoned delegates emphasized the need to change work modalities, noting that “business as usual simply does not work with such an extended agenda and increased ambition.” Others highlighted that “either we equip the Secretariat with the human and financial resources necessary to address our increasing number of requests for further work, or we need to focus.”

Despite lengthy discussions, which often went late into the night, many issues remained unresolved. Extensive parts of the draft COP decisions remain bracketed, which means that COP 16 will have to find common ground, adopt meaningful decisions by consensus, and set the GBF’s implementation in motion.

Nevertheless, both SBSTTA 26 and SBI 4 completed their work—adopting nine and 15 recommendations to COP 16, respectively. Delegates highlighted important progress on, among others, the GBF monitoring framework, including relevant indicators

and mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting, and review. Significant work remains on many issues, with arguably the most prominent being resource mobilization. Archetypal divisions between developing and developed country parties repeatedly surfaced during SBI 4, a barometer of how difficult closing the biodiversity finance gap will be. While some insist on the need for more affluent parties to fulfil their obligations under the Convention and mobilize the necessary financial resources, others point to a stalemate, urging to think out of the box and innovate to find much-needed solutions.

SBSTTA 26 and SBI 4 convened from 13-18 May and 21-29 May 2024, respectively, in Nairobi, Kenya. More than 1,000 participants attended each meeting. The International Day for Biodiversity, which fell halfway through the meetings, offered some reprieve from the difficult negotiations and reminded everyone of their common cause—to protect the foundations of life on Earth.

A Brief History of the Subsidiary Bodies

The CBD was adopted on 22 May 1992 and entered into force on 29 December 1993. There are currently 196 parties to the Convention. The CBD 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 currently meets every two years. Subsidiary bodies include the SBSTTA; the Working Group on Article 8(j) (traditional knowledge) and related provisions; and the SBI.

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Most recently, COP 15 was held in two parts due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The first part of the UN Biodiversity Conference convened virtually from 11-15 October 2021, with a limited number of delegates physically present in Kunming, China. It resulted in the adoption of the Kunming Declaration, which called for urgent and integrated action to reflect biodiversity considerations in all sectors of the global economy. The second part convened from 7-19 December 2022 in Montreal, Canada, and adopted the GBF, which will guide biodiversity policy in the years to come, through four overarching goals and 23 targets to be achieved by 2030.

SBSTTA was established under CBD [Article 25](#) as an open-ended, intergovernmental, multidisciplinary, scientific advisory body to provide the COP and other subsidiary bodies with scientific and technical advice relating to the Convention's implementation. Article 25 further elaborates on SBSTTA's functions, including providing assessments of the status of biodiversity and the effects of types of measures taken in accordance with CBD provisions; and responding to questions that the COP may pose. SBSTTA further serves the Cartagena Protocol (CP) on biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol (NP) on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization, with [CP Article 30](#) and [NP Article 27](#) stipulating that any subsidiary body established by or under the Convention may also serve the protocols.

SBSTTA carries out its work according to its consolidated [modus operandi](#), set forth in Annex III of [Decision VIII/10](#) (operations of the Convention), which elaborates on SBSTTA's functions, operating principles, rules of procedure, and other modalities.

SBSTTA has met 26 times to date and produced over 240 recommendations to the COP.

SBI was established by [COP Decision XII/26](#) in 2014 to replace the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention. SBI's terms of reference are annexed to the aforementioned decision and also contain its functions, namely to: review information on progress in CBD implementation, including provision of implementation support and progress; review strategic plans and relevant COP decisions, and assist the COP in preparing decisions on implementation; develop recommendations to overcome obstacles in implementation of the CBD and its strategic plans; develop recommendations on strengthening implementation mechanisms; and review the impacts and effectiveness of existing processes, and increase efficiency.

Recent SBSTTA Sessions: SBSTTA 23 was held from 25-29 November 2019, in Montreal, Canada. It adopted seven recommendations, addressing the scientific and technical base of the GBF; collating ideas on the 2030 mission and relevant targets; and addressing: biodiversity and climate change, technical and scientific cooperation, sustainable wildlife management, and new and emerging issues.

SBSTTA 24 took place in two parts due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Part I convened virtually in May-June 2021. Plenary sessions took place on 3-4 May, 23-26 May, and 7-9 June 2021, with contact groups convening in between. The meeting addressed several scientific and technical matters related to the GBF, as well as items related to synthetic biology, risk assessment and risk management of living modified organisms (LMOs), and marine and coastal biodiversity. Delegates agreed to defer the adoption of recommendations to Part II, which took place in-person from 14-29 March 2022, in Geneva, Switzerland. They adopted 11 recommendations to support the review of the GBF and address,

among others, the fifth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook; the programme of work of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES); synthetic biology; invasive alien species; and the monitoring framework for the GBF.

SBSTTA 25 was held from 15-20 October 2023, in Nairobi, Kenya. It adopted eight recommendations, including on: plant conservation; invasive alien species; sustainable wildlife management; the GBF monitoring framework; scientific, technical, and technological inputs that should inform the GBF global review of collective progress; and climate change.

SBI Sessions: SBI 1 convened from 2-6 May 2016 in Montreal, Canada. The meeting adopted 13 recommendations related to: review of progress in implementation, strategic actions to enhance implementation, strengthening support for implementation, and improving the efficiency of the structures and processes of the CBD and its Protocols.

SBI 2 took place from 9-13 July 2018 in Montreal, Canada. It adopted 20 recommendations, including on: review of progress in implementation and relevant mechanisms; resource mobilization and the financial mechanism; biodiversity mainstreaming; preparation for the follow up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020; national reporting; and enhancing integration under the Convention and its Protocols.

SBI 3 took place in two parts due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Part I convened online from 16 May – 13 June 2021. Plenary meetings were held on 16-18 May, 28-30 May, and 11-13 June, with contact groups convening in between. Delegates deferred adoption of recommendations to Part II, which took place in-person from 14-29 March 2022, in Geneva, Switzerland. The meeting adopted 19 recommendations on, among other things: resource mobilization and the financial mechanism; capacity building and development; review of effectiveness procedures; the gender plan of action; the review mechanism; and cooperation with other conventions, international organizations, and initiatives, as well as subnational governments, cities, and other local authorities to enhance GBF implementation.

SBSTTA 26 Report

On Monday, 13 May, SBSTTA Chair Senka Barudanović (Bosnia and Herzegovina) opened the meeting, encouraging delegates to translate the ambitious goals and targets of the GBF into action by building on available knowledge and experiences.

UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Executive Director Inger Andersen highlighted as opportunities for SBSTTA 26: increasing accountability and transparency; advancing the global action plan on biodiversity and health; and multilateral and institutional collaboration, including on biodiversity within and beyond areas of national jurisdiction.

Acknowledging ongoing environmental catastrophes, including the recent flooding in the host country, Kenya, David Cooper, CBD Acting Executive Secretary, emphasized the role of the GBF in halting and reversing biodiversity loss.

Organizational Matters

Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work: Delegates adopted the provisional agenda and organization of work ([CBD/SBSTTA/26/1](#) and [Add.1](#)). BRAZIL expressed concern about the multiplication of intersessional activities, noting the disproportionate burden on developing countries.

Election of Officers: On Monday, Grenada, for the LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GROUP (GRULAC), nominated Paulina Stowhas Salinas (Chile), and Ana Laura Mello (Uruguay) as an alternate, for matters relating to CBD Protocols. Senegal, for the AFRICAN GROUP, nominated Mostafa Madbouhi (Morocco). Jean Bruno Mikissa (Gabon) was elected as rapporteur.

On Tuesday, Indonesia, for ASIA-PACIFIC, nominated Ruliana Susanti (Indonesia). Croatia, for CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, nominated Jan Plesnik (Czechia).

On Wednesday, Belgium, for the WESTERN EUROPEAN AND OTHERS GROUP (WEOG), nominated Sanne Kruid (Netherlands). All candidates were elected by acclamation.

Monitoring Framework for the GBF

This agenda item was discussed in plenary on Monday and Saturday, and in a contact group, co-chaired by Anne Teller (EU) and Hesiquio Benítez Díaz (Mexico), on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

Discussions focused on technical updates supporting the operationalization of the monitoring framework for the GBF based on the work of the Ad hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Indicators, including on headline, binary, component, and complementary indicators for each GBF goal and target. Delegates devoted considerable time and energy to a list of binary indicator questions for parties' self-reporting on the establishment of relevant policies at the national level.

Despite a considerable number of brackets remaining in the document, in particular in the draft recommendation to COP 16, most participants agreed that considerable progress was made both during the intersessional period through the AHTEG's indicators work and during SBI 4.

On [Monday](#), the Secretariat introduced the relevant documents ([CBD/SBSTTA/26/2](#) and [Add.1](#)) and delegates exchanged initial views. Many called for a robust monitoring framework, welcomed the work of the AHTEG on indicators, and supported updating the monitoring framework with a view to adopting it at COP 16. Some delegates pointed to inconsistencies with language agreed at COP 15 and pointed to several indicators requiring further discussion.

On [Tuesday](#), the contact group considered a non-paper compiling views and suggested amendments; formed an informal group to discuss divergent opinions regarding Targets 13 (benefit-sharing) and 17 (biosafety); and addressed a list of binary indicators, which continued on [Wednesday](#), and concluded on [Thursday](#). The contact group addressed the preambular paragraphs of the draft recommendation.

On [Saturday](#), the contact group finalized its work on the draft recommendation in the morning. During the evening plenary, Chair Barudanović tabled the relevant conference room paper (CRP) (CBD/SBSTTA/26/CRP.9), which was approved, following amendments by BRAZIL and COLOMBIA, who expressed concerns that Annex I containing GBF indicators had not been discussed in the contact group.

The final recommendation was adopted with minor revisions.

Final Recommendation: In the final recommendation (CBD/SBSTTA/26/L.10), SBSTTA notes with appreciation the work conducted by the AHTEG and other technical expert groups. It invites: the Co-Chairs of the Committee of the Whole of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Benefit-sharing from the Use of Digital Sequence Information (DSI) to facilitate a discussion on possible approaches for monitoring the sharing of benefits from

the use of DSI; and the Working Group on DSI to develop options for the indicators on the sharing of benefits from the use of DSI for possible inclusion in the monitoring framework.

SBSTTA requests the Secretariat to: extend the period for submission of views on documents [CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/14](#) and [INF/20](#) and invite parties to submit views on [INF/19](#), and produce updated versions of these documents; and provide a list of component and complementary indicators, adopted in [Decision 15/5](#), that were not included in the annex for not meeting the criteria and that have since met these criteria, for consideration by COP 16.

SBSTTA recommends that COP 16, among other things:

- take note of the current status of development of the headline indicators and the current status of relevant guidance as prepared by the AHTEG and decide that further work on indicators need to consider the reporting burden and other constraints, particularly for developing country parties;
- request SBSTTA, prior to COP 17, to review updated metadata for headline indicators and the list of component and complementary indicators in Decision 15/5, that have met the criteria for inclusion in the monitoring framework;
- recall that national validation of data is part of the reporting template;
- encourage parties and others to take a consistent approach at the national level to monitoring ecosystems and reporting data based on national ecosystem classifications;
- urge developed country parties, and invite others to enhance international cooperation, including by providing adequate, timely and predictable financial resources, capacity building and development, technical and scientific cooperation, and technology transfer;
- urge parties to strengthen their monitoring systems in an inclusive approach;
- invite parties and others to make use of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators and other globally available data to complement data in national monitoring systems and further enhance international cooperation;
- encourage parties and others to exchange knowledge, and build capacity related to the indicators; and
- request the Secretariat to work with relevant organizations to further develop and update the metadata for headline indicators, and to support inclusive and participatory processes to facilitate the operationalization of the monitoring framework by: sharing relevant updates; identifying options to address gaps; and facilitating capacity-building and development activities.

A number of provisions remain bracketed, including:

- endorsing the technical updates to the GBF monitoring framework, comprising headline, binary, component and complementary indicators and optional headline indicator disaggregations;
- agreeing to add a headline indicator on land use change and land tenure in the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) and a binary indicator on trade of wild species;
- adopting the list of binary questions on indicators;
- welcoming the guidance on the monitoring framework provided by the AHTEG on indicators and the ongoing work on monitoring under multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and relevant initiatives, and inviting their Secretariats to share relevant information;

- noting with appreciation that the monitoring framework provides good coverage of the GBF's scope;
- highlighting the importance of mainstreaming the indicators across relevant processes;
- reviewing parties' needs and considering how to address technical or capacity gaps;
- inviting parties to make use of the Global Ecosystem Typology level 2 and 3 and align their national ecosystem data;
- urging parties and other governments to take GBF section C (considerations for GBF implementation) into consideration when implementing the monitoring framework;
- requesting the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to provide adequate, timely, and predictable financial resources for national monitoring systems in a transparent manner;
- requesting SBSTTA prior to COP 17 to review parties' needs and address technical or capacity gaps;
- encouraging parties and others to consider providing resources to contribute to global monitoring systems, standards, and datasets, and to community-based monitoring and information systems;
- deciding to review the use of indicators in conjunction with the global review of progress in GBF implementation at COP 17 and COP 19, and consider additional indicators at COP 17; and
- requesting the Secretariat to: work with parties and others to fill the gaps and facilitate the monitoring framework's operationalization through inclusive and participatory processes; ensure that the guidance on the monitoring framework is easily accessible and encourage use of the guidance on indicators; prepare an analysis of the usage of indicators in national reports; and further develop and update headline indicator metadata.

Scientific and Technical Needs to Support the Implementation of the GBF

This agenda item was addressed in plenary on Monday and Friday, and the final recommendation was adopted on Saturday. Discussions focused on potential future requests for assessments by IPBES on the links between biodiversity and: pollution; cities; poverty; climate change; and rights-based approaches. Delegates further discussed future work under the CBD, with some suggesting further work to develop common understanding on the concept of bioeconomy and others cautioning overloading the agenda.

On [Monday](#), the Secretariat introduced the relevant documents ([CBD/SBSTTA/26/3](#) and [Add.1](#)), addressing matters related to the IPBES work programme and new suggested areas of work for the CBD. Delegates exchanged initial views, tabling suggestions for new areas of work and proposals for IPBES assessments.

On [Friday](#), delegates addressed CRPs on the IPBES' work programme (CBD/SBSTTA/26/CRP.1) and the scientific and technical needs to support GBF implementation (CBD/SBSTTA/26/CRP.2).

On [Saturday](#), they adopted the final recommendations.

Final Recommendations: In the final recommendation on matters related to the **IPBES work programme** (CBD/SBSTTA/26/L.2), SBSTTA requests the Secretariat to continue its close collaboration with IPBES and prepare information on five topics for requests for future IPBES assessments for COP 16 consideration, namely:

- biodiversity and pollution;
- cities and biodiversity;
- biodiversity and poverty;
- biodiversity and climate change; and

- rights-based approaches, including issues related to gender, to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources.

SBSTTA further recommends that COP 16:

- decide on suggested topics for IPBES assessments based on the information above and invite IPBES to consider them; and
- request the Secretariat to: facilitate the participation of the IPBES Secretariat in meetings of the Liaison Group of biodiversity-related conventions; update the overview of previous and future IPBES deliverables and their relevance in the decision-making of the CBD; and liaise with the IPBES Secretariat to analyze and identify further ways in which IPBES may contribute to GBF implementation.

The schedule of IPBES assessments and of their consideration under the CBD up to 2030 is annexed to the recommendation.

In the final recommendation on **scientific and technical needs to support GBF implementation** (CBD/SBSTTA/26/L.3), SBSTTA concludes that most of CBD guidance is relevant, and that many tools and guidance developed through other processes exist, to support GBF implementation, stressing that access to this guidance and adequate resources are needed by parties for implementation, while recognizing there are gaps that require further discussion at COP 16.

The recommendation further recognizes the potential need for new work under the Convention, especially but not limited to: biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning; biodiversity and pollution; and sustainable biodiversity-based activities, products, and services that enhance biodiversity.

SBSTTA further recommends that COP 16:

- recognize: that the programmes of work and cross-cutting work of the CBD remain important for GBF implementation and that most of the tools and guidance developed are relevant; that the priority for further work should be on supporting the use of tools and guidance to enhance GBF implementation; the opportunity to mainstream the GBF into the work undertaken by other agreements, processes, and organizations; and the role of the regional and subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centers and the global knowledge support service for biodiversity;
- encourage parties and others to make use of relevant tools and guidance, adapted to national contexts, to support GBF implementation, and to share experiences; and
- request the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to continue facilitating access to scientific and technical tools and guidance and the development of further tools in cooperation with relevant MEAs and conduct a strategic review and analysis of the programmes of work of the Convention in the context of the GBF.

The final decision on the areas for advancing work under the CBD remains bracketed as do references to the development of further guidance.

Synthetic Biology

This agenda item was discussed in plenary on Monday, Tuesday, and Saturday, and in a contact group, co-chaired by Jane Stratford (UK) and Ossama AbdelKawy (Egypt), on Tuesday and Thursday.

Discussions focused on intersessional work by the multidisciplinary AHTEG (mAHTEG), its merit towards achieving the CBD's objectives, and whether its mandate should be extended for further work.

On [Monday](#), the Secretariat introduced document [CBD/SBSTTA/26/4](#) and delegates exchanged initial views, which continued on Tuesday. Many welcomed the intersessional work by the mAHTEG and the Secretariat and suggested extending its mandate to continue the process of broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring, and assessment. Others questioned how horizon scanning contributes to CBD objectives and did not support extending the mAHTEG's mandate.

On [Tuesday](#), the contact group Co-Chairs facilitated a general exchange of ideas aiming to identify areas of convergence and divergence. Discussions focused on: the refined methodology for broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring, and assessment; capacity building, technology transfer, and knowledge sharing; the process' review; and the way forward.

On [Thursday](#), delegates started work on the draft recommendation on the basis of a non-paper prepared by the contact group Co-Chairs.

On [Saturday](#), delegates approved the CRP (CBD/SBSTTA/26/CRP.5) and adopted the heavily bracketed final recommendation.

Final Recommendation: In the final recommendation (CBD/SBSTTA/26/L.6), SBSTTA acknowledges the mAHTEG's work and takes note of the outcomes; welcomes the peer review process; and emphasizes the need to strengthen capacity building and development, access to and transfer of technology, and knowledge sharing.

SBSTTA's final recommendation to COP 16 is divided into two parts.

On capacity building, technology transfer, and knowledge sharing, SBSTTA recommends that COP 16: emphasize the urgent need for these functions; urge parties and invite others to provide financial and technical support; and decide to develop a thematic action plan to support these functions, inviting parties and others to submit information and experiences to inform the action plan's preparation.

In bracketed recommendations, parties must still address whether COP 16 should request the Secretariat to prepare the thematic action plan, taking into account:

- areas where capacity building is needed;
- strategies to ensure equitable participation of developing countries, and rights- and stakeholders in research, development, assessment, and regulation of synthetic biology;
- proposals to promote the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from synthetic biology;
- relevant mechanisms;
- parties' specific needs as identified in their submissions; and
- a gap analysis, taking into account other relevant processes and initiatives.

In further bracketed provisions, parties could not agree to recommend that COP 16 request: the Secretariat to create a dedicated webpage on the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) to promote the action plan and facilitate knowledge-sharing; and SBSTTA to consider the action plan before COP 17 and make recommendations.

On broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring, and assessment of the most recent technological developments in synthetic biology, SBSTTA recommends that COP 16 welcome, acknowledge, or take note of the outcomes of horizon scanning, reflecting the range of views among parties. The remaining bracketed text contains possible provisions on: deciding whether to extend the process of horizon scanning; adopting or taking note of

the relevant refined methodology; deciding that the process should be party-led; extending the tenure of the mAHTEG; and deciding to review existing relevant technical information regarding synthetic biology.

In bracketed provisions, parties must still address if COP 16 should request the Secretariat to: update the literature review to inform the mAHTEG's work; convene online discussions of the open-ended online forum on synthetic biology; convene at least one in-person meeting of the mAHTEG; and support the participation of the research community, women, and youth, and the full and effective participation of IPLCs in the work relevant to synthetic biology.

In another bracketed provision, parties could not agree if the 11th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the CP (COP/MOP 11) should decide that any trends identified through the process of horizon scanning of the most recent technological developments in synthetic biology that are considered to be LMOs will need to follow the required process under the Protocol.

Annexed to the draft recommendations are bracketed terms of reference of the mAHTEG.

Risk Assessment and Risk Management

This agenda item was discussed in plenary on Tuesday and Saturday.

On [Tuesday](#), the Secretariat introduced the relevant documents ([CBD/SBSTTA/26/5](#) and [Add.1](#)). Many parties welcomed the additional voluntary guidance on case-by-case risk assessments of LMOs containing engineered gene drives. Many further supported developing voluntary guidance on living modified fish (LM fish), with some delegates expressing concerns and suggesting focusing the finite resources on capacity building and information sharing on existing guidance documents.

On [Saturday](#), delegates approved the CRP (CBD/SBSTTA/26/CRP.4) and adopted the final recommendation, which contains brackets, with minor amendments and revisions.

Final Recommendation: In the final recommendation (CBD/SBSTTA/26/L.5), SBSTTA recommends that CP COP/MOP 11:

- take note or welcome with appreciation the outcomes of the AHTEG on risk assessment;
- welcome, acknowledge, or endorse the additional voluntary guidance on case-by-case risk assessment of LMOs containing engineered gene drives;
- invite parties and others to submit information on their experiences using the voluntary guidance, calling for international cooperation, capacity building, and resource mobilization;
- invite parties to submit information on their needs and priorities for further guidance materials;
- decide to extend the open-ended online forum on risk assessment and risk management;
- decide at CP COP/MOP 12 which guidance materials on risk assessment may be needed; and
- request the Secretariat to prepare a synthesis of the information submitted and convene relevant capacity-building and development activities.

In fully bracketed provisions, parties still have to agree if CP COP/MOP 11 should:

- encourage parties and others to make use of the additional voluntary guidance materials;

- decide to establish an AHTEG on risk assessment, tasked with the development of additional voluntary guidance on LM fish, and invite parties and others to submit relevant information;
- decide to extend the open-ended online forum;
- request SBSTTA 28 to consider the outcomes of the AHTEG and make a recommendation to CP COP/MOP 12; and
- request the Secretariat to: develop a detailed outline of additional guidance material on LM fish for peer review and convene discussions of the online forum to support the AHTEG; synthesize information submitted by parties and others to facilitate the AHTEG's work; and convene two meetings of the AHTEG, at least one in-person; and collect relevant information to support the risk assessment of self-limiting insects and make it available on the BCH.

Annexed to the document are bracketed terms of reference for the AHTEG on risk assessment and risk management.

Detection and Identification of LMOs

This agenda item was discussed in plenary on Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

On [Tuesday](#), the Secretariat introduced document [CBD/SBSTTA/26/6](#). Many delegates highlighted the revised [Training Manual on the Detection and Identification of LMOs](#), which was released in April 2022, noting that it remains relevant and does not require updating.

On [Friday](#), delegates approved the CRP (CBD/SBSTTA/26/CRP.3) with some amendments, including on updating the training manual and on sharing experiences through the BCH.

On [Saturday](#), delegates adopted the final recommendation.

Final Recommendation: In the final recommendation (CBD/SBSTTA/26/L.4), SBSTTA concludes that the training manual is relevant and useful, and there is currently no need to update it.

SBSTTA recommends that CP COP/MOP 11:

- invite: parties and others to submit to the Secretariat technical reference materials and publications related to new quantitative polymerase chain reaction (PCR) techniques, digital PCR, next-generation sequencing and isothermal amplification techniques; and parties to share through the BCH their experiences with new detection techniques, including those that contain stacked events, which refer to transfers of more than one gene from another organism, and training materials and publications, with the latter remaining bracketed;
- encourage parties to establish regional networks of laboratories and partnerships;
- urge parties and invite others to provide financial resources to laboratories; and
- recommend that the CBD COP invite the GEF to assist eligible parties by providing speedy and adequate access to means of implementation.

SBSTTA further recommends that CP COP/MOP 11 request the Secretariat to: continue to collect publications and technical resource materials and make them available on the BCH; prepare a compilation of such materials; collaborate with relevant organization and provide capacity-building support to parties; and raise awareness on the sampling, detection, and identification portal of the BCH, with a bracketed provision to explore the possibility to link and cross-reference the BCH with relevant industry databases.

Marine and Coastal Biodiversity

This agenda item includes two parts: one on further work on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs); and the other on the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity. It was discussed in plenary on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday, and in a contact group, co-chaired by Erica Lucero (Argentina) and Gaute Voigt-Hansen (Norway), from Thursday to Saturday.

On [Tuesday](#), the Secretariat introduced the documents ([CBD/SBSTTA/26/7](#) and [Add.1](#)). On further work on EBSAs, many delegates welcomed the outcomes of the expert workshops and supported extending the mandate of the advisory group. On the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity, many supported the review and analysis of the work programmes, including on island biodiversity, and highlighted the need for cooperation with the Agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement).

On [Wednesday](#), delegates concluded their first exchange, tabling proposals for inclusion in the document and discussing, among other things, issues regarding the delimitation of maritime zones.

On [Thursday](#), delegates addressed a non-paper in the contact group, focusing on modalities for the modification of descriptions of EBSAs and the description of new areas, as well as sections covering overarching provisions on the repository and the information-sharing mechanism for EBSAs, and guidance for the modalities' implementation.

On [Friday](#), the contact group resumed discussions on the non-paper on EBSAs and addressed an additional non-paper on the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity. On EBSAs, delegates focused on relevant guidance and expressed divergent views regarding references to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the BBNJ Agreement. On the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity, they considered, and then bracketed, preambular text for the draft recommendation, and discussed whether to include specific references to past CBD decisions, UN resolutions, and IPBES.

On [Saturday](#), the contact group finalized its discussions on the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity in the morning. Discussions focused on: whether to introduce text calling for the Secretariat to convene an expert workshop on how the scientific and technical work conducted under the Convention could inform the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement, with some delegations noting this is premature; the scope of requests made to the Secretariat for cooperation and collaboration with other MEAs, organizations, and stakeholder groups; and preambular provisions referring to resolutions of the UN General Assembly on the ocean and coral reef bleaching.

On Saturday afternoon, in plenary, delegates addressed the CRPs. On EBSAs (CBD/SBSTTA/26/CRP.7), delegates discussed the status of non-parties to UNCLOS and adopted the final recommendation with minor revisions. On the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity (CBD/SBSTTA/26/CRP.6/Rev.1), some parties noted that not all proposals were reflected in the CRP and indicated that they would repeat their suggestions on these matters at COP 16. Delegates adopted the final recommendation with minor revisions.

Final Recommendations: In the final recommendation on further work on EBSAs (CBD/SBSTTA/26/L.7), SBSTTA recommends that COP 16:

- recognize that the description of EBSAs is an important scientific and technical process that can make a crucial contribution to the implementation of the GBF and the BBNJ Agreement;
- take note of the reports of the technical and legal expert workshops to review the modalities for modifying the descriptions of EBSAs and describing new areas;
- extend the term of the Informal Advisory Group (IAG) on EBSAs, and request the Secretariat to revise its terms of reference, and to facilitate the work of the Group;
- stress that the modification of descriptions of EBSAs and the description of new areas meeting the EBSA criteria is strictly a scientific and technical exercise, and does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, including maritime zones, or of their authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its boundaries, and does not have economic or legal implications.

In fully bracketed provisions, SBSTTA recommends that COP 16 request the Secretariat:

- subject to the availability of financial resources, to continue to facilitate the description of areas meeting the criteria for EBSAs, and to modify the description of EBSAs through the holding of additional workshops;
- subject to the availability of financial resources, to continue to facilitate the description of areas meeting the criteria for EBSAs, and to modify the description of EBSAs, in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ);
- to facilitate the participation in the workshops of experts from IPLCs, women and youth organizations, and the use of traditional knowledge; and
- to develop voluntary guidelines on peer-review processes for the description of areas meeting the criteria for EBSAs and other relevant compatible and complementary scientific criteria for consideration by the SBSTTA.

Concerning the modalities for the modification of descriptions of EBSAs and the description of new areas, contained in an annex that was bracketed in its entirety to reflect ongoing negotiations to reach convergence, there are bracketed provisions, pending the finalization of those modalities, that COP 16 could:

- adopt the modalities for the modification of descriptions of EBSAs and the description of new areas contained in the annex, and request the Secretariat facilitate the implementation of the modalities; and
- stress or note the potential importance of synergies between the process to facilitate the description of areas meeting the criteria for EBSAs using the modalities for ABNJ contained in the annex, and the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement, and to invite parties to the BBNJ Agreement and intergovernmental organizations with competence in ABNJ to actively engage in the development and review of submissions of the modification of descriptions of such areas and the description of new areas.

In relation to the modalities, SBSTTA delegates reached consensus on recommending that COP 16:

- invite parties and others to collaborate in the implementation of the modalities; and

- request the Secretariat to facilitate a review of the effectiveness of the implementation of the modalities contained in the annex ten years after the adoption of this decision and submit the results of the review for SBSTTA's consideration.

In the final recommendation on the **conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity** (CBD/SBSTTA/26/L.9), SBSTTA recommends that COP 16, among other things:

- encourage parties participating in the development of an internationally legally binding agreement on plastic pollution to take into consideration the GBF during its negotiations;
- urge accelerated implementation for priority actions on coral reefs and closely associated ecosystems;
- recognize the relevance of the work programmes on marine and coastal, and island biodiversity towards guiding and implementing the GBF;
- stress that enhanced provision of financial resources, capacity building and development, technical and scientific cooperation, and access to and transfer of technology is needed in particular for least developed countries and small island developing states;
- stress that a substantial and progressive increase in the level of financial resources is required for implementing the GBF and Sustainable Development Goals 14 (life below water) and 15 (life on land) with regard to marine and coastal, and island ecosystems;
- request the Secretariat continue to cooperate with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the UN Office of Legal Affairs (DOALOS) and others with competence in ABNJ, and with relevant organizations to strengthen cross-sectoral cooperation on a regional and global scale; and
- request the Secretariat to continue facilitating capacity-building and partnership activities, including through the Sustainable Ocean Initiative, with the participation of IPLCs, women, and youth, to support GBF implementation.

In fully bracketed recommendations, parties still have to agree if COP 16 should:

- welcome or note the adoption of the BBNJ Agreement, and encourage its timely ratification;
- note that there are certain elements of the GBF targets for which there is limited guidance or tools available under the work programmes on marine and coastal, and island biodiversity that may require enhanced action and attention;
- invite collaboration with relevant partners to enhance work on the issues identified in the bracketed annex, on gaps and areas in need of additional focus under the Convention to support GBF implementation;
- request the Secretariat to convene an expert workshop in collaboration with the eventual secretariat of the BBNJ Agreement, and until it commences its function, with DOALOS, on opportunities for specific areas of scientific and technical work conducted under the CBD to inform the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement; and to provide the results of this workshop for SBSTTA's consideration prior to COP 17; and
- request the Secretariat to enhance cooperation, collaboration, or synergies regarding various thematic issues related to marine and coastal biodiversity, in accordance with international human rights law.

The fully bracketed annex contains gaps and areas in need of additional focus to support GBF implementation regarding marine and coastal, and island biodiversity.

Biodiversity and Health

This agenda item was discussed in plenary on Wednesday and Saturday, and in a contact group, co-chaired by Jahidul Kabir (Bangladesh) and Barbara Engels (Germany), on Thursday and Friday.

On [Wednesday](#), the Secretariat introduced document [CBD/SBSTTA/26/8](#), which includes the draft global action plan on biodiversity and health. Many delegates suggested adopting the action plan at COP 16, either as annexed in the document or with amendments. Others expressed serious concerns, saying the draft action plan fails to address benefit-sharing and DSI, and includes new concepts that are still under development or consideration, including some that may fall under areas in other international organizations' purview.

On [Thursday](#), delegates met in the contact group to address a non-paper developed by the Co-Chairs on the basis of Wednesday's interventions. They engaged in detailed discussions on the purpose of the action plan. On [Friday](#), delegates resumed consideration of the non-paper in the contact group, focusing on actions for mainstreaming biodiversity and health interlinkages into the implementation of the GBF.

On [Saturday](#), delegates addressed CBD/SBSTTA/26/CRP.8, focusing on the draft recommendation. They made amendments and bracketed many provisions. They decided not to reopen the text of the draft action plan, adding a footnote stating "the finalization of text currently in brackets may have implications for currently unbracketed text."

The final recommendation was adopted with minor additional revisions.

Final Recommendation: In the final recommendation (CBD/SBSTTA/26/L.8), SBSTTA recommends that COP 16 encourage parties, in accordance with national circumstances and priorities, and on a voluntary basis, to: recognize the need to urgently address the drivers of biodiversity loss to reduce risks to health; and integrate biodiversity and health interlinkages into biodiversity-related policies, programmes, or accounts and, if appropriate, in their national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), taking the elements of the Global Action Plan into account, with the references to "accounts" and the action plan being bracketed.

SBSTTA further recommends that COP 16 invite the World Health Organization to take into account synergies in its work.

In fully bracketed provisions pending agreement on the draft action plan, parties still need to agree if COP 16 should:

- adopt the global action plan as a voluntary plan to support GBF implementation and welcome the targeted messages for mainstreaming biodiversity in the health sector;
- encourage parties, in accordance with national circumstances and priorities, and on a voluntary basis, to: implement the global action plan and provide relevant information; designate a national focal point on biodiversity and health; designate a national youth liaison focal point; and integrate biodiversity and health interlinkages into biodiversity-related policies and programmes;
- invite others to mainstream biodiversity and health interlinkages into their respective constituencies and across sectors, and share measures, guidance and tools, examples, best practices and lessons learned;

- urge or request parties and invite others to provide financial and technical support, and request the GEF to provide financial assistance; and
- request the Secretariat to: complete the development of integrated science-based indicators, metrics, and progress measurement tools; facilitate capacity building, technical and scientific cooperation, and technology transfer activities; continue to raise awareness of the interlinkages between biodiversity and health; enhance cooperation with relevant multilateral environmental, health, and human rights agreements; and explore the development of an online information platform to collate knowledge and experiences.

All annexes remain bracketed. Annex I contains the draft global action plan on biodiversity and health, including a table containing action areas and related GBF targets, their relevance to health, and actions to ensure biodiversity and health co-benefits. Annex II includes the monitoring elements for the global action plan. Annex III contains biodiversity and health interlinkages identified for health promotion and disease prevention. Annex IV includes targeted messages for mainstreaming biodiversity into the health sector.

Closure of the Meeting

On Saturday, Rapporteur Jean Bruno Mikissa (Gabon) introduced the meeting's report (CBD/SBSTTA/26/L.1), which delegates adopted with minor amendments.

In closing remarks, Acting Executive Secretary Cooper emphasized SBSTTA's fundamental contributions in providing "the substance and the ideas that have driven this Convention forward," and noted the value of its work in translating science into policy.

SBSTTA Chair Barudanović said she has never seen a SBSTTA with such a spirit of compromise, pointing to the body's maturing. She gavelled the meeting to a close at 10:51 pm on Saturday, 18 May 2024.

SBI 4 Report

On [Tuesday, 21 May](#), SBI Chair Chirra Achalender Reddy (India) opened SBI 4, urging participants to invest their "time, energy, and wisdom" in a productive meeting.

Inger Andersen, UNEP Executive Director, encouraged focus on the means of implementation and resource mobilization for the GBF, noting that its goals are "aspirational and inspirational" and "implementable and monitorable."

CBD Acting Executive Secretary David Cooper underlined the commitments and progress made thus far, and expressed hope that SBI 4 participants will continue building on this work through their "clear determination to succeed."

Liu Ning, China, on behalf of COP 15 President Huang Runqiu, Minister of Ecology and Environment, China, urged global action for GBF implementation, including through implementation initiatives and contributions to the GBF Fund.

Ambassador Pedro León Cortés Ruíz, Colombia, on behalf of the COP 16 Presidency, said the COP 16 theme, "Peace with Nature," addresses the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss and the necessary reconciliation with nature.

Regional group representatives stressed, among other things, that capacity building and resource mobilization are critical to ensure effective GBF implementation. They further underscored the need for: modalities to operationalize technical and scientific

cooperation; reviewing the progress in updating NBSAPs; and defining procedures for the global review of collective progress in GBF implementation.

Organizational Matters

Delegates adopted the provisional agenda ([CBD/SBI/4/1](#)) and the organization of work ([CBD/SBI/4/1/Add.1](#)). Angela Lozan (Republic of Moldova) was elected rapporteur.

Review of Implementation

The agenda item on review of implementation, progress in the preparation of revised and updated NBSAPs, and the establishment of national targets in alignment with the GBF was discussed in plenary on 21, 27 and 29 May.

Discussions focused on progress in preparation of updated or revised NBSAPs and the need for their timely submission to facilitate a global review of progress. Challenges that developing countries face in revising or updating their NBSAPs, in particular the need for relevant support, led to vibrant discussions.

On [Tuesday, 21 May](#), the Secretariat introduced relevant documents on: progress in preparation of updated NBSAPs and the establishment of targets in alignment with the GBF ([CBD/SBI/4/2](#)); and on implementation of the multi-year programme of work (MYPOW) on Article 8(j) and related provisions ([CBD/SBI/4/3](#)).

Many parties offered progress reports on efforts to update their NBSAPs and national targets, committing to submit them prior to COP 16. Some delegates called for adequate means of implementation and lamented insufficient support through the GEF and the GBF Fund for updating NBSAPs, with a few calling for support to “all” parties.

On the MYPOW for Article 8(j) and related provisions, delegates welcomed the report, stressing its usefulness for national efforts towards GBF implementation. Major Groups and other stakeholders called for: the full, equitable, inclusive, effective, meaningful, and gender-responsive participation of IPLCs, women, youth, and persons with disabilities in the setting of national targets and reviews of NBSAPs, and financial support to enable their participation.

On [Monday, 27 May](#), Chair Reddy opened discussion of CBD/SBI/4/CRP.1. A lengthy discussion took place on a paragraph recognizing with concern the challenges many parties face in revising or updating their NBSAPs, including relevant financial support. Some urged reflecting that some parties “have not received or have been denied financial support.” Delegates further focused on a provision stressing with concern that the provision of means of implementation to developing country parties since adopting the GBF has not been commensurate with the challenges faced by those countries, and the levels of funding made available through the GBF Fund are not sufficient for GBF implementation.

On Wednesday, 29 May, with interpretation no longer available, delegates discussed options on the way forward, including a proposal by Chair Reddy to defer considerations to SBI 5, scheduled for October 2024. Following discussions, delegates decided to continue discussions on the CRP.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION, supported by the UK, BRAZIL, MEXICO, and CANADA, proposed to delete the preambular section of the draft recommendation. The Secretariat clarified that four operative paragraphs had already been agreed. The DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC)

proposed to adopt the draft recommendation with the already agreed paragraphs. BRAZIL requested to include in the draft recommendation a provision recognizing that the effective implementation of NBSAPs depends on the provision of adequate, sufficient, predictable, and accessible means of implementation to developing country parties. CANADA requested to replace “implementation” of NBSAPs with “revising or updating” NBSAPs; and the EU suggested clarifying the provision of means of implementation “in particular to developing countries.” Following interventions by INDIA, BRAZIL, the DRC, ARGENTINA, and the EU, delegates approved the CRP with these amendments.

Final Recommendation: In the final recommendation (CBD/SBI/4/L.15), the SBI:

- urges parties to revise or update their NBSAPs and submit them by COP 16, and those not in a position to do so, to submit their national targets;
- emphasizes that parties should submit their national reports following the relevant template;
- recognizes that revising or updating NBSAPs depends on the provision of adequate, sufficient, predictable, and accessible means of implementation; and
- encourages parties, in line with national circumstances, to work towards a whole-of-government and society approach, and improve mainstreaming and coherence by raising awareness of the process to revise or update NBSAPs across different sectors.

Mechanisms for Planning, Monitoring, Reporting and Review

This agenda item was discussed in plenary on 21 and 29 May, and in a contact group, co-chaired by Gillian Guthrie (Jamaica) and Carolina Caceres (Canada), on 22, 24, 26, and 28 May. Discussions focused on, among other things, procedures for the global review of collective progress in GBF implementation, reporting requirements for non-state actors, and the open-ended forum for voluntary country review.

On [Tuesday, 21 May](#), the Secretariat introduced [CBD/SBI/4/4](#), on mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting, and review; [CBD/SBI/4/4/Add.1](#), on the *modus operandi* for the open-ended forum; and [CBD/SBI/4/4/Add.2/Rev.1](#), on procedures for the global review.

Many parties supported the enhanced multidimensional approach to planning, monitoring, reporting, and review, and welcomed the regional and subregional dialogues. Many further emphasized that successful implementation of the monitoring framework depends on data quality, adding that the template for national reports can be improved. Delegates stressed the importance of the global review and discussed relevant procedures; others noted that the process for non-state actors reporting their voluntary commitments will require further refinement.

On [Wednesday, 22 May](#), the contact group addressed elements comprising the enhanced multidimensional approach, focusing their discussions on the global review. On [Friday, 24 May](#), the group focused on reporting commitments by non-state actors, and addressed the draft recommendation. On [Sunday, 26 May](#), delegates continued work on the draft recommendation. On [Tuesday, 28 May](#), the contact group continued discussions on non-state actors and discussed the part of the draft recommendation for a COP 16 decision.

On Wednesday, 29 May, the contact group Co-Chairs reported back to plenary, indicating: provisions the contact group had considered; the SBI draft recommendation was clean; and bracketed parts remained in the draft recommendation to the COP.

Delegates then considered and approved a preambular and two operative paragraphs related to national reports of the SBI draft recommendation addressed to the COP, that had not been considered by the contact group. The EU and the DRC asked, and delegates agreed, to bracket a provision encouraging parties to use headline and binary indicators, as well as component, complementary, and national indicators, in national reports.

Delegates then approved the SBI draft recommendation and Chair Reddy proposed to adopt the remainder of the CRP in its entirety. The EU asked to add a footnote to the annex on reporting of commitments by non-state actors, to suggest that it was not discussed and indicated that the previous version of the annex had been acceptable to them. BRAZIL, CHINA, CUBA, CAMEROON, the DRC, and MEXICO opposed, pointing to broad attendance by parties and non-state actors in the small group discussions on the issue. Chair Reddy said that the concerns of the EU would be noted in the meeting's report. The CRP was approved as amended.

In the afternoon, Chair Reddy tabled the final recommendation. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION asked to bracket the footnote in the annex on reporting of commitments by non-state actors, noting it had not been discussed, and indicated that reporting is voluntary and would be open to actors beyond national governments, including IPLCs and all relevant organizations and stakeholders, such as the private sector. Delegates adopted the final recommendation with this amendment.

Final Recommendation: In the final recommendation (CBD/SBI/4/L.6) the SBI: recalls COP Decision 15/6 paragraph 1(f) to further develop and test the open-ended forum for voluntary country review as part of the multidimensional approach to planning, monitoring, reporting, and review; and welcomes the further development of the online reporting tool for the submission of national targets and reports and the functionality of the Clearing-house Mechanism (CHM) for uploading revised or updated NBSAPs.

It further requests the Secretariat to: continue the development and testing of the online reporting tool and supporting regional or subregional NBSAP dialogues in collaboration with relevant organizations and host countries; develop a resource manual before COP 16 with further guidance; and prepare a summary of lessons learned and insights gained from regional dialogues by the SBI 5.

SBI recommends that COP 16, among other things:

- endorse the revisions to the annexed national reporting template for the seventh and eighth national reports;
- decide that the global review of collective progress in GBF implementation, conducted by the COP, is a process that will culminate in a decisions, including any recommendations to address challenges in collective progress in implementation, including on means of implementation, with a view to achieving the GBF goals and targets;
- decide that the global review of collective progress in GBF implementation, including the means of implementation, will be primarily based on: national reports; a global report on collective progress in GBF implementation; and bracketed text containing additional sources including: information shared by major stakeholder groups on their contributions; the global analysis; a

technical dialogue at the global level to discuss progress towards GBF implementation; and outcomes from the open-ended forum for voluntary country review;

- decide that the process for the global review is a party-driven process in all its stages, including preparation of the global report;
- decide that the global report will focus primarily on assessing progress in GBF implementation;
- emphasize that the global report should draw upon data and information provided by parties and the best available peer-reviewed scientific, technical and technological information, as well as traditional knowledge;
- decide to establish an ad hoc scientific and technical advisory group for the preparation of the global report with a time-bound mandate until COP 17 and annexed terms of reference that will provide scientific, technical and technological recommendations for the preparation of the global report;
- decide that the global report on collective progress in GBF implementation will be made available for peer review and review by SBSTTA and SBI before its submission to the COP; and
- invite IPBES to contribute to the global review of collective progress, and to the work of the ad hoc scientific and technical advisory group.

The recommendation to the COP contains bracketed options for the global review, which will be a party-led process led by SBI:

- with support from an advisory committee with its annexed terms of reference; or
- with engagement of all parties through both subsidiary bodies and COP review; or
- with support from the COP Bureau, the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies and the Co-Chairs of the ad hoc scientific and technical group.

In fully bracketed recommendations, parties still have to reach agreement on whether COP 16 should:

- reiterate the encouragement to parties to use headline and binary indicators, as well as component, complementary, and national indicators, in national reports;
- adopt the annexed core elements for reporting by non-state actors;
- recall the invitation to non-state actors to, on a voluntary basis, develop and share commitments contributing to NBSAPs and the GBF;
- recognize that the open-ended forum for voluntary country review provides a platform for sharing experiences and lessons learned;
- endorse the *modus operandi* for the open-ended forum for voluntary country review yet to be developed;
- emphasize or decide that the global review should focus on assessing collective progress in GBF implementation with no individual party focus or policy prescriptive guidance, and that the global review will be undertaken in a facilitative, non-intrusive and non-punitive manner, respecting national sovereignty and avoiding placing undue burden on parties, recognizing different levels of development;
- take note of the indicative timetable for the global review of collective progress in GBF implementation, including for the preparation of the global report; and

- decide that specific challenges to GBF implementation, in particular for developing countries, in particular least developed countries and small island developing states, will be considered throughout the global report.

The bracketed text of the decision further requests the Secretariat to:

- continue supporting the implementation of the guidance for NBSAPs and the guidance for the seventh and eighth national reports;
- support capacity building and development of parties in the use of online registration tools for both NBSAPs and online progress reporting;
- further develop a mechanism for tracking commitments of non-state actors using the annexed template;
- support the organization of subregional and regional dialogues;
- support SBI in conducting the open-ended forum for voluntary country review; and
- continue coordinating and collaborating with relevant partners in support of the implementation of the enhanced multidimensional approach to planning, monitoring, reporting and review.

Bracketed text invites donors, governments, and multilateral and bilateral agencies to support the enhanced multidimensional approach to planning, monitoring, reporting and review.

The final document contains annexes on:

- the national reporting template for the seventh and eighth national report;
- the terms of reference of the ad hoc scientific and technical advisory group for the preparation of the global report on collective progress in GBF implementation; and
- fully bracketed annexes on reporting of commitments by non-state actors, and the terms of reference of the advisory committee on collective progress in GBF Implementation, pending a decision on its establishment.

Resource Mobilization and Financial Mechanism

Resource Mobilization: This agenda item was discussed in plenary on 22 and 29 May, and in a contact group, co-chaired by Shonisani Munzhedzi (South Africa) and Salima Kempenaer (Belgium) on 23, 24, 26, and 27 May.

Discussions were difficult and sometimes polarized. Developing country parties urged developed countries to fulfil their commitments under the Convention and provide the necessary financial resources to close the biodiversity finance gap and achieve robust GBF implementation. Others emphasized the need to mobilize resources from all sources, including the private sector, and find innovative ways to bridge the finance gap. Many delegates expressed frustration about limited progress and stressed the need to find common ground at COP 16.

On [Wednesday, 22 May](#), the Secretariat introduced document [CBD/SBI/4/5](#). Ines Verleye (Belgium) and Patrick Luna (Brazil), Co-Chairs of the Advisory Committee on resource mobilization, reported on the committee's work. Many delegates expressed appreciation for the work of the Advisory Committee.

Delegates stressed the need to close the financing gap to achieve the GBF goals and targets. Many lamented slow progress on GBF Target 19 (mobilize USD 200 billion annually for biodiversity from all sources, including USD 30 billion through international finance) and emphasized developed country parties' obligations under [CBD Articles 20](#) (financial resources), [21](#) (financial mechanism), and [39](#) (financial interim arrangements). Two regional groups urged

establishing a global instrument for biodiversity finance under the COP. Others welcomed the establishment and capitalization of the GBF Fund and stressed the need to work within existing structures and to expand the donor base. Many welcomed the draft revised strategy for resource mobilization 2025-2030.

On [Thursday, 23 May](#), the contact group considered a non-paper reflecting proposals and amendments suggested in plenary and through written submissions. On [Friday](#), discussions focused on potentially establishing a global instrument, with the Secretariat describing options on: COP 16 deciding to establish a global biodiversity fund and indicating the process for its development; the intersessional process proposed by the Advisory Committee, annexed to the document; and operating the financial mechanism under the GEF.

On [Sunday](#), discussions in the contact group focused on draft recommendation elements on assessing efficiency, effectiveness, gaps, and overlaps, and proposals for potentially establishing a global instrument under the COP. On [Monday](#), the contact group concluded its work, discussing the way forward and focusing on the most contentious paragraphs of the draft recommendation.

On Wednesday, 29 May, in plenary, contact group Co-Chair Kempenaer reported on "intense and difficult" discussions, noting limited success, and stressing that a considerable amount of brackets remain in the document, adding that the structure may serve as a basis for further discussions at COP 16.

The Secretariat introduced a number of editorial amendments on CBD/SBI/4/CRP.11 and Chair Reddy opened discussions.

Cuba, for GRULAC, supported by EGYPT, the DRC, INDONESIA, and GABON, expressed deep frustration with lack of progress despite lengthy negotiations. He stressed that the implementation ability of developing country parties is contingent on fulfilment of developed country parties' obligations. He added that a collaborative approach in financial assistance fosters an environment of trust and mutual accountability, which can catalyze ambitious actions. He urged continuing the dialogue at COP 16, emphasizing that reaching common ground on resource mobilization is key to unlocking progress in other areas of work.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION shared the concerns, emphasizing the need for adequate, predictable, and timely provision of required financial resources, and urging continuing a party-led, inclusive dialogue. The DRC stressed the need for an open-ended working group for an intergovernmental and inclusive process that will enable operationalization of a global instrument on biodiversity finance. KENYA urged developed country parties to honor their obligations under CBD Article 20, stressing that equity and fairness in GBF implementation is critical, and urging for a dedicated fund for biodiversity.

EGYPT urged thinking in a practical, innovative way to break the deadlock, suggesting drawing inspiration from the African Union's Resource Mobilization Strategy and Framework. INDIA noted that all provisions encouraging parties towards specific actions should be qualified "according to national circumstances, priorities, and capabilities."

The EU, supported by SWITZERLAND, highlighted the need for mobilizing resources from all sources, including domestic, international, public, and private sources. The EU requested, supported by SWITZERLAND and AUSTRALIA, clarifying that provisions contained in the document with an asterisk represent

proposals by the Co-Chairs during the contact group discussions and have not been agreed by the contact group.

CANADA lamented that time pressure did not allow further refinement of the text, noting good progress in some areas. She suggested, supported by JAPAN and SWITZERLAND, adding a footnote, noting that “additional elements for a draft decision will be elaborated during COP 16 and that the content of the CRP is not a complete reflection of all parties’ views.”

BRAZIL, KENYA, CHINA, and LIBERIA opposed introducing the footnote, noting that nothing is agreed and everything is still in brackets. BRAZIL stressed the footnote would send a political message that no progress was made. The DRC and NIGERIA emphasized the need for the recommendation to include clear modalities towards GBF Target 19a (increasing total biodiversity related international financial resources from developed country parties to at least USD 20 billion per year by 2025, and to at least USD 30 billion per year by 2030).

Delegates agreed to note the concerns by CANADA, the DRC, NIGERIA, and others in the meeting’s report rather than through a footnote. The CRP was approved with these and other minor amendments.

In the afternoon, Chair Reddy introduced the final recommendation, which was adopted.

Final Recommendation: In the final recommendation (CBD/SBI/4/L.8), the SBI: notes the work of the Advisory Committee on Resource Mobilization, acknowledging it had not been able to finalize work without considering the yet-to-be-completed work of the Working Group on DSI, which has its second meeting scheduled for August 2024. The SBI further recommends that COP 16:

- welcome the establishment of the GBF Fund, as well as the decisions adopted by its first Council meeting; and
- note the increased recognition within the international community of the benefits of synergies between climate and biodiversity finance.

Fully bracketed recommendations include that COP 16 may:

- emphasize the urgent need to identify, eliminate, reform, or phase out harmful incentives and subsidies, and scale up positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;
- recognize the need to follow a human rights-based and gender-responsive approach when providing and mobilizing resources from all sources; and
- recognize the lack of direct access to biodiversity finance by rights- and stakeholders such as IPLCs, women, and youth.

The provision of the recommendation addressing national biodiversity finance plans was fully bracketed, encouraging parties to develop, update, and implement national biodiversity plans, on the basis of NBSAPs, and among other things, to support adequate and timely resource mobilization for GBF implementation.

In the section considering the **resource mobilization strategy**, the SBI recommends that COP 16:

- adopt or welcome the revised resource mobilization strategy 2025-2030; and
- invite or encourage relevant international organizations and initiatives, and potentially the private sector and others, alongside major stakeholder groups and partnerships, to support the strategy’s implementation by aligning public and private financial flows with the GBF, and potentially through the provision or deployment of financial support or resources.

Heavily bracketed recommendations in this section address whether COP 16 should:

- encourage parties to consider the strategy in domestic resource mobilization efforts;
- decide to monitor implementation progress or assess impacts on biodiversity and human rights of the strategy through the GBF, and to undertake a review or stock-take of the strategy, potentially through the global review, at COP 17 or 18;
- invite parties and potentially non-state actors, or invite the engagement of non-state actors and relevant rights- and stakeholders, to provide information through the seventh national reports to support the aforementioned review;
- decide to appoint an expert panel to analyze financial flows for the period covered by the GBF, to assess the extent to which parties’ obligations under Target 19 have been met, and to report to COP 17; and
- urge parties, the private sector, financial institutions, and multilateral development banks to establish and enforce social and environmental safeguards, and apply a human rights-based approach for developing or scaling up biodiversity and finance instruments, in particular innovative schemes.

The section on **assessing efficiency, effectiveness, gaps, and overlaps, potentially in the biodiversity finance landscape**, recommends that COP 16:

- welcome or note the exploration of the biodiversity finance landscape;
- recognize ongoing work by parties, IPLCs, and others, or by all actors, to strengthen, simplify, and potentially reform or leverage synergies among existing biodiversity finance instruments, and possibly other actions, with a view to closing the biodiversity finance gap; and
- recognize or note the potential voluntary actions outlined in the non-exhaustive list contained in the bracketed Annex II, and encourage all relevant actors to carry these out, as appropriate.

In fully bracketed provisions under this section, parties still need to reach agreement on whether COP 16 should:

- recognize with concern the remaining significant gap to substantially and progressively increase the level of financial resources from all sources to reach GBF Target 19;
- note the trend in development finance for biodiversity, and further underline or note that a critical gap still remains;
- urge parties to continue and intensify efforts to identify by 2025, and eliminate, phase out, or reform harmful incentives and subsidies by 2030, in a proportionate, just, fair, effective, and equitable way;
- encourage parties to harness, as appropriate, synergies between climate change and biodiversity finance;
- call on or urge countries, parties, or donors in a position to do so, to make or increase contributions to the GBF Fund, to achieve GBF targets or in a manner commensurate with the challenges faced by developing country parties in implementing the CBD and the GBF;
- invite non-sovereign contributors to contribute to the GBF Fund; and
- call on parties and other relevant actors to facilitate access to and increase financial resources for IPLCs, women, youth, and potentially people of African descent, for GBF implementation.

Another fully bracketed provision addresses whether the Secretariat should commission or undertake studies on:

- the implementation of guidance on safeguards in biodiversity finance mechanisms, identifying lessons learned and opportunities for improvement;
- the relationship between sovereign debt and the implementation of the CBD, and on the possibility of rechanneling Special Drawing Rights for biodiversity finance;
- the lessons learned from different financial mechanisms' governance and grievance mechanisms; and
- the synergies between biodiversity and climate finance.

In a fully bracketed section of the final recommendation addressing the **global instrument on biodiversity finance**, the SBI draft recommendation to COP 16 contains a set of alternative provisions under different headings.

On options related to the establishment of a new global instrument, alternative provisions recommend that COP 16:

- decide to establish the dedicated GBF Fund, under the authority of, and accountable to, the COP, with bracketed additions to “operationalize it,” and for the Fund to be “informed by the criteria enshrined in Articles 20 and 21 of the CBD,” “and by other elements in Annex III”; or
- decide to defer, with a bracketed addition “until COP 17,” “consideration” or a “decision” of whether the GBF Fund should be designated the Global Biodiversity Fund, with bracketed additions for the GBF Fund to “be informed by the criteria enshrined in CBD Articles 20 and 21,” “and by other elements in Annex III”; or
- “affirm” or “decide” that the GEF, including its newly established GBF Fund, continue to be the institutional structure operating the financial mechanism of the CBD and its Protocols, with bracketed additions for the GBF Fund to “be informed by the criteria enshrined in CBD Articles 20 and 21,” “and by other elements in Annex III”; and note with appreciation the work of the Advisory Committee on Resource Mobilization on proposals for a global instrument on biodiversity finance to mobilize resources from all sources.

On possible paragraphs on the substance of further work, alternative options recommend that COP 16:

- decide that further or continued discussions on a dedicated global instrument for biodiversity finance be informed by: Articles 20 and 21 of the CBD; the results of the work of the Advisory Committee on Resource Mobilization; further assessments of the funding landscape by relevant organizations; the first national reports of parties as well as the information gathered through the monitoring framework as part of the global review of collective progress in GBF implementation; and other elements in Annex III; or
- decide to hold further in-depth discussions on the urgent need for mobilizing additional resources to close the biodiversity finance gap, in line with goals and targets of the GBF, and informed by the criteria in Articles 20 and 21 of the CBD, and by other elements in Annex III.

On possible paragraphs on the intersessional process, alternative provisions recommend that COP 16:

- decide to establish an open-ended working group or intergovernmental and inclusive intersessional process for operationalization and to report on the outcomes to COP 17; or

- decide to establish an expert advisory committee to develop the modalities for the operationalization of the dedicated global instrument for biodiversity finance and to consider the future or “evaluate the implementation” of the GBF Fund, and to report thereon to COP 17; or
- decide to use the established bodies of the CBD and engage with stakeholders intersessionally; and request the Secretariat to: gather all relevant information and submit it for consideration by the SBI and by COP 17; and to issue a notification inviting developing country parties and parties with economies in transition to consider whether they are in a position to voluntarily assume the obligations of the developed country parties in accordance with Article 20 of the CBD.

Annex I contains the revised strategy for resource mobilization (Phase II (2025-2030)). Annex II is entitled a non-exhaustive list of actions, with “voluntary” in brackets, to “strengthen, simplify and reform existing instruments for biodiversity finance” and/or “close the gap in the biodiversity finance landscape.” Annex III contains elements for discussion on a possible dedicated global instrument for biodiversity finance. Annex IV contains a bracketed placeholder for terms of reference for the open-ended working group on resource mobilization.

Financial Mechanism: This agenda item was discussed in plenary on 22 May and 27-29 May. Discussions were interlinked with those under resource mobilization, with delegates disagreeing on whether the GEF should continue to operate as the financial mechanism or if a dedicated financial mechanism under the COP would be necessary.

On [Wednesday, 22 May](#), the Secretariat introduced the relevant document ([CBD/SBI/4/6](#)) and the preliminary report of the GEF Council ([CBD/SBI/4/6/Add.1](#)). Sam Johnston, independent evaluator for the sixth review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism, addressed the review’s modalities. Mark Gimski, GEF, provided details on projects under the eighth replenishment cycle (GEF-8).

On [Monday, 27 May](#), Chair Reddy opened consideration of CBD/SBI/4/CRP.2. Lengthy discussions were held over a provision inviting the GEF, in collaboration with the Secretariat, to encourage recipient parties to submit project proposals in support of implementation of the CP on biosafety. Delegates further debated whether to “encourage,” “invite,” or “instruct” the GEF, expressing diverging opinions on whether the GEF is under the authority of the COP. Some delegates highlighted the timely establishment and operationalization of the GBF Fund, while others questioned whether the fund is truly operational. Chair Reddy noted that controversial provisions would be bracketed in their entirety.

On [Tuesday, 28 May](#), delegates concluded discussions on the draft recommendation and approved the CRP.

On Wednesday, 29 May, Chair Reddy introduced the final recommendation, which was adopted with minor amendments.

Final Recommendation: In the final recommendation (CBD/SBI/4/L.2), SBI:

- notes the preliminary report of the GEF Council to COP 16 and the relatively rapid support it provided for revising or updating NBSAPs as well as national biodiversity finance plans aligned with the GBF;

- encourages eligible parties to accelerate their use of their country allocations available under GEF-8 and eligible CP and NP parties to take note of the relevant information in the GEF's preliminary report when submitting project proposals;
- encourages parties to participate in the evaluation process conducted to implement the terms of reference for the sixth review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism, as well as consider at COP 16 advice submitted by other biodiversity-related conventions;
- strongly encourages eligible parties to contribute to the survey of national funding priorities and needs;
- encourages the GEF to take into account in a balanced manner project proposals related to the CP and NP, and continue to strengthen collaboration with the Biodiversity Finance Initiative on national biodiversity finance plans; and
- requests the GBF Fund Council to adopt at its second meeting terms of reference for the auxiliary body and the advisory group.

SBI requests the Secretariat to: present the outcomes of the funding needs survey and the report of the independent evaluator on the effectiveness of the financial mechanism for consideration at COP 16, CP COP/MOP 11, and NP COP/MOP 5; incorporate the final GEF report into COP 16 documentation; and develop, for COP 16's consideration, elements of guidance to support the implementation of GBF targets not covered in previous guidance to the GEF.

SBI's recommendation to COP 16 is divided in six parts addressing: the GEF Trust Fund; the GBF Fund; the four-year outcome-oriented framework of programme priorities; funding needs' assessment; further guidance to the GEF; and the review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism.

On the GEF, SBI recommends that COP 16 note with appreciation the GEF Council report and:

- invite relevant parties to the CP and NP to access proactively the national allocations available for each Protocol from GEF-8;
- encourage the GEF and recipient countries to maintain the contribution of the International Waters focal area and extend this practice to other focal areas, as well as explore potential opportunities for maximizing contribution of its integrated programmes to GBF implementation;
- request the Secretariat and the GEF to support implementation of GBF Target 13 (increase benefit-sharing from genetic resources, DSI, and traditional knowledge); and
- invite all parties and others to participate in GEF-9, with bracketed language inviting "in particular developed country parties."

In a partially bracketed provision, SBI recommends that COP 16 invite, encourage, or instruct the GEF, in collaboration with the Secretariat to encourage or invite recipient or all eligible parties to submit proposals in support of implementation of GBF Target 17 (strengthen biosafety and distribute the benefits of biotechnology) and the implementation plan and capacity-building action plan for the CP.

On the GBF Fund, in fully bracketed recommendations, parties must still determine if COP 16 should:

- express its appreciation to the GEF either for progress made or for the timely establishment and operationalization of the GBF Fund;
- regret that the GBF Fund Council did not adopt terms of reference for the auxiliary body and the advisory group at its first meeting;

- urge the GEF Secretariat to continue to strengthen its resource mobilization efforts; and
- emphasize that guidance from the COP in accordance with CBD Article 21 is also applicable to the GBF Fund.

On the four-year framework of programme priorities, SBI delegates reached consensus on recommending that COP 16:

- request the GEF to include in its report to the COP how it responds to the framework and how it contributes to each GBF target;
- encourage the governing bodies of biodiversity-related conventions to provide strategic advice concerning national actions to achieve the objectives of the CBD and its Protocols; and
- further encourage or invite the Secretariats of biodiversity-related conventions to provide input to the inter-secretariat consultation for the negotiations of GEF-9.

In a fully bracketed recommendation, parties must still determine if COP 16 should adopt the framework of biodiversity programming priorities for GEF-9, aligned with the GBF.

On assessing funding needs, SBI delegates agreed to recommend that COP 16 request the Secretariat to prepare draft terms of reference for conducting the fifth determination of funding needs for GEF-10 for consideration by SBI 6 and COP 17.

In fully bracketed provisions, parties must still reach agreement whether COP 16 should: take note of the report on estimated funding needs for GEF-9; and request the Secretariat to compile and transmit information on funding needs received from all eligible parties and participants in GEF-9.

On further guidance to the GEF, the provisions still contain brackets. The SBI recommends that COP 16 either request or instruct the GEF to: continue to support partnerships with IPLCs, women and youth, and people of African descent; inform the COP of the voluntary guidelines on safeguards in biodiversity financing mechanisms, with the qualifier "voluntary" remaining in brackets; and explore ways to further improve, facilitate access, and increase direct funding to IPLCs, women and youth, and people of African descent. References to people of African descent remain bracketed throughout the document.

On the review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism, the SBI recommends that COP 16 request the Secretariat to prepare draft terms of reference for the seventh review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism, including views from IPLCs, women, and youth for consideration by SBI 6 and COP 17, with bracketed references to also include possible impacts on the rights of IPLCs as well as that the aforementioned actions be implemented with resources from the core budget.

Annexed to the recommendation is the four-year outcome-oriented framework of programme priorities for the CBD for GEF-9, which remains fully bracketed.

Capacity Building and Development

Capacity Building and Development, Technical and Scientific Cooperation, CHM, and Knowledge Management: This agenda item was discussed in plenary on 22-23 May, 28-29 May, and in a contact group, co-chaired by Jesús Guerra Bell (Cuba) and Holly Kelley-Weil (UK), which met on 24 and 26 May.

Discussions addressed a number of issues as the agenda item was broad. Delegates highlighted the development of the mechanism comprising regional and subregional technical and scientific support centers, with the Secretariat announcing selected entities by

region, following consideration by the Bureau. Discussions further addressed the necessary global coordination entity. Eventually, two separate recommendations were adopted: one on capacity building and development, technical and scientific cooperation, and technology transfer; and the other on the CHM and knowledge management.

On [Wednesday, 22 May](#), the Secretariat introduced documents [CBD/SBI/4/7](#), [Add.1](#), [Add.2](#), and [Add.3](#) on capacity building and development, technical and scientific cooperation, and technology transfer, highlighting the development of a mechanism comprising regional and subregional technical and scientific support centers, to be coordinated by a global coordination entity. Motohiro Hasegawa (Japan), Co-Chair of the IAG on technical and scientific cooperation, reported on the IAG's work and advice.

Many delegates supported the draft recommendation and highlighted the importance of a needs-based approach. Many welcomed the proposed network of regional and subregional support centers; requested extending the IAG's mandate; welcomed the CHM work programme; and supported the adoption of the knowledge management strategy.

On [Thursday, 23 May](#), they concluded the first reading, with some supporting strengthening national CHM portals and integrating traditional knowledge and practices of IPLCs in the knowledge management strategy.

On [Friday, 24 May](#), the contact group considered a non-paper on capacity building and development, technical and scientific cooperation, and technology transfer. The Co-Chairs noted that the elements under the CHM and the knowledge management strategy were being developed into a separate CRP.

On [Sunday, 26 May](#), the contact group concluded its deliberations, focusing on the section of the draft recommendation addressing technical and scientific cooperation and technology transfer, and remaining bracketed text.

On [Tuesday, 28 May](#), Chair Reddy introduced CBD/SBI/4/CRP.4 on the CHM and knowledge management. Delegates debated references to international obligations or regulations and data sovereignty, which were bracketed. They further decided to bracket: paragraphs on adoption of the knowledge management strategy, as well as Annex II containing the strategy; and Annex I containing the CHM work programme 2024-2030.

The Secretariat announced the entities selected to serve as regional and/or sub-regional technical and scientific cooperation support centers, following consultations in the Bureau:

- Africa: the Central African Forest Commission; the Ecological Monitoring Center; the Regional Center for Mapping of Resources for Development; the Sahara and Sahel Observatory; and the South African National Biodiversity Institute.
- Americas: the Alexander von Humboldt Resources Research Institute; the Secretariat of the Caribbean Community; and the Central American Commission for Environment and Development.
- Asia: the ASEAN Center for Biodiversity; the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Asia Regional Office; the IUCN Regional Office for West Asia; the Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences; and the Regional Environment Center for Central Asia.
- Oceania: the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme.

- Europe: the Joint Research Center of the European Commission; the IUCN Center for Mediterranean Cooperation; the IUCN Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia; and the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences.

On Wednesday, 29 May, following report-backs from the Co-Chairs of the contact group in plenary, delegates approved CRP/SBI/4/CRP.10, which contains several brackets, adding a further bracket around the reference to the Global Knowledge Support Service for Biodiversity, following an intervention by ARGENTINA.

In the afternoon, Chair Reddy introduced the final recommendation. The Secretariat indicated that Annex I containing the CHM programme of work for the period 2024-2030 had been bracketed in its entirety. Delegates adopted the draft recommendation.

Final Recommendations: In the final recommendation on **capacity building and development, technical and scientific cooperation, and technology transfer** (CBD/SBI/4/L.7), the SBI: takes note of the report on the work of the IAG on Technical and Scientific Cooperation, and welcomes the progress made; and requests the Secretariat with respect to the regional and/or subregional technical and scientific support centers to:

- initiate the process of signing the host agreements with the selected entities and organizations;
- prepare, with support from the IAG, guidance to address the specific capacity-building and development needs identified by parties, for use by the centers in the development of their workplans, and to make such guidance available for consideration by COP 16;
- support entities and organizations selected to host the support centers in the mobilization of resources for delivering support to parties to implement the GBF, and to report on progress to COP 16; and
- prepare an estimate of the required resources, with respect to the global coordination entity, for consideration by COP 16.

In the section of the final recommendation addressing capacity building and development, the SBI recommends that COP 16:

- welcome the indicators proposed by the IAG on Technical and Scientific Cooperation ([CBD/TSC/IAG/2024/1/2](#));
- decide that the monitoring and reporting of progress of the long-term strategic framework for capacity building and development and the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism will be conducted as part of the process for monitoring and reporting of the progress in the implementation of the GBF;
- invite parties, rights- and stakeholders, including initiatives, networks and partnerships, to share through the central portal of the CHM information about their ongoing and planned capacity-building and development activities in support of GBF implementation and monitoring;
- invite parties and other governments, in partnership with IPLCs, women and youth organizations and others, to continue to identify and share their biodiversity-related capacity-building and development needs, including for technology assessment through the central portal of the CHM, and invite parties and others to offer support to address needs identified;
- invite parties, other governments, and organizations to continue to implement the long-term strategic framework for capacity building and development, including through the development of dedicated action plans and programmes; and

• request the IAG to prepare terms of reference for the independent evaluation of the relevance and effectiveness of the long-term strategic framework for capacity building and development and the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism, to be undertaken in 2029, for consideration by the SBI and by COP 17.

The SBI further recommends that COP 16 request the Secretariat, with the support of the IAG, to:

- continue to support parties, IPLCs, women and youth organizations and others in assessing and communicating their capacity needs and priorities through the central portal of the CHM;
- further identify and map initiatives and partnerships supporting capacity building and development for GBF implementation;
- share the information collected through the central portal of the CHM;
- continue to develop and implement joint capacity-building activities and programmes with the Secretariats of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the biodiversity-related conventions to strengthen cooperation, collaboration and synergies.

In a fully bracketed provision, the SBI may recommend that COP 16 request the IAG to identify suitable options to further address the technological, technical, and institutional capability gaps identified, for consideration by SBI 6 and by COP 17.

In the section of the final recommendation addressing technical and scientific cooperation and technology transfer, the SBI recommends that COP 16:

- decide that the global coordination entity of the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism will be hosted by, with bracketed alternatives referring to “the Secretariat of the CBD” or “an international organization with a global mandate”;
- decide that, in the interim, the Bio-Bridge Initiative will continue to provide coordination support;
- encourage the global coordination entity and the centers to mobilize necessary funding from various sources to support the operationalization and activities of the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism;
- request the regional and/or subregional support centers to: develop, with the support of the global coordination entity and the IAG, a biennial workplan for the period 2025-2026; collaborate among themselves and with parties, and others in the delivery of support to parties in the respective regions and subregions; and submit to the global coordination entity their activity reports for the period 2025-2026 for review by the SBI and for consideration by COP 17;
- invite parties and, as appropriate, IPLCs, women and youth organizations and others to make full use of the regional and/or subregional support centers to support the implementation of the CBD and its Protocols and the GBF;
- invite parties, other governments, and organizations to provide financial and in-kind contributions and other resources to support programmes and activities;
- invite the Kunming Biodiversity Fund to support programmes and activities, in response to requests made by parties in their respective subregions;
- invite the GEF, including through the GBF Fund, to continue to support country-driven projects that include technical and

scientific cooperation, technology transfer and capacity building for GBF implementation.

The SBI further recommends that COP 16 request the Secretariat to:

- identify and facilitate the mobilization of additional financial resources and technical assistance to enable the regional and/or subregional support centers to initiate support programmes and activities in their respective subregions;
- compile relevant requests for capacity-building and development activities in decisions of the COP and the COP/MOP to the Protocols;
- prepare, in collaboration with the IAG, the criteria for evaluating the performance of the regional and/or subregional centers and of the global coordination entity; and
- prepare a progress report on the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism, for consideration by SBI 6 and COP 17.

In fully bracketed provisions, parties still need to agree to recommend that COP 16:

- adopt the modalities for operationalizing the global coordination entity of the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism, in Annex II;
- decide to issue a second call for additional centers of excellence, with priority given to underrepresented regions;
- request the GEF, including through the GBF Fund, and invite the Kunming Biodiversity Fund and other funds, to support the operationalization and activities of the regional and/or subregional technical and scientific support centers;
- request the Secretariat to: initiate operations of the global coordination entity; organize meetings of the selected regional and/or subregional support centers; organize annual joint meetings of all the support centers to enhance coordination and synergy; and facilitate meetings of the regional and/or subregional support centers with key initiatives and partnerships.

Annex I encompasses a list of entities and organizations selected to host the technical and scientific cooperation support centers. Annex II contains the modalities for operationalizing the global coordination, with many in brackets.

The final recommendation on **CHM and knowledge management** (CBD/SBI/4/L.4) is split into two sections. References to the global knowledge support center for biodiversity and to people of African descent remain bracketed throughout.

Regarding the CHM, SBI recommends that COP 16, among other things:

- welcome or adopt the annexed CHM programme of work 2024-2030;
- invite parties, other governments and regional and/or subregional scientific cooperation support centers, the global knowledge support service for biodiversity, and relevant organizations to implement the CHM work programme
- encourage parties: to continue to take necessary steps to establish or strengthen national CHMs and ensure their sustainability; with the bracketed option of taking into consideration national legislation, the necessity to devise capacity-building and development programmes that target all parties to the CBD and its Protocols; and to join relevant biodiversity-related networks; with a specific reference to Global Biodiversity Information Facility remaining in brackets;

- invite the GEF, in accordance with its mandate, to consider funding requests from developing country parties, in particular least developed countries and small island developing states, as well as from countries with economies in transition, to implement the CHM programme of work; and
- request the Secretariat to: facilitate the implementation of the programme of work in collaboration with parties, regional and/or subregional support centers and the global coordination entity, and, as appropriate, IPLCs and people of African descent, women and youth and relevant initiatives and organizations; further develop and strengthen the CHM central portal; and further improve the CBD website.

The following draft SBI recommendations to COP 16 on CHM are bracketed in full, including to:

- encourage parties to nominate or update information on a national focal point to the Secretariat;
- urge developed country parties, and invite others, or as a further bracketed alternative, to: invite parties, and others in a position to do so to provide financial, technical, and human resources to enable developing country parties to implement the CHM programme of work; and
- request UNEP to elaborate a global project to facilitate capacity building and development on using the CHMs of the CBD and its Protocols, and invite the GEF to provide support for that project.

Regarding knowledge management, SBI recommends that COP 16, among other things:

- recognize that nothing in the strategy should be understood as modifying the rights and obligations of a party under the CBD or any other international agreement;
- invite the actors mentioned in the knowledge management strategy; or an alternative in brackets: parties, other governments and relevant organizations; to implement the knowledge management strategy, with the effective participation of IPLCs, people of African descent, women, and youth;
- urge or invite developed country parties, and invite others in a position to do so to provide financial, technical, and human resources support to enable developing country parties to implement the knowledge management strategy;
- invite regional and/or subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centers, and others to support the implementation of the knowledge management strategy in collaboration with the Secretariat, relevant organizations, IPLCs, people of African descent, women, and youth and other initiatives; and
- request the Secretariat to: support the implementation of the knowledge management strategy, with the guidance of the IAG on technical and scientific cooperation; to implement, in collaboration with the regional and/or subregional support centers and others, the knowledge management for biodiversity initiative to strengthen the capacities of parties, IPLCs, people of African descent, women, and youth in knowledge management; to further classify the available information relating to GBF targets and other GBF elements, using the appropriate metadata standards and taxonomies; and to submit a report on these implementation activities for consideration and further guidance by SBI 6 and COP 17.

In fully bracketed recommendations, parties still need to reach agreement to recommend that COP 16:

- adopt the annexed knowledge management strategy to support GBF implementation; and
- stress addressing inequalities between countries in their capacities to generate, collect, organize, and share biodiversity-relevant data, and potentially urge parties to enhance capacity building and development, scientific, and technical cooperation and access to and transfer of technology.

The final document also contains two annexes bracketed in their entirety: Annex I on the CHM programme of work for the period 2024-2030; and Annex II on the knowledge management strategy to support GBF implementation.

Capacity Building and Development Action Plan for the NP:

This agenda item was discussed in plenary on 23, 28, and 29 May.

On [Thursday, 23 May](#), the Secretariat introduced [CBD/SBI/4/8](#). Many parties welcomed the draft action plan. Some suggested that the proposed network of support centers support the action plan's implementation, and supported broadening the Informal Advisory Committee's (IAC) mandate.

On [Tuesday, 28 May](#), Chair Reddy introduced CBD/SBI/4/CRP.3. Delegates addressed the draft recommendation and the annexed draft action plan, devoting a considerable amount of time on a table of indicative capacity-building activities. The CRP was approved.

On Wednesday, 29 May, Chair Reddy introduced the final recommendation. The Secretariat drew attention to editorial and other amendments. The final recommendation was adopted.

Final Recommendation: In the final recommendation (CBD/SBI/4/L.3), SBI recommends that NP COP/MOP 5:

- take note of the report of the IAC on Capacity-building for the Implementation of the NP at COP/MOP 5;
- adopt the draft capacity-building and development action plan for the NP, contained in the annex, with the phrase “adopts” in brackets;
- invite parties and other governments to use the action plan to assess capacity-building and development needs and priorities, in the development of capacity-building and development plans on access and benefit-sharing (ABS) as part of their NBSAPs, as well as national biodiversity finance plans to implement the GBF;
- invite parties and others to develop and implement capacity-building and development activities to support the action plan, and publish information and resources on the ABS Clearing-House;
- recommend that the COP invite the GEF to provide adequate financial resources for the implementation of the action plan;
- decide to assess the implementation of the action plan as part of the third assessment and review of the effectiveness of the NP, and to consider at COP/MOP 8 the need for review or revision of the action plan;
- decide to: extend the mandate of the IAC on Capacity-building for the Implementation of the NP until COP/MOP 8; expand the mandate of the IAC to include providing more general advice related to NP implementation; and keep an expanded IAC membership, with relevant expertise; and
- request the Secretariat to: disseminate and promote the action plan to target audiences; continue to facilitate capacity-building and development activities; make available, and update as necessary, supporting guidance materials to the action plan; and prepare a report on progress made towards the implementation of the action plan, as part of the third assessment and review of the effectiveness of the NP.

The annex, containing a draft capacity-building and development action plan for the NP, includes an introduction; key concepts, with bracketed references to “considerations,” “guiding principles,” and “theory of change”; cooperation and coordination; review and implementation; and an enclosure on outputs and capacity-building and development activities.

Communication, Education, and Public Awareness (CEPA)

This agenda item was discussed in plenary on 23, 28, and 29 May. Discussions focused on the updated programme of work on CEPA with many delegates calling for the development of a global plan of action for education on biodiversity. Lack of time did not allow in-depth consideration of suggested actions to align the CEPA work programme with the GBF.

On [Thursday, 23 May](#), the Secretariat introduced document [CBD/SBI/4/9](#), containing a review of implementation of the CEPA work programme and annexed actions to align CEPA activities with the GBF. Many emphasized the importance of aligning the CEPA work programme with the GBF. Delegates further supported that COP 16 adopt the updated programme of work on CEPA following further discussions, and urged the development of the global plan of action for education on biodiversity. Major Groups and other stakeholders suggested considering: transdisciplinary education recognizing worldviews of IPLCs, holistic and lifelong learning, and informal education.

On [Tuesday, 28 May](#), Chair Reddy opened consideration of CBD/SBI/4/CRP.5. Delegates bracketed references to “transformative changes”; language on the provision of adequate resources; and options for text on cultural “differences” and/or “contexts.”

On Wednesday, 29 May, delegates resumed consideration of the CRP, adopting it with minor additional amendments and further brackets around references to IUCN, IPBES, and digital transformation, following interventions by BRAZIL, MEXICO, CHILE, the EU, INDONESIA, ARGENTINA, SAUDI ARABIA, and JAPAN. The annex, containing suggested actions for GBF alignment was bracketed in its entirety, with a footnote explaining that it had not been discussed beyond the first reading in plenary. The CRP was approved.

In the afternoon, Chair Reddy presented the final recommendation. The Secretariat and JAPAN introduced editorial amendments. The final recommendation was adopted.

Final Recommendation: In the final recommendation (CBD/SBI/4/L.5), the SBI recommends that the COP:

- either “request” or “encourage” parties to develop and implement actions at the national level that align the CEPA work programme with the GBF, as set out in the annex, and to include this information in their national report; with bracketed text referring to “the global plan of action on education”;
- invite the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to “develop” or “contribute to the development of,” a global plan of action for education on biodiversity, with references to also invite the IPBES and IUCN, in brackets;
- invite parties and international organizations to provide resources, including to support capacity building and development, for CEPA activities at all levels;
- request the Secretariat: to implement, in consultation with the IAC on CEPA, the actions to align the CEPA work programme with the GBF; to submit a progress report on the implementation of these actions for consideration by SBI before COP 17 and also

by COP 17, and to keep this topic under review at COP 18 and 19; and to continue to implement the communications strategy to support GBF implementation; and

- invite parties and organizations to provide support to the Secretariat and to parties for the continued implementation of the communications strategy.

The annex, containing suggested actions to align the work programme on CEPA with the GBF, along with a provision in the recommendation welcoming the actions contained in the annex, were bracketed in their entirety, along with a footnote noting: “The present annex was prepared by the Chair with the support of the Secretariat following the first reading of the agenda item. It was not reviewed by SBI 4.”

Cooperation with Other Conventions and International Organizations

This agenda item was discussed in plenary on 23, 24, and 29 May. Discussions focused on the importance of cooperation to address cross-cutting challenges, increase efficiency and effectiveness, and reduce duplication of work. They also addressed the need to respect mandates of different MEAs. The recommendation to COP 16 is entirely bracketed since SBI 4 did not have adequate time to address it.

On [Thursday, 23 May](#), the Secretariat introduced document [CBD/SBI/4/10](#). Clarisse Kehler Siebert (Sweden), Co-Chair of the Bern III Conference on cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions, presented the conference’s outcomes. Many delegates emphasized the importance of cooperation among the CBD and other biodiversity-related conventions and international organizations; welcomed the Bern III Conference report; and supported the draft recommendation. Others urged recognizing the independent and autonomous nature of MEAs, respecting their individual mandates, and a party-driven approach to cooperation, cautioning prejudging other international organizations and conventions’ procedures.

On [Friday, 24 May](#), delegates concluded the first reading, with Major Groups and other stakeholders stressing, among other things, the importance of policy coherence on cross-cutting issues, and urging collaboration with relevant conventions and international organizations to develop common definitions and policies.

On Wednesday, 29 May, Chair Reddy introduced CBD/SBI/4/CRP.9. Delegates decided to bracket the entire SBI draft recommendation to COP 16 due to lack of time, following a suggestion by BRAZIL.

On the part of the recommendation not directed to COP 16, delegates reaffirmed the importance of cooperation for the implementation of “the Convention, its Protocols” and the GBF, and removed references to the Paris Agreement and the land degradation neutrality target in a section on cooperation among the three Rio Conventions, following proposals by BRAZIL.

On a request to the Secretariat, they decided to delete an invitation to foster cooperation and enhance synergies, including to support implementation, when preparing for COP 29 of the UNFCCC and COP 16 of the UNCCD, following a suggestion by ARGENTINA, supported by the RUSSIAN FEDERATION. Following interventions by SWITZERLAND and the EU emphasizing the momentum for strengthening synergies due to three back-to-back COPs of the Rio Conventions, delegates agreed to a streamlined version of the provision. The CRP was approved as amended.

Final Recommendation: In the final recommendation (CBD/SBI/4/L.12), SBI requests the Secretariat and invites the Secretariats of the UNFCCC and the UNCCD to continue to foster cooperation and enhance synergies, in line with their respective mandates. The entire recommendation to COP 16 remains bracketed.

Pending agreement by all parties, the SBI recommends that COP 16:

- welcome the outcomes of the Bern III Conference and invite parties to consider actions to implement the outcomes set out in the report;
- note with appreciation the contribution of UN agencies and others, including rights- and stakeholders to the development of tools and guidance on biodiversity and the GBF and express its appreciation to the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions and the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions for enhancing cooperation;
- invite the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN and UNEP to continue to implement the GBF in consultation with parties, and others, including rights- and stakeholders, and further invite UNEP to continue to support cooperation and collaboration among biodiversity-related conventions and of relevant agreements;
- encourage parties to raise awareness of their ongoing process for the update or revision of NBSAPs;
- invite parties and others to continue to reinforce actions to enhance synergies at all levels in the implementation of the GBF, the Sustainable Development Goals, the biodiversity-related conventions, and other relevant agreements;
- call upon parties to establish coordination processes to support collaboration among CBD national focal points and national focal points of other conventions;
- call upon the Secretariats of the chemicals and waste conventions and other relevant conventions to develop, in collaboration with the three Rio Conventions, a pathway for GBF Target 7 (reduce pollution to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity); and
- invite the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to further cooperate with the Secretariat to develop tools and guidance on a human-rights based approach to GBF implementation.

SBI further recommends that COP 16 request the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to:

- continue collaboration with other conventions and UNEP on the implementation of the outcomes of the Bern III Conference and of specific GBF targets;
- strengthen collaboration with the Secretariats of the UNFCCC and the UNCCD;
- further support cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions, chemicals and waste conventions, and relevant science-policy bodies;
- strengthen collaboration with the UN Forum on Forests and other relevant organizations;
- further support the participation of representatives of IPLCs, women, and youth in GBF implementation; and
- report to SBI at a meeting before COP 17 on cooperation activities.

Long-term Strategic Approach to Mainstreaming

This agenda item was discussed in plenary on 24 and 29 May. Although most delegates agreed on the need for a long-term approach to mainstreaming, emphasizing the need to mainstream

biodiversity concerns across productive sectors in whole-of-government and society approaches, discussions proved difficult. A suggestion on intersessional work prior to COP 16, setting out a roadmap for mainstreaming-related activities to 2030, created tensions and disagreements, leaving many delegates frustrated.

On [Friday, 24 May](#), the Secretariat introduced document [CBD/SBI/4/13](#). Many delegates emphasized the importance of mainstreaming biodiversity across all sectors of government and society, and highlighted relevant efforts at the national and regional levels. Some noted that the long-term strategic approach to mainstreaming is already addressed within the GBF and has no clear added value. They pointed to potential overlaps, cautioning duplication of work. Others cautioned working in silos and a group of parties called for a “coalition of the willing” to promote biodiversity mainstreaming. Yet others proposed a dedicated work agenda on mainstreaming until 2030, allowing for gap identification, and called for relevant capacity building.

On Wednesday, 29 May, Chair Reddy introduced CBD/SBI/4/CRP.6.

On a paragraph reiterating the critical importance of biodiversity mainstreaming to achieve the objectives of the Convention, the DRC and ETHIOPIA suggested including reference to a whole-of-government and society approach, and also refer to the CBD Protocols.

ARGENTINA and BRAZIL noted that this provision is agreed language from Decision 15/17 and suggested including another provision from the same decision, requiring parties “to integrate as far as possible and as appropriate, the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes, and policies.” Both proposals were included in brackets.

A paragraph emphasizing the importance of ensuring that “the processes under the Convention remain inclusive and representative” was amended to “the processes under the Convention and its Protocols remain inclusive and regionally balanced,” following interventions by CHILE, ARGENTINA, MEXICO, CÔTE D’IVOIRE, and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION.

On a paragraph recognizing that biodiversity mainstreaming needs to be considered in a balanced manner and that there is no one-size-fits-all approach, delegates bracketed text noting “that actions related to biodiversity mainstreaming should be implemented on a flexible basis, taking into consideration national circumstances and capabilities,” following interventions by INDONESIA, the EU, and BRAZIL.

MEXICO, supported by the EU, suggested requesting the Secretariat to propose a 2025-2030 roadmap for further work on biodiversity mainstreaming to be considered by COP 16. BRAZIL opposed any intersessional work, questioning why their textual proposals had not been included in the draft recommendation.

Noting lack of agreement, Chair Reddy highlighted time pressure and proposed to bracket the rest of the CRP, adding a footnote stating that “the document was prepared by the Chair, with the support of the Secretariat, following the first reading on this agenda item, and has not been revised by SBI.” He further suggested approving the CRP as amended and noting concerns in the meeting’s report.

The EU expressed concern on necessary intersessional work, and asked whether delegates would be able to introduce new text at COP

16. Chair Reddy confirmed that new text can be introduced and that this would be noted in the meeting's report.

In the afternoon, MEXICO, supported by the EU, PERU, COSTA RICA, and GEORGIA, reiterated the suggestion to request the Secretariat to prepare a 2025-2030 roadmap to allow parties to consider at COP 16 the feasibility, timeline, and cost implications, noting that the proposal was not discussed informally due to lack of time.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION and BRAZIL opposed, noting that the proposal preempts COP 16 discussions and highlighting the Secretariat's heavy workload for the intersessional period. TOGO stressed the need to be realistic in requests to the Secretariat. ARGENTINA expressed flexibility for further discussions at COP 16.

Following a request by Chair Reddy, MEXICO and the EU agreed to clearly reflect the issue in the meeting's report, expressing their frustration on how the request was handled. The CRP was approved as amended.

In the afternoon, Chair Reddy introduced the final recommendation. The DRC requested a footnote, noting that, due to exceptional reasons and lack of time, the document was not translated in all UN official languages. The final recommendation was adopted.

Final Recommendation: In the final recommendation (CBD/SBI/4/L.9) and in fully bracketed provisions, SBI did not yet agree to recommend that COP 16:

- recognize that the GBF sufficiently captures the common goal of biodiversity mainstreaming;
- urge parties and invite others to undertake biodiversity mainstreaming in a manner supportive of the three objectives of the CBD, in particular to enable mainstreaming at all levels of government and society, with a view to fostering the full and effective contributions of women, youth, IPLCs, and others;
- invite parties and others to provide relevant information through their seventh national reports; and
- encourage parties to promote and support business models that contribute to the three objectives of the CBD and mainstream the GBF.

The SBI further recommends that COP 16 request the Secretariat to:

- integrate the consideration of biodiversity mainstreaming into regional dialogue meetings;
- strengthen collaboration with relevant conventions and organizations to achieve biodiversity mainstreaming at all levels;
- invite parties and others to share good practices, tools, mechanisms, guidance, and relevant solutions;
- undertake a gap analysis focusing on challenges and propose an agenda for 2025-2030; and
- prepare a progress report on the aforementioned activities for consideration at an SBI meeting prior to COP 17.

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

This agenda item was discussed in plenary on 24 and 29 May. Discussions focused on conflicts of interest for individuals participating in the work of the Convention; the merits and shortcoming of virtual and hybrid meetings; and effectiveness and participation.

On [Friday, 24 May](#), the Secretariat introduced [CBD/SBI/4/11](#) and [Add.1](#). Delegates welcomed the procedures for avoiding or managing conflicts of interest, with some suggesting periodically updating them. They discussed procedures for convening virtual and hybrid meetings, with many suggesting they take place under extraordinary, urgent, or special circumstances, and underscored relevant challenges linked to time zones. On options to improve effectiveness of processes under the Convention and its Protocols, delegates offered various suggestions, including submitting first interventions in writing; ensuring effective participation of developing country parties' representatives; and limiting additional requests to the Secretariat unless they are accompanied by necessary budgetary or staffing arrangements. Some suggested an external in-depth functional review by COP 17, to support efforts to improve efficiency of processes.

On Wednesday, 29 May, Chair Reddy tabled the CRPs relating to the review of the effectiveness of processes under the Convention and its Protocols (CBD/SBI/4/CRP.7) and options to further improve effectiveness of processes (CBD/SBI/4/CRP.7/Add.1).

ARGENTINA reported on the work by the Friends of the Chair group on the section on increasing effectiveness of processes under the Convention, indicating that they had only negotiated the wording of the SBI recommendation. He presented compromise language on an operative paragraph regarding additional financial support for developed country representatives to be piloted in this intersessional period.

On Section A of CBD/SBI/4/CRP.7, on the procedure for avoiding or managing conflicts of interest in expert groups, CANADA, opposed by the EU, proposed deleting two paragraphs for continued work on the conflict of interest guidelines. Noting concerns with workload, the EU, opposed by BRAZIL, asked to delete a request to the Secretariat to review, for accuracy, the information provided in the interest disclosure forms submitted by nominated experts. Regarding disclosure of significant interests to other expert groups at the beginning of each expert group meeting, the EU and MEXICO asked for clarification about a reference to such information revealed by other reliable sources. The respective references were all bracketed.

Regarding Section B on procedures for virtual and hybrid meetings, BRAZIL, supported by INDONESIA and opposed by GEORGIA, asked to stipulate that at least one meeting of expert groups be held in person. It was bracketed.

Regarding a provision on extraordinary circumstances rendering in-person meetings impossible, sessions will be held virtually as long as no substantive decisions are taken online, with the exception of decisions on budgetary and procedural matters to allow the Secretariat to function, ZIMBABWE asked to just refer to budgetary matters, while CANADA also pointed to potential procedural decisions. Due to lack of time for substantive discussion, the entire section was bracketed.

Regarding Section C on effectiveness of participation, the compromise proposal for the SBI recommendation presented by the Friends of the Chair group was accepted, while the SBI recommendation to COP was bracketed in its entirety.

The CRP was approved as amended.

In the afternoon, Chair Reddy introduced the final recommendation, which was approved.

Final Recommendation: The final recommendation (CBD/SBI/4/L.10) contains three sections.

In the section on the procedure for avoiding or managing conflicts of interest in expert groups, SBI recommends that COP 16, among other things:

- approve amendments to the procedures in the appended interest disclosure form;
- request the Secretariat to: integrate these amendments and replace the original form with the amended version; take measures to enhance the application of the procedure, in consultation with the SBSTTA and SBI Bureaux; and review, for accuracy, the information provided in the interest disclosure forms submitted by nominated experts, remaining in brackets.

In fully bracketed text, SBI recommends that COP 16: decide to review periodically the procedure and request the Secretariat to prepare a report on the implementation of the procedure and, if necessary, to propose updates and amendments for consideration by the SBI at a meeting prior to COP 19.

The section on procedures for virtual and hybrid meetings is bracketed in full. The bracketed text recommends that COP 16, among other things:

- affirm that the COP and CP and NP COP/MOP meetings, as well as the meetings of the intergovernmental subsidiary bodies, shall be held in-person, unless extraordinary circumstances render the holding of in-person meetings impossible for an extended period of time;
- reaffirm that in the event of these extraordinary circumstances, sessions of the above meetings shall be held virtually through modalities that allow for online interactive participation, following consultations among parties and a decision of the COP Bureau, as long as no substantive decisions are taken online, with the exception of decisions on budgetary and procedural matters to allow the Secretariat to function;
- note that, in the event of these extraordinary circumstances, urgent decisions, such as those on budgetary matters, may be taken by the COP, applying the procedures set out in the rules of procedure for the convening of an extraordinary meeting;
- note that: expert groups, advisory groups, and other groups with limited membership may meet in person, virtually or in a hybrid format and, as applicable, their respective rules of procedure; and that, during the intersessional period, the Bureaux can meet virtually to provide continued guidance to the Secretariat with regard to the preparation of meetings; and
- decide that: the operational modalities of any meeting held virtually should be clearly set out in a scenario note prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with the relevant Bureau and made available to all parties in advance of the meeting; when scheduling virtual sessions of meetings, the Secretariat shall take into consideration, among others, the time differences and aim to enable equitable participation of parties across all regions, including by rotating time zones.

In the section on options to further improve the effectiveness of processes under the CBD and its Protocols, SBI delegates agreed to:

- recommend the Secretariat, under the guidance of the Bureau, identify a pool of representatives to serve as Chairs of working groups or contact groups, or facilitators of Friends of Chairs on the basis of their skills in building trust and consensus among those with differing views and their demonstrable knowledge about the issue to be addressed by the group, well in advance of SBI 5, COP 16, CP COP/MOP 11 and NP COP/MOP 5;

- request the Secretariat facilitate an orientation or training session for the representatives identified ahead of the meetings; and
- also request the Secretariat mobilize resources to facilitate the participation of representatives from developing countries in addition to those identified for the purpose of chairing or facilitating negotiating sessions at SBI 5, COP 16, CP COP/MOP 11 and NP COP/MOP 5, when requested, without prejudice to the support provided for the participation of developing countries.

The part with SBI recommendations to COP 16 contains a compilation of submissions of parties and others, whose text was neither discussed nor negotiated, and is bracketed as a whole.

Assessment and Review of the Effectiveness of the NP

This agenda item was discussed in plenary on 26 and 29 May.

On [Sunday, 26 May](#), the Secretariat introduced document [CBD/SBI/4/12](#). Some asked for submission of national reports “well before the deadline,” to allow time for a proper analysis, while others urged for flexibility. Others supported extending the work of the informal advisory committee on capacity building for the implementation of the NP, and commissioning a scoping study. A regional group called for a process for further work on non-functional articles, such as the multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism and DSI. Delegates further discussed relevant information sources.

On Wednesday, 29 May, Chair Reddy introduced CBD/SBI/4/CRP.8. Following interventions by BRAZIL, MEXICO, the EU, and JAPAN, delegates approved the CRP with the draft recommendation and the annex, containing elements and sources of information for the second assessment and review of the effectiveness of the NP, bracketed in their entirety along with a footnote acknowledging that the draft decision was prepared by the SBI Chair with the support of the Secretariat following the first reading and the text had not been reviewed by SBI 4.

In the evening, Chair Reddy presented the final recommendation, which was adopted.

Final Recommendation: The final recommendation (CBD/SBI/4/L.11), and the accompanying annex containing elements and sources of information for the second assessment and review of the effectiveness of the NP, were bracketed in their entirety, along with the above-mentioned footnote: “The draft decision was prepared by the Chair of the Subsidiary Body with the support of the Secretariat following the first reading of agenda item 9. The text has not been reviewed by SBI 4.”

In the fully bracketed final recommendation, parties still have to reach agreement on the SBI recommendations that NP COP/MOP 5:

- decide to conduct the second assessment and review of the effectiveness of the NP on the basis of the elements in the annex to the present decision;
- urge parties and encourage others to publish information on the ABS Clearing-House so that it is available for the second assessment and review of the effectiveness of the NP;
- emphasize that parties should submit their first national reports on the implementation of the Protocol by 28 February 2026, and encourage them to submit their reports earlier;
- urge the GEF and the implementing agencies to facilitate the relevant processes in a timely manner to ensure that support is provided to parties that submit their letters of commitment;

- invite parties, other governments, IPLCs, women and youth, and others to respond to the targeted surveys, and to submit their views in order to inform a preliminary review of the compliance procedures and mechanisms contained in the annex to decision NP-1/4;

The SBI may further recommend that the COP request the Secretariat to:

- analyze and synthesize information on the implementation of the Protocol using the sources listed in the annex to the recommendation, measure the indicators in the framework of indicators contained in Annex II to decision NP-3/1 A, and make the information available to the IAC on Capacity-building for the Implementation of the NP, the NP Compliance Committee, and the SBI;
- commission a scoping study on the possible reasons and underlying root causes for the challenges to effective implementation and compliance, and on possible ways to enhance implementation; and
- include the main conclusions of the study in the elements for the second assessment and review of the effectiveness of the NP as a complementary source of information; and
- request the IAC on capacity-building for the implementation of the NP and the NP Compliance Committee to contribute to the second assessment and review of the effectiveness of the NP and to submit their conclusions for consideration by SBI 6.

Review of the Programmes of Work of the Convention and MYPOW of the COP

On [Sunday, 26 May](#), the Secretariat introduced documents [CBD/SBI/4/14](#) and [CBD/SBI/4/15](#). Many delegates stressed the importance of reviewing and assessing progress in implementation and required resources, and supported areas for further work listed under the MYPOW.

On the review of the CBD work programmes in the context of the GBF, some called for further reviews to address gaps in available implementation tools and further work on capacity building and development.

On the MYPOW of the COP, delegates exchanged ideas on issues for further work, with some emphasizing the need to keep the MYPOW under review and a process for prioritizing issues for further work.

On Wednesday, 29 May, delegates considered [CBD/SBI/4/CRP.12](#). Following interventions by the EU and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, delegates approved the CRP with the draft recommendation bracketed in its entirety along with a footnote acknowledging that the draft decision was prepared by the SBI Chair with the support of the Secretariat following the first reading and that the text had not been reviewed by SBI 4.

In the evening, Chair Reddy introduced the final recommendation, which was approved.

Final Recommendation: The final recommendation ([CBD/SBI/4/L.14](#)), and the accompanying annex, containing a list of the main issues to be addressed at each COP during the period 2023-2030, were bracketed in their entirety, along with the above-mentioned footnote.

In the fully bracketed recommendation, SBI may recommend that COP 16 decide to:

- update its MYPOW up to 2030 according to the list of issues set out in the annex to the recommendation;

- review and update, at COP 17 and 18, the work programmes and cross-cutting issues of the CBD, focusing on their alignment with the GBF, and addressing a limited number of those programmes and issues at each meeting; and
- address, at each of its meetings, standing items consistent with its previous decisions, as well as other issues arising from its decisions related to particular work programmes and cross-cutting issues, to maintain sufficient flexibility in its MYPOW to accommodate emerging issues or opportunities that it may identify; and to review the MYPOW at COP 17 and 18.

Administrative and Budgetary Matters

This agenda item was discussed in plenary on 26 and 29 May. Delegates focused on pathways for ensuring full and effective participation in CBD's work, as well as transparency and inclusivity, including on decision-making processes for future appointments of CBD Executive Secretaries, and a requested functional review of the Secretariat's structure.

On [Sunday, 26 May](#), the Secretariat introduced document [CBD/SBI/4/16](#). Many urged financial support for full and effective participation of developing country parties in CBD meetings and decision-making processes. Others called for clarity in future appointments of CBD Executive Secretaries, with a group of parties proposing a draft recommendation to enhance the transparency, inclusivity, and objectivity of the process for future appointments. Many delegates supported undertaking the mandated external in-depth functional and structural review of the Secretariat as soon as possible and requested progress updates. Others emphasized the need for party-led guidance on priority-setting and resource focus.

On Wednesday, 29 May, Chair Reddy tabled [CBD/SBI/4/CRP.13](#).

CANADA noted that they had submitted text regarding several Secretariat actions that was not reflected in the document and asked to include the requests in the meeting's report. BELGIUM urged making amendments to the SBI recommendation, while bracketing the recommendation to COP.

BELGIUM, supported by SPAIN, tabled the following amendments to the SBI requests to the Secretariat: to specify that the functional review have a view to updating not only the Secretariat structure, but also its posts, in light of the GBF's adoption; to specify that the budgetary information be provided 90 days in advance of COP 16 in accordance with the financial rules contained in COP Decision 3/1, in line with rules of procedure; and to present, under each substantive agenda item, its administrative and financial implications, before opening the substantive discussion, and to include that information in the relevant documents.

Debate ensued about the feasibility of an in-depth external functional review and following clarification by the Secretariat about both delays and their hope to undertake this work before COP 16, consensus was reached.

Namibia, for the AFRICAN GROUP, asked to bracket the entire CRP, since the region did not have time to consult due to other ongoing discussions. The EU again stressed the need for an SBI decision on intersessional work and Chair Reddy approved it with the entire COP decision bracketed.

In the evening, Chair Reddy introduced the final recommendation, which was adopted.

Final Recommendation: In the final recommendation [CBD/SBI/4/L.13](#), the SBI requests the Secretariat to:

- undertake the external in-depth functional review of the structure of the Secretariat, with a view to updating its structure and posts in the light of the adoption and implementation of the GBF, for consideration and action by COP 16;
- provide the information requested in paragraph 36 of COP Decision 15/34 90 days in advance of the opening of COP 16, CP COP/MOP 11, and NP COP/MOP 5, in accordance with the financial rules contained in the appendix to COP Decision III/1;
- organize online interactive information sessions on administrative and budgetary matters before COP 16; and
- present, under each substantive agenda item, its administrative and financial implications, before opening the substantive discussion, and to include that information in the relevant documents.

In the entirely bracketed recommendation to the COP, the SBI may recommend that it:

- reaffirm the importance of the full and effective participation of developing country parties, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing states, as well as parties with economies in transition, in meetings of the parties to the CBD and its Protocols; and
- recognize the need to secure adequate funding to enable the participation of at least two delegates from each developing country party in meetings of the parties to the CBD and its Protocols.

The recommendation then foresees the following two options regarding processes for future appointments of CBD Executive Secretaries. Option 1 emphasizes the need for inclusive, transparent and objective processes in the appointment of future CBD Executive Secretaries, and to improve the procedure and relevant guidelines in order to ensure that the parties, through the COP Bureau, are able to fulfil their consultative role, in particular concerning the terms of reference for the position and the review of the recommended candidate.

Option 2 recalls that the revised administrative arrangements between the UNEP and CBD Secretariats, contained in Annex I to decision X/45, stipulate that the Executive Secretary is appointed by the UN Secretary-General as recommended by the UNEP Executive Director in consultation with the COP through its Bureau; and that the recruitment process for the position of CBD Executive Secretary is subject to the rules and regulations of the UN.

It further clarifies that, for the purposes of interpreting Article 2 of the revised administrative arrangements between UNEP and the CBD Secretariat, the COP will consider itself properly consulted through its Bureau if a listed number of actions have been undertaken.

Other Matters

On Wednesday, 29 May, INDONESIA and others, including EGYPT and SYRIA, drew attention to the severe environmental and biodiversity destruction in Palestine, especially Gaza, stressing that it is affecting both human population and natural ecosystems. He urged halting this environmental and biodiversity destruction.

Adoption of the Report

On Wednesday, 29 May, Rapporteur Lozan presented the draft report of the meeting (CBD/SBI/4/L.1). Delegates adopted the report of the meeting, with a series of factual amendments.

Closure of the Meeting

On Wednesday, 29 May, in closing remarks, Acting Executive Secretary Cooper recognized that SBI 4 “was a tough meeting,” and that while some progress was made, many recommendations still include brackets. He stressed that SBI 4’s agenda was very heavy and highlighted important progress on some areas, including on the GBF monitoring framework, and technical and scientific cooperation. He underscored difficult discussions on resource mobilization, noting that they “increased mutual understanding.” He further highlighted the celebrations for the International Day for Biodiversity and work on the margins of SBI 4, including on the work programme for Article 8(j) and related provisions as well as on DSI, stressing that they will help the Convention move forward.

Liu Ning, China, on behalf of COP 15 President Huang Runqiu, Minister of Ecology and Environment, China, highlighted work on NBSAPs, capacity building, resource mobilization, and the financial mechanism, stressing they are important steps towards COP 16 and GBF implementation. He emphasized that the GBF provides “a blueprint for global biodiversity governance,” underscoring the need to maximize synergies towards biodiversity conservation.

Pedro León Cortés Ruíz, Ambassador of the Republic of Colombia to Kenya, offered a warm welcome to all ahead of COP 16, to be held in Cali, Colombia, in October-November this year. He invited delegates to help make COP 16 “the COP of the people, for the people,” and to show that “as humanity, we can reconcile with one another and with nature.”

Senegal, for the AFRICAN GROUP, reflected on the intense weeks of meetings and emphasized certain key steps for the road ahead, including the importance of resource mobilization and resource provision for the NBSAP process, and upholding the principles of transparency and inclusivity within CBD processes. He expressed his commitment to continue close collaboration, looking ahead to COP 16.

The INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORUM ON BIODIVERSITY called on parties to respect the rights of IPLCs, and reaffirmed that access to traditional knowledge must be based on the respect of free, prior, and informed consent. She highlighted the need for whole-of-society and human rights-based approaches in the implementation of the GBF “from the local to the global levels,” and called for an inclusive approach on resource mobilization, including direct access to financial resources for all sociocultural regions and ecosystems.

SBI Chair Reddy highlighted progress on many agenda items, stressing that SBI 4’s outcomes lay the foundations for a successful COP 16, urging to “move from commitment to action.” He gavelled the meeting to a close at 10:19 pm.

A Brief Analysis of the Meetings

Once the gavel has struck, the applause has ended, and the echoes of interventions have faded, what does fulfilling the world’s ambitions of living in harmony with nature truly look like?

Over three weeks in May, two intersessional bodies of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA); and the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI), met in Nairobi, Kenya, to review, advise, and push forward to meet, as UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Executive Director Inger Andersen noted, the

“aspirational and inspirational” goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) that was adopted in December 2022.

The GBF has been celebrated as a game-changer for biodiversity governance. Its arrival was paved by tireless negotiations that were hindered, delayed, and occasionally rendered virtual by the COVID-19 pandemic. The GBF is seen by many as an indicator of the multidimensional impacts of biodiversity loss. Its implementation and operationalization are now key to ensure we move forward, and not back.

Crucially, the GBF is accompanied by a monitoring framework with indicators, clearly-defined metrics for measuring progress; reporting requirements; and a financial instrument to mobilize and dispense much-needed funds, building on lessons learned to fix what the CBD’s previous Strategic Plan, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, could not.

This brief analysis will examine the efforts of the CBD’s subsidiary bodies to undertake the momentous task of, in the words of Senka Barudanović, Chair of SBSTTA’s 26th meeting (SBSTTA 26), “translating the ambitious GBF goals and targets into action.”

“Every Road Leads Back to You”

The word on everyone’s lips has been “implementation,” an incantation that may require more than being repeated to come to fruition. Both SBSTTA 26 and the fourth meeting of the SBI (SBI 4) focused on providing the required foundations: SBSTTA on the scientific and technical needs; and SBI on questions of resources, review of implementation, including through national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), mechanisms for monitoring and reporting, and more.

SBSTTA 26 made progress on agenda items that certain delegates noted had been “sidelined” in the past, such as marine and coastal, and island biodiversity, including further work on ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs). With regard to EBSAs, delegates focused on outlining modalities for modifying the descriptions of EBSAs and describing new areas. Following constructive debate, parties were able to advance towards common ground (or water). This does not mean that negotiations will be straightforward at COP 16, with some senior negotiators warning that diverging views on fundamental jurisdictional issues, rather than technical ones, remain. Meanwhile, long-standing disagreements reared their head in discussions on synthetic biology, which revealed polarized positions held by parties, including on whether the CBD should address the issue at all, with some arguing it falls outside its mandate.

Strides were made in ironing out the GBF monitoring framework, and many welcomed the intersessional work completed by the expert group on indicators. Measures of progress in implementing the GBF rely on national reporting and targets. These have limitations, however, and the proposed binary indicators, essentially a “yes/no” questionnaire to assess parties’ implementation of GBF targets, are not particularly reflective of real life. While the questionnaire was broadened beyond its initial streamlined scope, to cover certain nuances and intricacies, many delegates still had questions about their practicality.

SBSTTA 26 furthermore lived up to its mandate by feeding directly into SBI 4, providing advice on the scientific and technical needs to support GBF implementation, and directing the SBI to consider work related to capacity building and development, knowledge management, and technical and scientific cooperation.

This was among SBI’s toughest agenda items to consider, with parties engaging in drawn-out deliberations of important elements, including the potential roles and responsibilities of non-state actors in contributing to the GBF.

Implementation comes with a cost. If measures in place for monitoring progress are not fit-for-purpose, and crucially if resources and capacities enabling action are not provided for, the GBF is set to live a life only on paper.

“Money, Money, Money”

On the final day of the meetings, a coalition of rights- and stakeholders drew a picture of the biodiversity finance landscape outside of plenary. A great green banner, reaching far into the courtyard, illustrated the estimated USD 7 trillion spent annually on “harmful flows”: public and private investments for activities with direct negative impacts on nature; and another one showing the USD 1.69 trillion spent each year on harmful subsidies. Significantly shorter banners depicted estimated public finance spending for biodiversity (USD 83 billion annually) and private finance (USD 5 billion per year).

UNEP calculated the gap in spending needs for meeting biodiversity targets to be USD 700 billion in 2020. While this is a daunting figure, considering it is seven times the total biodiversity spending at the time, the purpose of the GBF was to lay out concrete steps to close the gap. One fast-approaching milestone on the path to reaching GBF Target 19 (mobilize USD 200 billion annually) is increasing biodiversity finance from developed country parties (and others ready to voluntarily assume that role) to developing country parties to USD 20 billion per year, by 2025. Currently, the main financial mechanism to operate the GBF is under the institutional structure of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Discussions across plenary sessions and late-night contact groups shed light on the discomfort of many in allowing the GEF to have more than an interim role. Several parties sounded the alarm regarding the lack of adequate or any funding being dispensed for projects in their countries, stressing the need for transparency and reforming the *modus operandi* of the GEF, including its project selection criteria.

SBI 4’s agenda items on resource mobilization and the financial mechanism had the difficult task of deciding how to navigate operationalizing a mechanism that will accelerate the road to reversing biodiversity loss, without agreement on what this mechanism would look like or whether it would actually be established. Following protracted discussions, parties laid out three options for COP 16 to consider: establishing a dedicated global biodiversity fund under the authority of the COP; deferring decisions until COP 17; and deciding that the GEF will continue its role as the interim, or ongoing, institutional structure. In the meantime, one overarching direction is clear: all are invited to mobilize funding, from all sources.

“Wake Me Up Before You Go-go”

As with many other multilateral environmental agreements, a common struggle faced by the CBD is an ever-increasing workload, with limited available resources. The GBF’s adoption significantly added to the Secretariat’s everyday agenda.

Delegates were faced with several wake-up calls about the overburdening of the Convention, its bodies, and the Secretariat. These were first heard in an apology issued to plenary for delays in making documents available in all six UN languages in time; subsequently seen in the challenges they faced in completing the

consideration of numerous agenda items, themselves containing long documents; and in the yet-to-be-completed external in-depth structural and functional review of the Secretariat, mandated by COP 15. Underlying these frustrations are issues of capacity and resources, with the Convention racing to catch up to its own ambitions.

With questions of administrative matters and of effectiveness and efficiency on the table at SBI 4, one seasoned negotiator opened the floor with an appeal, “it’s not just about making more honey, the question is how to keep the beehive healthy, well-organized, and productive.” Many were heard expressing concern at the extent of work directed to the Secretariat, particularly when it is not “accompanied by commensurate budget and staffing considerations.” Many more underscored the negative impacts arising from the volume of work and documents, affecting delegates’ health and wellbeing, and subsequently the quality and effectiveness of decision-making and negotiations. “Let’s not normalize three weeks of 14-hour workdays,” one experienced delegate urged.

Changing times call for novel work methods. Following remarks that options for improving processes under the Convention “only start to scratch the surface,” delegates shared a number of innovative ideas. These included presenting opening statements virtually, prior to in-person consideration of agenda items, an idea which grew in appeal over the intense meetings, as first readings of documents were still taking place more than halfway through SBI 4. Others urged priority-setting and increased focus of any mandated work, including that any substantive requests be accompanied by estimates of budgetary implications.

“Can’t Get No [Satisfaction]”

These procedural challenges were reflected in the significant number of square brackets that clung to outcome documents from both meetings. Some participants noted that the bracketed text will take time to resolve, adding to an already overly full COP 16 agenda. One delegate compared the brackets to a “boomerang, ready to hit us in the head in October,” echoing frustrations that the hard work put into SBI was lost, with some recommendations being fully bracketed despite considerable discussion having taken place. Some highlighted progress made nonetheless in terms of achieving greater understanding of parties’ different positions, and noted that the multiple options in brackets in outcome documents provide a good basis for future negotiations at COP 16.

Items from both SBSTTA 26 and SBI 4 that were not fully addressed will be at the top of many parties’ agendas, as implementing and operationalizing the GBF is a primary focus at COP 16. Questions of roles and responsibilities remain, including those of the COP and its Bureau. The Secretariat’s announcement of the 18 entities selected to support the Convention’s work regionally or sub-regionally as technical and scientific support centers, was warmly received. Pending the answer of who will take on the role of global coordination entity, delegates further agreed to request the Bio-Bridge Initiative to continue its role supporting such coordination.

Other questions with less clear answers include concrete ways forward on many issues. Plans of action on biodiversity and health, and education, still require further work, with a lot of bracketed text to be dealt with. With a substantially longer agenda to manage than SBSTTA 26, SBI 4 found an innovative but contested method of concluding their work before midnight on its last day. This entailed

adding a footnote to many documents, clarifying that they had not been reviewed thoroughly. As such, discussions will require more time allocation at COP 16.

“Zoom In Zoom Out”

Holding these meetings in Nairobi certainly bridged one gap that between humans and nature. In the daytime, delegates shared coffee tables with yellow-bellied sunbirds, and were occasionally seen chasing Sykes’ monkeys away from their open bags. Those who found themselves on the UN Nairobi campus after midnight had the chance to cross a honey badger on their way out.

Another bridge to consider is the one that facilitates the much-called for whole-of-society and government approaches to implement the GBF. Throughout SBSTTA 26 and SBI 4, participants stressed the need to consider cross-cutting work and sociocultural, ethical, and economic aspects of topics as diverse as guidelines on living modified organisms to increasing participation in the NBSAP process. Strengthening dialogues and coordination mechanisms such as the biodiversity-related conventions liaison group is one path forward. Another is the increased attention and provision of resources to rights-holders, namely Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), youth, and people of African descent, an addition proposed by the Colombian COP 16 Presidency.

With rights- and stakeholders holding a key seat in CBD processes, their meaningful participation is critical for the future that the Convention has envisaged. Integrating knowledge systems and worldviews beyond Western science has taken shape within SBSTTA, and recognition of IPLCs’ effective role in conserving biodiversity is increasing. Alongside this, questions remain regarding these non-state actors’ inclusion in discussions, decision-making, and benefit-sharing from topics such as digital sequence information.

The bigger picture sits just outside the negotiation rooms. “We are running a sprint in negotiations, but this race is a marathon,” reflected a participant, considering the six years left before 2030. On the other hand, the pace of SBI 4 was glacial enough that interpreters left the building long before delegates could finish their consideration of final documents on the last day. The “spirit of consensus” that was so sought after during these meetings returned in the form of laughter and embraces, as weary delegates took the floor in their own languages before remembering to switch to English; and applause, as agreement was found on last-minute compromise language for the final conference room paper. At the eleventh hour, plans for crucial intersessional work on capacity building and development and effectiveness of implementation were approved, and implementation will not wait more than a day: delegates from the African region stepped directly into several days of a well-timed CBD dialogue to facilitate experience-sharing towards updating or revising their NBSAPs. “We’re moving forward with sustained and determined efforts,” said one weary participant, “and as long as we continue in a transparent and fair manner, COP 16 has a chance.”

Upcoming Meetings

60th sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies to the UNFCCC: The SBSTA and SBI of the UNFCCC will take up a range of issues including follow up from COP 28 and preparation for COP 29. **dates:** 3-13 June 2024 **location:** Bonn, Germany **www:** unfccc.int/sb60

High Level Event on Ocean Action: Immersed in Change: The meeting will serve as a platform for the exchange of best practices and successful experiences related to ocean governance and health, leading up to the 2025 UN Ocean Conference. **dates:** 7-8 June 2024 **location:** San Jose, Costa Rica **www:** immersedinchange.gob.cr

Organizational Meeting of the BBNJ Preparatory

Commission: The Preparatory Commission created to prepare for the entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement—and the convening of the first COP to the Agreement—will hold a three-day meeting to discuss organizational matters. **dates:** 24-26 June 2024 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** un.org/depts/los/bbnj.htm

67th meeting of the GEF Council: The GEF will consider its work program and other matters related to its functioning as the financial mechanism for various MEAs. The Council will also meet as the 36th Least Developed Countries Fund and Special Climate Change Fund (LCDF/SCCF) Council and the 2nd Global Biodiversity Framework Fund Council. **dates:** 17-20 June 2024 **location:** Washington, DC, US **www:** thegef.org/events/67th-gef-council-meeting

2024 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF): The 2024 session of the HLPF will convene on the theme “Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: The effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions.” It will include in-depth review of SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), and SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals). **dates:** 8-17 July 2024 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** hlpf.un.org

27th Session of the FAO Committee on Forestry: Heads of forest services and senior government officials will meet in Rome identify emerging forest policy and technical issues as well as solutions, advising the FAO and others on appropriate action to better manage the planet’s forests. **dates:** 22-26 July 2024 **location:** Rome, Italy **www:** <https://www.fao.org/forestry/committee-on-forestry/en>

Second meeting of the Ad hoc Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on Benefit-sharing from the Use of DSI on Genetic Resources, CBD: At the second meeting of the OEWG on DSI, parties will continue discussing the development and operationalization of a multilateral mechanism for benefit-sharing from the use of DSI on genetic resources, including a global fund, set to be finalized by CBD COP 16. **dates:** 12-16 August 2024 **location:** Montreal, Canada **www:** cbd.int/meetings/WGDSI-02

ITPGRFA OEWG 12: The twelfth meeting of the OEWG of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) will continue discussing the enhancement of the Treaty’s Multilateral System, set to be finalized by ITPGRFA GB 11. **dates:** 16-19 September 2024 **location:** Rome, Italy **www:** fao.org/plant-treaty/en

Summit of the Future: Building on the SDG Summit in 2023, Member States will consider ways to lay the foundations for more effective global cooperation that can deal with today’s challenges as well as new threats in the future. **dates:** 22-23 September 2024 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** un.org/en/summit-of-the-future

SBI 5: The fifth meeting of the SBI will take place immediately preceding the UN Biodiversity Conference. **dates:** 16-18 October 2024 **location:** Cali, Colombia **www:** cbd.int/meetings/WGDSI-02

2024 UN Biodiversity Conference: CBD COP 16, CP COP/MOP11 and NP COP/MOP 5 will address a series of policy, administrative, and implementation-related items of relevance to the CBD and its protocols and the effective implementation of the GBF. **dates:** 21 October - 1 November 2024 **location:** Cali, Colombia **www:** cbd.int/meetings

For additional upcoming events, see sdg.iisd.org

Glossary

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| ABNJ | Areas beyond national jurisdiction |
| ABS | Access and benefit-sharing |
| AHTEG | Ad hoc technical expert group |
| BBNJ Agreement | Agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction |
| BCH | Biosafety Clearing-house |
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| CEPA | Communication, education, and public awareness |
| CHM | Clearing-house mechanism |
| COP | Conference of the Parties |
| COP/MOP | COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties |
| CP | Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety |
| CRP | Conference room paper |
| DRC | Democratic Republic of Congo |
| DSI | Digital sequence information |
| EBSA | Ecologically or biologically significant marine area |
| GBF | Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GRULAC | Latin American and Caribbean Group |
| IAC | Informal Advisory Committee |
| IAG | Informal Advisory Group |
| IPBES | Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services |
| IPLCs | Indigenous Peoples and local communities |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature |
| LMO | Living modified organism |
| MEA | Multilateral environmental agreement |
| MYPOW | Multi-year programme of work |
| NBSAP | National biodiversity strategy and action plan |
| NP | Nagoya Protocol on ABS |
| SBI | Subsidiary Body on Implementation |
| SBSTTA | Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice |
| UNCCD | UN Convention to Combat Desertification |
| UNEP | UN Environment Programme |
| UNFCCC | UN Framework Convention on Climate Change |