

SBI 5 Highlights: Wednesday, 16 October 2024

The fifth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI 5) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) opened with a review of progress in national target setting and updating of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) toward implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). A pilot open-ended forum for voluntary country review of implementation convened in the afternoon.

Opening Plenary

SBI Chair Chirra Achalender Reddy (India) underscored the importance of NBSAPs and setting of national targets according to national priorities, circumstances, and capabilities, noting it is a difficult and complex process.

Maria Susana Muhamad, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Colombia, via video message, called for whole-of-society and whole-of-government mobilization to achieve transformative change, and agile, innovative, and direct finance to fulfill commitments on biodiversity conservation.

Liu Ning, China, on behalf of Huang Runqiu, President of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the CBD, highlighted the submission of China's updated NBSAP and underscored the importance of resource mobilization and capacity building, emphasizing the establishment of the Kunming Biodiversity Fund.

CBD Executive Secretary Astrid Schomaker underscored that the environmental crisis feeds into a larger social and equity crisis, and emphasized that the GBF recognizes these interlinkages. She drew attention to dialogues and workshops aimed at sharing experiences on NBSAP revision, and announced that, at the moment, 91 parties have submitted national targets and 29 updated NBSAPs, noting continued submissions.

Organization of work: Delegates adopted the agenda and organization of work ([CBD/SBI/5/1](#), [Add.1](#) and [Add.2](#)); and elected Moustafa Fouda (Egypt) as Rapporteur.

Review of Implementation

SBI Chair Reddy invited delegates to consider progress in the establishment of national targets and the revision or updating of NBSAPs, and a draft recommendation. The Secretariat introduced documents, including analyses of submitted targets and NBSAPs, and key findings from regional dialogues ([CBD/SBI/5/2/Rev.1](#), [2/Add.1/Rev.1](#), [2/Add.2/Rev.1](#), and [2/Add.3](#)), noting submissions of targets and NBSAPs continue.

CUBA, LAO PDR, AZERBAIJAN, TOGO, GHANA, COLOMBIA, JAPAN, JORDAN, UGANDA, MALAYSIA, NIGERIA, ZIMBABWE, MEXICO, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC), NEPAL, MOROCCO, CÔTE D'IVOIRE, SAUDI ARABIA, COSTA RICA, HAITI, GUINEA,

LESOTHO, INDIA, MALAWI, MOLDOVA, BANGLADESH, CHINA, SIERRA LEONE, LIBERIA, SUDAN, VENEZUELA, BENIN, BURUNDI, BURKINA FASO, KENYA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, and CAMEROON drew attention to submission of national targets. Senegal, for the AFRICAN GROUP, highlighted that 36 countries in the region have submitted national targets. Vanuatu for PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (PSIDS) noted that eight of the 14 PSIDS have submitted national targets.

CUBA, NORWAY, CANADA, JAPAN, JORDAN, UGANDA, MALAYSIA, MEXICO, SAUDI ARABIA, COSTA RICA, INDONESIA, CHINA, SURINAME, and BURKINA FASO highlighted submission of updated NBSAPs. COLOMBIA announced the imminent launch of their updated NBSAP on 21 October.

Many parties described the process of preparing national targets and updating their NBSAPs for submission in 2025, including through stakeholder consultations, and drew attention to national efforts on biodiversity conservation, finance, and monitoring. SOUTH AFRICA suggested that after COP 16, parties should only submit NBSAPs, not national targets.

Many parties noted challenges experienced in preparing national targets and NBSAPs, including insufficient financial resources, and stressed the need for capacity building, technical and scientific collaboration, and technology transfer. The AFRICAN GROUP highlighted as substantial challenges: gaps in the global indicator-setting process, limited capacity in developing monitoring frameworks, and delays in the disbursement of funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF). MALAWI highlighted challenges associated with setting SMART targets, limited capacity in monitoring, and limited time to follow whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches. GUATEMALA noted that implementation of GBF Target 19 on mobilization of financial resources lags behind the stated level of ambition. TOGO and JAMAICA underlined the relevance of capacity building to translate targets into concrete actions and called for developing tools to evaluate actions' contributions to achieving global targets. The DRC, CÔTE D'IVOIRE, and HAITI noted difficulties with the online reporting tool. BENIN called for strengthened bilateral and multilateral communication to facilitate NBSAP processes. PERU highlighted the role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs).

BRAZIL urged developed countries to fulfill their commitments under CBD Articles 20 (Financial resources) and 21 (Financial Mechanism). ARGENTINA stressed that the analysis of national targets and NBSAPs should address the availability of finance.

The EU urged harmonizing the approach to national target setting and the level of detail in the submissions, and facilitating a quantitative assessment of the contributions of national targets and measures to the GBF targets. NEW ZEALAND said that a global analysis reviewing implementation can play a key role

in identifying successes and challenges. With NORWAY, they called for further improving the global analysis by including alignment mapping at the target element level, facilitated through improvements to the online reporting tool. The UK outlined challenges related to updating NBSAPs on the basis of a standard template and a common set of indicators. CHINA and CHILE supported continuing the global analysis to ensure balanced views among parties. NIGERIA lamented that the analysis does not identify the challenges faced by parties.

SWITZERLAND highlighted the importance of monitoring, reporting, and review tools, and with VENEZUELA, JORDAN, TOGO, MOLDOVA, JAPAN, and others, the value of the regional dialogues.

CANADA expressed concern regarding parties not submitting NBSAPs despite receiving GEF support. NIGERIA called for speeding up the process for GEF funding. BANGLADESH suggested a simplified process to access funds for the monitoring framework. SEYCHELLES and SIERRA LEONE urged timely support to all eligible countries. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION focused on challenges faced by some countries in accessing financial assistance from the GEF. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA highlighted inadequate geographic balance in the provision of financial support toward NBSAP revision. CHINA and LIBYA stressed the need to ensure developing countries' access to international support including funding, capacity building, and technology transfer. The AFRICAN GROUP and PSIDS supported a new dedicated fund for accelerated GBF implementation.

The INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORUM ON BIODIVERSITY (IIFB) urged all parties to include the interests of IPLCs in updated NBSAPs, recognize traditional territories, and increase coordination with Indigenous Peoples' organizations. CBD WOMEN'S CAUCUS called for national mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting, and review that systematically include gender-responsive approaches and incorporate sex-disaggregated data.

The GLOBAL YOUTH BIODIVERSITY NETWORK (GYBN) noted that youth involvement is key in building trust and inclusivity in the updating of NBSAPs and reported gaps in youth inclusion. The INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE (IUCN) called for concrete linkages among multilateral environmental agreements for GBF implementation. UN WOMEN noted the need for integrated approaches to tackle the interlinked challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and desertification, adding that gender-responsive and human rights approaches are essential.

The OFFICE OF THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (OHCHR) stressed that the GBF needs to be implemented consistently with its Section C (considerations for the implementation of the GBF), following a human rights-based approach, and suggested developing relevant tools and guidance for the development of national targets. The SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (SPREP) similarly urged parties to take into account the cross-cutting considerations in Section C when updating their NBSAPs.

The FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UN (FAO) underscored the importance of linking national targets to those of the GBF. They drew attention to the provision of technical and financial support for the updating of NBSAPs to over 40 countries through capacity-building and awareness-raising activities. The UN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP) applauded early action on biodiversity conservation and steps to harmonize efforts across the Rio Conventions and the Sustainable Development Goals in recognition of their interconnectedness. The INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (ITPGRFA)

drew attention to the 2023 session of its Governing Body and contribution to GBF implementation for sustainable food systems.

The INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S BIODIVERSITY NETWORK emphasized the importance of the full and effective participation of Indigenous women, following a human rights-based approach, and highlighted work toward implementing the gender action plan and assisting in updating NBSAPs.

A conference room paper will be prepared for consideration on Friday, 18 October.

Pilot Forum for Voluntary Country Review

The Secretariat introduced the document on the pilot open-ended forum for voluntary country review of implementation (CBD/SBI/5/3). SBI Chair Reddy highlighted the open-ended forum as an opportunity for parties to hold in-depth discussions, building on the regional dialogues conducted over the year. Reddy noted three thematic sessions will be held over the coming days.

Delegates then engaged in an interactive session facilitated by Natasha Walker and Martín Sánchez Vilchis, who encouraged participants to go "off script" in discussing "what works and what does not" in the voluntary country review process.

A panel discussion on regional dialogues on NBSAPs held in 2024 ensued, featuring representatives from the dialogues' host countries. Taimur Abdullah Al Said, Oman, reported on the regional dialogue hosted in Oman, noting that collaboration and high-level support were shown to be key for implementing national biodiversity targets. He emphasized that support from ministers and other decision-makers toward elevating the importance of biodiversity to national agendas had enabled stronger commitments and clearer alignment of NBSAPs with national development goals. Al Said noted that the meeting, held back-to-back with the invasive alien species (IAS) workshop, provided technical knowledge for effective action toward IAS management in the region. He reported challenges, including the political focus on security at the expense of biodiversity conservation and the lack of adequate funding for NBSAP updating.

Bilal Qtishat, Jordan, reported on the dialogue held in Jordan. He noted it facilitated collaboration between countries for elaborating guidelines and national objectives, alongside the identification of knowledge gaps.

Roxana Solis Ortiz, Peru, said the regional dialogue held in Peru provided an opportunity to review how lessons learned from capacity-building initiatives are taken on board in decision-making on biodiversity. She noted different approaches to biodiversity conservation in the region.

Nozanin Rasulova, Tajikistan, said the dialogue for Central Asia demonstrated the importance of communication, cooperation, and coordination across sectors for biodiversity mainstreaming.

In the Corridors

Progress in setting up national targets and updating NBSAPs is key for successful implementation of the GBF, delegates agreed, as SBI 5 initiated its deliberations. Some lamented that less than 20 percent of parties had submitted revised NBSAPs, noting that such submission is only the first step of national-level policy development toward achieving the GBF's goals and targets, and ultimately the Convention's objectives. Others highlighted long lists of challenges related to data and capacity gaps. "Financial resources and technical collaboration are preconditions for the development and implementation of successful NBSAPs," one delegate stressed.

Innovative measures for achieving progress also came into play during the pilot of the open-ended forum for voluntary country review of implementation, as the session shook up usual SBI procedures. A quick census by the facilitators indicated skepticism regarding this experiment. Watch this space.