

SBI 5 Highlights: Friday, 18 October 2024

Delegates to the fifth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI 5) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) approved draft recommendations on progress in national target setting and updating of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), and on the pilot forum for voluntary country review of implementation, and the report of the meeting.

Pilot Forum for Voluntary Country Review

SBI 5 Chair Chirra Achalender Reddy (India) introduced the [Chair's Summary](#) of the pilot forum, which will be annexed to the SBI 5 report. He said that the text captures key messages, reflects the richness of discussions, and summarizes the challenges, successes, and opportunities discussed during the forum. He thereafter closed the forum.

Recommendations

Review of Implementation: Andrea Cruz Angón (Mexico) reported that the Friends of the Chair meeting held on Thursday evening had completed discussions and agreed on text to be presented in the draft recommendation. She added that the group also held in-depth discussions on the future of the analysis of NBSAPs, which would be shared with the Co-Chairs of the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16) Working Group addressing the item on mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting, and review.

The Secretariat noted that the lists of parties that have submitted NBSAPs and national targets aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) will continue to be updated until the final decision documents are released. She reported that 100 parties have submitted national targets, and 31 updated NBSAPs to date.

Delegates then addressed a draft recommendation on progress in national target setting and updating of NBSAPs. They held a lengthy debate on a preambular paragraph noting that SBI 5 has “considered the information provided in document [CBD/SBI/5/2/Rev.1](#) and its addenda.” NEW ZEALAND, supported by CANADA, suggested repeating the language in the draft COP decision, as well as adding text clarifying that this information consists of the global analysis of updated NBSAPs. BRAZIL and ARGENTINA opposed additional text. The issue remains pending.

EGYPT, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, UGANDA, BRAZIL, GABON, and others expressed concern regarding the time spent on preambular text rather than operative paragraphs, calling for prioritization, namely to tackle contentious text still in square brackets.

On a preambular paragraph noting the outcomes of the regional dialogues on NBSAPs, the EU suggested, and delegates agreed, adding “parties” to the organizations that provided support.

A lengthy discussion took place on a paragraph on support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for revision and updating of NBSAPs. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION noted lengthy informal discussions on Thursday evening and suggested, supported by UGANDA, BRAZIL, CUBA, and ARGENTINA, “noting with appreciation the support provided to many parties by the GEF and its implementing agencies for facilitating the revision and updating of NBSAPs, while noting with concern that not all eligible parties were provided with support or timely support.”

The EU, opposed by BRAZIL, proposed addressing this paragraph under the agenda item on the financial mechanism at COP 16. CANADA noted that the proposal by the Russian Federation can provide a way forward.

ARGENTINA, supported by CUBA, MEXICO, COLOMBIA, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, and PAKISTAN, but opposed by CANADA, suggested, as a compromise proposal, removing all qualifiers, simply noting support provided to many parties by the GEF and that not all eligible parties received support. Following discussions, ARGENTINA withdrew this proposal, reiterating support for the earlier suggestion by the Russian Federation.

SOUTH AFRICA, supported by TOGO, CAMEROON, and EGYPT, proposed splitting the paragraph in two parts, one addressing the provided support and the other the concerns and challenges. UGANDA emphasized that the current drafting communicates both progress and challenges.

Following further discussion, delegates accepted the proposal by the Russian Federation in the spirit of compromise. The text was agreed as proposed, with an amendment from MEXICO to refer to the revision “and/or” updating of NBSAPs.

On a paragraph recognizing that updating NBSAPs depends on means of implementation, in particular for developing country parties, TURKMENISTAN, opposed by BRAZIL and ARGENTINA, suggested reference to countries with economies in transition.

On operative paragraphs, delegates agreed to:

- congratulate those parties that have submitted revised and updated NBSAPs and urge those that have not to do so as soon as possible;
- note with satisfaction the communicated national targets; and
- encourage parties to enable the full and effective participation of stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), in the revision and updating of NBSAPs.

On a paragraph requesting the GEF to provide timely support to all eligible parties to enable NBSAP revision and updating, the EU and SWITZERLAND requested the issue to be addressed under the COP 16 agenda item on the financial mechanism. Several delegates, including NIGERIA, SOUTH AFRICA, TOGO, BRAZIL, GABON, and the DRC, objected, noting the paragraph

is specific to the topic and places emphasis on the importance of timely and adequate funding for NBSAP revision. The Secretariat explained that inclusion of the GEF-related language in this recommendation would not preclude its consideration under the item on the financial mechanism.

NIGERIA proposed additional wording specifying that the funds are also to enable the preparation of biodiversity finance plans. EGYPT and others opposed adding text, noting that the request to the GEF should remain specific and clear.

Delegates agreed to retain the original paragraph, with the understanding that changes can be made following COP 16 deliberations.

Delegates agreed to delete a paragraph regarding the pilot forum for voluntary country review trialed during SBI 5, noting it should be addressed under the relevant draft recommendation.

Delegates then engaged in a lengthy discussion on a paragraph urging parties to implement their NBSAPs and addressing the support and means of implementation required. Those in favor of retaining the paragraph stressed that the agenda item includes implementation, noting that updating NBSAPs is the first step of implementation, which is critical to achieving GBF goals and targets. Those opposing, noted that the draft recommendation should only address the national target-setting process and NBSAP updating. The EU, supported by BANGLADESH and NEW ZEALAND, suggested adding language to support developing countries, countries with economies in transition, least developed countries, and small island developing states, as well as a reference to means of implementation “from all sources on a needs basis.” BRAZIL opposed, and suggested including a reference to CBD Article 20 (Financial Resources). INDIA put forward language urging parties to implement their NBSAPs “as per national circumstances, priorities, and capabilities.” DJIBOUTI expressed concerns with the use of the term “urges.”

The DRC, SOUTH AFRICA, NIGERIA, CUBA, TANZANIA, GHANA, SENEGAL, CÔTE D’IVOIRE, ZIMBABWE, GABON, and others supported the paragraph with Brazil’s addition. CANADA, SWITZERLAND, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, CHILE, JAPAN, AUSTRALIA, JAMAICA, and others supported deleting the paragraph and placing it elsewhere. Delegates agreed to retain two options of the paragraph in brackets and approved the CRP as amended.

Pilot Forum for Voluntary Country Review: Delegates considered a draft recommendation on the pilot forum. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION, supported by BRAZIL, the DRC, MEXICO, and CUBA, proposed amendments to the first two preambular paragraphs, whereby the views expressed by parties during the pilot forum, as well as the Chair’s summary, are taken note of, rather than welcomed. This amendment was also approved for the first operative paragraph.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION, BRAZIL, MEXICO, COLOMBIA, CUBA, and others expressed concern regarding the operative paragraph recommending the SBI to continue convening the pilot forum under its auspices, highlighting issues of efficiency, time constraints, and budgetary implications. They nonetheless emphasized the value of the regional dialogues and, with the EU, proposed that alternate ways of hosting these spaces outside of SBI be considered. The DRC proposed the paragraph’s deletion. JAMAICA suggested keeping a placeholder, noting the forum’s particular value for interregional dialogues that the subregional and regional dialogues’ current formats do not provide. Following comments by the DRC, GEORGIA, ARGENTINA, NEW ZEALAND, JAMAICA, COLOMBIA, and SOMALIA, a compromise text was proposed to request the Secretariat, subject

to the availability of resources, and under the guidance of the Bureau, to identify options for convening subregional or regional dialogues, as well as a possible interregional dialogue, taking into consideration the experience of the pilot forum.

Following the loss of interpretation, the DRC, alongside CÔTE D’IVOIRE, SAUDI ARABIA, ARGENTINA, and GABON, noted that negotiations should not continue in English only.

SBI Chair Reddy suggested, and delegates agreed, adopting the CRP as amended and with remaining brackets.

Adoption of the Report and Closing

Rapporteur Moustafa Fouda (Egypt) introduced the meeting’s report (CBD/SBI/5/L.1). The DRC noted the report is incomplete. Rapporteur Fouda stressed that Friday’s proceedings will be incorporated into the final report, as per standard practice. The Secretariat added that the final report will be made available in all official languages prior to the opening of COP 16 on Monday, 21 October. Delegates adopted the report with minor amendments.

In closing remarks, CBD Executive Secretary Astrid Schomaker said the countdown to COP 16 is now coming to an end. She praised the pilot forum for providing an opportunity to address gaps and challenges, from communication to participation and financing, adding that negotiations alone have not yielded desired progress in the past.

Liu Ning, China, on behalf of Huang Runqiu, COP 15 President, said China has been fully committed to playing a leadership and coordinating role in uniting a global force for biodiversity conservation, and underscored the role of the Kunming Biodiversity Fund in supporting developing countries achieve their commitments.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION lauded SBI 5 Chair Reddy for his successful guidance of two meetings of the body, commending his patience and accommodating nature. SBI 5 Chair Reddy closed the meeting at 19:21 pm.

In the Corridors

On the last day of SBI 5, questions of prioritization and time management took center stage. Connectivity issues slowed progress in the morning during consideration of draft recommendations. In addition, many delegates expressed concern at the time spent on minor preambular details, rather than focusing on more substantive matters. While some expressed frustration over the slow pace of deliberations, others commented that lengthy debates on seemingly innocuous provisions usually reflect principled differences over crucial issues – in this case the role of the GEF in the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols. At the same time, delegates celebrated the announcement that 100 parties have submitted national targets aligned with the GBF, applauding these first steps toward national-level implementation.

With COP 16 around the corner, issues regarding resource mobilization and the financial mechanism of the Convention will be in the spotlight, with discussions on the GEF expected to continue and intensify. Other agenda items feature similarly high on the agenda. These include the multilateral mechanism on benefit-sharing from use of digital sequence information on genetic resources and the new programme of work on Article 8(j) of the Convention regarding Indigenous Peoples and local communities and traditional knowledge, alongside the GBF’s monitoring framework, the mechanism to strengthen technical and scientific cooperation, and several other ecosystem-related and cross-cutting items. Resolution of technical problems and good time management will certainly remain of essence, as will be the resolve to move forward in good faith and a spirit of compromise.