

SBSTTA 27 Highlights: Wednesday, 22 October 2025

Completing the first reading of all agenda items by discussing biodiversity and health in an afternoon plenary, the 27th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 27) initiated consideration of conference room papers (CRPs) discussing matters related to the work programme of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). Delegates met in four contact groups in the morning and evening to deliberate on issues requiring further discussion.

Biodiversity and Health

Chair Mikissa noted that according to the pilot modalities for the early submission of statements ([Notification 2025-120](#)), 19 parties and four observers submitted written statements ([CBD/SBSTTA/27/INF/13/Rev.1](#)) on a voluntary and informal basis, aimed at facilitating an abbreviated first reading of this agenda item. With no objections, parties' early statements were entered on the official record. The written statements from the Cooperation on Health and Biodiversity (COHAB) Initiative, the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, and the Global Youth Biodiversity Network, which were present in the room and supported by a party, entered the record.

The Secretariat introduced document [CBD/SBSTTA/27/9](#).

South Africa, for the AFRICAN GROUP, highlighted that significant challenges remain in relation to the integration of biodiversity and health into national policies and the implementation of the [Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health](#); and, supported by MALAWI, BURKINA FASO, INDIA, JORDAN, and PANAMA, called for capacity building, technical and scientific cooperation, technology transfer, and the mobilization of resources for implementation. The DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC) called for recognition of the roles of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) and traditional knowledge, including through free, prior, and informed consent, when implementing the Action Plan. DJIBOUTI called for scientific guidance to integrate biodiversity and health into national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs).

The AFRICAN GROUP, supported by DJIBOUTI, MEXICO, and UGANDA, suggested continuing work on the development of integrated science-based indicators, metrics, and progress measurement tools on biodiversity and health for initial discussion at the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP 17) and finalization at COP 18. PANAMA requested clarity on "harmonized methodologies," and stressed indicators should be inclusive and party-led. MEXICO highlighted the need for a comprehensive review of indicators, and with the DRC called to include preventive approaches. ARGENTINA and JORDAN urged taking into account regional specificities. BURUNDI, UGANDA, DJIBOUTI, and others highlighted addressing zoonotic diseases as

a priority. SENEGAL, DJIBOUTI, and others prioritized emerging diseases.

ARGENTINA suggested postponing the consideration of indicators until the next intersessional period; expressed concerns about the availability of financial and human resources for a list of projected activities for the Secretariat; requested deleting references to IPBES; and suggested references to articles from the [Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures](#) of the World Trade Organization.

INDIA called for multidisciplinary and pluralistic strategies for health sectors, inclusive of traditional and local approaches. Several parties welcomed the Quadripartite collaboration on [One Health](#), with PANAMA urging that it build concrete results, practical tools, and not duplicate efforts. EGYPT called to establish a dedicated module under the Clearing-House Mechanism for data-exchange and regional workshops to strengthen capacities to implement the One Health approach.

The WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION urged not to conflate work on One Health with the broader range of issues covered by the Global Action Plan. CBD WOMEN'S CAUCUS urged gender-responsive and inclusive indicators, reflecting Section C (implementation) of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). The INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE urged that the Secretariat, with relevant international organizations, support parties to implement the Global Action Plan. GLOBAL GREEN COLOMBIA emphasized a need for technology transfer and knowledge sharing.

Matters related to the Work Programme of IPBES

Chair Mikissa introduced [CBD/SBSTTA/27/CRP.1](#) on matters related to the work programme of IPBES.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION and ARGENTINA expressed concern that their comments submitted during Tuesday's plenary had not been incorporated into the CRP.

On the [Nexus Assessment](#), including its summary for policymakers and key messages, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, ARGENTINA, BRAZIL, and INDIA requested to "take note of" the assessment. In contrast, Malawi, for the AFRICAN GROUP, SOUTH AFRICA, JAPAN, EGYPT, CZECHIA, and the EU insisted on "welcoming" it. EGYPT and the UK noted that this assessment was one of CBD's requests to IPBES.

Similarly, on a paragraph encouraging parties and other actors, as appropriate, to promote and implement a synergistic and holistic approach to biodiversity issues in line with the Nexus Assessment, ARGENTINA and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, opposed by the EU, requested to use "inviting" rather than "encouraging" as well as deleting reference to the list of non-party actors and the action-oriented sub-paragraphs on promoting synergies. SWEDEN, GHANA, EGYPT, and others supported "encouraging."

In the absence of consensus, Chair Mikissa requested interested parties to form a small informal group to resolve recurring differences of views on inclusion of "welcoming" or "taking note

of,” as well as “encouraging” or “inviting,” further mandating the small group to address the actors to be listed and the subparagraphs, as appropriate.

Regarding the approval of the undertaking of a second global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services by IPBES, delegates agreed to welcome it, and to replace that it would be considered by IPBES plenary “in 2028” with “at a future session of the plenary.”

A lengthy discussion took place over the actors listed in a paragraph encouraging engagement in the preparation of the second global assessment. Eventually, delegates approved “parties, other governments, subnational authorities, IPLCs, women and youth, relevant organizations, and other stakeholders, as appropriate.”

Delegates also approved specifying that the engagement pertain in particular to the review process and that the second global assessment will be a major scientific input to the global review of collective progress.

Contact Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change

The group, co-chaired by Sikeade Egbuwalo (Nigeria) and Clarisse Kehler Siebert (Sweden), resumed their deliberations of the draft SBSTTA decision and the COP recommendation on the basis of a [revised non-paper](#).

On the SBSTTA decision, delegates supported requesting the Secretariat to invite participation in a peer review of an updated expanded supplement to the [Voluntary Guidelines](#) for the Design and Effective Implementation of Ecosystem-based Approaches to Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction, including the revised primer for policy makers, and make the further revised primer available for consideration at COP 17.

Regarding the draft COP recommendation, on preambular paragraphs, delegates diverged on language to recognize that interdependent environmental “crises” or/and “challenges” must be addressed in a coherent manner. They agreed that action must ensure gender-responsive and human rights-based approaches, and intergenerational equity.

On operative paragraphs, delegates agreed to encourage parties and others to take steps to promote and implement integrated and synergistic approaches for biodiversity and nexus elements, in accordance with national priorities and circumstances; and delete a paragraph on CBD decisions on geoengineering.

Delegates diverged on whether to reference the [advisory opinion](#) of the International Court of Justice on obligations of states in respect to climate change and the [advisory opinion](#) of the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea on climate change and international law. They also differed on whether to recommend the COP to adopt or take note of the primer for policy makers of the supplement to the Voluntary Guidelines.

On a paragraph encouraging parties to achieve GBF targets 8 (minimize the impacts of climate change) and 11 (restore, maintain and enhance nature’s contributions to people), delegates diverged, among other things, on:

- whether to refer to “customary rights” or “rights of IPLCs”; and
- whether to refer to “carbon-rich ecosystems,” “key biodiversity areas,” “biodiversity rich areas,” or “natural sinks and reservoirs.”

The contact group will meet again.

Contact Group on Forest Biodiversity

Co-Chairs Marina von Weissenberg (Finland) and Jahidul Kabir (Bangladesh) presented the [non-paper](#) on the strategic review of, and update to, the expanded programme of work (PoW) on forest biodiversity in the context of the GBF.

Many delegates supported the strategic review and update, stressing that unprecedented forest loss and degradation requires urgent attention. Some expressed concerns about revising the expanded PoW and producing additional guidance at a time when

NBSAPs have already been updated, suggesting focusing efforts on implementation at the national level.

Delegates then focused on the draft recommendation, discussing, among other things, whether to:

- include reference to the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#);
- refer to “updated” or “supplementary” guidance;
- include references to the relevance of the IPBES [Transformative Change](#) and Nexus Assessments;
- adjust language to ensure recommendations do not place undue burden on parties and remain non-prescriptive;
- refer to human rights-based and gender-responsive approaches, and intergenerational equity; and
- refer to “forest ecosystems” or “forest biodiversity.”

On the annex containing the updated PoW activities in the context of each GBF target, parties debated activities’ specificity and placement, querying their relevance to specific targets.

Delegates debated, among other things, whether to: conserve “all” forests, specify “primary and high-integrity forests,” and/or “old growth and protected forests”; include qualitative aspects of forest management; and encourage use of native species in reforestation.

They further discussed whether to maintain reference to “eradicating or controlling existing populations” of invasive alien species, and addressed distinct definitions of land use and deforestation, conflicts with national laws, and supply chain implications. The Co-Chairs established a small informal group to iron out remaining disagreements.

Contact Group on Risk Assessment and Risk Management of Living Modified Organisms

Co-chaired by Martha Kandawa-Schulz (Namibia) and Werner Schenkel (Germany), the contact group convened, opening the floor for general reflections on a [non-paper](#), noting it seeks to address the submissions heard in Tuesday’s plenary and find a balance between a pragmatic approach and concerns heard pertaining to the development of additional guidance. Discussions focused, among others, on whether to develop additional voluntary guidance materials and whether to prolong the work of the *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group on Risk Assessment.

Contact Group on the Strategic Review and Analysis of the PoW under the Convention in the Context of the GBF

Delegates met in the evening, focusing their deliberations on a [non-paper](#) developed by Co-Chairs Senka Barudanović (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Scott Wilson (Canada) on the basis of oral submissions presented in plenary on Tuesday 21 October and written proposals submitted by parties.

In the Corridors

Delegates began the day rushing to make it on time to parallel morning contact groups. Hours of intense discussion later, although the contact group on biodiversity and climate change reached overall agreement on a request for a peer review of the supplement to the Voluntary Guidelines, not everything felt like achievement, with many parts of the non-paper remaining bracketed. This was also the case in the contact group on forest biodiversity, especially when agreed language emerged as controversial during consideration of the proposed activities for each target under the expanded programme of work on forests.

In an afternoon plenary, delegates trialing the pilot modalities for the early submission of statements for a second time, this time on biodiversity and health, gave mixed reactions. While some lauded them, others expressed concerns, pointing out that “there are still plenty of interventions in the room.” “We have some way to go for a fully streamlined process,” quipped a delegate on his way to an evening contact group.