

Geneva Biodiversity Conference Highlights: Monday, 28 March 2022

The Geneva Biodiversity Conference continued its work on Monday, with the SBI closing plenary meeting throughout the day. SBI adopted 20 decisions and recommendations to COP-15 and to the protocols' COP/MOPs, and the meeting's report.

This daily report includes the deliberations of the SBI plenary and the WG2020 Contact Group on digital sequence information that met late in the night on Sunday, 27 March.

SBI Plenary

SBI Chair Charlotta Sörqvist resumed consideration of conference room papers.

Post-2020 global biodiversity framework: Chair Sörqvist presented the draft recommendation on **other matters related to the GBF** (CBD/SBI/3/CRP.9). She noted that the first two paragraphs, recommending that the COP adopt the post-2020 gender plan of action, and welcoming the framework for a communications strategy, are now redundant as they have both been adopted by SBI. Delegates agreed to their deletion.

On the recommendation that, following COP-15, meetings of the COP be held every two years unless otherwise decided by the COP, the EU suggested bracketing until a final decision on the periodicity of meetings is taken.

The draft recommendation was adopted as amended.

In the evening, Chair Sörqvist introduced the final recommendation that addresses the periodicity of meetings (CBD/SBI/3/L.20), which was adopted with no further comments.

Chair Sörqvist presented the recommendation to the Cartagena Protocol COP/MOP on the **implementation plan and capacity-building action plan for the Cartagena Protocol** (CBD/SBI/3/L.11). MALAWI proposed brackets on paragraphs with ongoing discussions on: the adoption of the implementation plan contained in annex I; adoption of the capacity-building action plan, as contained in annex II; welcoming the adoption of the GBF; and welcoming the long-term strategic framework for capacity development.

The recommendation was adopted with these changes.

CANADA requested lifting the brackets around the draft recommendation to COP and the **draft gender plan of action**, annexed to document CBD/SBI/3/L.12. ALGERIA requested retaining brackets around references to "sexual orientation and gender identity." Delegates agreed to bracket the section on intersecting ways in which gender inequalities may be amplified.

The recommendation was adopted.

Chair Sörqvist presented the recommendation on the **GBF communications strategy** (CBD/SBI/3/L.14).

AUSTRALIA asked for the tripartite definition of FPIC to be captured in full on a paragraph regarding the role of IPLCs.

The recommendation was adopted.

Mechanisms for reporting, assessment, and review of implementation: Chair Sörqvist recalled the work of the Contact Group on options to enhance planning, reporting, and review mechanisms during the first part of SBI-3, and presented the draft

recommendation (CBD/SBI/3/CRP.5/Rev.1.). Contact Group Co-Chair Gillian Guthrie (Jamaica) explained that the group was not able to discuss the annex on guidance on NBSAPs due to insufficient time.

Chair Sörqvist proposed extending the peer-review of the annex, as well as of three other annexes (on non-state actor commitment guidance; national reporting guidance and template; and country-by-country review modalities) that were excluded from the Group's deliberations due to insufficient submissions from the Group's deliberations due to insufficient submissions from the previous review period. She proposed extending the peer-review period to 30 April 2022. The AFRICAN GROUP urged for a longer extension, suggesting 16 May 2022. Chair Sörqvist noted that a further extension would affect the requirement to present documents six weeks in advance of meetings.

On the preambular part, NORWAY suggested text to ensure that the outcomes of the options to enhance planning, reporting, and review mechanisms are made available to the WG2020 to inform its work towards the finalization of the GBF. COLOMBIA suggested "inviting the WG2020 to consider the outcomes of the extended peer-review of the annexes in future deliberations." Several parties, including SWITZERLAND, CHILE, and ARGENTINA, supported this text.

Belize, on behalf of SIDS, recommended flexibility in the application of the headline indicators, based on their adoption within NBSAPs and availability of resources, capacities, technologies, and financial mechanisms required for implementation. She further called for explicitly mentioning SIDS within the review framework, and removing brackets around reference to CBD Article 20 (financial resources). Chair Sörqvist said the statement will be included in the meeting's report.

The draft recommendation was adopted. In the evening, Chair Sörqvist introduced the final recommendation (CBD/SBI/3/L.15), which was adopted with no comments.

Biodiversity mainstreaming: SBI Chair Sörqvist introduced CBD/SBI/3/CRP.8, on **engagement with subnational governments, cities, and other local authorities** to enhance implementation of the GBF, including a plan of action on subnational governments, cities, and local authorities for biodiversity.

In the draft recommendation to the COP, the EU, opposed by the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO and EGYPT, suggested deleting reference to Article 20 of the Convention. After a suggestion by ARGENTINA, the whole paragraph was bracketed.

EGYPT requested to add a reference to "communicating" as well as reporting on the implementation of the updated plan of action.

In a paragraph on investing resources and capacity building, SOUTH AFRICA requested a reference to biodiversity-inclusive spatial and land-use planning. COLOMBIA suggested deleting a reference to principle 2 (decentralized management) of the ecosystem approach.

ARGENTINA requested bracketing a paragraph requesting the SBI to review the role of subnational governments, cities, and

other local authorities until a regular review of implementation is clarified.

Regarding the background of the action plan, BRAZIL requested replacing references to goals, targets, and milestones with “implementing the GBF.”

On activities to engage subnational governments, cities, and other local authorities, the EU requested reference to the implementation of the action plan for “the long-term strategic approach to mainstreaming biodiversity and its action plan.”

On the development of biodiversity strategies and action plans reflecting the involvement of subnational governments and local authorities, COLOMBIA requested adding language concerning “process to revise and update” rather than “defining appropriate strategies,” as well as “alignment with the GBF and its subsequent implementation.” SOUTH AFRICA requested reference to technology transfer and initiatives. BELIZE requested a reference to financial mechanisms. The UK requested language on financial mechanisms “and instruments.”

BOLIVIA requested that a reference to encouraging the development of biodiversity strategies and action plans involving subnational governments and local authorities “in line with” NBSAPs be replaced with “integrated into.” The EU opposed, and both accepted BRAZIL’s bridging proposal of “in harmony with.”

Delegates approved the document with existing brackets.

In the evening, Chair Sörqvist introduced the final recommendation (CBD/SBI/3/L.16), which was adopted with no comments.

Chair Sörqvist introduced a draft recommendation on the **long-term strategic approach to mainstreaming** (CBD/SBI/3/CRP/16), which is annexed to the document. The Secretariat explained that following discussions in an informal group during the first part of SBI-3, the document had been streamlined to allow parties to develop their own approaches, including by choosing from a menu of suggested activities.

The EU suggested: inviting parties and others to review the long-term approach to mainstreaming and its actions; producing an updated version of the long-term approach to mainstreaming and targeted actions, based on the inputs received from parties and others; and presenting the reviewed long-term approach for mainstreaming for consideration at COP-15 in view of its adoption.

The AFRICAN GROUP requested bracketing the entire document, emphasizing that such a long-term strategic approach to mainstreaming requires the mobilization of various stakeholders, and sufficient financial resources and other means of implementation.

BOLIVIA opposed the peer-review process, suggesting inviting submission of views on the long-term strategic approach and the relevant plan of action, and initiating negotiations at COP-15 based on the compilation of those views.

Following discussions, Chair Sörqvist suggested compromise language on inviting and compiling submissions; producing an updated version of the long-term strategic approach to mainstreaming and the action plan based on the inputs; and providing the compilation of views, and the reviewed strategic approach and action plan for consideration at COP-15 in view of its adoption.

BOLIVIA proposed referring to an “in-depth, party-driven process” for review, which the EU accepted. BRAZIL and ARGENTINA supported compiling views, but opposed developing an updated version of the long-term approach and the action plan. ARGENTINA further noted that language on adoption at COP-15 is too ambitious requesting deletion.

Following a lengthy debate, the EU suggested compromise language on presenting the compilation of submissions and an in-depth party-driven review of the long-term strategic approach to mainstreaming at COP-15 “in view of its finalization,” which ARGENTINA accepted.

The draft recommendation was approved with these amendments. An L document will be developed for further consideration.

In the evening, Chair Sörqvist introduced the final recommendation (CBD/SBI/3/L.17), which was adopted with no comments.

Cooperation with other conventions, international organization, and initiatives: Chair Sörqvist introduced document CBD/SBI/3/CRP.19, noting that it had been discussed twice in the relevant Contact Group and contains a draft SBI decision and a draft recommendation to COP-15.

AUSTRALIA, opposed by NORWAY, the UK, and the EU, suggested replacing “crisis” with “challenges” in a paragraph recognizing the interlinked global crises of biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution. The EU noted that “crisis” is evidence-based and recognized by IPBES and IPCC. Chair Sörqvist highlighted the use of the term “crisis” in the Kunming Declaration.

BRAZIL objected to retaining this paragraph in the preambular part. The paragraph was moved to the operational part of the draft recommendation and was kept in brackets.

ARGENTINA urged adding subnational governments, cities, and other local authorities on a paragraph on participation and contributions to preparation of the GBF.

In the draft recommendation, the AFRICAN GROUP suggested an additional preambular paragraph welcoming the work of the Global Partnership on Plant Conservation, as described in GBO-5 and the 2020 Plant Conservation Report. The EU requested a reference to the Convention’s 2030 mission.

COLOMBIA requested a new preambular paragraph recognizing the rolling work programme up to 2030 of IPBES, including the thematic assessment of the interlinkages among biodiversity, water, food, and health. BOLIVIA requested a more general consideration of the work programme, with PERU opposing.

In an operative paragraph on monitoring of progress, SWITZERLAND requested general reference to modular reporting tools.

CHINA requested that paragraphs on biodiversity-related conventions aligning their strategies with the GBF be bracketed, but relented after clarification that its primary concern was with other conventions “endorsing” the GBF. The term was bracketed.

CANADA suggested a number of additions to a paragraph inviting the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions, including, *inter alia*, language on: reducing inefficiencies and including the informal advisory group on synergies.

SWITZERLAND requested that a paragraph on governing bodies of biodiversity-related conventions contributing to the implementation and monitoring of the GBF take into account the conclusions of the Bern workshop.

The EU proposed merging paragraphs on guidance and technical support for GBF implementation with a paragraph requesting synergies among biodiversity-related conventions. UGANDA, supported by JAPAN and SWITZERLAND, proposed merging the paragraph on synergies among biodiversity-related conventions with one on identifying opportunities for cooperation among these conventions and other relevant MEAs.

The EU proposed reference to parties providing pathogens in a “timely” manner, in a paragraph requesting collaboration with WHO to facilitate fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in its ongoing work on pandemic preparedness and access to pathogens. BOLIVIA opposed the reformulation, and ARGENTINA pointed out that the word “timely” is not aligned with the CBD and the Nagoya Protocol language. JAPAN proposed deletion of the paragraph. The paragraph was bracketed.

CANADA proposed deletion of a paragraph on reviewing and updating NBSAPs to support GBF implementation. NORWAY and COLOMBIA opposed this deletion, and CANADA agreed to maintain the paragraph.

The AFRICAN GROUP, supported by COLOMBIA and the EU, suggested a new paragraph inviting the Global Partnership on Plant Conservation, with the support of the Secretariat, to prepare a set of complementary actions related to plant conservation to support implementation of the GBF.

BOLIVIA proposed a new paragraph requesting the Secretariat to continue working with the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent on topics related to biodiversity and traditional knowledge.

SWITZERLAND, while supporting the AFRICAN GROUP and BOLIVIA, cautioned against listing all examples of synergies.

The recommendation was adopted as bracketed.

In the evening, Chair Sörqvist presented the final SBI decision and recommendation to COP (CBD/SBI/3/L.19).

AUSTRALIA reported willingness to refer to the term “crisis” in the text on interlinked global crises of biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution.

The final decision and recommendation were adopted.

Global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism: Chair Sörqvist introduced the draft recommendation to the Nagoya Protocol COP/MOP (CBD/SBI/3/CRP.12), noting that the document is heavily bracketed and suggesting developing an L document without further discussion.

The AFRICAN GROUP reiterated its position that a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism would be conducive to the objectives of the Convention, noting serious limitations of the bilateral model.

PERU emphasized that the relevant AHTEG should be regionally balanced and include IPLC representatives.

Chair Sörqvist that the statements will be reflected in the meeting’s report.

The draft recommendation was approved.

In the evening, Chair Sörqvist introduced the final recommendation (CBD/SBI/3/L.18), which was adopted with no comments.

Capacity building, technical and scientific cooperation, technology transfer, knowledge management, and communication: Chair Sörqvist introduced a draft recommendation on **knowledge management and the clearing-house mechanism** (CBD/SBI/3/CRP.4). She suggested, due to lack of time, bracketing the whole recommendation; developing an L document; and forwarding it fully bracketed to COP-15.

The EU opposed, noting that the document had not been discussed and stressing that knowledge management is an important element of the monitoring framework.

In the evening, Chair Sörqvist opened the floor for interventions.

The EU proposed a preambular paragraph recommending that the outcomes of SBI-3 on this item be made available for consideration by the WG2020 when continuing their work on the final draft of the GBF.

CANADA proposed a preamble recalling decision XIII/18 (Mo’otz Kuxtal Voluntary Guidelines).

BRAZIL requested adding “according to their capabilities” to a paragraph urging parties to provide support to developing country parties to implement strategic knowledge management actions.

The PHILIPPINES requested reopening a number of L documents to insert the term “subregional.” Chair Sörqvist said that the amendment would be noted in the meeting’s report.

The EU recommended inviting biodiversity-related conventions to contribute to the establishment of global biodiversity knowledge networks, including the Clearing-House Mechanism of the Convention.

On a paragraph extending and updating the work programme of the Clearing-House Mechanism, the EU requested alignment with relevant COP decisions, and mentioning the long-term strategic framework for capacity building and development.

BRAZIL requested that the COP “take note of” rather than “welcome” the Data4Nature initiative and the PANORAMA: Solutions for a Healthy Planet partnership, among others.

Regarding a paragraph welcoming the UNEP-WCMC initiative, BOLIVIA asked to add a reference to progress on targets and goals in coordination with interested parties and regional intergovernmental organizations, along with a process of transferring technologies and capacities to developing country parties.

BOLIVIA, supported by ECUADOR and BRAZIL, proposed an additional paragraph welcoming the establishment of the Amazon Regional Observatory of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, which includes information and data for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and invites donors and multilateral organizations to provide international cooperation for strengthening this initiative as well as other regional knowledge platforms.

Regarding the final paragraph containing requests to the Secretariat, CANADA asked for language to “support” parties rather than to “facilitate” implementation. The EU and the UK asked to delete a bracketed reference to provision of support and advice to parties regarding the implementation of the knowledge management component, since it is maintained elsewhere.

Delegates adopted the draft recommendation with the proposed additions and deletions remaining in brackets.

Regarding the bracketed annex on the knowledge management component of the GBF, delegates agreed to adopt it in brackets, with CANADA reserving the right to make insertions related to traditional knowledge in the annex at COP-15.

Delegates approved the document as both a CRP and an L document.

Chair Sörqvist introduced the recommendation on **communication** (CBD/SBI/3/L.5), which was adopted without comments.

Chair Sörqvist presented the recommendation on **capacity building and development, technical and scientific cooperation, and technology transfer** (CBD/SBI/3/L.13). The EU, supported by the UK and BRAZIL, proposed a preambular paragraph for Section A (capacity building and development) recommending that the outcomes of the second part of the SBI on this item be made available for consideration by the WG2020 when continuing their work on the final draft of the GBF. BRAZIL suggested that this also applies to Section B (technical and scientific cooperation).

The EU, supported by the UK, also suggested a footnote clarifying that the brackets in annex II (proposals to strengthen technical and scientific cooperation in support of the GBF) are not based on negotiations, but are based on submissions received from parties after the first reading of part I of the virtual meeting of SBI-3.

The PHILIPPINES proposed lifting brackets on a paragraph inviting parties to provide financial and technical support to design and implement capacity-building and development programmes aligned with the long-term strategic framework. She also called on lifting brackets on similar references throughout the document.

Chair Sörqvist suggested leaving the brackets rather than reopening the document for negotiations due to time pressure.

The recommendation was adopted.

Assessment and review of the Cartagena Protocol: Chair Sörqvist introduced the recommendation (CBD/SBI/3/L.2), which was adopted without comments.

Resource mobilization and the financial mechanism: Chair Sörqvist introduced the recommendation on the **financial mechanism** (CBD/SBI/3/L.3).

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION requested adding preambular language “reaffirming the utmost importance of Article 21 (financial mechanism) for the full implementation of the Convention.” The addition was bracketed.

The recommendation was adopted.

Chair Sörqvist introduced the recommendation on **elements of guidance to the GEF** (CBD/SBI/3/L.10). The recommendation was adopted without comments.

The Secretariat presented two additional paragraphs on intersessional work negotiated in a small group to the draft recommendation on **resource mobilization** (CBD/SBI/3/L.9):

- inviting the Co-Chairs of the SBI Contact Group on resource mobilization, with guidance from the SBI Chair, in consultation with the Bureau, and the Co-Chairs of WG2020, as appropriate, and with the support of the Secretariat, to facilitate an informal consultative process on resource

mobilization, based on the concepts reflected in the section entitled “Additional elements on resource mobilization,” and reflected in the proposed resource mobilization component provided in annex 1, with a view to enhance mutual understanding of the issues at hand and of the expectations by the parties, and to explore opportunities for convergence; and recommending that the outcomes of deliberations on resource mobilization and the informal consultative process on resource mobilization be made available to the WG2020 for its consideration when it continues its deliberations in future meetings and at COP-15, as appropriate.

JAPAN and SWITZERLAND asked for clarification about the intersessional process, in terms of the number of meetings, and whether they will be held virtually.

Following deliberation, SBI Chair Sörqvist suggested specifying that there be no more than two meetings before the next meeting of WG2020. The additional language now foresees to: facilitate, subject to availability of financial resources, an informal consultative process on resource mobilization, in a virtual format, with no more than two meetings before the next meeting of the WG2020, and open to all parties.

With this addition, the recommendation was adopted.

Review of progress in the implementation of the

Convention: Chair Sörqvist introduced the recommendation (CBD/SBI/3/L.4), which was adopted without comments.

Specialized international ABS instruments in the context of Article 4.4 of the Nagoya Protocol: Chair Sörqvist introduced the recommendation to the Nagoya Protocol COP/MOP (CBD/SBI/3/L.6).

The AFRICAN GROUP expressed: procedural concerns, noting that the L document was developed during the online session, with limited participation from the region; legal concerns regarding SBI’s mandate; and substantial concerns on the document’s content.

He suggested adding to the draft recommendation: that the Nagoya Protocol COP/MOP have the authority to assess, determine, review, or terminate the status of instruments as specialized international ABS instruments in the context of Nagoya Protocol Article 4.4, based on a set of criteria contained in an annex to the document; and a request to the Secretariat to receive and submit instruments to Nagoya Protocol parties for their consideration four months prior to the respective meeting.

He further requested amending the indicative criteria for specialized international ABS instruments, noting that such instruments should: be agreed or adopted through an intergovernmental process and/or explicitly endorsed by states through a decision of the governing body of an international organization; and create legal certainty with respect to access to genetic resources or traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources, and with respect to application of FPIC, and fair and equitable sharing of benefits.

The suggestions were bracketed and the recommendation was adopted.

Other matters: No other matters were raised.

Adoption of the report: Rapporteur Eric Amaning Okoree (Ghana) presented the draft report of the meeting (CBD/SBI/3/Part2/L.1).

On opening of the meeting, BRAZIL amended the reference to their statement, adding that they presented two non-papers on the implementation of Article 21 of the Convention and on payments for ecosystem services.

On resource mobilization and the financial mechanism, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION requested inclusion of their statement regarding the importance of financial resources for GBF implementation and the need to ensure full access of GEF funding without influence of unilateral decisions outside of the GEF.

Under other matters, the EU stated that the meetings were held under the “dark cloud” of the unprovoked attack on Ukraine. He highlighted that comments by the Russian Federation on the

occasion of the SBSTTA Bureau election showed a lack of respect of the Convention’s procedures. He noted that the EU members that are also members of the CEE have traditionally also occupied a place in the Bureau. He asked for reflection of this statement in the meeting’s report and also in the report of SBSTTA. New Zealand, speaking for JUSCANZ, supported this statement.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION responded, saying they had already made their position clear regarding the rationale for the military option taken. She objected to the inclusion of the EU statement in the report, saying it is not relevant to the current meeting. She added that the SBSTTA’s report has already been adopted and cannot be reopened.

With these and other minor amendments, the meeting’s report (SBI/3/Part2/L.1) was approved.

Closure of the meeting: CBD Executive Secretary Elizabeth Mrema remarked that SBI had taken on a “challenging agenda,” but had nevertheless made significant progress on work. She thanked all involved, including technical and venue support staff, for their “tireless efforts.” She reminded delegates that “the world will accept nothing less than a clear, ambitious, and transformative framework on biodiversity,” but expressed great hope, as all involved had risen above the difficult circumstances despite differing views.

SBI Chair Sörqvist thanked delegates for their work, which would ensure that the work of the CBD “will be turned into action on the ground.” Thanking delegates, the COP presidency and Bureau, the CBD team, interpreters, and technical support staff, she underlined that it had been “an honor” for her to serve as SBI Chair in the past two years, and wished all good luck at COP-15. She closed the meeting at 22:02.

WG2020 Contact Group 5

The Friends of the Co-Leads Group met throughout the night on Sunday, 27 March. Contact Group Co-Lead Voight-Hanssen reconvened the contact group after 3am. Co-Facilitator William Lockhart (UK) said that the informal group met three times since Friday, 25 March, worked on the most controversial paragraphs and managed to lift all brackets in the draft WG2020 decision.

Pointing to hard and complex deliberations, Co-Facilitator Martha Mphatso Kalemba (Malawi) explained that the outcome constitutes a carefully balanced compromise, and urged delegates to consider this a package and endorse it without renegotiating it. The Contact Group endorsed the draft decision, which will be presented to the WG2020 plenary on Tuesday, 29 March.

In the Corridors

If the Geneva Conference’s triple meeting can be compared to a three-course meal, Monday was a day where certain delegates were clearly feeling overstuffed. With scant hours between the end of the contact group on DSI and the beginning of the final SBI plenary, more than one delegate was heard apologizing on the plenary floor for losing track of the deliberations, mishearing requests, or simply being too tired to follow text aurally.

Still, real progress came from a sleepless night and a weary day. The friends of the co-leads on DSI came out of their extended informal negotiations with a clear recommendation to pass on: not a solution to any lines drawn in the sand, alas, but at the very least a clear path forward. “We need political weight behind the decisions in Kunming,” one insider explained, “and now we’ve given them a step-by-step way to make those decisions. That’s a victory.”

There was audible relief, too, when the SBI plenary managed to shift from reviewing contentious CRPs into adopting L documents in the afternoon and evening. Tuesday will be the decisive reflection of whether the momentum toward the COP has taken hold of all bodies. “Now all there is left is the global biodiversity framework,” one observer said, chuckling at the dinner metaphor he heard from one beleaguered writer. “Here’s hoping the OEWG will be dessert, rather than a fly in the pudding.”