

Thank you Mr. Chair

Norway has always been a strong supporter of the CBD, and we would like to continue this relation in the future. We need however to raise some issues related to the documents and format for SBSTTA17.

Our comments must be seen as comments from a friend of the CBD, with the aim for the best possible results for the CBD at all levels.

1. We have to respect the text of the convention and COP-decisions. This does not mean that we are against developments and modifications in the format. But the parties are to decide this through decisions at COP.

COP decision X/12 and XI/13, are our most recent decision on Ways and means to improve the effectiveness of the SBSTTA. We are surprised that some ideas from the friends of the CBD meeting in Bogis-Bossey earlier this year already seems to be used for SBSTTA17 with no formal COP decision to support this.

2. We have to ensure transparency in the work under the CBD. From the annotated agenda paragraph 10, we read “ it appears beneficial for SBSTTA to develop conclusions and recommendations on all agenda items together under item 7”, and from the explanatory note document SBSTTA/17/1 add2 dated 12 September: “the agenda for SBSTTA17 will follow a format that is somewhat different from previous meetings”.

In our view this is very different from the COP VIII/10 decision and it’s annex III with the modus operandi for SBSTTA. Paragraph 12 on documentation reads: The documentation prepared for meetings will be distributed three months before the meeting in the working languages of the SBSTTA, will be concrete, focused draft technical reports and will include proposed conclusions and recommendations for consideration of the SBSTTA.

We will also recall COP decision X/12 on ways and means, where paragraph 6 reads “Recalling para 5 of decision IX/29 request the Executive Secretary to streamline the texts of suggested draft recommendations for submission to the SBSTTA and encourages Parties to make these recommendations as short as possible so that the actions required are clear.”

The streamlining for the text of the draft recommendations for this meeting is obvious, - there are no draft recommendations. So how can we ensure transparency in developing the draft recommendations during this meeting.

With reference to para 12 in the annotated agenda, it is also a bit unclear to us to whom we will make draft conclusions and recommendations

Norway as all other parties has to prepare nationally for formal meetings under the Convention – and this has been almost impossible for this meeting, in particular getting targeted input from, and accommodating the interest of other sectors in the outcome of the meeting.

3. We stand ready to discuss new and improved working methods for SBSTTA and other bodies under the CBD, we also realize that this might be useful for the phase we are in these days. With our current focus on implementation, the relationship between SBSTTA and WGRI might benefit from further clarification. We are also aware that the ongoing developments under IPBES are of importance for SBSTTA, and this will be discussed under agenda item 5.

In this regard we would also like to remind you of COP XI/10 Periodicity of meetings, which give the mandate for work to improve the efficiency of structures and processes under the Convention and its two protocols.

4. Finally, I will repeat our main message: The COP is our decision making body, and we must not undermine COP decisions.
5. Having said that I would like to underline that the Norwegian delegation will as always contribute constructively during the meeting in order to reach useful outcomes.

Thank you