



## Convention on Biological Diversity

Distr.  
GENERAL

CBD/SBSTTA/21/INF/19  
10 December 2017

ENGLISH ONLY

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### SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

Twenty-first meeting

Montreal, Canada, 11-14 December 2017

Item 3 of the provisional agenda\*

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE REPORT OF THE BOGIS-BOSSEY DIALOGUE FOR BIODIVERSITY**

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

1. The United Nations Decade on Biodiversity and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 will come to a close at the end of 2020. The three-year period before the end of the decade provides an opportunity to reflect on achievements, take stock of ongoing challenges, and bring new perspectives to advance the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
2. As the world faces mounting challenges to planetary health, and the global state of biodiversity continues to deteriorate, addressing the symptoms of unsustainable lifestyle choices or increasing the efficiency of conservation efforts that occur at the margins of society will be insufficient to fundamentally reduce risks, improve the state of the environment and create opportunities for societal wellbeing in the long term.
3. To do this requires addressing the root causes that have led to the “symptoms of unsustainability”: shifting to radically new ways of production and consumption and reorienting economic development pathways towards an economy within ecological boundaries while meeting social and ecological development goals. With the goal of identifying a transformative agenda for action that will engage multi-level systemic change in sectors and domains that have an impact on or benefit from biodiversity, and with a view to contribute to discussions on an ambitious, innovative, yet pragmatic post-2020 global biodiversity framework, the Secretariat of the Convention convened the first of a series of dialogues from 12 to 14 November 2017, in Bogis-Bossey, Switzerland, with the support of the Government of Switzerland. The objectives of the dialogue were as follows:
  - (a) To identify barriers to, and opportunities for, transformational change (including change in institutions and behaviours) to address the drivers of biodiversity loss and to promote full integration of biodiversity into sustainable development;
  - (b) To identify how the Biodiversity Convention and the wider biodiversity community can leverage such transformational change, both in the lead-up to the fourteenth and fifteenth meetings of the Conference of the Parties and through the post-2020 global biodiversity framework;

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\* CBD/SBSTTA/21/1.

(c) To identify the main levers, champions and actors that can play a significant role in this transformational change.

4. The dialogue brought together close to 50 experts representing a variety of organizations and fields of work, with a view to providing a range of perspectives and insights on opportunities and approaches to scale and accelerate implementation of the Biodiversity Convention and its Protocols. The dialogue covered diverse issues, including the application of systems thinking research and transformation management, impact investment and finance, technologies and the use of big data, as well as communication and partnerships.

5. Section I of the present document provides a brief overview of the Convention and its role in sustainable development. Section II presents a synthesised summary of the report of the dialogue. It also introduces the perspective of sustainability transitions research as a starting point for reflection and strategic examination of pathways for action. Section III highlights next steps in the process. It notes the development of an analysis of innovative, cutting-edge ideas and concepts, and transformative actions for consideration by Parties and key actors to accelerate progress on the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The analysis will be presented as input to the second Bogis-Bossey Dialogue.

## **I. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

6. Biodiversity and ecosystem diversity are the foundation of human welfare, well-being, and health. Without the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity a perspective for future development ceases to exist. Until now, global development has been achieved to a large extent at the expense of biodiversity, impinging of the health and diversity of ecosystems. Economic growth has been benefited from the depletion of ecological and natural capital and by producing waste and emissions. As a result, the loss of species, degradation of ecosystems and depletion of natural resources continues at alarming rates, posing serious threats to the survival of life on Earth.

7. Against this background, society has become more aware of the negative effects of prioritizing economic growth at the expense of the environment. This led to the development of environmental policies and sciences, and to the introduction of sustainable development at the global scale. Within this context, the Convention on Biological Diversity was created in 1992 as the intergovernmental policy body on biodiversity designed to promote sustainable development. Its objectives – conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of the components of biodiversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources – underpin the environmental, social and economic dimensions of biodiversity in the pursuit of development at different levels.

8. There has been significant progress in the implementation of the Convention in the two and a half decades since its entry into force in 1993. With 196 Parties, the Convention has near-universal membership, with a comprehensive political and science-driven mandate, and an international financial support mechanism for national implementation. The Convention's constituency base is diverse and active. It includes governments, regional and local authorities, and a broad stakeholder base consisting of civil society groups, indigenous peoples and local community organisations, and representatives of youth, women, business and private sector, along with additional intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. In addition, the Convention interacts with a wide range of United Nations organizations and agencies as well as other relevant international and regional institutions.

9. Over the past few decades, a strong institutional and scientific process has been developed around biodiversity protection, supported by quantitative and qualitative environmental sciences that model, map, and explore ecosystem dynamics, seek understanding of ecological impacts, and develop policy recommendations. Despite its progress, biodiversity has often been treated in a narrow manner, without full value recognition or societal investment. While developing along the lines of conservation to inform high-level policy, the Convention's governance has been based upon institutional work and consensus building, with limited cross-sectoral influence to signal and address the negative symptoms of

unsustainable development. While the decisions on mainstreaming biodiversity into key sectors agreed on at the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention are a positive step forward, widespread challenges remain to confront entrenched individual, institutional, and sectoral mind-sets.

## II. THE BOGIS-BOSSEY DIALOGUE FOR BIODIVERSITY

10. The first Bogis-Bossey Dialogue for Biodiversity was held from 12 to 14 November 2017. Below is a summary of the eight sessions, which featured discussions within a systems thinking and transition management framework.

### A. Current state of affairs and future trends

11. **Session one** welcomed participants and provided context on the current state of affairs of biodiversity as well as projected global trends. The fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*, released in 2012, was referenced as the most up-to-date information on the status of global efforts to meet the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The fourth edition reveals that, although Parties are on track to meet some elements of some Targets, the broader picture shows that progress is not occurring at the rate needed to achieve all Targets by 2020. Efforts taken to advance towards many Targets are shown either to be insufficient or to have no impact, and, as a result, biodiversity loss is becoming more severe. Likewise, scenario-based projections to 2020 and 2050 show continued biodiversity loss if current trends continue.

12. The challenges ahead are steep. The population will likely expand by more than 1.2 billion people, triggering expected increases in demand for food, water and energy by 35%, 40% and 50%, respectively. The urban footprint is also expected to triple, including the \$4.2 trillion that will be spent on infrastructure before 2020. Failure to create appropriate institutional measures and legal structures for sustainable urbanization will further exacerbate these existing problems. Moreover, unprecedented rates of migration and displacement will require a combination of response measures.

13. Participants reflected on the main barriers and opportunities for action that will engage multi-level systemic change in sectors and domains that have an impact on, or benefit from, biodiversity. For example, discussions covered the need to phase out harmful and perverse subsidies and incentives, as well as using national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), to address effectively the underlying drivers of biodiversity loss that stem from other sectors.

14. Participants also identified opportunities around shifting communication strategies and collaboration with key partners. Nature-based solutions, or development approaches that conserve nature in order to deliver key development benefits, were viewed as helpful to deliver on both the Sustainable Development Goals and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Other opportunities were discussed to develop strategic experimentation and learning programs around natural capital approaches and to optimize the use of technical capacities and financial resources in parallel with other processes, such as the climate change and human rights communities. Participants noted that using clear narratives that show how nature is essential to achieving both the Sustainable Development Goals and the climate change agreement, could inform diverse stakeholders as to how biodiversity can help to deliver on different mandates. At the same time, participants stressed that the importance and political profile of the Biodiversity Convention needed to be raised.

### B. Systems thinking, transition management and tools for transformational change

15. **Session two** provided the theoretical framework for the dialogue. It profiled work on systems thinking research and transition management and introduced participants to new ways of thinking about societal, behavioural and environmental change. Systems thinking research provides a critical framework to understand the social and ecological complexity of the Earth's systems, spanning from the macro-scale planetary boundaries to smaller-scale social, ecological, economic and political systems. This research

aids understanding of transformation as the ability of people to create new systems when conditions make existing systems untenable.

16. Presentations by the [Stockholm Resilience Centre](#) and the [Dutch Research Institute for Transitions](#) explained that biodiversity loss is a “symptom of unsustainability”: it is caused by the unsustainable production and consumption that characterize the global economic system. The presenters noted that, in order to encourage transformation, the Convention’s constituency must imagine the type of sustainable future towards which to work. This could include identifying goals, envisioning systems and rethinking interactions between people and their surroundings.

17. Transformative change can only be facilitated on the basis of the existing momentum of a system. A key part of transitions will be encouraging local context-based solutions by local actors. Transformational change will require adapting global knowledge and experience to the local context in order to reimagine new futures.

18. Participants highlighted the importance of working towards transition within the political arena and within the private sector. However, many emphasized that there would be a conflict in timescale, as transitions are long-term processes, whereas both political and business mandates are of a short-term nature, governed by political demands and returns on investments. In order to address this, working with governments, the public and shareholders – as those that drive political cycles and private sector accountability – is essential to foster transitions towards sustainability.

### **C. Leveraging change, disruption and innovation, accelerators and multipliers**

19. **Session three** engaged participants to work in round tables to discuss questions based on the model of transformative change introduced in session two. The session proposed areas of action to encourage transitions to a more sustainable future. Groups considered: (a) structures in the existing regime that need to change from the top down; (b) alternatives which need to be built from the bottom up; (c) structures that need to be broken down; and (d) the end goal. After the round-table discussions, participants reconvened in plenary.

20. Among the points envisioned were a future in which:

- (a) There is a clear theory of change that unites the biodiversity community and mobilizes the public around key pressure points;
- (b) Harmful and perverse incentives are removed;
- (c) Strengthened and visible political process to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity;
- (d) Deeper engagement with ministers of finance around the importance of biodiversity to national economic stability and growth;
- (e) The economic case for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity has been built through engagement with the private sector;
- (f) Partnerships with faith-based organizations, labour unions, and the human rights community, and enhanced engagement with exiting partners;
- (g) The Biodiversity Convention is able to facilitate the diffusion, scaling, replication and institutionalization of transformative practices across sectors and institutions.

### **D. Transformation through corporate policies, markets, and finance**

21. **Session four** focused on the business case for action towards the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, showcasing presentations from the corporate and investment sectors. In terms of corporate sustainability policies, approaches for enhancing sustainability in the private sector were highlighted. Data-based monitoring, key performance indicators, environmental loss and profit reporting and

production innovations were introduced as critical tools for corporate sustainability. The concept of impact investing was also introduced.

22. Impact investments are investments in businesses or investments run by people seeking positive impact in society, such as achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The traditional investor works using a series of strategies that emphasize short to long-term gains, risk-adjusted returns, correlation and diversification, tailored investment strategies, and adherence to new laws, regulations and standards (environmental, social or civic, governance). Impact investors use the same strategies, but with active investment selection to improve the environment, develop social justice, and ensure governance and accountability. Their portfolios focus on mid- to long-term gains.

23. A report from the Sustainable Development Solutions Network<sup>1</sup> demonstrates that the Sustainable Development Goal financing gap can be met with approximately 2% of global gross domestic product and suggests that 50% of this should be from private investment. With this in mind, it is noted that entrepreneurs, and the business world as a whole, are part of the solution to transform approaches to safeguard and sustainably use biodiversity, while still meeting other development objectives, at different levels.

24. Further comments indicated that private sector capital can play a powerful role in funding protected areas or other conservation measures, and that public-private partnerships can also be useful in leveraging such capital. Although governments should create protected area policies that focus on areas of greatest risk, these may be complemented by initiatives, incentives and grass-roots engagement supported by private actors.

25. Participants also explained the importance of developing a pipeline of projects with bankable schemes to de-risk impact investing, highlighting this as an area of collaboration between the biodiversity community and investment sector. Discussions also highlighted increased consumer and shareholder awareness as a key entry point to encourage corporate investment in sustainable practices. Participants also discussed the continuing roles of carbon taxes, REDD+ payments, certification schemes and the voluntary carbon market as examples.

#### **E. Transforming implementation through technology, data and accountability**

26. **Session five** enabled participants to explore new technologies and innovative uses of data as a means to transform approaches to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity. New technologies have played a vital role in accelerating work to implement many conventions. Several innovative uses of new and old technology were presented, including the Wildlife Witness App<sup>2</sup>, DNA barcoding and electronic permitting. The role of technologies in leveraging investments, partnerships, data and building local capacities were also highlighted.

27. The effects of mobile technology, websites, and social media in reaching millions of people daily was explained in the context of the work of the Convention. Discussions focused on clear and concise narratives and underlying messages emphasizing an integrated approach to biodiversity and the achievement of the other multilateral agreements. The role of the Convention in championing the role of biodiversity and addressing the emergence of unsustainable technological solutions, such as the bioenergy with carbon capture services (BECCS), a popular climate change solution in special papers submitted to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was discussed. It was noted that the Convention's mandate positions it to take on issues such as these and to advocate for the critical role of biodiversity in sustaining life on Earth.

28. The issue of accountability was also addressed. References were made to commitments made by United Nations Member States to the three Rio Conventions, to the Bonn Challenge, and to the [New York](#)

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<sup>1</sup> <http://unsdsn.org/resources/publications/sdg-investment-needs/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.wildlifewitness.net/>

[Declaration on Forests](#), and the limited traceability of pledges into actions and advancements. For example, the New York Declaration on Forests is endorsed by over 190 entities, and sets out 10 forest-specific goals, closely in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. In order to meet these goals, the New York Declaration on Forests needs to build on the existing commitments of commodity platforms at the global scale. The weakness, in this case, is that most signatories make general commitments, not time-bound or measurable. For improved accountability, commitments should be time-specific and actionable, explicit on definitions, actively support smallholder compliance, and work towards harmonization and alignment with other initiatives, standardization of measure of progress, among other factors.

29. Participants emphasized that, without any serious compliance regimes, governments would continue to prioritize short-term commitments over long-term sustainability. In addition to top-down enforcement mechanisms designed to penalize failure to deliver on commitments, participants highlighted the importance of rewards for successful approaches. In addition, emphasis was made on technological development and inter-sectoral collaboration and how that could support transitions towards sustainable use of biodiversity. Participants also discussed the importance and challenge of developing sound indicators to measure trends and impacts, and track actions taken to meet commitments. Various approaches to gathering data for indicator development were highlighted, including the use of citizen data to document biodiversity loss on a local scale and remote sensing as a powerful tool for monitoring global forest trends, and the human footprint. In many countries, natural capital accounting has also provided a powerful motivator to generate useful data that can be used to track action towards commitments.

#### **F. Changing the game for biodiversity — communicating for transformational change**

30. **Session six** focused on how communication strategies could transform public conceptions and action around biodiversity. Four critical dimensions for communicating biodiversity were highlighted:

(a) **Audience:** there is more than one audience to communicate with, in order to change the trajectory of biodiversity loss. For each audience, tailored messages are needed in order to meet each audience where they are and not where we want them to be;

(b) **Message:** messaging around biodiversity conservation must make the topic simple, personally relevant, and offer meaningful strategies to activate different individuals based on their skills and capacities;

(c) **Tone:** messages need to connect to people's hearts by branding through a narrative of optimism, such as by showcasing local solutions and avoiding "doom and gloom" communications;

(d) **Rigor:** communication campaigns should be designed with the same rigor that a national park is designed. Communication campaigns cannot be accomplished by single actors anymore. These must leverage partnerships to increase their reach.

31. It was also highlighted that conservation's greatest challenge might be human behaviour. In this aspect, an organization introduced a concept using the emotion of pride to induce behavioural change based on three principles: (a) emotions are often more powerful than reason; (b) people are social animals and therefore are influenced by their neighbours' actions; and (c) context matters – culture, circumstance, and education all lead people to have their own biases. Working from these principles, campaigns have revealed an increase of local knowledge of the benefits of conservation, which, in turn, increases regulations, increases enforcement, and increases participation, leading to a change in stewardship of the resource.

32. Other initiatives to mobilize people were also highlighted, including Global People's Climate March and Earth Hour. The presenters contended that the focused initiatives make action accessible, strike an emotional chord around being part of something bigger, and enable the mobilization of millions

of people. This widespread mobilization can be used as a mechanism to show policymakers how many constituents are concerned with an issue.

33. During the plenary discussion, participants stressed the need for both a unified, catchy, top-line message, as well as targeted communications strategies that can bring this message to segmented, specialized audiences. Different tools and strategies need to be employed to mobilize the public, the private sector, and government in different cultural contexts, drawing on the unique profile of each of these actors.

34. Central to a communication strategy for each actor will be designing campaigns that not only raise awareness but that encourages behavioural change. A mechanism which was presented was the open source communication campaign model used in the Global People's Climate March and Earth Hour, which enables stakeholders to mobilize around issues relevant to them and adapt them to the local context. Participants noted differences in using negative messaging around fear of biodiversity loss and positive messaging. Participants also emphasized that most target audiences do not understand the term "biodiversity", and that communication efforts may consider using "nature" as an alternative.

### **G. Looking ahead: opportunities and commitments for multiplying the discussion**

35. **Session seven** focused on looking ahead to the next three years to 2020, highlighting key events that will take place as the Secretariat works with Parties and other stakeholders to design the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The session included information on the process the Secretariat will take to ensure a comprehensive and participatory preparatory process for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, with three key priorities: (a) supporting countries to meet the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; (b) facilitating the preparatory process for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; and (c) collecting ideas to organize conservation processes and build the profile of biodiversity. These three priorities contribute to the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity identified by countries under the current Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

36. Furthermore, [IUCN](#) and the [UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre](#) outlined their engagement and current initiatives in the run-up to 2020. The need to build a movement around biodiversity conservation and a more compelling narrative was stressed. There are multiple ways in which to engage diverse stakeholders to effect change. Participants expressed the importance of being disruptive, creative and nimble. Furthermore, the importance of a science, data-based approach was recognized, along with multiple inputs to engage beyond the existing conservation community and to create new mechanisms to achieve broad, effective conservation.

37. On the potential of mainstreaming, the challenge to promote responsible investment that meets sustainability criteria and guidelines was noted. Responsible investment is still a niche market – if very successful, it will account for 5% of global investment. Participants were challenged to think about how to enhance sustainability in the other 95% of investments. Examples of innovation were provided, including information on international shifts in financial and capital markets which have started to lead to incentives that reward investments aligned with biodiversity conservation.

38. Participants emphasized the importance of addressing both biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, the importance of bringing together the biodiversity and climate change communities, and what should be done with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in the post-2020 era, with some suggesting that they should be revised in favour of more simple, concise targets and some suggesting that more time should be allocated in order to achieve the existing targets. Participants emphasized that the Aichi Biodiversity Targets provide a high-level "what" in terms of the priorities for biodiversity conservation. Further discussions noted that Parties and other stakeholders also need the "how" to accomplish these goals, which may require more focus now and in the post-2020 framework.

39. A calendar of events relating to the development of the post-2020 framework was also presented. Several events were highlighted as critical for work under the Convention on Biological

Diversity towards the post-2020 framework. In that context, plans to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2018 were noted. Other events included the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland (January 2018), [IPBES](#) regional assessments and land degradation assessment (March 2018), review periods for the next draft of the IPBES global assessment (June 2018), the United Nations High-Level Political Forum (July 2018), the Global Climate Action Summit (September 2018), the twenty-fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, (December 2018), the seventh [Parliament of the World's Religions](#) (November 2018), the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (November 2018), and the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (December 2018). Participants also referenced other meetings and events, including the G7 and G20 meetings (2018, 2019, 2020), release of the Living Planet Report (2018 and 2020), the California Climate Summit (2018), IUCN Regional Conservation Consultations (2019), Tenth Meeting of the World Environmental Educator Congress (November 2019), the launch of Our Planet (2019), the IUCN World Conservation Congress (2020), the Summer Olympics (2020), the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (2020), and the review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030).

#### *8. Gems and gaps: next steps and commitments for action*

40. **Session eight** of the dialogue invited critical thinking on next steps and what is needed to scale up action in concrete terms. Participants generally contributed suggestions around four major issues: (a) awareness-raising; (b) ways to strengthen ongoing partnerships and stewardship with key partners; (c) rethinking financing; and (d) and changing the game within the Biodiversity Convention.

41. In regard to raising awareness, participants suggested a series of key global events in which the Convention should be involved, already starting in 2018, to help raise awareness around the widespread importance of biodiversity vis-à-vis different sectors, including at the G7 and G20 global summits, the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, and the High-Level Political Summit on Sustainable Development, among many others. An interactive timeline leading up to 2020 to showcase key events was suggested. Suggestions also included creating a simplified message and vision that would be easy to communicate and use by many to make the case for biodiversity. Furthermore, tailored messages to specific audiences, such as the private sector and financial sector were proposed.

42. Participants emphasized the need to strengthen partnerships with other relevant organizations, like the Rio convention secretariats, the [United Nations Development Programme](#), the [United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs](#) and others to make sure biodiversity would be fully integrated in the development agenda. Others included financial institutions, such as the [World Bank](#), the [International Monetary Fund](#), regional development banks as well as the [World Health Organization](#), the Office of the [United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), the [United Nations Human Rights Council](#) and the [United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues](#). Partnerships should be broad and inclusive. Close partnership with the private sector is essential. Involving as many stakeholders as possible in these types of conversations and discussions can also be very positive and create richer dialogues.

43. In terms of financing, participants highlighted the importance of identifying and meeting the finance gaps. Participants suggested reactivating the high-level panel on resource mobilization. In that context, the importance of integrating biodiversity into national financial policies and gaining political traction with ministers of finance was noted. It was also suggested that convening a small group of stakeholders working in private capital could be useful to complement the leverage capacity of development banks.

44. Participants stressed that the nature of discussions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention should be more politically tuned to draw the attention of heads of State. Implementation of



the Biodiversity Convention should look for innovative ways to engage with various ministries to leverage effective biodiversity mainstreaming.

45. While noting that business as usual cannot continue, participants provided a wealth of ideas and insights to enhance coordination and increase impact. The participants recognized that further reflection should focus on what can be changed and what practices have worked. A new global biodiversity framework must not only address what needs to be done, either through target-setting or goal-setting, but also include how these things will be done. Throughout the dialogue, participants commented that the current Strategic Plan could not be forgotten.

46. Finally, a successful era for biodiversity conservation will not rest with the adoption of another global strategy that only advocates for conserving and protecting nature, but on a paradigm shift that fundamentally positions conservation, the sustainable use of biological diversity and access and benefit sharing of genetic resources, shifting regimes where economic activities lie within planetary boundaries will still providing significant human benefits to meet social, economic and ecological priorities.

### **III. NEXT STEPS FOR THE BOGIS-BOSSEY DIALOGUE FOR BIODIVERSITY**

47. Among the next steps, the Convention Secretariat will be preparing an analysis of innovative, cutting-edge ideas and concepts and transformative actions for consideration by the Parties and key actors to accelerate progress on the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The analysis will be presented in a forthcoming information note to serve as a further input for the second Bogis-Bossey Dialogue.

48. The second dialogue is planned for early 2018 to bring Parties together to discuss the outcomes of the first dialogue and further work to identify a transformative agenda for action, with a view to contributing to discussions on an ambitious yet pragmatic and innovative post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

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