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Twenty-fourth meeting
Informal virtual session
17-19 and 24-26 February 2021

REPORT ON THE INFORMAL SESSION IN PREPARATION FOR THE TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

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INTRODUCTION

1. Due to the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the twenty-fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice was rescheduled from May 2020 to August 2020 and then subsequently rescheduled to November 2020 before being delayed, *sine die*, until 2021. In that context, the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body decided to hold a virtual informal session of the Subsidiary Body, with a view to maintaining momentum towards, and advancing preparations for, the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

2. The informal session was held online from 17 to 19 February and 24 to 26 February 2021 to consider the topics covered by items 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 of the provisional agenda for the twenty-fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body. One three-hour online session was held each day, from 12:00 to 15:00 Universal Time Coordinated (UTC) (7 a.m. to 10 a.m. Montreal time). No negotiations took place during the informal session and consequently no formal substantive outcomes, decisions or conference room papers were produced; however, it was expected that the discussions at the formal session of the twenty-fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body would build on the statements made during the informal session, on the understanding that those statements were provisional and without prejudice to any subsequent statements made at the formal session.

I. OPENING OF THE INFORMAL SESSION

3. The informal session was opened at 12:00 UTC (7 a.m. Montreal time) on Wednesday, 17 February 2021, by the Chair of the Subsidiary Body, Mr. Hesiquio Benitez-Diaz (Mexico), who welcomed the participants and expressed the hope that they, and those close to them, were healthy and safe. He expressed his condolences to those that had lost loved ones during the pandemic and called for a moment of silence to remember those lost. He then invited Mr. Hamdallah Zedan (Egypt) to address the informal meeting on behalf of the President of the Conference of the Parties.

4. Mr. Zedan, speaking on behalf of the President of the Conference of the Parties, welcomed the participants to the informal session and expressed his solidarity with them during the difficult time of the pandemic and his hope that they and their loved ones were well. The present informal session would advance preparations for the formal session of the twenty-fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body and allow for an exchange of views that would facilitate effective deliberations at the formal session towards the development of an ambitious and transformative post-2020 global biodiversity framework. It would also contribute to the development of monitoring and review mechanisms under the Convention, to be considered by the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at its third meeting. Mr. Zedan expressed appreciation to the Chair of the Subsidiary Body and all members of the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body for their leadership in preparing for the informal session.

5. Ms. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, also thanked the members of the Bureau for their leadership in preparing an informal session in difficult times, as well as the Government of Canada for providing the financial resources to cover the additional costs of the virtual session, for which over 1,800 people had registered. She expressed her hope that the participants had been able to adequately prepare for the meeting by attending the pre-meeting webinars.

6. In terms of the substance of the meeting, the informal session was an opportunity to hear statements on scientific and technical aspects of the updated goals and targets and related indicators and baselines of the draft global biodiversity framework, in preparation for the development, at the twenty-fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body, of recommendations for the third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. The United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre and the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership had provided valuable assistance for the preparation of the documentation for the relevant agenda item.

7. Participants would also consider the topic of synthetic biology and risk assessment and risk management of living modified organisms, and provide input on the need for further guidance and adjustments to the process for identification and prioritization of specific issues of risk assessment. The

input provided would also inform the discussion on the potential benefits and adverse effects of synthetic biology as it related to the three objectives of the Convention. The work of the ad hoc technical expert groups had been invaluable in that regard.

8. With respect to marine and coastal biodiversity, work under the Convention had evolved to address a broad range of issues in light of the diversity of uses, interests and priorities for the ocean. At its twenty-fourth meeting, the Subsidiary Body would consider approaches for the future of the process on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and ways to make that process more adaptive and better suited to integrating the growing knowledge of marine ecosystems.

9. The agenda item on biodiversity and agriculture offered an opportunity to underscore the critical role of soil biodiversity. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) had provided a basis for discussions on the draft plan of action 2020–2030 for the International Initiative for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Soil Biodiversity.

10. The discussion on invasive alien species, a direct driver of biodiversity loss, was expected to once again focus on additional advice provided by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Invasive Alien Species in its report on broader sectoral collaboration on the classification and labelling of environmentally hazardous organisms.

11. Finally, the work programme of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services was to be considered. It was notable that the four new deliverables provided for in the rolling work programme up to 2030 were closely aligned with the specific requests made by the Conference of the Parties in its decision 14/36. Under the agenda item on the topic, the Parties were also being asked to consider requesting a second global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services with a scope and timing aligned with the work on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

12. The Chair of the Subsidiary Body then provided additional information on the organization of the work of the informal session. Interventions would be made as for the first reading of the working documents at in-person meetings of the Subsidiary Body. Participants were encouraged to focus their interventions on the draft recommendations set out in the pre-session documents. There would be no negotiations at the informal session and no formal substantive outcomes, decisions or conference room papers produced. There was, however, an expectation that at the formal session of the Subsidiary Body, the Parties would refer to the statements made at the informal session and only make additions to them as needed.

13. All statements delivered during the informal session would be recorded and made public on the meeting web page.¹ Statements submitted in writing would also be made available on that web page unless indicated otherwise by the party concerned; it was nevertheless preferable that key points in such statements be made orally. A procedural report would be prepared listing the Parties and observers that had made oral statements or submitted written statements.

14. Discussions on the various topics to be considered during the informal session would be chaired by members of the Bureau as follows:

(a) Post-2020 global biodiversity framework (item 3 on the provisional agenda of the twenty-fourth meeting): Ms. Marina von Weissenberg (Finland);

(b) Synthetic biology (item 4 on the provisional agenda of the twenty-fourth meeting): Mr. Gaute Voigt Hanssen (Norway);

(c) Risk assessment and risk management of living modified organisms (item 5 on the provisional agenda of the twenty-fourth meeting): Mr. Gaute Voigt Hanssen (Norway);

(d) Marine and coastal biodiversity (item 6 on the provisional agenda of the twenty-fourth meeting): Ms. Marie-May Muzungaile (Seychelles);

¹ <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/sbstta24-sbi3/sbstta-24-prep-03/documents>.

(e) Biodiversity and agriculture (item 7 on the provisional agenda of the twenty-fourth meeting): Mr. Adams Toussaint (Saint Lucia);

(f) Programme of work of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (item 8 on the provisional agenda of the twenty-fourth meeting): Mr. Hesiquio Benitez-Dias;

(g) Invasive alien species (item 10 on the provisional agenda of the twenty-fourth meeting): Ms. Helena Brown (Antigua and Barbuda).

15. At the invitation of the Chair, a representative of the Secretariat explained an online application that had been developed to facilitate the submission of statements to the meeting web page. Participants were asked to use that tool instead of emailing their statements to the Secretariat, although the Secretariat would continue to monitor the email address statements@cbd.int for submissions. No provision had been made for regional or group statements during the opening or closing segments of the informal session; instead, regional statements would be heard on each topic following the Secretariat's introduction of the topic. Presentations had been prepared for marine and coastal biodiversity (item 6 of the provisional agenda for the twenty-fourth meeting) and biodiversity and agriculture (item 7 of the provisional agenda for the twenty-fourth meeting); however, they would not be made during the informal session but were available on the meeting web page for participants to view prior to consideration of those topics.

II. POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK (ITEM 3 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING)

16. The topic of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework was considered during the first segment of the informal session, on 17 February 2021. The available background documents were: (a) notes by the Executive Secretary on the fifth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* and its summary for policymakers (CBD/SBSTTA/24/2); (b) scientific and technical information to support the review of the updated goals and targets, and related indicators and baselines of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (CBD/SBSTTA/24/3); (c) the proposed indicators and monitoring approach for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (CBD/SBSTTA/24/3/Add.1); (d) scientific and technical information to support the review of the proposed goals and targets in the updated zero draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (CBD/SBSTTA/24/3/Add.2); (e) the linkages between the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/12); and (e) indicators for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/16).

17. Regional statements were made by representatives of Antigua and Barbuda (on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group), Australia (on behalf of Australia, Canada, Iceland, Israel, New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland), Bosnia and Herzegovina (on behalf of the Central and Eastern European countries) and South Africa (on behalf of the African Group).

18. Additional statements were made by representatives of Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ethiopia, the European Union, Finland, France, Georgia, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Malawi, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Uganda.

19. Consideration of the topic resumed during the second segment of the informal session, on 18 February 2021.

20. Statements were made by representatives of Australia, Bhutan, Chile, China, Cuba, Denmark, Egypt, Guatemala, Madagascar (also on behalf of the African Group), Morocco, Palau, Poland, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

21. In addition to the statements by Parties presented orally, a written statement by the State of Palestine was made available on the meeting web page.

22. Statements were also made by representatives of FAO, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

23. Additional statements were made by representatives of the Advisory Committee of Subnational Governments for Biodiversity (coordinated by Regions4 and the Government of Quebec) (also on behalf of the European Committee of the Regions, the Group of Leading Subnational Governments toward Aichi Biodiversity Targets, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, and on behalf of the Edinburgh Process partners), the CBD Alliance, the CBD Women’s Caucus, the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) and the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB).

24. Further statements were made by representatives of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Centre for Biodiversity, the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture, the Business for Nature coalition, the Center for International Forestry Research (on behalf of the Global Landscapes Forum community), the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW), the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), the Missouri Botanical Garden (on behalf of the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation), Resource Africa (on behalf of the Community Leaders Network of Southern Africa), WWF (on behalf of BirdLife International, Conservation International, the Nature Conservancy, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and WWF International) and the Wildlife Conservation Society.

25. In addition to the statements by observers presented orally, statements by the following observer organizations could not be delivered due to limited time but were made available on the meeting web page: Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), Avaaz, Born Free Foundation, Center for Biological Diversity and David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation, Conservation International, EcoNexus, Global Forest Coalition (GFC), the Coastal Oceans Research and Development – Indian Ocean (CORDIO) East Africa, the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO-BON), International Fund for Animal Welfare, International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), International Tropical Timber Organization, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Pro Natura – Friends of the Earth Switzerland, Third World Network (TWN), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS).

III. SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY

(ITEM 4 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING)

26. The topic of synthetic biology was considered during the second segment of the informal session, on 18 February 2021. The available background documents were: (a) a note by the Executive Secretary on actions taken pursuant to decision 14/19 on synthetic biology (CBD/SBSTTA/24/4/Rev.1); (b) the report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology (CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/1/3); (c) a synthesis of submissions on synthetic biology (CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/1/INF/1); (d) a synthesis of discussions of the Online Forum on Synthetic Biology (CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/1/INF/2); and (e) a list of references on synthetic biology (CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/6).

27. Regional statements were made by representatives of Belarus (on behalf of the Central and Eastern European countries) and Ethiopia (on behalf of the African Group).

28. Statements were also made by representatives of Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Mexico and New Zealand.

29. Consideration of the topic resumed at the third segment of the informal session, on 19 February 2021.

30. Statements were made by representative of Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Ethiopia, the European Union, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Malawi, Morocco, Norway, Paraguay, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand and the United Kingdom.

31. Statements were also made by representatives of the CBD Alliance, the CBD Women’s Caucus, GYBN and IIFB.

32. Statements were also made by the representatives of Friends of the Earth United States, IPC, the J. Craig Venter Institute and TWN.

33. In addition to the statements by Parties presented orally, a written statement by Cameroon was made available on the meeting web page.

34. In addition to the statements by observers presented orally, statements by the following observer organizations could not be delivered due to limited time but were made available on the meeting web page: GenØk – Centre for Biosafety and Pollinis.

IV. RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT OF LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS (ITEM 5 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING)

35. The topic of risk assessment and risk management of living modified organisms was considered during the third segment of the informal session, on 19 February 2021. The available background documents were: (a) a note by the Executive Secretary on risk assessment and risk management (CBD/SBSTTA/24/5); (b) a synthesis of submissions on experiences, challenges and needs regarding risk assessment of living modified organisms containing engineered gene drives and living modified fish (CBD/CP/RA/AHTEG/2020/1/INF/1); (c) a synthesis of the interventions from the Open-ended Online Forum on Risk Assessment (CBD/CP/RA/AHTEG/2020/1/INF/2); (d) a study on risk assessment: application of annex I of decision CP 9/13 to living modified fish (CBD/CP/RA/AHTEG/2020/1/3); (e) a study on risk assessment: application of annex I of decision CP 9/13 to living modified organisms containing engineered gene drives (CBD/CP/RA/AHTEG/2020/1/4); (f) the report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Risk Assessment (CBD/CP/RA/AHTEG/2020/1/5); (g) a list of bibliographic references on engineered gene drives and living modified fish (CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/7); and (h) a synthesis of relevant information from the fourth national reports on the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/13).

36. Regional statements were made by representatives of Belarus (on behalf of the Central and Eastern European countries) and Ethiopia (on behalf of the African Group).

37. Additional statements were made by representatives of Austria, Brazil, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Portugal, Thailand and the United Kingdom.

38. Consideration of the topic resumed during the fourth segment of the informal session, on 24 February 2021.

39. Statements were made by representatives of Belgium, China, Cuba, Italy, Malawi, Sweden and Switzerland.

40. Statements were also made by representatives of Argentina and the Russian Federation.

41. Additional statements were made by representatives of the CBD Alliance, the CBD Women's Caucus and IIFB.

42. Further statements were made by representatives of the African Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) (on behalf of civil society organizations in Africa) and Imperial College London (on behalf of the Outreach Network for Gene Drive Research).

43. In addition to statements presented orally by Parties, written statements by Belarus, Guatemala and Jordan were made available on the meeting web page.

44. In addition to the statements presented orally by observers, statements by GYBN and TWN could not be delivered due to limited time but was made available on the meeting web page.

V. MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY (ITEM 6 OF THE AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING)

45. The topic of marine and coastal biodiversity was considered during the fourth segment of the informal session, on 24 February 2021. The available background documents were: (a) a note by the Executive Secretary on marine and coastal biodiversity (CBD/SBSTTA/24/6); (b) the report of the Expert Workshop to Identify Options for Modifying the Description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant

Marine Areas and Describing New Areas (CBD/EBSA/WS/2020/1/2); (c) the report on the Thematic Workshop on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (CBD/POST2020/WS/2019/10/2); (d) a compilation of submissions on experiences in the implementation of marine spatial planning (CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/1); (e) a synthesis of experiences to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 10 for coral reefs and closely associated ecosystems (CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/2); (f) a synthesis of submissions on experiences for the implementation of the voluntary specific workplan on biodiversity in cold-water areas within the jurisdictional scope of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/3); (g) a technical paper updating *CBD Technical Series No. 83* on marine debris (CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/4); (h) the report of the Expert Meeting on Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures in the Marine Capture Fishery Sector (CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/10); and (i) *CBD Technical Series No. 87: Assessing Progress towards Aichi Biodiversity Target 6 on Sustainable Marine Fisheries*.

46. A video presentation, *What is the “ocean we want”? Working towards an ocean-positive future*, by Mr. David Obura, CORDIO East Africa, was also made available on the meeting web page.

47. Regional statements were made by representatives of Seychelles (on behalf of the African Group) and Turkmenistan (on behalf of the Central and Eastern European countries).

48. Statements were also made by representatives of Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

49. Consideration of the topic resumed during the fifth segment of the informal session, on 25 February 2021.

50. A regional statement was made by the representative of the Philippines (on behalf of ASEAN).

51. Further statements were also made by representatives of Belgium, China, Egypt, India, Italy, Jordan, the Philippines, Senegal and Thailand.

52. Statements were also made by the representative of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations, FAO, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the International Whaling Commission and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

53. Statements were also made by representatives of the CBD Alliance, the CBD Women’s Caucus, GYBN and IIFB.

54. Statements were also made by the representative of BirdLife International (also on behalf of Conservation International, CORDIO East Africa and WWF), GEO-BON, the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative, IUCN and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).

55. In addition to statements made orally by Parties, written statements by Bahrain, Ecuador, Indonesia and South Africa were made available on the meeting web page.

56. In addition to the statements by observers presented orally, statements by the following observer organizations could not be delivered due to limited time but were made available on the meeting web page: the International Coral Reef Initiative, IPC, the United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UNU-IAS.

VI. BIODIVERSITY AND AGRICULTURE (ITEM 7 OF THE AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING)

57. The topic of biodiversity and agriculture was considered during the fifth segment of the informal session, on 25 February 2021. The available background documents included notes by the Executive Secretary on the review of the International Initiative for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Soil Biodiversity and updated plan of action (CBD/SBSTTA/24/7/Rev.1) and on the state of knowledge of soil biodiversity (CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/8).

58. Two video keynote presentations by FAO were also available on the meeting web page, the first being an introduction to the work of FAO on biodiversity and the second a description of the findings and main messages of the FAO report, *State of Knowledge of Soil Biodiversity – Status, Challenges and Potentialities*.
59. Regional statements were made by representatives of the Republic of Moldova (on behalf of the Central and Eastern European countries) and Seychelles (on behalf of the African Group).
60. Additional statements were made by representatives of Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand and the United Kingdom.
61. Consideration of the topic resumed at the sixth segment of the informal session, on 26 February 2021.
62. Statements were made by representatives of Austria, China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Italy, Jordan, New Zealand, Paraguay, Peru and the Russian Federation.
63. Statements were made by representatives of FAO and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).
64. Additional statements were made by representatives of the CBD Alliance, the CBD Women's Caucus, GYBN and IIFB.
65. Further statements were made by representatives of the African Centre for Biodiversity, Avaaz, GBIF (also on behalf of GEO-BON) and Pro Natura (also on behalf of Friends of the Earth Europe and Friends of the Earth Switzerland).
66. In addition to the statements by Parties presented orally, written statements by Canada and Ghana were made available on the meeting web page.
67. In addition to the statements by observers presented orally, statements by the following observer organizations could not be delivered due to limited time but were made available on the meeting web page: EcoNexus, Global Forest Coalition, IPC, IUCN, Secretariat of the Mountain Partnership, UNU-IAS and Wilfrid Laurier University.

VII. INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

(ITEM 10 ON THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING)

68. The topic of invasive alien species was considered during the sixth segment of the informal session, on 26 February 2021. The available background documents were: (a) a note by the Executive Secretary on invasive alien species (CBD/SBSTTA/24/10 and Corr.1); (b) a note by the Executive Secretary on invasive alien species: technical specifications on invasive alien species under the World Customs Organization Framework of Standards on Cross-border E-commerce (CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/15); (c) draft advice or elements for the development of technical guidance on management measures for invasive alien species to be implemented by broad sectors to facilitate achieving Aichi Biodiversity Target 9 and beyond (CBD/IAS/AHTEG/2019/1/2); and (d) the report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Invasive Alien Species (CBD/IAS/AHTEG/2019/1/3).
69. Regional statements were made by representatives of Georgia (on behalf of the Central and Eastern European countries and South Africa (on behalf of the African Group).
70. An additional statement was made by Indonesia (also on behalf of ASEAN).
71. Statements were also made by representatives of Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Peru, Portugal, the Russian Federation, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Uganda and the United Kingdom.
72. In addition to the statements by Parties presented orally, written statements by Australia and the Sudan were made available on the meeting web page.

73. In addition to the statements by observers presented orally, statements by the CBD Women's Caucus, GBIF, GEO-BON, GYBN, IIFB, the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and Island Conservation could not be delivered due to limited time but were made available on the meeting web page.

**VIII. PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL SCIENCE-POLICY
PLATFORM ON BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES
(ITEM 8 OF THE AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING)**

74. Due to limited time, the topic of the programme of work of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services was not considered during the informal session.

IX. CLOSURE OF THE INFORMAL SESSION

75. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the Chair declared the informal session closed at 15:10 UTC (10.10 a.m. Montreal time) on Friday, 26 February 2021.
