



Convention on Biological Diversity

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Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity Sixteenth meeting

Cali, Colombia, 21 October–1 November 2024

Agenda item 27

Review of the effectiveness of processes under the Convention and its Protocols

Procedures for convening online and hybrid meetings

Draft decision submitted by the Chair of Working Group I

The Conference of the Parties,

Reaffirming that all meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity,¹ as well as the meetings of the intergovernmental subsidiary bodies of the Convention, must follow their respective rules of procedure,

1. *Affirms* that the meetings of the Conference of the Parties, as well as the meetings of the intergovernmental subsidiary bodies of the Convention, should be held in person, unless extraordinary circumstances, as indicated in paragraph 2 below, render the holding of in-person meetings impractical for an extended period of time;

2. *Reaffirms* that, in the event of extraordinary circumstances that render the holding of in-person meetings impractical, sessions of the meetings referred to in paragraph 1 above could be held virtually through modalities that allow for online interactive participation, following consultations among Parties and a decision of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties, as long as no substantive decisions are taken online, with the exception of decisions on budgetary and procedural matters to allow the Secretariat to function;

3. *Notes* that, in the event of extraordinary circumstances that render the holding of in-person meetings impractical, urgent decisions, such as those on budgetary matters, may be taken by the Conference of the Parties under a written silence procedure in line with United Nations practice and a decision of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties, following consultations by the Bureau members with their respective regions, and applying the procedures set out in the rules of procedure for the convening of an extraordinary meeting;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to ensure that arrangements for meetings referred to in paragraph 1 above always include a provision for streaming the proceedings online to allow all duly registered delegates to follow the proceedings in real time;

5. *Notes* that expert groups, advisory groups and other groups with limited membership may meet in person, online or in a hybrid format, in line with their respective mandates and, as applicable, their respective rules of procedure;

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

6. *Also notes* that, during the intersessional period, the Bureaux can meet online to provide continued guidance to the Secretariat with regard to the preparation for, and conduct of, the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and relevant subsidiary bodies;

7. *Decides* that:

(a) The operational modalities of any meeting held online should be clearly set out in a scenario note prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with the relevant Bureau and made available to all Parties in advance of the meeting;

(b) When scheduling online sessions of meetings, the Secretariat shall take into consideration the significant health and well-being burden for Parties arising from time differences across time zones and aim to enable equitable participation of Parties across all regions, including by rotating time zones;

(c) The duration of online sessions should preferably be limited to two consecutive hours per day;

(d) The Secretariat should implement measures to facilitate effective online participation by all participants in online and hybrid sessions of meetings, and in particular to support Parties in overcoming network and connectivity difficulties, including by providing opportunities for prior training and testing convenient for all time zones, facilitating the use of meeting facilities at the relevant United Nations country office, where possible and by prior arrangement following a request from the Party concerned, and providing all reasonable measures to assist Parties that encounter difficulties with connectivity and the use of the interactive platform.
