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Convention on Biological Diversity

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Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity
Seventeenth meeting
Yerevan, 19–30 October 2026
Agenda item 19
Review of the effectiveness of processes under the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Protocols
Working Group I

Options for further improving the effectiveness of meetings under the Convention and its Protocols

Draft decision submitted by the Chair of Working Group I

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling its decision 16/25 of 1 November 2024,

Recognizing the need to further improve the effectiveness of meetings under the Convention on Biological Diversity[1] and its Protocols and ensure inclusiveness, transparency and equity, taking into account the needs of developing country Parties,

Reiterating the important role of technology in supporting the efficiency and effectiveness of meetings, without prejudice to decision-making by consensus,

Reaffirming the importance of [securing funding to allow for] the full and effective participation of each developing country Party to the Convention and its Protocols, in particular least developed countries and small island developing States, to participate and engage effectively in meetings,

1. *Welcomes* the progress made in the implementation of measures to improve the effectiveness of processes under the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Protocols, as described in document CBD/SBI/6/9, takes note of the summary of submissions for improving the effectiveness of meetings contained in the same document, and notes the need to encourage more Parties to contribute to such improvement;

2. *Notes with appreciation* the pilot on the early submission of statements carried out for the twenty-seventh meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, and the application of the modalities for such submissions on a trial basis at subsequent meetings of the subsidiary bodies, as well as identified challenges, benefits and experiences associated with the use of the pilot to improve the efficiency of meetings;

[1] United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

3. *Takes note* of General Assembly resolution 79/318 of 18 July 2025 and the efforts of the Secretary-General to strengthen the United Nations in order to keep pace with a changing world and to make it fit for present and future challenges;

4. *Encourages* the further use of early submission modalities on a voluntary and informal basis, while ensuring sufficient time for the consideration of the submissions before the relevant meetings, and also encourages every effort to be made in making the submissions available in all official languages of the United Nations, including through the use of artificial intelligence tools, subject to the availability of resources;

5. *Requests* the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties and the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to continue to improve the modalities for the early submission of statements;

6. *Encourages* Parties to cooperate in streamlining meeting agendas and decisions;

7. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources and, as appropriate, in consultation with the Bureaux:

(a) To hold, where possible, online briefing sessions for Parties, indigenous peoples and local communities, women's and youth organizations and other stakeholders on the agenda items ahead of intergovernmental meetings held under the Convention and its Protocols, providing the overall context, an overview of the main agenda items and a summary of past discussions and outcomes;

(b) To develop and make available briefing materials on applicable meeting procedures of the subsidiary and governing bodies of the Convention and its Protocols;

(c) To prepare an analysis of the possible opportunities and challenges related to the use of technological tools for expediting decision-making processes, while ensuring transparency and inclusiveness;

(d) To finalize the decision-tracking tool and make it fully operational to clearly track the implementation status of decisions of the Conference of the Parties;

8. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Bureaux, as appropriate:

(a) To streamline the agendas of meetings, including through the possible reduction of the number of agenda items, with a view to ensuring focus on matters requiring consideration by Parties;

(b) To continue to explore and make use of, as appropriate, relevant ways to improve the effectiveness of the processes under the Convention and its Protocols, taking into account relevant practices under other multilateral environmental agreements and United Nations processes, as summarized in annex I to document CBD/SBI/6/9, as well as the responses to relevant notifications of the Secretariat of the Convention and decisions of the Conference of the Parties;

(c) To invite submissions from Parties, indigenous peoples and local communities, women's and youth organizations and other stakeholders on options to further improve the effectiveness of meetings under the Convention and its Protocols specifically with regard to the engagement of observers, and to pilot the options and lessons learned in the intersessional period leading to the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

(d) To ensure that representatives identified to serve as chairs of subsidiary bodies or working or contact groups or as facilitators for friends-of-the-chair groups receive training on the management of multilateral negotiations;

9. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To fully implement subparagraph 13 (a) of decision 16/25 and to limit the number and length of working documents, while ensuring that all the information required for decision-making is included therein and made available in the six official languages of the United Nations;

(b) To report on the outcomes of the work requested in the present decision to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at its eighth meeting;

10. *Decides* to establish an informal advisory group as a Party-driven process to further improve the effectiveness of the processes and meetings under the Convention and its Protocols in accordance with the terms of reference contained in the annex to the present decision.

Annex

Terms of reference for the Informal Advisory Group on the Effectiveness of the Processes and Meetings under the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Protocols

A. Purpose

1. The purpose of the Informal Advisory Group on the Effectiveness of the Processes and Meetings under the Convention on Biological Diversity[2] and its Protocols is to provide a neutral and informal space for broad reflections on the effectiveness of processes and meetings under the Convention and its Protocols and to provide advice and recommendations on options and practical measures to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, equity and inclusiveness of those processes and meetings.

B. Functions

2. In fulfilling its purpose, the Informal Advisory Group should:

(a) Identify and examine challenges affecting processes and meetings under the Convention and its Protocols, identify their underlying causes and provide advice and recommendations on options and practical measures to address them;

(b) Consider, inter alia, agenda-setting and scheduling of work; the preparation of draft recommendations and decisions, and official meeting documents; the management of plenary sessions and contact groups; the preparation and use of in-session documents, including non-papers and conference room papers; the identification of agenda items that could be retired; and co-chairing and group facilitation techniques;

(c) Produce guidance on the operation of plenary sessions, contact groups and friends-of-the-chair sessions to ensure consistency in the conduct of meetings;

(d) Examine potential innovations, tools and working methods that could improve the organization and conduct of negotiations and meetings;

(e) Identify lessons learned and good practices from previous meetings under the Convention and its Protocols and, where relevant, other multilateral environmental agreements and international processes;

(f) Identify options to strengthen coherence and coordination among processes under the Convention and its Protocols, while respecting their respective mandates.

C. Composition

3. The Informal Advisory Group shall be composed of up to 26 members, with due regard to equitable geographical representation and gender balance, as follows:

(a) The presidencies of the seventeenth and eighteenth meetings of the Conference of the Parties;

(b) Twenty members representing Parties, with substantive experience in formal and informal negotiation processes and meetings under the Convention and its Protocols, from each

[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

regional group, ensuring representation of least developed countries and small island developing States;

(c) Two representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities, nominated by their representatives, with substantive experience in processes and meetings under the Convention and its Protocols;

(d) Two representatives of other relevant organizations and stakeholders, including women and youth, nominated by those organizations and stakeholders, with substantive experience in processes and meetings under the Convention and its Protocols.

4. The members referred to in subparagraphs 3 (c) and 3 (d) above shall be selected by the Executive Secretary from among the nominees, in consultation with the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties.

5. In nominating members referred to in subparagraph 3 (b), regional groups shall ensure that the nominees collectively include a balanced representation of Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization.[3]

6. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in line with Article 24 of the Convention and the rules of procedure for meetings of the Conference of the Parties, should support the work of the Informal Advisory Group through the provision of the necessary expertise and logistical, technical and secretarial support. In carrying out this role, the Secretariat will share its long-standing experience and accumulated knowledge and will also provide relevant advice to inform the work of the Informal Advisory Group, as needed.

7. The Informal Advisory Group will elect two co-chairs from among the Party representatives, one from a developed country Party and one from a developing country Party.

8. Participation costs of members of the Informal Advisory Group from developing country Parties, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, shall be covered in accordance with the applicable United Nations rules and regulations.

D. Modus operandi

9. Meetings may be held in person, online or in a hybrid format, subject to the availability of resources, with online meetings scheduled on a rotating basis to accommodate various time zones. The Informal Advisory Group should also make use of electronic communications between meetings to continue to progress in its mandate and develop its advice. The working language of the Informal Advisory Group shall be English.

10. The Informal Advisory Group shall meet at least once a year, wherever possible, in conjunction with other meetings under the Convention and its Protocols. The frequency of meetings may be adjusted by the members as needed.

11. The Co-Chairs may invite additional experts with relevant knowledge of specific issues or thematic areas to provide information and expertise, as needed.

E. Deliverables and reporting

12. The Informal Advisory Group is established by the Conference of the Parties to provide advice and recommendations to the Conference of Parties for its consideration, without replacing or prejudging the roles and mandates of the governing bodies of the Convention and its Protocols.

13. The Informal Advisory Group should:

(a) Provide, throughout the intersessional period, guidance to the Bureaux of the Conference of the Parties and the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological

[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 3008, No. 30619.

Advice on possible measures to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, equity and inclusiveness of the preparation and conduct of meetings and negotiation processes, for their information and, as appropriate, action within their respective competences;

(b) Develop a set of practical proposals, including medium- and longer-term measures, for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at a meeting before the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and subsequently by the Conference of the Parties at its eighteenth meeting.

14. The Bureaux of the Conference of the Parties and the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice are encouraged to report to the Conference of the Parties at its eighteenth meeting on any measures taken, within their respective competences, in response to the guidance provided by the Informal Advisory Group pursuant to subparagraph 13 (a) above.

15. Unless decided otherwise by the Conference of the Parties at its eighteenth meeting, the mandate of the Informal Advisory Group shall conclude upon the completion of its reporting to the Conference of the Parties at its eighteenth meeting.

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