

Review of the effectiveness of processes under the
Convention and its Protocols
Working Group I

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Non-paper

[B]

Procedures for convening online and hybrid meetings

The Conference of the Parties,

The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety,

The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing,

Reaffirming that all meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity,¹ the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety² and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity,³ 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, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol, as well as the meetings of the intergovernmental subsidiary bodies of the Convention, shall be held in-person, unless extraordinary circumstances, as indicated in paragraph 2 below, render the holding of in-person meetings impossible for an extended period of time;

2. *Reaffirms* that, in the event of extraordinary circumstances that render the holding of in-person meetings impossible, sessions of the meetings referred to in paragraph 1 above shall 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 impossible, urgent decisions, such as those on budgetary matters, may be taken by the Conference of the Parties through a silence procedure in line with United Nations practice and a decision of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties, following proper 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;

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

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2226, No. 30619.

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

5. *Notes* that expert groups, advisory groups and other groups with limited membership may meet in person, virtually or in a hybrid format, in line with their respective mandates and, as applicable, their respective rules of procedure[, noting that at least one of their meetings should be in person];

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

7. *Decides* that:

(a) The operational modalities of any meeting held virtually 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 virtual 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 virtual sessions should be limited to two consecutive hours per day;

(d) The Secretariat should implement measures to facilitate effective online participation by all participants in virtual 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.]
