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| **GERMANY: Statement SBSTTA-24**  **Agenda Item: 4, Synthetic Biology** |
| 18.02.2021 |

**Statement**

* Germany would like to thank the secretariat for the development of document CBD/SBSTTA/24/4, which is a good starting point for discussions under agenda item 4.
* Germany supports a coordinated and non-duplicative approach on issues related to synthetic biology under the Convention and its Protocols. We propose to recall paragraphs 9 to 11 of Decision 14/19 and emphasise to apply a precautionary approach with respect to organisms containing engineered gene drives.
* Germany also supports the establishment of an efficient horizon scanning process of the most recent technological developments in synthetic biology.
* The horizon scanning process however needs to be clearly described and suitable to assess and identify the potential positive and potential negative impacts of synthetic biology vis-à-vis the three objectives of the Convention and those of its Protocols.
* Therefore, we suggest some clarifications and more detailed descriptions to have a common basis for negotiations.
* The draft recommendations propose to establish a “Multidisciplinary Technical Expert Group” for the horizon scanning process. Germany believes that multidisciplinary expertise is needed for the process and recommends to refer to the expert group as a “multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert group”. This clarifies that the modus operandi is the same as those for AHTEGs and ensures a multidisciplinary approach.
* With a view to the process itself, we believe that two rounds of horizon scanning during two consecutive intersessional periods where the expert group meets once per intersessional period would be a good start.
* SBSTTA should review the horizon scanning process at its 28th meeting and provide a recommendation in this regard to COP-17. We will hand in our suggested amendments to the recommendations in writing.
* Thank you, chair.