

Japanese statement on item 4, "Synthetic Biology" in the informal session in preparation for SBSTTA-24

February 18, 2021

Our consistent position on the treatment of synthetic biology is that it is not appropriate to begin any specific considerations before concluding whether or not synthetic biology should be a new and emerging issue.

Japan appreciates the dedicated work done by the AHTEG members. However, we would like to draw your attention to the fact that, their report did not conclude if synthetic biology fully satisfy the criteria set out in Decision IX/29.

Therefore, we would like to request the deletion of paragraphs one through six of the Draft Recommendation, which recommends specific consideration of the treatment of synthetic biology.

If paragraphs one through six of the draft recommendation are upheld, we are prepared to propose adding a new paragraph to the draft recommendation (\*).

We would also like to propose changing the "four years" in paragraph 4 of Annex II to "two years".

Furthermore, in the trend in paragraph 5 parentheses a of Annex I, we propose to delete the phrase "organizations, components and products derived from" because these definitions are not strictly defined.

If, at Subsidiary Body's twenty-fourth meetings, discussions would proceed on whether or not synthetic biology should be treated as a new and emerging issue, we would like to argue that synthetic biology should not be treated as a new and emerging issue, in accordance with our comments previously submitted to the Convention Secretariat.

Furthermore, we support the argument that the Conference of the Parties should invite the submission of views on the improvement of the criteria set out in Decision IX/29 and their application in order to proceed with consideration of improvements for new and emerging issues.

However, we believe that the discussion should proceed with an enquiry that has advanced based on the results of the Notification No. 2017 – 054 issued by the Convention Secretariat in June 2017.

We submit our comments on this agenda.

(\*) The proposed new paragraph is as follows.

*“Also requests* the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to consider if the process for broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment should be further extended and make recommendations for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties at its sixteenth meeting and, as appropriate, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol at its eleventh meeting and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol at its fifth meeting;”