**ITEM 4 of SBSTTA 24: Synthetic Biology**

*The views expressed are provisional and Italy reserve the right to adapt them*

Thank you Chair for giving the floor,

Mr/Ms Chair distinguish delegates and participants,

* Italy would like thank the Secretariat for the efforts shown in organizing the meetings in preparation of the SBSTTA 24 and of the next Conference of the Parties and in facilitating the coordination of the activities and interventions of the Parties and stakeholders in such a complicated period.
* Italy considers the draft recommendation a good starting point for discussion and thanks the Secretariat for its preparation.
* Chair, Italy appreciates the work done by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology in analyzing and describing relevant trends of synthetic biology.
* Italy supports the AHTEG conclusion, contained in the report CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/1/3, that states “most living organisms already developed or currently under research and development through techniques of synthetic biology, including organisms containing engineered gene drives, fall under the definition of LMOs as per the Cartagena Protocol.”
* With reference to article 1 of the suggested recommendation on this issue (CBD/SBSTTA/24/4), Italy supports the proposal to establish a process for a broad and regular horizon scanning.
* In this regard, taking into account that synthetic biology is a tricky topic as it covers a wide range of techniques, scientific disciplines and fields of application, and evolves at a rapid pace, Italy considers useful a periodic evaluation on the effectiveness of the proposed process.

Italy agrees to establish the Multidisciplinary Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology with the aim to support the process for a broad and regular horizon scanning. In this regard, Italy suggests that it should be clarified that the *modus operandi* and the selection of the experts of this group should mirror the one of the AHTEG.