

Statement by Third World Network

Informal Session in Preparation for the Third Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation 8–14 March 2021

Agenda item 3: Review of progress in the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020

Thank you, Chair.

We are in unprecedented times, and the urgency to protect biodiversity and share the benefits equitably has never been greater.

In the midst of this pandemic, we are faced with multiple challenges.

Postponed face-to face and formal negotiations of SBSTTA 24, SBI 3, OEWG 3 and COP 15 have meant that work could not be concluded according to the original timelines.

However, the pandemic must not be used as an excuse to avoid existing obligations. Instead the focus and priority should be on:

- Firstly, renewed commitment by Parties to implement their legally-binding obligations under the CBD, on all three objectives in a balanced manner, including on the means of implementation;
- Secondly, achieving the goals of the Strategic Plan and the Aichi Targets which have not been met;
- Thirdly, confronting and addressing the root causes of biodiversity loss;
- Fourthly, supporting indigenous peoples and local communities, and protecting their rights, in their efforts to protect biodiversity; and
- Finally, strengthened national implementation of NBSAPs that is cognizant of all the above points.

Many developing countries are struggling with multiple crises brought about by the pandemic. In the midst of all this, there are strong pressures to begin formal virtual negotiations for the post-2020 GBF.

Formal virtual negotiations will disadvantage developing countries, which may face challenges in participating effectively and dynamically. They would be inequitable for many reasons including the digital divide affecting internet connectivity and technical capability, limited capacity and resources and other challenges for regional and other coordination. In addition, time zone differences may disproportionately disadvantage a particular region while inclusivity and transparency in how decisions are made would also be impacted.

We must not entrench further inequity into the post-2020 GBF.

The pandemic must not be used as an excuse to avoid existing obligations, while seeking to negotiate new obligations in an inequitable way, and that could result in unbalanced outcomes that do not meaningfully reflect or address developing countries' views and concerns.

Much can still be done to address the biodiversity crises. And many steps can still be taken virtually to advance the post-2020 GBF without convening formal virtual negotiations.

Thank you.