



**Twenty-sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological  
Advice (SBSTTA-26)**  
*13–18 May 2024*  
*Nairobi, Kenya*

**AGENDA ITEM 5: SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY**

**DATE: 13 MAY 2024**

Statement on behalf of the **International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB)** delivered by Yolanda Teran from the Indigenous Women Network on Biodiversity from Latin America and the Caribbean (RMIB-LAC).

Madam Chair:

We thank the Secretariat for preparing the document CBD/SBSTTA/26/4

IIFB would like to begin by recognizing the Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IP&LCs) of this land as well as to thank the countries which graciously contributed to the Voluntary Fund to make it possible for the participation of some Indigenous Peoples and local communities in these two-week meetings.

IIFB would like to note that Indigenous Peoples and local communities, are aware and concerned with the increasing development and use of synthetic biology and recent developed biotechnologies, such as artificial intelligence, engineered gene drives, insect systems, self-operating vaccines for wildlife, which have unknown impacts on Mother Earth and all her ecosystems, biodiversity, health, socio-economic and cultural aspects.

Considering the potential adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Indigenous Peoples' lands, territories, and waters, we recommend having safeguards and precautionary mechanisms as well as socio-economic, cultural, ethical and risks assessments to avoid the risks for humanity and the environment. It is critical to consider the principle of NO HARM, Principle of the consultation, the Free, prior and informed consent and the right to veto of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Regarding to suggested recommendations, the IIFB would like to propose the following text: At the end of the paragraph 4

4. Recognize the relevance of broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment to mitigating inequity in the context of synthetic biology and contributing to the implementation of the objectives of the Convention and the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework **INCLUDING ARTICLE 26 OF THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL.**
6. Note that the broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment can be enriched through outreach to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, **WOMEN AND YOUTH** and by strengthening the development of relevant **CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE** participatory instruments and tools;



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10. Consider recommending to Parties to undertake a capacity self-assessment in order to address existing and continuing inequalities **AND KNOWLEDGE GAPS** in the participation of developing countries in synthetic biology and to develop proposals for strengthening the capacities of developing countries in that field, taking into account areas of particular interest to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women and youth, as appropriate;

13. Consider measures for enhancing the dissemination of information on scientific and technology assessments, including through the clearing-house mechanisms, **ENSURING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES FULL AND EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION**;

16. Note that, as synthetic biology applications are now being developed for taxa in all kingdoms of life, the implications of their potential or actual use in wild populations may be subject to further review, and that such applications might have potential positive and negative impacts in various contexts, such as species resilience or threatened species management **TAKING IN ACCOUNT THAT WITHIN IPLCS WILDLIFE IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THEIR LIFE AND LIVELIHOODS**;

17. Develop a white paper or non-binding guidelines on synthetic biology technology transfer in the context of the Convention, including with regard to intellectual property issues, monitoring and assessment of the technology **AND FULLY CONSIDER THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES**.

21.a. Request to the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group to undertake a further assessment leading to a report addressing, inter alia, potential impacts on biosafety, the sustainable use of biodiversity, equitable access and benefit-sharing, social, economic and cultural aspects, impacts on traditional knowledge, **INNOVATIONS** and practices, and other relevant matters;

23. b. To develop mechanisms to ensure the free, prior and informed consent of all potentially affected communities, including indigenous peoples and local communities, **WOMEN AND YOUTH**;

Furthermore, the IIFB would like to suggest writing consistently in all CBD documents Indigenous Peoples with an “s” at the end of people. So that it reads as Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

We will provide in writing the suggested additional texts to the Secretariat.

Many thanks Madam Chair.