

## **Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice**

**Twenty-sixth meeting Nairobi, 13–18 May 2024**

### **Statement by Brazil**

#### *Agenda Item 5: Synthetic biology*

- Thank you, Mr Chair. We are entering a very important discussion for Brazil, considering that we are facing the greatest dengue epidemic in the history of our country, as well the potential represented by innovations discussed here to concretely tackle this issues.
- During COP15, Brazil agreed to establish a new process for horizon scanning on synthetic biology for one intersessional period, despite doubts on whether the topic constituted a new and emerging issue and the perception of duplication with the Cartagena Protocol.
- As we know, the AHTEG established under this process identified 17 priority tends, five of which were selected for evaluation. Three of them -engineered gene drives, self-limiting insect systems, and self-spreading vaccines for wildlife- are covered by the Cartagena Protocol. One is being currently addressed by a specific AHTEG under Cartagena and the two others are identified as LMOs. Particularly, the considerations on self-spreading vaccines fall largely under the work of the World Health Organization or the World Organization for Animal Health.
- In this context, it is important to recall decision 15/31, which referred, in PP5, to the need for a complementary and non-duplicative approach on issues related to synthetic biology under the Convention and its protocols, as well as among other conventions and relevant organizations and initiatives. Nevertheless, most, if not all, of the priority issues analyzed by the AHTEG may be considered duplicative.
- Finally, on the question of inequity in the participation of developing countries and capacity-building and technology transfer - here we feel that an opportunity was lost.
- In the contextualization of this topic, the report addresses synthetic biology as resource-intensive from both a technical and regulatory standpoint, where the likelihood of inequity is inherent - and further emphasises the historical patterns of dominance by developed countries.
- However, main considerations focus on the lack of enabling policies and experience or adequate frameworks for risk assessments, which is not a direct conclusion from the contextualisation itself. It thus failed to focus on promoting innovation and technology transfer in developing countries.
- We, therefore, understand that most of the process has been duplicative and would recommend its discontinuation. We express our sincere gratitude for the efforts, and believe the exercise on capacity-building and technology transfer or a more focused agenda could have represented an important contribution to the Convention. Argentina's suggestion could be a way forward in that sense.