



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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**BUREAU OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE
PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

Seventh Teleconference
7:00 to 11:15
13 August 2020

**MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH TELECONFERENCE OF THE BUREAU OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES IN THE INTER-SESSIONAL PERIOD**

1. The seventh inter-sessional teleconference of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties since the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and concurrent meetings of the Parties to the Protocols in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, 2018, was held on 13 August 2020 via GotoMeeting.

2. The teleconference was attended by the following members of the COP Bureau and substitutes:

Presidency: Mr. Hamdallah Zedan (Egypt); Mr. Ayman Amin (Egypt);

Africa: Mr. Eric Okoree (Ghana); Mr. Melesse Maryo (Ethiopia);

Asia and the Pacific: Mr. Vinod Mathur (India); Ms. Leina El-Awadhi (Kuwait);

Latin America and the Caribbean: Ms. Helena Jeffery Brown (Antigua and Barbuda); Mr. Carlos Manuel Rodríguez (Costa Rica); Mr. Joaquín Salzberg (Argentina, substitute for Costa Rica for matters related to the Nagoya Protocol);

Central and Eastern Europe: Ms. Teona Karchava (Georgia); Ms. Elvana Ramaj (Albania);

Western Europe and Others: Ms. Gabriele Obermayr (Austria); Ms. Rosemary Paterson (New Zealand); and Ms. Marie Haraldstad (Norway, substitute for New Zealand for matters related to the Nagoya Protocol);

Ex-officio: Ms. Charlotta Sörqvist (Sweden), Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation; Mr. Hesiquio Benítez (Mexico), Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice; Mr. Basile van Havre (Canada) and Mr. Francis Ogwal, Co-chairs of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework,

Observers: Incoming COP 15 Presidency: Mr. Liu Ning (China); Ms. Yueyu Zou (China)

3. Ms. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary; Mr. David Cooper, Deputy Executive Secretary; Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, Director of Implementation Support Division; Mr. Wataru Suzuki, Global Coordinator of the Japan Biodiversity Fund; Mr. Worku Yifru (Senior Legal Officer); Ms. Gudrun Fosse, Head of Administration, Finance and Conference Services Division; and Mr. Tauko Shikongo, Head, Nagoya Protocol Unit; Ms. Wadzanayi Mandivenyi, Head, Biosafety Protocol Unit; Mr. Ide Ahmed, Finance Officer; Ms. Catalina Santamaria (Senior Programme Officer); and Ms. Martine Christine, Finance Officer, were also present.

ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

4. The teleconference was opened at 7.00 am Montreal time, by the Chair, Mr. Hamdallah Zedan, representative of the President of the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Chair welcomed all the Bureau members, wishing everyone well in the ongoing situation.
5. The Executive Secretary introduced two new staff members of the Secretariat to the Bureau, Ms. Wadzanayi Mandivenyi, Head, Biosafety Protocol Unit and Mr. Tauko Shikongo, Head, Nagoya Protocol Unit.

ITEM 2. THE AGENDA

6. The Chair noted the four agenda items that would be covered during the call:
 - i.) Financial implications of the postponement of COP-15 and related draft decision
 - ii.) Preparations for the UN Summit on Biodiversity
 - iii.) Preparation for the September special virtual sessions
 - iv.) Update on the schedule of future/upcoming meetings

ITEM 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE POSTPONEMENT OF COP-15 AND RELATED DRAFT DECISION

7. At the invitation of the Chair, the Executive Secretary then referred to the budget proposal document circulated to the Bureau earlier and advised that some corrections needed to be made. She recalled earlier discussions in the Bureau, noting that since the approval of the programme budget for the 2021-2022 period would not take place this year as it normally would, arrangements would need to be made to adopt an interim budget for the year 2021 to cover the secretariat costs and its operations.
8. The Finance Officer explained the corrections to the document and indicated that these would be made in next version.
9. The Bureau thanked the Secretariat for the documents and sought clarification on a number of issues, including on the process on how to agree on the interim budget and the role of the Bureau in addressing this matter. Members of the Bureau emphasized that the approval of the interim budget would be done by the Parties and requested more information on the legal aspects of the various options to adopt the interim budget. Members also noted the difficulty that some Parties may face in obtaining credentials in a timely fashion. They noted that the interim budget should be limited to the scope of activities of the operations, with no nominal growth. They highlighted the need for a proper process to scrutinize the budget and thus requested for more background information on the budget tables
10. In response to the questions raised by the Bureau, the Secretariat clarified that, as per the rules of procedure, the process by which the Parties decide to convene extraordinary meetings of the Conference of the Parties, and the meetings of the Parties to the protocols, that would specifically address and decide on an interim budget for 2021, would need to be triggered by a request from a Party. For example, Egypt could make such a request, which would then be circulated through a notification. The Secretariat would prepare a notification for review by Bureau members. It would be necessary to obtain agreement by one third of the Parties in order to hold the extraordinary meetings.
11. The Secretariat further advised that the most viable option was to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties with two possible methods to adopt the decision: a virtual interactive convening of the COP or written by silent procedure. The Secretariat highlighted that even though the rules of procedure should apply fully, due to the virtual nature of the meeting some practices may need to be adjusted, for instance with regard to the process for determining the number of Parties participating to satisfy the quorum.
12. The Secretariat also advised the Bureau that they may wish to consider creating an informal budget committee that would review the budget documents before the extraordinary meeting. It clarified that there was no legal impediment to this. Informal consultations through the committee would allow full prior consideration and scrutiny of the proposal and thereby facilitate subsequent discussion and adoption by the extraordinary meetings through a silent procedure.

13. Regarding credentials, the Secretariat would draft a document setting out the various options for Parties to present credentials and to issue it alongside the notification. Drafts of the notification would be submitted to Bureau members for their review prior to finalization and circulation, and the Bureau agreed to continue consultations with their regions on the matter in the meantime.

ITEM 4. PREPARATIONS FOR THE UN SUMMIT ON BIODIVERSITY

14. At the invitation of the Chair, The Deputy Executive Secretary recalled that a notification had been recently issued with the new date of the Summit which was now scheduled for 30 September 2020. He advised that there had been adjustments to the modalities, but the scope and topics remained the same. The changes consisted mainly that the meeting would be virtual with pre-recorded video messages from Heads of State/Government. He highlighted that the Summit would provide an opportunity for Heads of State/Government to indicate ambition and provide momentum for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework process. Furthermore, he invited the Bureau to urge the countries in their regions to encourage and prepare the participation of their Heads of State and Government at the UN Biodiversity Summit. He finally advised the Bureau that information on the concept note, related events and other important information were available through the CBD website.

15. The Chair thanked the Deputy Executive Secretary for the update and moved on to the next agenda item.

ITEM 5. PREPARATION FOR THE SEPTEMBER SPECIAL VIRTUAL SESSIONS

16. At the invitation of The Chair, the Executive Secretary and the Deputy Executive Secretary recalled that special virtual sessions of the subsidiary bodies would be held in September to support preparations for SBSTTA-24 and SBI-3 and to give further momentum to the process ahead of the UN Summit.

17. The Deputy Executive Secretary further outlined the scope and modalities of the special virtual sessions referring to the notification 2020-050¹ that had been issued previously and the draft of the Programme that would be issued following the Bureau meeting. He noted that the sessions would require registration and would be available in all 6 UN languages; they would be chaired by the SBSTTA and SBI Chairs and no decision or formal recommendations would come out of these sessions.

18. The Bureau thanked the Secretariat for the information and documents provided. They had a few enquiries mainly regarding the length and timing of the sessions, how Parties' interventions would be accommodated, and if there would be a limit to the delegations.

19. The Secretariat responded that the sessions would have to be two hours in length due to interpretation limitations and would be held at a time that would be the least inconvenient for all time zones. In terms of the interventions from Parties and observers, it would follow the normal fashion where Parties are given the opportunity to speak first, then others. The Secretariat pointed out that it was still working on the details of the platform and would advise Parties upon registration or a notification of all the procedural matters, including the limit of delegations and security measures.

20. The Chair thanked the Secretariat for the information and the Bureau for their comments and moved on to the next agenda item.

ITEM 6. UPDATE ON THE SCHEDULE OF FUTURE/UPCOMING MEETINGS

21. At the invitation of the Chair, the Executive Secretary reminded the Bureau that the current schedule of meetings had SBSTTA 24 and SBI 3 taking place in November 2020 in Montreal, the third meeting of the WG2020 in February 2021 in Colombia, followed by COP 15 in May 2021, assuming COVID-19 situation was over. She advised the Bureau that the Secretariat continued to review the COVID-19 pandemic situation, noting in particular its increasing spread in various parts of the world and restrictions imposed by Governments across the world. After providing an overview of the above, the Secretariat noted that it would remain available during the following week for any clarifications or comments the Bureau may have on this topic.

¹ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2020/ntf-2020-050-sbstta-sbi-en.pdf>

22. The Deputy Executive Secretary referenced the document circulated a few days before to the Bureau. He indicated that as the current global situation was worsening in some parts of the world, it was becoming clearer that holding the physical meetings of SBSTTA and SBI in November was becoming unviable. He indicated that the Bureau would need to decide if the physical meetings of SBSTTA and SBI would have to be delayed beyond November and outlined three proposals. The first proposal would be to search for a date in the first quarter of 2021 to convene the physical meetings. The second proposal would be to explore if some form of virtual meetings could take place in November to advance the work of the meetings and then to reconvene physically in February. A third proposal would be to make a contingency plan to complete the work of these meetings virtually in 2021, should physical meetings be still not possible by then.
23. He proposed that the Bureau proceed in a step by step manner, considering the first two proposals at its present meeting. The third option could be explored later based on the ongoing global situation. He indicated that if the Bureau agreed to reschedule the meetings to 2021, this would have a knock-on effect for the rest of the schedule and new dates in October would have to be sought for the COP. He highlighted the need to decide promptly on the rescheduling of the intersessional meetings in order to find a viable alternative date for COP, as there is a general concern about congestion in the timetable of events for 2021.
24. The Bureau thanked the Secretariat for the information provided and agreed that due to the ongoing situation, it would not be possible to hold physical meetings of SBSTTA and SBI in November. It agreed that the meetings would need to be postponed to the first quarter of 2021. It also noted the need to explore alternative dates for COP in October but to not make any formal announcements in that regard yet.
25. Regarding the second proposal, the Bureau deliberated on options of how it could conduct limited part of the work of SBSTTA and SBI through virtual meetings, including holding a first reading of some agenda items. The Bureau noted that it would need to be careful in choosing a limited number of agenda items in order to make progress and that no final decisions should be made during these virtual sessions.
26. The Bureau indicated it would need more time to consult with their regions on the second proposal, namely to ensure that all Parties could fully participate and agreed to keep exploring this option.
27. In response to some questions from the Bureau, the Secretariat clarified that there would be cost implications with holding parts of SBSTTA and SBI virtually, mainly due to interpretation. It also noted that the WHO Assembly as well as the FAO Council had met virtually and adopted decisions, therefore a precedent had been set which should enable Parties to meet virtually.

ITEM 7. OTHER MATTERS

28. The Chair then asked the members of the Bureau if they had any other business to address.
29. Members of the Bureau highlighted the need to have regular meetings to address various issues and to limit the number of items for these meetings to avoid the need for long meetings.
30. They also requested the Secretariat to indicate in the documentation what is expected from the Bureau, and whether the document is for information purposes or for decision making. They agreed that documents would be provided to the Bureau 2 weeks in advance if prior consultation with regions would be needed, and 1 week for other documents. Furthermore, they also indicated that an annotated agenda should be provided for each Bureau meeting. The Bureau also noted it should consider options for alternate timings for their meetings to accommodate all Parties in different time zones.
31. The Secretariat would circulate the key action points arising from the present meeting and an outline of the dates and agenda items for the next meetings of the Bureau. These points were prepared and circulated to the COP Bureau on 14 August 2020 and are appended to these minutes.
32. Bureau members also highlighted the importance of posting documents by the deadline so that Parties can have the opportunity to review the documents appropriately.

ITEM 8. CLOSING OF THE MEETING

33. No other issues were raised.

34. The Chair thanked the participants for the valuable discussions and closed the meeting at 11:15 a.m. on 13 August 2020.

Annex

7th meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties

13 August 2020

Summary of Agreements, Action points and Pending items

Agenda Item 1: Financial implications of the postponement of COP-15 and related draft decision

- 1.) The Bureau recognizes that extraordinary meetings of the COP and COP-MOPs would need to be convened virtually or through written procedure in 2020, ensuring the requirements of the Rules of Procedure are met, to consider a proposed interim budget for the programmes of work of the Convention, the Cartagena Protocol, and the Nagoya Protocol, for 2021.
- 2.) To this end, the Secretariat is to prepare a draft notification for the review and approval of the Bureau, along with a supplementary document outlining the options for the acceptance of credentials, for consultations with their respective regions with a view of providing feedback in one week ie. 21 August 2020.
- 3.) The Bureau agreed to continue consultations with their regions in the meantime the notification is being prepared by the Secretariat.
- 4.) The Bureau noted that the proposal for an interim budget prepared by the Secretariat, required a few corrections and additional background information.
- 5.) The Secretariat should ensure original invoices are provided to Parties so they can make the payments of their contributions.
- 6.) The Bureau requested the Secretariat in future to indicate in the documentation on what will be expected from the Bureau, namely, whether the document is for information purposes or decision making and what kind of decision expected.

Agenda Item 2: Preparations for the UN Summit on Biodiversity

- 1.) Bureau members to urge the countries in their regions to encourage and prepare the participation of their Heads of State and Government at the UN Biodiversity Summit, now scheduled for 30 September 2020.

Agenda Item 3: Preparation for the September special virtual sessions

- 1.) The Bureau requested clarity on how Parties and observers will intervene and participate in the different sessions, and on any limitations to the size of delegations.
- 2.) The Secretariat will make this information clear in the notification to be issued on this matter and/or upon registration of Parties and other organizations.

Agenda Item 4: Update on the schedule of future/upcoming meetings

- 1.) The Bureau agreed that physical meetings of SBSTTA and SBI cannot be held in November 2020 and would need to be postponed to the first quarter of 2021.
- 2.) The Bureau discussed the option of conducting limited part of the work of SBSTTA and SBI through virtual meetings, at the already scheduled dates in November 2020, but did not reach a final conclusion on this matter.
- 3.) The Bureau agrees to explore ways to hold part (and which agenda items) of the SBSTTA and SBI meetings virtually in November and reconvene physically in the first quarter of 2021.
- 4.) The further option of consideration of holding SBSTTA and SBI virtually in February would be considered later as the situation evolves, and as necessary.

- 5.) The Bureau noted that WG2020 and COP 15 would need to be rescheduled once again but agreed to not make any formal announcements yet.

AOB

- 1.) In order to know what outcomes and decisions are expected from the Bureau at each of its meetings, an annotated agenda should be provided for each meeting.
- 2.) Documents need to be provided to the Bureau 2 weeks in advance if prior consultation with regions is needed, and 1 week for other documents.
- 3.) The Bureau should alternate the time of their meetings to accommodate all Parties in different time zones fairly.
- 4.) The Bureau agreed to limit the number of items addressed at each meeting.
- 5.) The Secretariat is to advise the Bureau, by Monday 17 August, the dates of the next Bureau meetings and which agenda items will be addressed in each.