



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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BUREAU OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE
PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
10, 11 and 14 October 2021
(Hybrid)

**MINUTES OF THE BUREAU MEETINGS HELD DURING THE FIRST PART OF THE UN
BIODIVERSITY CONFERENCE**

1. The Bureau of the Conference of the Parties met a total of three times in a hybrid modality during the first part of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-15), tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CP-MOP 10), and fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (NP-MOP 4). The meetings took place in the Kunming Dianchi International Convention and Exhibition Centre (DCEC), in Kunming, China, as well as via the Interactio platform on 10(a), 11(b) and 14(c) of October 2021.
2. The meetings were attended by the following members of the COP Bureau and substitutes (in case that a person did not attend all the sessions, attendance is indicated by a, b, or c, respectively):
 - Presidency:* Mr. Hamdallah Zedan (Egypt) (a,b,c) and H.E. Mr. HUANG Runqiu (China) (a,b,c);
 - Africa:* Mr. Eric Okoree (Ghana) (a,b,c), Mr. Melesse Maryo (Ethiopia) (b,c)
 - Asia and the Pacific:* Ms. Leina El-Awadhi (Kuwait) (a,b,c); Mr. Vinod Mathur (India) (a,b)
 - Latin America and the Caribbean:* Ms. Helena Jeffery Brown (Antigua and Barbuda) (a,b,c); Ms. Eugenia Montezuma (Costa Rica, representing H.E. Minister Meza Murillo) (a,b,c); Mr. Joaquín Salzberg (Argentina, substitute for Costa Rica for matters related to the Nagoya Protocol) (a,b,c);
 - Central and Eastern Europe:* Ms. Elvana Ramaj (Albania) (a,b); Ms. Teona Karchava (Georgia) (a,b,c);); Mr. Dilovarsho Dustov (Tajikistan, substitute for Georgia for matters related to the Nagoya Protocol); (a,b,c)
 - Western Europe and Others:* Ms. Gabriele Obermayr (Austria) (a,b,c); Ms. Rosemary Paterson (New Zealand) (a,b,c); and Mr. Gaute Voigt-Hanssen (Norway, substitute for New Zealand for matters related to the Nagoya Protocol) (a,b,c);
 - Ex-officio:* Ms. Charlotta Sörqvist (Sweden), Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (a,b,c); Mr. Hesiquio Benítez (Mexico), Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (a,b); Mr. Basile van Havre (Canada) (a,b,c) and Mr. Francis Ogwal (Uganda) (a,b,c), Co-chairs of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework;

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Observers: Dr. ZHOU Guomei (China), Representative of COP 15 President (a,b,c), Mr. LIU Ning (China), Deputy Representative of COP 15 President (a,b,c), Dr. CUI Shuhong, Mr. XIA Yingxian (China), COP 15 host representatives (a,b,c); Mr. Sebastian Acosta (Colombia), WG2020 3 host representatives (b), Ambassador Spencer Thomas (Grenada), Chair of Budget Committee (b).

3. The Secretariat was represented by Ms. Elizabeth Mrema, Executive Secretary; Mr. David Cooper, Deputy Executive Secretary; Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, Director of Implementation Support Division; Ms. Wadzanayi Mandivenyi, Head, Biosafety Protocol Unit; Mr. Taukondjo Shikongo, Head, Nagoya Protocol Unit; Mr. Wataru Suzuki, Global Coordinator for the Japan Biodiversity Fund; Mr. Worku Yifru, Senior Legal Officer; Mr. Markus Lehmann, OIC of Science, Society and Sustainable Futures Division; Ms. Catalina Santamaria, Senior Programme Officer; Ms. Gu Li, Liaison Officer for COP 15.

ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

4. On **10 October 2021**, the first hybrid meeting was opened by the Chair of the Bureau, Mr. Hamdallah Zedan, representative of the President of the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties at 5:00 p.m. Kunming time. After welcoming all members of the Bureau, the Chair noted this was the last Bureau meeting under the Egyptian COP Presidency and thanked all Bureau members, as well as the Secretariat for their support and hard work during the last three years - the longest CBD Presidency in the history of the Convention. The Chair then invited H.E. Mr. Huang Runqiu, Minister of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China, as incoming COP President to deliver welcoming remarks.
5. Minister Huang thanked the Chair, the Bureau and the Executive Secretary and her team for all the efforts done in the preparation of the first part of COP 15. Noting how the pandemic had complicated efforts to prepare for the meetings, he expressed China's commitment as incoming President of the COP, to lead the international community in its efforts to protect biodiversity and achieve sustainable development. After thanking the Secretariat for the hard work and support provided in the preparatory road of the first part of the Conference, Minister Huang provided an overview of how the Conference would unfold, as well as the number of registered and confirmed participants, Ministers participating in the High-Level Segment, and status of the Kunming Declaration. He highlighted that China was willing to work together with the Parties to ensure effective multilateralism in benefit of the biodiversity agenda.
6. The Chair thanked Minister Huang for his remarks and invited the Executive Secretary of the Convention, Ms. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, to provide opening remarks. The Executive Secretary began by thanking the Bureau for their support and guidance through the preparatory process towards the Conference, as well as the dedicated team in the Secretariat who had ensured the meeting would be a success. Noting that this was the first hybrid COP in the history of the Convention, she thanked the representative of the COP 14 President for his support, wise leadership and guidance throughout this process. She also thanked Minister Huang and the Government of China for excellent preparations made for the first part of COP. The Executive Secretary assured the Bureau that the arrangements made in Kunming and in the facility provided an excellent setting for the Conference, including its High-Level Segment. She wished the Bureau an excellent meeting during the historic week ahead.
7. On **11 October 2021**, the Bureau meeting was opened by Minister Huang Runqiu as COP 15 President at 8:30 p.m. Kunming time. He welcomed the members of the Bureau and thanked Mr. Zedan for his leadership and invited him to continue on the Bureau as ex-officio, playing an important role in the future. He provided an overview of the commitment that China, as COP President, would have during its tenure, including ensuring political leadership on biodiversity; support the multilateral forum in a fair, neutral and pragmatic manner; stimulate confidence in order to establish an ecological civilization; provide the necessary services and monitor and guide the relevant bodies and in their discussions in order to secure consensus; and make the effort to halt and reverse the degradation and loss of biodiversity.

8. **On 14 October 2021**, the Bureau meeting was opened at 7:30 p.m. by Minister Huang, COP 15 President. He welcomed the members of the Bureau.

ITEM 2. PREPARATIONS AND REVIEW OF PROGRESS OF COP 15 AND ITS CONCURRENT MEETINGS

9. At its session on **10 October 2021**, after receiving no objections from the Bureau, the agenda of the meeting was adopted.
10. The Chair began the discussion of the meeting by proposing the officers for the Conference. He proposed that Ms. Elvana Ramaj (Albania) be elected Rapporteur of the meetings, and that Mr. Eric Okoree (Ghana) be designated as the representative of the Bureau for the review of credentials. After no objections from the Bureau, the Chair congratulated both Bureau members on their proposed roles. In addition, the Bureau agreed that Mr. Spencer Thomas (Grenada) continue his role as Chair of the Budget Committee throughout the Conference and would join subsequent meetings of the Bureau to provide the relevant updates on the work of the Committee.
11. The Chair then invited the Secretariat to provide an overview to the Bureau on the anticipated workload of the Conference as well as other relevant updates. The Deputy Executive Secretary began by providing a general overview of the opening ceremony and official agenda of the Conference. Noting that the annotated agendas that set out the organization of work for the COP and two MOPs had been available for some weeks before, the Deputy Executive Secretary highlighted that some extensions in the timing of some sessions of the High-Level Segment would be needed in order to accommodate the large demand for interventions. He noted that the timetable remained the same as in the organization of work and it would always be available in the conference meeting page. He urged those Bureau members that had not yet provided advanced versions of their regional statements to do so as soon as possible in order to facilitate interpretation.
12. The Deputy Executive Secretary then provided an overview of how plenaries of the Conference would unfold. He noted that a formal contact group to deal with the issue of the budget was expected to be established in the opening plenary, which would work on the basis of the work of the informal group which had concluded recently. He noted that the first meeting of the contact group on the budget was foreseen for 9:00 p.m. Kunming time on Monday, 11 October 2021. He also noted that after the budget agenda, there would be reports from the subsidiary bodies and if time permitted, reports from the compliance committees of the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols. If time did not allow for these reports to be delivered in the first session, then this would take place in the closing plenary on Friday. He added that the only decision to be made in the Conference was the adoption of the interim budget for 2022. He informed Bureau members of registration numbers of the Conference and reminded the Bureau to work with their regions to encourage all Parties to submit their credentials as soon as possible but no later than Tuesday, 12 October 2021. The Deputy Executive Secretary then informed the Bureau on the list of qualified bodies and agencies that had registered as observers, which was available on the Secretariat's website.
13. After no comments or questions from the Bureau, the Chair thanked the Secretariat and invited the representatives of the Government of China to provide an update on aspects of the High-Level Segment.
14. The legal officer of the Secretariat informed the Bureau that due to the delay in holding the COP and MOP meetings and the elections of the members of the compliance committee under the two Protocols, the committees under the two Protocols could not be heard. As a result, there was a need to further extend the term of office of the compliance committee members to the end of next year, and with the endorsement of the Bureau, the COP could be informed of this through an announcement in the President's statement in the opening plenary. The Bureau had no objections to this proposal.
15. Mr. Xia Yingxian and Mr. Liu Ning, representatives from the Government of China, provided key updates on the status of the Kunming Declaration and the preparation of the High-Level Segment. Regarding the Kunming Declaration, Mr. Xia noted this would be the political outcome of the High-

Level Segment and serve as starting point in building consensus in the road to the adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. He noted that China received almost 300 submissions from approximately 100 Parties and observers and that the final version of the Declaration had been released, which seemed to be well received and accepted. He noted that although they considered this version final, they were still open to any bilateral consultations that may be necessary and counted with the support from the Bureau for a successful adoption of the Declaration.

16. Mr. Liu further complemented the overview provided by Minister Huang and informed the Bureau of the expected participation for the High-Level Segment. He noted that China was ready for the event and expressed hope they could welcome the Bureau and Parties in person, next year. The Deputy Executive Secretary also provided an overview of the modalities of the expected discussions to take place in the round tables of the High-Level Segment.
17. In response to the enquiries of a Bureau member, the Bureau was informed that the programme of the Leaders' Summit had not been yet finalized, that the Co-chairs of each of the round table sessions of the High-Level Segment would be reporting back in the closing plenary of the event, and that a procedural report would be issued.
18. After no further comments or questions from the Bureau, the Chair invited the incoming COP Presidency and Secretariat to provide an update on the logistical arrangements for the Conference.
19. The Deputy Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that every logistical aspect for the local participation of delegates was in place, especially in terms of transportation, hotel, access to venue, etc. He noted that with the hybrid modality, this was a more complex meeting to organize than the usual in-person meetings. He urged Parties that were joining virtually, to log in to the sessions early to test their connections and audio-visual equipment. Mr. Liu, representative of the Government of China, further reconfirmed that all logistical arrangements were in place, despite the great challenges posed by the hybrid nature of the meeting. He thanked the Bureau for their patience and support and also thanked the Secretariat for their assistance and support in order to ensure a good meeting.
20. The Chair then invited the Secretariat to provide an update on the arrangements for press and media coverage. The Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that over 800 media outlets had registered for the Conference. She provided an overview of the media press coverage they had done and that they were planning to do, and noted the intensity of interviews, including from international media outlet, that they had engaged in. The Executive Secretary highlighted the press conferences that would take place during the Conference and their objectives.
21. After thanking the Executive Secretary for the overview on press coverage, the Chair informed the Bureau they would meet on 11 and 14 October 2021, at 8:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. (Kunming time) and 7:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., respectively.
22. On the meeting on **11 October 2021**, the COP President informed the Bureau that the opening and progress of the first part of COP 15 had been very successful, with more than 1500 participants on site and over 3000 participants joining virtually. He provided an overview of the speeches from the opening ceremony, including from the Excellency Vice-Premier of China. He informed the Bureau that due to the lack of time, the two reports of the Protocols had not been heard and would be resumed in the final plenary on 15 October. The President provided a quick overview of the proceedings of the opening plenary and invited Ambassador Spencer Thomas to provide a brief update on the progress of the informal Budget Committee's discussions.
23. Ambassador Thomas began by informing the Bureau that the former informal group had successfully completed its work after meeting on four different occasions. He noted they had finally been able to agree on an interim budget and very delicate compromises had been made. Ambassador Thomas conveyed some concerns to the Bureau regarding the staff costs and staffing table with the proposal for two upgrades. He noted that the Bureau needed to look at the decision-making process regarding the budget decisions and needed to follow the process of providing all information required to make an informed decision in the second part of the Conference. Ambassador Thomas also noted that the other area of concern was regarding the meeting costs, including the increasing costs for translation.

24. The President thanked Ambassador Thomas for this update. Brief updates were given on the ongoing proceedings and the High-Level Segment. The Bureau was informed that the final edited version of the Kunming Declaration was posted on the website.
25. The Bureau requested further clarification on how the decisions would be adopted in the closing plenary. The Secretariat clarified that the budget documents had been provided 36 hours in advance of the start of the closing plenary to ensure enough time for Parties' review. These were developed following a consensus in the budget contact group which met on Monday and the expectation was that the L-document would be adopted as whole: three documents, one for each instrument. For the reports, it was noted that the same process was to be followed as in physical meetings and that the reflection of the closing plenary's proceedings would be completed later under the supervision of the Rapporteur.
26. On the meeting of **14 October 2021**, the President provided a quick overview of the progress of the Conference, highlighting three important outcomes thus far. Firstly, they had heard many high-level political inputs from leaders around the world during the High-Level Segment; secondly the Kunming Declaration had been unanimously adopted; and the new initiatives for biodiversity conservation in China had been announced, including the setting up of a biodiversity fund of 1.5 billion RMB. The Chair also informed the Bureau that the first part of the Ecological Civilization Forum had taken place that day with nearly 2000 delegates participating in the forum.
27. The Secretariat provided an update on the availability of documents and Mr. Eric Okoree (Ghana) provided an update on the progress of credentials. He noted that there was a low submission of credentials compared to previous Conferences of the Parties and MOPs and indicated that this could be due to the constraints Governments may be facing due to the pandemic. He, therefore, proposed to the Bureau that he add a sentence to his plenary report that the Bureau recognized the pandemic situation as a possible contributing factor in the delay of credential submissions. The Bureau agreed with this proposal.
28. The Secretariat then provided an update on the media coverage of the Conference, noting that it had had very good coordination with the host government in most of the media arrangements. It was highlighted that a media training had been held in Kunming in 10 October, which had been very well attended by journalists. The Bureau was provided with a brief breakdown and analysis of the media coverage, including the online reach which had been one of the highest ever recorded for the Convention.
29. The COP President reminded the Bureau that due to time limitation in the opening plenary, the reports of the Co-chairs of the Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, as well as the reports of the compliance committee under the Protocols would be heard in the closing plenary of the COP.
30. The Secretariat provided a brief update on the Rio Conventions Pavilion event.
31. The Bureau expressed appreciation and congratulated the Government of China and the Secretariat for a successful High-Level Segment and COP proceedings thus far.

ITEM 3. OTHER MATTERS

32. On the **11 October** meeting, a request was made to the incoming COP Presidency to facilitate the participation of delegates from developing countries.
33. On the meeting of **14 October 2021**, the Bureau was informed that consultations would be made with the Secretariat in order to determine the dates of the next meetings of the Bureau in Geneva in January and for the second part of COP 15.
34. Responding to some questions from the Bureau regarding preparation for the resumed meetings in 2022, the Secretariat clarified that a notification had been issued to Parties seeking informational need for vaccination. It was highlighted that the Secretariat was still seeking further financial contributions to ensure the participation of delegates from developing countries in the Geneva and

COP part 2 meetings. The Secretariat further clarified that the dates of COP 16, to be hosted by Turkey, were not yet determined and it would be up to COP 15 to fix the dates, noting that it would be unlikely that COP 16 would take place in 2022.

35. Regarding the management of the newly established Kunming biodiversity fund, representatives of the Government of China clarified that they are in the process of consulting and deciding how best the fund will be managed. For the moment, it was proposed these funds be used to support the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, compile and updates of NBSAPs and information platforms. However, the details are still under discussion.

ITEM 4. CLOSING OF THE MEETINGS

36. After thanking the Bureau for their support and discussions, Mr. Hamdallah Zedan, as representative of the Egyptian COP 14 Presidency, closed the meeting on 10 October 2021 at 7:00pm Kunming time.
37. Minister Huang Runqiu, as COP 15 President and Chair of the Bureau, also thanking the Bureau and the Secretariat, closed the meetings of 11 and 14 October 2021 at 9:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., respectively.