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MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
Geneva, Switzerland, 11 to 18 November 2023

**MINUTES OF THE BUREAU MEETINGS HELD DURING THE TWELFTH MEETING OF
THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED INTER-SESSIONAL WORKING GROUP ON ARTICLE 8(J)
AND RELATED PROVISIONS OF THE CONVENTION, AND THE FIRST MEETING OF
THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON BENEFIT-SHARING FROM THE USE
OF DIGITAL SEQUENCE INFORMATION ON GENETIC RESOURCES, IN GENEVA,
SWITZERLAND**

1. The Bureau of the Conference of the Parties met a total of seven times during the twelfth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Inter-sessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention, and the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Benefit-sharing from the Use of Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources, collectively referred to as the Working Group meetings. The Bureau meetings took place at the Centre International de Conférences Genève, in Geneva, Switzerland.
2. This note summarizes the proceedings of the Bureau meetings held from 10:00 a.m. to 13:00 p.m. on 11 November 2023; and from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. on 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 December 2023.
3. The meetings were chaired by Mr. Ning Liu, the representative of the Minister of Ecology and Environment of China, Mr. Runqiu Huang, the COP 15 President. Another representative of the COP Presidency present at the meetings was Ms. Haishan Zhao.
4. The following members of the Bureau attended the above meetings:
 - Africa:* Ms. Hlobile Sikhosana (Eswatini); Mr. Moustafa Fouda (Egypt, substitute for Algeria for matters related to the Nagoya Protocol).
 - Asia-Pacific:* Ms. Somaly Chan (Cambodia); Ms. Senivasa Waqairamasi (Fiji, representing Mr. Krishneel Nand).
 - Eastern Europe:* Ms. Teona Karchava (Georgia); Ms. Angela Lozan (Republic of Moldova).
 - Latin America and the Caribbean:* Ms. Laura Bermudez (Colombia, representing Ms. Maria Teresa Becerra Ramirez); Ms. Corina Sarli (Argentina, substitute for Colombia for matters related to the Nagoya Protocol); Ms. Teresa Cruz Sardiñas (Cuba, representing Mr. Jesus Guerra Bell, substitute for Jamaica for matters related to the Nagoya Protocol).
 - Western Europe and Others:* Mr. Eric Schauls (Luxembourg); Mr. Norbert Bärlocher (Switzerland); Mr. Niklaus Wagner (Switzerland, representing Mr. Norbert Bärlocher in some of the Bureau meetings).
 - Ex officio:* Ms. Senka Barudanovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Matters (SBSTTA).

5. The Secretariat was represented by Mr. David Cooper (Acting Executive Secretary), Mr. Olivier Rukundo (Senior Programme Management Officer, and Secretary of the Working Group on Article 8(j)), Mr. Taukondjo Shikongo (Senior Programme Management Officer, ABS Unit and Secretary of the Working Group on DSI), Mr. Neil Pratt (Officer in Charge, Implementation Support Division), Mr. Worku Yifru (Senior Legal Officer), Ms. Inonge Kwenda Mweene (Legal Officer), Ms. Kathryn Garforth (Programme Management Officer), Mr. David Ainsworth (Information Officer), Ms. Li Gu (Programme Management Officer), Ms. Charlotte Germain-Aubrey (Programme Management Officer), Mr. Antonio Q'Apaj Conde Choque (Associate Programme Management Officer) and Ms. Imane Sednaoui (Staff Assistant).

6. The main purpose of the Bureau meetings was to provide guidance to the presiding officers and Secretariat and on the preparations and the conduct of the meeting.

ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

7. The first Bureau meeting held on 11 November 2023 was opened at 10:00 a.m. Central European Time by Mr. Ning Liu, who chaired the meeting on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Runqiu Huang, Minister of Ecology and Environment of China and COP 15 President. The Chair welcomed the Bureau members and expressed his confidence that the Bureau would guide and ensure the smooth proceedings of the Working Group meetings. He also conveyed the Presidency's deep appreciation to the Acting Executive Secretary and his team for the preparations of the Working Group meetings.

8. The Chair informed the Bureau that China was taking concrete steps towards the full and effective implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). In this respect, he stated that an agreement between China and the Secretariat would be finalized by the end of 2023 to set up the Kunming Biodiversity Fund. The Chair added that China was also taking other initiatives to promote the profile and visibility of the GBF.

9. In his opening remarks, the Acting Executive Secretary thanked the COP Presidency for its leadership, as well as its initiatives towards the successful implementation of the GBF, in particular the establishment of the Kunming Biodiversity Fund. He expressed his gratitude that the meetings of the resumed second part of COP 15 and the COP-MOPs to the Protocols, as well as SBSTTA 25, were successfully concluded and closed in Nairobi. He also thanked the Bureau members elected at COP 15 for their presence and for stepping into their new roles on the Bureau.

10. In relation to the Working Group on Article 8(j), scheduled to begin the following day, the Acting Executive Secretary emphasized the importance of all the agenda items and noted that representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities would be joining the Bureau meeting in line with established practice. He also highlighted the success of the just ended international dialogue with indigenous peoples and local communities and relevant stakeholders on the implementation of the Framework and the Gender Plan of Action, and added that the dialogue set a positive tone for the Working Group meeting.

11. For the Working Group on DSI, scheduled to commence on 14 November, the Acting Executive Secretary stressed the significance of the work to be undertaken by the Working Group in the further development of a multilateral mechanism for benefit-sharing from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources.

12. The Acting Executive Secretary concluded by assuring the Bureau members that the Secretariat was fully prepared to provide them with necessary assistance in their deliberations during the week.

ITEM 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

13. The Chair introduced the provisional agenda, and the Bureau adopted it as presented.

ITEM 3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COP BUREAU

14. The Chair welcomed the new Bureau members once again and invited them to introduce themselves. Following the introductions, the Chair invited the the Senior Legal Officer to brief the meeting on the roles and responsibilities of COP Bureau members..

15. In his presentation, the Senior Legal Officer recalled that three relevant documents had been circulated to the Bureau members beforehand, namely: Guidance for members of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties; Managing Processes within the Framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity: A Guide for Presiding Officers; and List of meetings in 2023-2024 which the COP Bureau is expected to attend.

16. The Senior Legal Officer explained the contents of the first two documents and informed the meeting that these documents had been developed by the Secretariat at the request of an earlier COP Bureau in order to provide appropriate guidance to Bureau members and presiding officers in the various CBD processes. He added that when the COP and COP-MOPs were in session, the Bureau members would also be invited to preside over working groups and contact groups, as well as review credentials.

17. A Bureau member observed that the presentation was timely as, in the past, not all Bureau members were well prepared for their roles due to lack of information.

ITEM 4. PREPARATION FOR THE TWELFTH MEETING OF THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP ON ARTICLE 8(j) AND RELATED PROVISIONS OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

18. On 11 November 2023, the Chair informed the meeting that, as in past meetings of the Working Group on Article 8(j), representatives of the indigenous peoples and local communities would be invited to designate seven representatives to act as “Friends of the Bureau”, one of whom would act as a Co-Chair of the Working Group and others as Co-Chairs of contact groups, as needed. The Chair explained that the Friends of the Bureau would participate in the Bureau meetings when considering matters related to the Working Group.

19. With the agreement of the Bureau, the Chair invited the “Friends of the Bureau” to join the meeting and introduce themselves: Ms. Lucy Mullenkei (African region), Ms June Rubis (Asia region); Ms. Yolanda Teran (Central and South America and the Caribbean region); Ms. Polina Shulbaeva (Central and Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia region); Ms. Rochelle Diver (North American region); and Ms. Teresa Christine Grant (Pacific region). The Chair welcomed the representatives and explained that indigenous peoples and local communities played a very important role in the implementation of the Convention.

20. The Secretariat provided a briefing to the Bureau on the preparations for the Working Group meeting. The Secretariat indicated that, aside from the usual organizational matters, the Working Group had five substantive agenda items to consider, as reflected in the provisional agenda. The Secretariat also stated that the first reading of the documents under the respective agenda items was expected to be completed by the morning session of Monday, 13 November 2023, and that it might be necessary for the Working Group to establish a contact group under agenda item 6 to further consider the draft new programme of work and institutional arrangements on Article 8(j) and other provisions of the Convention related to indigenous peoples and local communities.

21. The Secretariat added that, if established, the contact group would be chaired by Ms. Lucy Mullenkei and Ms. Matilda Wilhelm who had served as the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on the New Programme of Work and Institutional Arrangements on Article 8(j), held in Manaus, Brazil, in July 2023.

22. In response to questions raised by Bureau members and the “Friends of the Bureau”, the Secretariat made the following clarifications on the proposed arrangements:

- a) “Friends of the Bureau” would attend Bureau meetings when the COP Bureau was serving as the Bureau of the Working Group on Article 8(j).
- b) There would be no opening statements by individual Parties. Parties would be given an opportunity to state their positions when each agenda item was introduced.
- c) The In-depth dialogue emanated from a COP decision (X/43) and was therefore a standing agenda item. As per the COP decision, the dialogue was intended to contribute to the incorporation of Article 8(j) and related provisions as a cross-cutting issue throughout the work undertaken under the Convention and its Protocols.
- d) The document on the budget estimate for the new programme of work and institutional arrangements, which was circulated at the request of Parties, indicated that when the COP Bureau was serving as the Bureau of the proposed new subsidiary body on Article 8(j), there would be no additional costs relating to the Bureau. However, if the proposed new subsidiary body were to have its own Bureau, there would be additional costs for the Bureau in instances where the subsidiary body is held back-to-back with the meeting of other bodies for which the COP Bureau would be serving as the Bureau. The establishment of a permanent subsidiary body in itself would not create additional costs as the costs of the current Working Group would simply be transferred to the new body.
- e) There was universal agreement on the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in CBD processes, and thus their participation was supported by a separate budget. Furthermore, although the CBD processes were Party led, the indigenous peoples and local communities were normally the first group to be given an opportunity to intervene in meetings, after Parties. In order to be considered for a recommendation or decision, proposals from indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as other non-Parties, were required to be supported by a Party.

23. Exceptionally for this Working Group meeting, it was proposed that indigenous peoples and local communities could be allowed to make a consolidated statement at the beginning of each agenda item before interventions by Parties. Individual Bureau members were requested to consult their regions on this proposal and advise the Bureau accordingly. There being no objections, the Bureau noted agreement on this approach at its meeting on 13 November. The “Friends of the Bureau” expressed their appreciation to the Bureau for this proposal. They also requested the Secretariat to keep them informed of the developments in the Working Group at every stage.

24. The Chair concluded by thanking the indigenous peoples and local communities for their great contribution to the work of the Convention.

25. On 13 November 2023, the Bureau welcomed Ms. June Rubis, who had been nominated by the Friends of the Bureau to serve as the Co-Chair of the Working Group meeting, as well as the “Friends of the Bureau”, who were also attending the Bureau meeting specifically for this agenda item. The Bureau designated Ms. Hlobisile Sikhosana (Eswatini) as Rapporteur for the Working Group meeting.

26. The Secretariat provided the Bureau with an update of the work done in the Working Group the previous day. The Secretariat indicated that the Working Group conducted a first reading of documents under agenda items 3 (in-depth dialogue), 4 (multi-year programme of work), 5 (knowledge management) and 6 (new programme of work and institutional arrangements). Regarding item 6, the Secretariat explained that there were several comments on the proposed new programme of work including that it needed to be streamlined and adjusted to the timeline of the GBF. The Secretariat noted that the majority of delegates favoured the establishment of a permanent subsidiary body on Article 8(j), but requested for more clarifications on the cost implications of such a body. The Secretariat added that this information would be provided to the contact group on this item, once established.

27. The Secretariat also informed the Bureau that the Working Group would next consider agenda item 7 on the Joint programme of work on the links between biological and cultural diversity, and item 8 on Recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.
28. In response to comments and questions from Bureau members, the Secretariat explained that an updated document on the cost implications would be provided although it would only give the best possible indications for comparative purposes. The full discussion on the costs would take place in the Budget Committee of the COP.
29. Regarding concerns raised by the Bureau on holding contact groups in parallel, the Secretariat explained that every effort would be made to only have one contact group taking place at a time, although informal groups could meet in parallel to the contact groups. The Secretariat also explained that each eligible Party had a representative funded separately for each Working Group to ensure that they could be represented in both processes at the same time. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that delegates would be expected to maximise the limited time available in contact groups as the meeting venue would be closing at midnight each day.
30. On 14, 15 and 16 November 2023, the Co-Chair of the Working Group, the Co-Chairs of the contact group established under agenda item 6 on the new programme of work, and the Secretariat updated the Bureau on the proceedings, indicating, among other things, expectations concerning the publication of sequential versions of a non-paper for item 6 and of conference room papers.
31. Regarding item 6, a number of Bureau members expressed their concern regarding the contact group's slow progress on the institutional arrangements for the proposed subsidiary body on Article 8(j). The Secretariat explained that further clarifications on the budgetary aspects could be provided, if necessary, to help the process, but reiterated that the final budget would be determined by the Budget Committee of the COP.
32. On 16 November 2023, the Co-Chairs of the contact group, Ms. Mulenkei and Ms. Wilhelm, expressed their appreciation to the Bureau and the Secretariat for the support rendered to them. They observed that some unresolved areas in the proposed new programme of work could be addressed before the next meeting of the COP. The Secretariat noted that informal dialogues through webinars could be conducted for this purpose, but that there would be no formal changes to the texts of the documents that would be submitted to the COP; and that indigenous peoples and local communities would be fully involved in the proposed informal dialogues, with some webinars dedicated to addressing their concerns.
33. In this context, the Co-Chair of the contact group, Ms. Mulenkei, noted that the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB) had regular caucuses where the Secretariat was usually invited to provide updates on issues relating to indigenous peoples and local communities. She added that the Secretariat could also invite IIFB to brief Parties on relevant issues of common interest.
34. The Co-Chair of the Working Group, Ms. Rubis, expressed her gratitude to the Bureau, COP Presidency and the Co-Chairs of the contact group, for providing an opportunity to indigenous peoples and local communities to effectively participate in the Working Group. Ms. Rubis added that indigenous peoples and local communities would welcome the establishment of a permanent subsidiary body on Article 8(j) which would reaffirm commitments in the GBF.

**ITEM 5. PREPARATION FOR THE FIRST MEETING OF THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED
WORKING GROUP ON BENEFIT-SHARING FROM THE USE OF DIGITAL SEQUENCE
INFORMATION ON GENETIC RESOURCES**

35. On 11 November 2023, in relation to the Working Group on DSI, the Chair recalled that an earlier Bureau meeting decided that while the Presidency would chair the plenary sessions in line with regular practice, it would recommend establishing a Committee of the Whole (COW) with co-chairs to lead the substantive negotiations. The Chair also recalled that Ms. Martha Mphatso Kalemba (Malawi) and Mr. William Lockhart (United Kingdom)

were designated as Co-Chairs, subject to their election by the Working Group. The Chair advised that Ms. Kalemba and Mr. Lockhart would join the Bureau meeting on 13 November to provide their insights at that time.

36. The Secretariat updated the Bureau on the preparations for the Working Group meeting and highlighted that the Working Group would carry out the important task of operationalizing COP decision 15/9 on digital sequence information on genetic resources. The Secretariat also provided a brief overview of that COP decision and highlighted that COP 15 decided to establish, as part of the GBF, a multilateral mechanism for benefit-sharing from the use of DSI, including a global fund; as well as a fair, transparent, inclusive, participatory and time-bound process to further develop and operationalize the mechanism, to be finalized at COP 16. In this context, the Secretariat stated that the main agenda item for the Working Group was item 3 on Issues for further consideration set out in the annex to Decision 15/9.

37. The Secretariat also provided an overview of the documents to be considered by the Working Group.

38. In response to questions raised by Bureau members, the Secretariat clarified that:

- a) At the opening of the Working Group meeting in plenary, only regional groups would be invited to deliver opening statements and these statements were expected to be general, covering only policy perspectives. In the COW, statements containing substantive proposals or comments were expected to be made by regional groups, Parties, and observers.
- b) During the COW, the Secretariat would provide information on the various processes linked to DSI.
- c) The meetings of the Working Group on DSI and the Working Group on Article 8(j) had been arranged to minimize the impacts of one on the other. Each Party was funded separately for each Working Group to ensure that their participation did not overlap. Furthermore, every effort would be made to only have one contact group taking place at a time, although informal groups might meet in parallel to the contact groups.

39. On 13 November 2023, Ms. Mphatso Kalemba and Mr. Lockhart, the proposed Co-Chairs of the COW joined the Bureau meeting. They expressed their appreciation to the Bureau for nominating them as Co-chairs and looked forward to the Bureau's guidance throughout the process. Ms. Mphatso Kalemba noted that, for the next day's discussion in the Working Group, regions should be encouraged to find solutions to the issues at hand, rather than dwell on previous discussions. Mr. Lockhart added that the regions would be instrumental in ensuring quick progress, within the limited time available, after the long gap from COP 15 discussions.

40. In response to questions and comments from Bureau members, Ms. Mphatso Kalemba explained that one main challenge for the Working Group discussions would be finding a common understanding and narrowing down the many alternatives provided for the issues at hand. Mr. Lockhart stated that the major focus of the Working Group discussions would be document CBD/WGDSI/1/2/Add.2/Rev.1 containing an executive summary of the compilation of lessons learned from other international funding mechanisms, where Parties would be requested to provide views on the different clusters. Mr. Lockhart added that there was an expectation from other related international processes that the Working Group would make progress on the important issues.

41. The Bureau designated Ms. Angela Lozan (Moldova) as Rapporteur for the Working Group meeting.

42. On 15, 16, 17 and 18 November 2023, the Co-Chairs of the COW and the Secretariat provided the Bureau with updates on the proceedings. They noted that the COW had established a contact group co-chaired by Ms. Salima Kampenaer (Belgium) and Ms. Nneka Nicholas (Antigua and Barbuda), to discuss the issues for further consideration listed in the annex to decision 15/9, on the basis of a non-paper. Additional versions of the non-paper were published sequentially for the consideration of the contact group, and subsequently conference room papers were prepared as the basis of the work of the contact group for consideration by the COW.

43. On 16 November, the Bureau members from the Eastern European region and WEOG requested more information on the study regarding a multilateral mechanism for benefit-sharing from the use of DSI, to be

commissioned pursuant to COP decision 15/9. The Secretariat indicated that the commencement of the study highly depended on the UN procurement process. The Secretariat added that a draft of the study would be made available for peer review and the main findings of the study would be part of the documentation for the next meeting of the Working Group; and furthermore, that there was enough flexibility in the terms of reference for the study to ensure that points taken from the Working Group meeting would be included in the study.

44. On 17 November 2023, the Co-Chairs of the COW invited the Bureau members to provide suggestions on how to move the intersessional process smoothly. A Bureau member from the Asia-Pacific region reiterated the region's request for capacity building before the next formal meeting. The Secretariat indicated that it was ready to support the capacity building initiative taking into consideration the requirement of a balanced approach across the regions. The Secretariat added that webinars could be organized, although in-person training would be subject to the availability of resources.

45. On 18 November, Mr. Lockhart noted that the COW had established a contact group, co-chaired by himself and Ms. Mphatso Kalemba, to discuss proposals for intersessional work between the first meeting of the Working Group and its next meeting scheduled for August 2024. Mr. Lockhart indicated that the contact group considered three proposed modalities for intersessional work, namely: information sharing, an informal advisory group (IAG) and informal consultations facilitated by the Co-Chairs. The Secretariat explained that the IAG meetings would likely start in January 2024 and Parties would be invited to provide nominations within a reasonable time. The Secretariat indicated that physical meetings involving all Parties and stakeholders were not envisaged for the intersessional work. Bureau members shared their views on aspects of the modalities for intersessional work, including balancing inclusiveness with managing the discussions and rotating the timing of online sessions to take different time zones into account.

46. A Bureau member from the Asia-Pacific region informed the Bureau that her region was requesting for a one-day consultative meeting on DSI before the next Working Group meeting. The Secretariat indicated that it would consult on the possibility of holding the proposed regional meeting.

ITEM 6. HOSTING OF COP-16 AND THE CONCURRENT MEETINGS OF THE PARTIES TO THE PROTOCOLS

47. On 11 November 2023, the Chair recalled that, due to internal constraints, Türkiye had decided to withdraw its offer to host COP 16 and its concurrent meetings. He informed the meeting that the Secretariat, under the guidance of the President, and the Bureau, had been conducting close consultations with Parties regarding the hosting of these meetings.

48. The Chair also recalled that the resumed session of the second part of COP 15 in Nairobi had requested the Executive Secretary to expedite consultations with Parties on the date and venue of COP 16 and its concurrent meetings, and, in the absence of any viable offer from a Party by the end of December 2023, explore, in consultation with the Bureau, arrangements to hold the meetings at the seat of the Secretariat.

49. Upon invitation by the Chair, the Acting Executive Secretary informed the meeting that there were no new developments, and that the Secretariat would continue consulting Parties from different regions.

50. A Bureau member representing WEOG informed the Bureau that the main hindrance for potential host countries from WEOG was that a number of them would be going through national elections in 2024. He also stated that Switzerland was expected to take a decision, in December, on whether or not to host the COP 16 and COP-MOP meetings.

51. The Chair concluded that the Secretariat would be entrusted with the task of conducting, under the guidance of the President and the Bureau, further consultations and providing timely updates to the Bureau for its consideration.

ITEM 7. OTHER MATTERS

52. A number of other matters were raised at the various meetings of the Bureau as set out in the following paragraphs.

53. On 13 November 2023, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that the Government of Switzerland would be holding a reception the following day for all delegations. The Bureau members expressed their appreciation to the Government of Switzerland.

54. On 15 November 2023, regarding a concern about the limited number of meeting days which resulted in a heavy workload and agenda, the Secretariat indicated that the number of meeting days was determined by the Budget Committee of the COP, and that the Secretariat would make a follow-up on the matter with that Committee. A Bureau member from GRULAC observed that it was equally the Bureau's responsibility to ensure that meetings were properly scheduled within the limited time available. On a related matter, on 17 November, a Bureau member from WEOG mentioned that the region was not in favour of overlapping Working Group meetings. The Secretariat stated that it was working within constraints of the budget and availability of venues.

55. In response to a query from a Bureau member, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that the level of security measures at Geneva were determined by the UN Department for Safety and Security which assessed that there was no need for high level security.

56. A Bureau member from GRULAC informed the Bureau that the DSA cards of most of the sponsored delegates from her region had not been credited with funds yet, which was causing hardship for them in terms of food and accommodation costs. The Secretariat expressed its sincere apologies and stated that the matter would be promptly addressed to ensure that the DSA cards for the affected delegates were credited. On 14 November 2023, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that the DSA cards would be credited that day.

57. On 15 November 2023, the Bureau members from Africa, Asia-Pacific and GRULAC indicated that there were still a number of delegates from their respective regions whose DSA cards had not been credited with funds. They noted that this was affecting the ability of the concerned delegates to effectively participate in the meetings which were long with a heavy schedule. The Secretariat re-iterated its apologies and assured the Bureau that the matter was being handled with the utmost urgency. A Bureau member from the Eastern European region proposed that, as an emergency measure, the Secretariat, in conjunction with the Swiss Government, could consider providing food to the affected delegates and reassuring their respective hotels that payment would be forthcoming. On 16 November 2023, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that most delegates had now been paid their DSA except for those that arrived later who would also be paid by the end of the day.

58. On 11 November, in response to a question, the Secretariat clarified that "Eastern European States" was the appropriate name for the regional group, in accordance with United Nations terminology. Therefore, in order to align the Secretariat language in this respect with the United Nations, the term "Central and Eastern European States" would no longer be used. There were no implications of this change for the composition of the group.

59. In response to a question, the Secretariat clarified that the agenda for SBI 4 and related documentation would be completed and published after the reports of SBSTTA 25 and the resumed second part of COP 15, CP/COP MOP 10 and NP/COP MOP 4 were finalized.

60. The Bureau was not expected to take decisions on matters of substance but discussed procedures and processes to ensure the prevalence of Party-led processes in the consideration of issues. Decisions on substantive matters were intended to be taken by the relevant CBD intergovernmental bodies. Nonetheless, the Bureau was usually instrumental in streamlining agendas of the COP and COP-MOP meetings from a process perspective. Every Party had the right to propose substantive agenda items before the agenda was finalized.

61. On 13 November 2023, the Chair of SBSTTA, Ms. Barudanovic, indicated that SBSTTA had an extensive agenda which was impacted by discussions in other CBD processes, and gave an example of agenda item 7 of the

Working Group on Article 8(j), relating to traditional knowledge indicators, which she said had implications on the SBSTTA agenda. In this context, the SBSTTA Chair requested the COP Bureau to consider how to effectively organize SBSTTA 26, taking into account the heavy workload. She also indicated that for the purposes of continuity and smooth transition, an in-person meeting should be organized for the new SBSTTA Bureau members, together with the immediate past members.

62. In response to the SBSTTA Chair's first point, the Secretariat recalled that a joint meeting of the COP and SBSTTA Bureaux was held earlier in the year in Kunming, China, to plan for SBSTTA 25 and 26. The Secretariat noted that since a new SBSTTA Bureau was in place, the issue of holding another joint bureaux meeting could be revisited. Regarding the SBSTTA Chair's second point, the Secretariat stated that there were currently no resources to hold an in-person intersessional SBSTTA Bureau meeting, but that other possibilities would be considered.

63. On 14 November 2023, a Bureau member from WEOG indicated that the region would be able to fund an in-person meeting between the COP and SBSTTA bureaux. The SBSTTA Chair expressed her gratitude to the WEOG region for this offer.

64. On another matter, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly approved a draft resolution on the Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its contribution to sustainable development. The Secretariat stated that the draft resolution, inter alia, welcomed the adoption of the GBF and the decision on DSI, and also acknowledged indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as the development of the related new programme of work. The Chair of SBSTTA stated that the draft resolution was a welcome development which ought to be communicated to Parties and published on the CBD website. The Secretariat concurred but advised that the draft resolution was yet to be formally adopted by the General Assembly.

65. In relation to the Bern III Conference on Cooperation Among the Biodiversity-related Conventions for the Implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, being organized by UNEP from 23 to 25 January 2024, in Bern, Switzerland, the Secretariat suggested, on 11 November, that Bureau members consult with their regions to provide five nominations, one per UN regional group, by 18 November 2023, so that the Secretariat could inform UNEP and proceed with next steps. The Secretariat clarified that, for each region, if none of the Bureau members were available, a substitute Bureau member could be nominated, and if that substitute was not available, the region could nominate another person from the region. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that a formal invitation for nominations, including background information, would be sent out the same day.

66. On 17 November 2023, the Bureau members announced the names of the nominees from their respective regions for the Bern III Conference as follows: Ms. Hlobisile Sikhosana (Africa – as communicated earlier), Ms. Angela Lozan (Eastern Europe), Mr. Jesus Guerra Bell (GRULAC), and Ms. Marina Von Weissenberg (WEOG). The Bureau member from the Asia-Pacific region indicated that the region was still consulting on its nominee. On 18 November 2023, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that since most of the nominations for the Bern III Conference had been received, the Secretariat would be issuing formal invitation letters. The Secretariat thanked the Bureau for guiding the work of the Working Groups throughout the week, and also expressed its appreciation to the rapporteur and the Co-Chairs.

67. At its final session on 18 November 2023, the Chair thanked the Secretariat for the work undertaken in servicing the meetings.

68. The Secretariat staff present at the Bureau meeting, except the Senior Legal Officer who was requested to remain, recused themselves to allow the Bureau members discuss the pending appointment of the Executive Secretary of the Convention.

69. On 11 November 2023, the Bureau members inquired about the progress of selecting the new Executive Secretary of the CBD Secretariat. As there were no representative from UNEP present, no information was provided. The Bureau requested for updates to be distributed before the end of the week. At its final session on

18 November 2023, the Chair informed the Bureau that the COP15 Presidency had conveyed the Bureau's concerns to UNEP immediately but had not received a formal reply to date. The Bureau members emphasized that the Bureau should have been closely involved in this process and provided with timely updates. The Bureau stated that a formal inquiry should be made to UNEP asking to provide an update. The Chair assured that he would convey the Bureau's concerns to UNEP promptly.

ITEM 8. CLOSURE OF THE MEETINGS

70. The first Bureau meeting held on 11 November 2023 was closed at 13:00 p.m. The last meeting held on 18 November 2023 was closed at 9:00 a.m.
