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High Symbolism, High Stakes Mark Historic 1st Meeting of New Biodiversity Body

Indigenous peoples and local communities representation at the decision-making level of a UN environmental treaty is unprecedented

Panama City-Montreal – Amid a mix of celebration and caution, Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) made important progress and decisions on the operation and governance of its new Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and Other Provisions of the CBD Related to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

At the Subsidiary Body's inaugural meeting (SB8J-1, 27 – 30 October in Panama City), delegates advanced important aspects of work on CBD's Article 8j, which relates to traditional knowledge, innovations and practices

SB8J is the first permanent body of its kind to be established under a Multilateral Environmental Agreement. Dedicated to elevating the role and leveraging the contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities in the implementation of the objectives of the CBD, this new Subsidiary Body was adopted in a landmark decision at the 16th Conference of the Parties to the CBD Convention (COP16) in 2024 in Cali, Colombia.

During this first meeting of SB8j, delegates:

- Addressed foundational issues, such as the operation and governance of the SB8J, including mechanisms to ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in its work.

- Held an in-depth dialogue on strategies for mobilizing resources to ensure the availability of and access to financial resources and funding, as well as other means of implementation, including capacity-building, development and technical support for indigenous peoples and local communities.
- Advanced important discussions on guidelines related to the implementation of the programme of work on Article 8j, which was adopted at COP 16 last year in Cali
- Advanced the contribution of traditional knowledge to the global report on collective progress in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, or KMGBF. The report will feed into the first global review of progress in the implementation of the KMGBF to be held in Yerevan, Armenia, in October 2026.

Strong support was expressed for reflecting the expertise of women and youth in the work of the CBD.

The Parties' decisions in full can be found [here](#), with some square bracketed text to be resolved later at COP17 next October in Armenia.

Colombia's Environment Minister Irene Vélez Torres, the current President of CBD's COP16, hailed the new body as an "unprecedented step toward greater environmental democracy."

The Minister of Environment of Panama, Juan Carlos Navarro, meanwhile, urged the body to ensure that commitments "translate into real policies, accessible funding, and visible results on the ground."

Astrid Schomaker, CBD Executive Secretary, stressed: "This is just the beginning of the journey, but the first round of SB8J negotiations has paved the way for a fully operational body that has everything it needs to deliver on its mandate and marks a major step forward."

Earth Negotiations Bulletin daily updates: <https://enb.iisd.org/cbd-subsiary-body-scientific-technical-technological-advice-sbstta27-sb8j1>

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