



Convention on Biological Diversity

BUREAU OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC,
TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE
9:00 to 10:54 a.m. (Montreal time)
Via Teleconference (Microsoft Teams)
18 September 2025

MEETING MINUTES

INTRODUCTION

1. The meeting of the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) was attended by the following members of the Bureau: Mr. Jean Bruno Mikissa (Gabon, Chair), Mr. Mostafa Madbouhi (Morocco), Ms. Ruliyana Susanti (Indonesia), Mr. Md. Jahidul Kabir (Bangladesh), Mr. Jan Plesnik (Czech Republic), Ms. Aria St. Louis (Grenada), Ms. Ana Laura Mello Villamarin (Uruguay), Ms. Sanne Kruid (The Netherlands) and Mr. Scott Wilson (Canada). Apologies were received from Ms. Jane Stratford (The United Kingdom), Ms. Paulina Stowhas Salinas (Chile), Mr. Francis O. Reyes Polanco (Dominican Republic), Mr. Taulant Bino (Albania) and Mr. Kenneth Uiseb (Namibia).
2. Also attending were Ms. Sakhile Silitshena (OIC Head of Science Society and Sustainable Futures Division, support to SBSTTA Secretary), Ms. Wadzanayi Mandivenyi (Head of Biosafety Protocol Unit), Ms. Jamal Annagylyjova (OIC Head of Biodiversity, Science, Policy and Governance Unit, Programme Management Officer for Ecosystem Restoration and Forest Biodiversity), Ms. Monica Kobayashi (Programme Management Officer for Inland Waters and Agriculture Biodiversity), Ms. Marianela Araya Quesada (Programme Management Officer for IAS and Health and Biodiversity), Mr. Tristan Tyrrell (Programme Management Officer for Climate Change), Ms. Lisa Pedicelli (Programme Assistant) Ms. Inonge Mweene (Legal Officer), Ms. Jacqueline Grekin (Programme Assistant) and Ms. Myriam Samya (Programme Assistant) of the CBD Secretariat.

I. OPENING OF THE MEETING

3. The meeting was opened at 9 a.m. local time (GMT -4) on Thursday 18 September 2025 by Mr. Mikissa, the Chair of SBSTTA and Ms. Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
4. In her opening remarks, Ms. Schomaker welcomed Bureau members to the final stages of preparations for SBSTTA-27 and thanked them for their continued commitment to the Convention. She gave special recognition to colleagues in the Secretariat for their dedication, noting that all official documents were published ahead of the deadline. She highlighted that the key item on the agenda was the

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approval of the draft modalities for the early submission of statements and first reading of agenda items. These modalities were developed in response to the Bureau's request to streamline work, facilitate early preparations, and enhance meeting effectiveness. She expressed hope that the Bureau could approve the modalities to allow the issuance of a notification promptly. She also noted that, due to limited funding, only one delegate per country would be supported for SBSTTA-27, which presents challenges for some countries. It would also pose challenges to the scheduling of contact groups, in light of paragraph 4 of COP decision 16/25. She concluded by expressing confidence that, through joint determination, SBSTTA-27 can be a model of effectiveness and a successful meeting.

5. In his opening remarks, the Chair of SBSTTA, Mr. Jean Bruno Mikissa, thanked the Secretariat team for delivering high-quality documents within the deadline and for the support provided to him. He stressed the importance of finalizing the draft modalities to advance the work of SBSTTA. He also highlighted that consultations within the regions are key, noting that strong regional representation helps ensure a balanced and effective preparatory process.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

6. The Chair introduced the provisional agenda for the meeting, and there being no objections, the agenda was adopted without changes.

III. PREPARATIONS FOR THE TWENTY-SEVENTH MEETING OF THE SBSTTA (SBSTTA-27)

7. Under this item, the Bureau members, with the support of the Secretariat, reviewed the following matters in relation to the preparation for the twenty-seventh meeting of the SBSTTA, to be held in 20-24 October 2025, in Panama City, Panama.

1) Update on logistical arrangements for the meeting

- a. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the meeting will take place at the Atlapa Convention Center, which is centrally located and where transportation is relatively affordable.
- b. The Government of Panama has waived visa fees. However, visa processing requires at least one month; Bureau members were asked to relay this message to their regions. The information note will be updated to include the e-visa link for easier access and the registration for badges will take place onsite from 18 October.
- c. A joint workshop with IPBES is scheduled for 18 October.
- d. The Secretariat provided an update on side events: 77 requests received, with 44 for SBSTTA and 33 for SBSTTA SB8(j). Side events will be scheduled over lunch (1:15–2:45 p.m.) and in the evenings (6:15–7:45 p.m.). Several meeting rooms, the plenary, and additional spaces will also be available for stakeholders, including youth, women, regional groups, IGOs, NGOs, and the private sector.
- e. On funding:
 - 116 funding requests were received, with one country requesting funding for more than one delegate;
 - 86 delegates were funded: 59 SIDS and LDCs, 27 other developing countries;
 - 30 countries remain without funding. Priority was given to SIDS and LDCs, ensuring regional balance and supporting at least one delegate per country;

- Some countries raised concerns about lack of funding support; Others noted challenges with forming two contact groups when only one delegate per country is funded;
 - Bureau members expressed concern that limited funding could affect inclusiveness and the smooth conduct of the meeting.
- f. Some Bureau members suggested reconsidering two parallel contact groups under the circumstances. Others recalled that in previous meetings, scaling back the agenda or reducing contact groups had been necessary in similar funding situations. One Bureau member requested clarification on how the situation had been handled in previous SBSTTA meetings where it had not been possible to fund all developing country delegates that had requested travel support.
 - g. It was suggested that the matter of funding support be raised with the COP Bureau.
 - h. Practical arrangements: at the request of Muslim participants, a prayer room will be arranged.
 - i. On budget mechanisms: a Bureau member inquired whether the decision taken at COP 16, allowing the secretariat's temporary coverage of participation costs if donor transfers are delayed, was being applied. The Executive Secretary explained that all contributions had been received, and no new donor commitments are in the pipeline. However, given the short visa window, fundraising for the remaining 30 countries may be difficult.

2) Finalization of the scenario note, including draft modalities for early submission of statements on a trial basis

- a. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that a revised proposal of the draft modalities for early submission of statements was prepared, building on earlier drafts and incorporating elements from different regional inputs.
- b. Following an internal legal review, the Secretariat confirmed that the draft addresses the relevant COP decision. To avoid procedural issues, it was proposed that the early submission of statements be voluntary and informal. A notification would invite Parties to voluntarily submit written statements by 19 October.
- c. Bureau members highlighted the importance of providing clear guidance to Parties and observers on the process, to promote efficiency and avoid confusion. One Bureau member pointed out the importance of all Parties and observers making use of the pilot modality in order to effectively assess its usefulness, and requested the Executive Secretary to “encourage” rather than “request” Parties to make use of the pilot modality.
- d. The Bureau member from the Group of Latin American countries stated that the region had some comments, but that they were addressed by the changes suggested by the Secretariat.
- e. The Secretariat confirmed that the notification to Parties and observers on the modalities will include the link for submission of statements, which will also apply to observers. Observers' participation would remain subject to the Chair's invitation.
- f. To meet the 30-day requirement for Parties, the Secretariat emphasized that the notification would have to be issued the following day.
- g. The Bureau approved the draft modalities, with the understanding that the Secretariat will incorporate suggestions made during the meeting.
- h. Regarding the draft scenario note, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that written comments had been received, though not yet incorporated into the revised version, because of the pending Bureau decision on the modalities for early submissions.
- i. The Bureau discussed the organization of work, particularly contact groups, noting that the number and scope of groups would depend on the workload and the number of delegates present;

- j. It was recalled that previous Bureau discussions had identified potential items for contact groups, but that flexibility would be needed, as decisions on the establishment and scope of contact groups ultimately rest with the Bureau and not the plenary. A Bureau member emphasized that it would be premature to determine in advance the number of contact groups or the specific agenda items that would necessitate such groups. It was noted that a more accurate assessment can only be made following the initial reading of the agenda items.
- k. Bureau members noted the challenges of managing parallel contact groups with limited delegate participation, highlighting the importance of balancing efficiency with inclusiveness;
- l. It was agreed that the scenario note should remain generic on the number and scope of contact groups, while allowing the Bureau to define them as needed during the meeting;
- m. A proposal was made that a smaller group, comprising Bureau members, the Chair, and the Secretariat, would be tasked with reviewing practical options for the organization of contact groups, taking into account funding, participation, and the agenda.

IV. OTHER MATTERS

- 8. A Bureau Member informed the Bureau that PBL and IDDRI will organize regional dialogues on the Global Review during SBSTTA-27. Bureau members who wished to receive further information were invited to indicate their interest, so they may be put in contact with the organizers.
- 9. The action points for this meeting are provided in the annex to this report.

VI. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

- 10. The meeting concluded with appreciative remarks by the SBSTTA Chair towards Bureau members for their active participation and willingness to support the Secretariat in organizing the forthcoming meetings of SBSTTA.
- 11. The Bureau meeting closed at 10:54 am (Eastern Time)

Action Items

1. Bureau members to remind their regions that visa applications require at least one month, and to refer to the updated information note.
2. Secretariat to finalize logistical arrangements for registration, side events, and prayer room facilities.
3. Secretariat and Bureau to explore options to manage limited funding, including reconsideration of parallel contact groups and agenda adjustments.
4. Chair to consider raising the issue of funding with the COP Bureau.
5. Secretariat to finalize and issue the notification on the pilot modalities for early submission of statements the soonest.
6. Secretariat to incorporate Bureau suggestions into the final draft modalities.
7. Secretariat to circulate the revised scenario note for Bureau review before finalization.
8. Interested Bureau members should contact the Netherlands Bureau member to be connected with PBL and IDDRI for the regional dialogues.
