



Convention on Biological Diversity

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**Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific,
Technical and Technological Advice**
Teleconference, 26 March 2026

Minutes of the meeting of the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice held via teleconference on 26 March 2026

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) met on 26 March 2026 via Microsoft Teams teleconference. The meeting was attended by the following members of the Bureau: Mr. Jean Bruno Mikissa (Gabon), Chair; Mr. Mostafa Madbouhi (Morocco); Mr. Dickson Chitupa (Zimbabwe); Mr. Karl Fellenius (Marshall Islands); Ms. Ruliyana Susanti (Indonesia); Mr. Karen Khachatrian (Armenia); Mr. Jan Plesnik (Czech Republic); Ms. Paulina Stowhas Salinas (Chile); Ms. Anna Laura Mello Villamarin (Uruguay); Mr. Niklaus Wagner (Switzerland); and Ms. Sanne Kruid (Netherlands). Apologies were received from Ms. Kishma Primus-Ormond (Antigua and Barbuda) and Ms. Camille Inatio (Federated States of Micronesia).

2. Also in attendance were Ms. Sakhile Silitshena, Head, Science Society and Sustainable Futures Division (SBSTTA Secretary); Mr. Olivier Rukundo, Head, Peoples and Biodiversity Unit; Ms. Marianela Araya Quesada, Programme Management Officer (invasive alien species and health and biodiversity); Mr. Joseph Appiott, Programme Management Officer (marine and coastal biodiversity); Ms. Monica Kobayashi, Programme Management Officer (inland waters and agricultural biodiversity); Mr. Kieran Noonan Mooney, Programme Management Officer; Ms. Wadzanayi Mandivenyi, Head, Biosafety Protocol Unit; Mr. Austein Mcloughlin, Programme Management Officer; Ms. Regina Kipper, Programme Assistant; Mr. Q"apaj Conde, Programme Management Officer; Ms. Jacqueline Grekin, Programme Assistant; and Ms. Myriam Samya, Staff Assistant, of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

II. OPENING OF THE MEETING

3. The meeting was opened at 9 a.m. (Eastern Time) on Thursday, 26 March 2026, by the Chair, Mr. Jean Bruno Mikissa. Opening statements were delivered by the Chair and by Ms. Sakhile Silitshena, Secretary of SBSTTA.

4. In her opening remarks, Ms. Silitshena, speaking on behalf of the Executive Secretary, welcomed Bureau members to the first meeting of the SBSTTA Bureau in 2026, noting that it is a COP year with a particularly full agenda. She emphasized that the meetings of the subsidiary bodies will be critical to ensuring a successful outcome of the COP. She highlighted the important role of the SBSTTA Bureau in providing strategic guidance and steering preparations towards SBSTTA-28, as well as in ensuring efficient and effective outcomes. She further underscored that the Secretariat

would continue to support the Bureau and ensure the smooth organization and conduct of SBSTTA-28.

5. In his opening remarks, the Chair of SBSTTA, Mr. Jean Bruno Mikissa, welcomed Bureau members and thanked them for their continued engagement and dedication to the preparations for SBSTTA-28. He stressed the importance of ensuring that the work is both technically robust and responsive to the expectations of Parties. He expressed appreciation for the support provided by the Secretariat in preparing documents, coordinating intersessional work and organizing the meeting. He noted that the agenda focuses on key areas requiring the Bureau's guidance, including the preparation of documents, organization of work, identification of contact group co-chairs, and the enhancement of preparedness of Parties and observers. He highlighted the importance of these elements for the effectiveness of SBSTTA and concluded by expressing confidence that the meeting would contribute to alignment and readiness for a productive SBSTTA-28.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

6. The Chair introduced the provisional agenda. There being no objections, the agenda was adopted.

IV. PREPARATIONS FOR THE TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF SBSTTA: DOCUMENTATION, INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND THE ROLE OF THE BUREAU

7. Under this agenda item, the Bureau, with the support of the Secretariat, considered updates on the preparations for SBSTTA-28, including progress on document preparation, intersessional work and the role of the Bureau. Relevant documents for each sub-item had been circulated by the Secretariat in advance of the meeting, and Bureau members were invited to provide comments and guidance.

Global review of collective progress in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework:

8. The methodology was considered at the March 2026 meeting of the Ad Hoc Scientific and Technical Advisory Group (AHSTAG), and the draft report is scheduled to undergo peer review starting on 1 June for a four-week period. This process may result in some revisions to the methodologies; however, the technical meeting provided assurance that the scientific basis is robust.

9. SBSTTA will validate the scientific content of the global report, review the identified gaps and provide recommendations to address them. The complete package will subsequently be submitted to the SBI and then to the COP as a draft decision.

10. Pre-session documents will include the peer-reviewed draft report and an information document containing the full global report. The information document will also be considered by SBSTTA.

11. All documents related to this agenda item, including the global report and the SBSTTA and SBI documents, will be prepared in parallel to ensure consistency.

12. A technical dialogue among Parties and stakeholders is planned for September to discuss the global report. A potential host country has been identified, but confirmation is pending. Preparatory webinars and workshops, including one scheduled for 25 July and an IPBES workshop, will support the discussions. A webinar will also be organized following the launch of the peer review to share information with Parties. The Secretariat was requested to ensure that the global dialogue does not coincide with regional COP preparation meetings.

Monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework:

13. The Secretariat is reviewing the use of indicators and updating the associated metadata. Alignment with the eighth national report will take place at the next SBSTTA following COP 17.

Areas of potential further work in the context of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework:

14. In response to a question from a SBSTTA Bureau member regarding SBSTTA recommendation 27/6 on areas of potential further work in the context of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that it is compiling information from various relevant organizations relating to their activities on the interaction of chemicals and waste, including plastic waste, with biodiversity and ecosystem services. This information will be shared as an information document, in line with the recommendation, which does not specify that the item will be considered by SBSTTA-28.

Potential delays in the publication of documents:

15. Delays are anticipated in the publication of certain documents, as outlined below:

(a) Global report on the review of progress (item 3): The timeline for the global report was determined by COP decision 16/32. In accordance with that timeline, the document will be issued after the deadline for SBSTTA documentation.

(b) Synthetic biology (item 5): The draft document will be submitted for internal review by the end of May. Preparation of the independent scientific study experienced significant delays due to institutional procurement issues. In addition, a robust peer-review process is required for the study, which constitutes a key input to the meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (19–22 May 2026). Preparation of the pre-session document remains a priority for the Secretariat and will be completed following the meeting of the Expert Group.

(c) Marine and coastal biodiversity (item 8): The pre-session document is expected to be issued by the SBSTTA deadline. However, the information document containing the full descriptions of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas may be delayed until the end of May 2026 owing to extended online comment periods required under the new modalities adopted at COP 16, which provide for a six-month comment period.

16. The Secretariat reported that all other documents were on track for timely publication.

Pre-SBSTTA-28 workshops:

17. Three workshops will be held on 25 July 2026; namely, a workshop on the global report, a workshop on the latest findings of IPBES, and a lunch session on synthetic biology.

V. IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF SBSTTA

Identification of potential contact group co-chairs:

18. The Secretariat presented a preliminary list of potential co-chairs for contact groups at SBSTTA-28 for the Bureau's consideration. For each agenda item, the Secretariat proposed two experts from developing countries and two from developed countries in order to provide a broad pool of candidates. This resulted in proportionally more suggestions from the Western European and Others Group (WEOG), which would be addressed in the final selection. It was noted that candidates had not yet been contacted to confirm their availability. The Bureau was invited to review the list and propose additional names.

19. A Bureau member suggested adapting the approach used at SBSTTA-27, under which Bureau members consult within their regions to identify potential co-chairs. The resulting list would be merged with the Secretariat's list, and co-chairs would be selected from the combined pool. The Bureau agreed to this approach and to establish a small group to review the consolidated list.

20. Bureau members noted that regional consultations were under way and requested additional time to submit names of potential contact group co-chairs
21. The Bureau agreed that additional suggestions are to be submitted by 17 April 2026.
22. Training for contact group co-chairs is planned for 24 July 2026.

Modalities for the early submission of statements:

23. Under this agenda item, the Secretariat presented a summary of the experiences related to the application of the modalities for the early submission of statements at SBI-6, including findings of a survey conducted among meeting participants.
24. The Secretariat informed the SBSTTA Bureau that the COP Bureau will review the SBI-6 experience at its meeting scheduled for 16 April 2026. The outcomes of that review will be shared with the SBSTTA Bureau.
25. SBSTTA Bureau members emphasized the need for clear guidelines on the modalities, including with respect to timing, statement length and the sequencing of agenda items.
26. The SBSTTA Bureau agreed to await the outcome of the COP Bureau's consideration of the modalities before taking a decision on their application at SBSTTA-28.

Organization of work, scenario note and preparatory webinars:

27. With regard to the organization of work, the Secretariat proposed ten plenary sessions, with parallel contact group sessions where possible.
28. Bureau members highlighted the importance of aligning approaches for SBSTTA and SBI, in particular, with regards to observer statements, and optimizing the balance between plenary and contact group discussions. It was noted that items suitable for detailed discussion in contact groups could facilitate more efficient plenary sessions. Bureau members agreed that certain agenda items, including items 3(a) and 5, should not be discussed in parallel.
29. Some Bureau members expressed concerns from their regions regarding the effectiveness of timing and meeting structure.

VI. SCHEDULE OF SBSTTA BUREAU MEETINGS

30. Under this agenda item, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that the standard schedule for the SBSTTA Bureau is one meeting per quarter and that, accordingly, the next scheduled meeting should take place in June 2026. It was noted that additional meetings could be convened should issues arise that require the Bureau's attention.
31. SBSTTA Bureau members requested that a meeting be held in May 2026. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that holding a meeting in May 2026 would pose challenges, as this period coincides with the document preparation phase for SBSTTA-28. Bearing that in mind, the Bureau decided to hold a meeting in May 2026.
32. The SBSTTA Bureau proposed the convening of a joint meeting with the COP Bureau. The proposal will be shared with the COP Bureau, and the outcome will be communicated to the SBSTTA Bureau accordingly.

VII. OTHER MATTERS

A SBSTTA Bureau member noted the high cost of flights owing to the current situation in the Middle East region and inquired whether the Secretariat was taking measures in response. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the issue had been noted and that the Administration Unit of the Secretariat was addressing it to the extent possible.

33. The Bureau and the Secretariat were informed of the resignation of Ms. Camille Inatio (Federated States of Micronesia).
34. The action points arising from the meeting are set out in the annex to this report.

VIII. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

35. The SBSTTA Bureau Chair thanked the SBSTTA Bureau members for their active engagement and closed the meeting at 11:04 a.m.

ANNEX: MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING

1. Bureau members to consult within their regions and submit additional proposed contact group co-chairs by 17 April 2026. This deadline has been extended to 24 April 2026.
2. The SBSTTA Bureau to convene a working group to review the pool of potential contact group co-chairs and select a final list.
3. The Secretariat to share the outcomes of the COP Bureau's review of the SBI-6 experience with the modalities for the early submission of statements.
1. The Secretariat to transmit to the COP Bureau, the SBSTTA Bureau's proposal for a joint meeting with the COP Bureau and inform the SBSTTA Bureau of the outcome.
