



Convention on Biological Diversity

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MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
Hybrid, Nairobi, Kenya, 12 May 2024

MINUTES OF THE HYBRID BUREAU MEETING HELD IN NARIOBI, KENYA, ON 12 MAY 2024

1. A hybrid meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties was held via MS Teams and in-person in Nairobi, Kenya on 12 May 2024 at 15:15 EAT. The purpose of the Bureau meetings was to consider how to move forward with the overall agenda of SBI 4, in light of the delay in the publishing of a number of the documents for the meeting.
2. The following members of the Bureau attended the meeting:
Representative of the COP President: Mr. Liu Ning (China).
Africa: Mr. Zino Izourar (Algeria), Mr. Moustafa Fouda (Egypt, substitute for Algeria for matters related to the Nagoya Protocol).
Asia-Pacific: Ms. Somaly Chan (Cambodia); Mr. Krishneel Nand (Fiji).
Eastern Europe: Ms. Teona Karchava (Georgia); Ms. Angela Lozan (Republic of Moldova).
Latin America and the Caribbean: Ms. Maria Teresa Becerra Ramirez (Colombia); Ms. Corina Sarli (Argentina, substitute for Colombia for matters related to the Nagoya Protocol); Ms. Gillian Guthrie (Jamaica), Mr. Jesus Guerra Bell (Cuba, representing, substitute for Jamaica for matters related to the Nagoya Protocol).
Western Europe and Others: Mr. Eric Schauls (Luxembourg); Mr. Norbert Bärlocher (Switzerland).
Ex officio: Ms. Senka Barudanovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Matters (SBSTTA). Mr. Chirra Achalender Reddy (India), Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation.
COP Presidency: Ms. WANG Ye, Ms. GUAN Jing, Ms. LIU Xiaqiong, Ms. ZHAO Haishan.
Observer: Mr. Neville Ash (UNEP)
3. The Secretariat was represented by Mr. David Cooper (Acting Executive Secretary), Ms. Jihyun Lee (Director of Science, Society and Sustainable Futures Division), Mr. Taukondjo Shikongo (Senior Programme Management Officer, ABS Unit), Mr. Neil Pratt (Officer in Charge, Implementation Support Division), Ms. Kathryn Garforth (Programme Management Officer), Ms. Wadzanayi Mandivenyi (Head, Biosafety Protocol Unit), Mr. Worku Yifru (Senior Legal Officer), Mr. David Ainsworth (Information Officer), Mr. Lijie Cai (Programme Management Officer), Ms. Inonge Mweene (Legal Officer), Ms. Li Gu (Programme Management Officer), Ms. Imane Sednaoui (Staff Assistant), and Ms. Christine Estrada (Senior Programme Management Assistant).

4. The hybrid meeting was opened by Mr. Liu Ning, representative of the Chinese COP 15 Presidency, who welcomed the Bureau members, thanked them for attending the meeting given the short notice given to convene it and briefly explained the purpose of the meeting. He then invited the SBI Chair, Mr. Chirra Achalender Reddy, to chair the rest of the meeting.
5. The SBI Chair invited a quick round of introductions of all Bureau members, both present in the room and those who were participating online. He then invited the Acting Executive Secretary to address the meeting.
6. The Acting Executive Secretary also thanked the Bureau members for attending the meeting at short notice and expressed his appreciation to the Presidency for convening the meeting. The Acting Executive Secretary conveyed, on behalf of the Secretariat of the Convention, sincere apologies for the delay in the posting of the documents for SBI 4. He noted that although the Secretariat had experienced some delays before, it had never experienced delays of so many documents at a time and he acknowledged the difficulties this delay posed for delegations and their preparations for the meeting. He highlighted that some of the documents that were posted by the deadline, or shortly after, covered some of the critical issues including on capacity building, mainstreaming and others, and noted that some other documents did not include draft recommendations or decisions. He informed the Bureau members that the full meeting of the Bureau on 20 May would discuss the organization of work of SBI 4 as well as look at the preparations of other meetings and COP 16.
7. The SBI Chair, noting that the meeting was convened to address concerns regarding the delay of publishing of documents for the meeting of SBI, acknowledged the difficulties by delegations to prepare for the meeting and the difficulties experienced by the Secretariat to manage its heavy charge during the intersessional period. He made an appeal to the Bureau to find a practical way forward and opened the floor to the Bureau members to discuss the matter.
8. During the discussion, some members of the Bureau expressed concern regarding the inability of their respective regions to properly prepare for SBI 4 mainly due to the delayed posting of the documents by the Secretariat and therefore suggested that a scenario note be prepared, outlining possible ways to manage the discussion of agenda items during the meeting. One of these scenarios included consideration of prioritizing certain agenda items, or of pushing some items to SBI 5. Bureau members also emphasized the need to find a long-term solution to the current situation the Secretariat and the Convention faced, either by addressing it in the budget discussions, or focusing priorities during the intersessional period and looking at other processes or ideas, such as regional briefings. There was a request to ensure the Bureau was kept more abreast of the status of preparation of documents in the future.
9. Regarding possible ways forward, including the possibility of prioritizing agenda items or pushing some items to SBI 5 or convening an additional meeting of the SBI ahead of the one back to back to COP, Bureau members highlighted that most of these options would not be viable due to a range of reasons, including the likelihood of not reaching consensus on which agenda items to prioritize, SBI 5 being back to back to COP which would not allow some delegations to travel for a long period, and a very full international calendar and workload which would not allow for an additional meeting to be convened between now and COP 16. It was noted that any other approach other than addressing the complete agenda of items of SBI 4, would have implications that Parties would have to deal with after and set an unwanted precedent for the future. It was also noted that proceeding with the provisional agenda for SBI 4 despite the late posting of a number of documents should also not be considered as setting a precedent and rule 10 of the rules of procedure was recalled in this regard.
10. After an extensive discussion, the Bureau, acknowledging the difficulties to delegations posed by the late posting of the documents, and also acknowledging that a longer term solution was needed to assist the Secretariat to manage the workload, decided to go ahead with the proposed agenda without prioritizing or pushing items to SBI 5, and asked the Secretariat to prepare a note for the next Bureau meeting on the organization of work for SBI 4 to ensure a successful outcome.

11. The Acting Executive Secretary reiterated his apologies and appreciated the efforts delegates were willing to make to work through the nine days of SBI 4 to address all the agenda items. He also reiterated the commitment of the Secretariat to continue supporting Parties as best it could and, noting the lessons learned from this experience, welcomed the cooperation of Parties and a longer-term solution to avoid this situation in the future. Responding to a comment on the quality of the documents, the Acting Executive Secretary emphasized that part of the reason of the delay was precisely to avoid compromising on quality. He noted that the outline of the organization of work for SBI 4 was contained in the annotations to the provisional agenda (CBD/SBI/4/1/Add.1) and the Secretariat would prepare a note to facilitate the discussions of the Bureau on 20 May. He indicated that the meeting would follow standard practice on the reading of documents and creation of contact groups. He noted a number of agenda items that would likely require a contact group, two items that may require one, and some issues on which Friends of the Chair might be required to find ways forward.

12. The Chair thanked the SBI Chair for leading the discussion, thanked the Bureau for the exchange of ideas and constructive solutions, and acknowledged the cooperative manner of the Secretariat. The Chair suggested learning valuable lessons from the belated preparation of documents for SBI-4 and encouraged the acceleration of national and regional consultations prior to the meeting. The meeting was closed at 17:00 EAT.
