



Convention on Biological Diversity

BUREAU OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

8h00 to 10h00 Montreal

Via teleconference (Microsoft Teams)

23 September 2020

MINUTES

1. A meeting via teleconference of the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) was held on Wednesday 23 September 2020, from 8:00 to 10:00 (Montreal time).

2. The meeting was attended by the following members of the Bureau: Mr. Hesiquio Benitez Diaz (Mexico), Chair, Mr. Moustafa Fouda (Egypt), Mrs. Marie-May Muzungaile (Seychelles), Ms. Gwen Sisor (Palau), Mrs. Senka Barudanovic (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Mr. Adams Toussaint (Saint-Lucia), Mrs. Helena Brown (Antigua & Barbuda), Mrs. Marina von Weissenberg (Finland), Mrs. Tia Stevens (Australia) and Mr. Gaute Voigt-Hanssen (Norway). Apologies were received from Mr. Dzmitry Lukashanets (Belarus), Mr. Volodymyr Domashlinets (Ukraine), Mrs. Kongchay Phimmakong (Lao People's Democratic Republic) and Mr. Larbi Sbai (Morocco).

3. The meeting was supported by the CDB Secretariat including Mr. Alexander Shestakov, Mrs. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema and Mr. David Cooper.

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

4. The meeting was opened at 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, 23 September 2020 by the SBSTTA Chair.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

5. The SBSTTA Chair presented the only agenda item for the meeting, i.e. Proposal for the organisation of online Meetings of the CBD Subsidiary Bodies.

3. PROPOSAL FOR THE ORGANISATION OF ONLINE MEETINGS OF THE CBD SUBSIDIARY BODIES

6. The SBSTTA Chair shared his expectations for the meetings and questions to be considered during the meeting.

7. The Secretariat provided a detailed overview of the proposal which was circulated to COP and SBSTTA Bureaux on 14 September 2020.

8. The SBSTTA Chair opened the floor for questions, comments and suggestions from the Bureau members.

9. The Bureau Chair and Members raised a number of points and questions. In response and the Secretariat provided further information on the approach to organisation of online meetings:

(a) Need to maximise time for interventions during first reading to accommodate all who are asking for the floor. The Chair and the SCBD highlighted the difference in modality at SBSTTA online meeting from the special sessions held from 15 to 18 September 2020. The SBSTTA-24 meeting will follow the usual modalities where all Parties are invited to speak and observers may be limited based on time and decision of the Chair. It is also at the discretion of the Chair to extend the session on particular agenda items to the following day;

(b) Need to keep the interactive nature of the meeting to the extent possible;

(c) Option for pre-recording the first reading statements. The SCBD highlighted the issue of translation in this case. However, this option can be used as a backup for some Parties experiencing serious internet connection problems;

(d) Legal ground for decision on and organisation of online session. The SCBD confirmed the legal ground for online meetings including based on consultations with UNEP and recent UN precedents for making decision to have an online session;

(e) Opportunities for providing statements in advance including pre-recorded video statements. The SCBD highlighted the issue of complexities with interpretation in case of pre-recorded videos. However, this option can be considered for a limited number of Parties with known poor internet connectivity only as a backup option (if they cannot speak during the session);

(f) Increase the timing of daily sessions through hiring a second pool of interpreters. The SCBD informed the Bureau of rules for interpreters' services (only 2 hours' sessions and the need for a 2-hours' break between sessions if more than one session on the same day). There are significant financial implications and logistical complexities of bringing the second set of interpreters to extend the daily sessions as well as extension of the meeting for an extra day(s) while the limited budget is allocated for the SBSTTA-24 meeting;

(g) The organisation of CRP and non-papers preparation and dissemination;

(h) Key note opening presentation for selected agenda items (as agreed at the previous Bureau meetings);

(i) The importance of all agenda items to be covered and complexity of prioritising among 8 agenda items. The Chair and the SCBD explained the rationale for the selection of suggested agenda items to be considered at online meeting based on continuity of the phases of consideration/negotiation (avoiding big gaps) including through the work of potential contact groups. Some members indicated preference to cover all agenda items for the first reading by considering the possibility of one extra day, pending on financial implications;

(j) Need for regional consultations. The SCBD confirmed that the virtual space will be provided for regional consultations prior to the session as well as during the session. Also, pending on the availability of funds, the SCBD will consider options for limited interpretation for those consultations (e.g. English/French for African group and English/Spanish for GRULAC);

(k) Opportunities for regional and groups statements during the first reading. The SCBD confirmed that the usual practice will be followed and regions and groups will have 5 minutes' slots for their interventions;

(l) Issue of timing for sessions bearing in mind continuous disadvantage for the most eastern parts of the globe;

(m) Issue of not having physical meeting. The SCBD is applying a step wise approach learning from the first round of online meetings before deciding on the following stages of the SBSTTA-24 meeting in 2021 (physical or online).

10. **After discussion the Bureau agreed on the following elements of the organisation of the SBSTTA-24 online session:**

(a) **Organise formal online session of the SBSTTA-24 with a focus on the first reading of pre-session documents;**

(b) **Dates for the session as suggested in the proposal (10 – 17 December 2020 with the break during the weekend of 12 – 13 December 2020). The Secretariat will proceed with logistical preparations for those dates;**

(c) **Invite key note speakers for the opening of previously identified agenda items to provide their presentations as pre-recorded videos to be available several days before the meeting to allow Parties and observers to watch them in advance of the meeting. This will maximise the time allocated for interventions by parties and observers;**

(d) **Following the usual SBSTTA meeting practice, no regional and groups' opening statements at the opening of the meeting. However, regional and groups' statements during the first reading will follow the usual meeting practice;**

(e) **Keep established practice for the length of interventions (3 min for Parties; 5 min for regions/groups; 2 min for observers);**

(f) **Invite Parties and observers to provide their written statements in advance of the meeting (at least 1 day before the meeting) including to facilitate work of interpreters. While doing so this will follow the usual rules that the essence of the statement needs to be articulated in the oral statement during the meeting. The SCBD will provide an online platform for uploading statements;**

(g) **The meeting will be recorded and available online as well as all written submissions;**

(h) **Include agenda item 3 into the programme of the online session;**

(i) **No extension of hours (beyond 2 hours session) during the day.**

11. The following questions were parked by the Bureau for further consideration, discussion and decision (pending further regional consultations) prior and at the joint session with the COP Bureau on 1 October 2020:

(a) Selection of agenda items to be considered in the first reading during the online session;

(b) Request the CBD Secretariat to explore the possibility for an additional day to cover all agenda items;

(c) Time for the preparation and distribution of CRPs and non-papers.

12. The Bureau requested the SCBD to explore options and financial implications of the additional day.

4. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

13. The Bureau meeting closed at 11:00 hrs.

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