



Convention on Biological Diversity

BUREAU OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC,
TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE
8h00 to 10h00 Montreal
Via teleconference (Microsoft Teams)
28 October 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 28 October 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), Mr. Larbi Sbai (Morocco), Mrs. Senka Barudanovic (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Mr. Dzmitry Lukashanets (Belarus), Mr. Volodymyr Domashlinets (Ukraine) 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. Adams Toussaint (Saint-Lucia), Mrs. Kongchay Phimmakong (Lao People's Democratic Republic) and Ms. Gwen Sisior (Palau).
3. The meeting was supported by the CDB Secretariat including Mr. Alexander Shestakov, Mr. David Cooper, Mrs. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp and Mrs. Wadzanayi Mandivenyi.

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

4. The meeting was opened at 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, 28 October 2020 by the SBSTTA Chair.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

5. The SBSTTA Chair presented the only agenda item for the meeting - organisation of an online formal Meeting of the Subsidiary Body.

3. ORGANISATION OF AN ONLINE FORMAL MEETING OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY

6. The SBSTTA Chair shared his expectations for the meetings and questions to be considered during the meeting based on the note circulated to the Bureau members on 27 October (see Annex 1) after

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completion of all regional briefings (21-27 October) on organisation of formal meetings of the CBD subsidiary bodies. The Bureau was invited to discuss the following aspects of the organisation of an online meeting:

- (a) New dates for the meeting;
- (b) Organisation of the meeting in line with the draft organisation of work to cover all SBSTTA-24 agenda items in the first reading mode;
- (c) The informal online session and briefings on agenda items prior to formal meeting.

7. The Chair and the Secretariat explained the proposal based on the note prepared for the meeting; after listening to the shared concerns and also messages of support raised by some Parties during the regional briefings, it was suggested to defer the dates for the SBSTTA-24 formal online meeting to early 2021, based on the need for more time to address the following points in order to build confidence and ensure a successful meeting:

- (a) Feasibility of online sessions including elements of technical and organisational matters (connectivity, logistics, fairness, openness, confidence, etc.);
- (b) Proper preparation by the Secretariat to address all concerns raised and ensure a smooth meeting.
- (c) Resolve whether all agenda items will have first readings and still ensure all papers are circulated 6 weeks in advance, noting there are papers outstanding which are not expected to be finalised by the current 6-weeks' deadline.

8. The Bureau members exchanged opinions on the new dates for the SBSTTA-24 online formal meeting. They agreed on the need to identify and fix the dates. The SBSTTA Chair brought to the attention of the Bureau that dates for the SBSTTA meeting are also linked to potential dates for SBI and consequently for WG2020-3 and COP15. The Bureau members agreed on the following:

- (a) Reiterated the previous SBSTTA Bureau decision to go ahead with preparations of the online formal meeting of the SBSTTA-24 for first reading of pre-session documents;
- (b) Agreed to defer the meeting to new dates in early 2021 (pending consultations in EU, GRULAC and Africa with the response on Friday) acknowledging this would give more time to build consensus and that the proposal includes additional days (pending budget decisions and on the expectation Parties from WEOG will offer funding for additional days) to facilitate a first reading of all agenda items;
- (c) The SBSTTA Chair will consult with the SBI Chair, the Presidency and the Secretariat to identify most appropriate new dates in January-February 2021 and report back to the SBSTTA Bureau at the next meeting (two options were suggested: 18-29 January and 25 January – 5 February).

9. The Bureau highlighted the importance of maximising time for the interventions during formal meetings and thus suggested to:

- (a) Move the usual introduction of each agenda item by the Secretariat at the beginning of the session to a presentation available online a few days before the meeting;
- (b) Request the key-note speakers to prepare pre-recorded presentations to be available online a few days before the meeting and not presenting at the opening of the agenda item.
- (c) Consideration of lengthening the sessions with interpretation (or having additional sessions) each day.

10. The Bureau considered it would be useful to organise informal briefing sessions prior to the formal meeting to introduce and explain agenda items and new documents using a similar format to that conducted previously on the regional information sessions organised in June-July 2020 on the post-2020 GBF

monitoring framework. It was suggested by the Secretariat to organise these briefings during the week of 14 December. The following sessions to be organised, pending discussions in the budget group:

- (a) Informal briefing on agenda item 3 on post-2020 GBF monitoring framework. In English only, 3 time slots;
- (b) Informal briefing on all other agenda items (4-10). In English only, one time slot.

11. The Bureau reiterated the importance to have an informal online session (trial) prior to the formal meeting, on the interlinkages between COVID-19, biodiversity and One Health approach, in order to test all modalities which are planned for the formal meeting. And confirmed the decision to hold a two days meeting on 24-25 November 2020.

12. Regarding pre-session documents pending to be published, in the light of the additional time, the Bureau requested the Secretariat to ensure to have all of them available online, in accordance to the 6 weeks' rule.

13. The bureau requested the Secretariat to prepare a short note for the next Bureau meeting on: informal online session (trial), briefings, and SBSTTA-24 virtual formal session, accordingly for better understanding of pending actions. Additionally, the draft notification by the Secretariat on the upcoming virtual meetings was requested to be made available as soon as possible.

4. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

14. The Bureau meeting closed at 10:00 hrs with an agreement to organise the next meeting of the Bureau on Tuesday 3 November 2020.

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Annex 1

**Update on the organisation of an online session of
the 24th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice
(the first reading)**

In light of the ongoing pandemic which prevents any physical meetings of the Convention's subsidiary bodies being held in 2020, the SBSTTA Bureau agreed at its meeting on the 13 October on an alternative proposal to convene SBSTTA-24 virtually, to have a first reading on a number of agenda items. The online meeting would then be suspended and reconvened physically to complete the work of the body when conditions allow. Subsequently, at a joint meeting of the COP and SBSTTA Bureaux, it was decided to convene a number of regional briefings with a view to hearing the views and any concerns of Parties. Those briefings were organized for all regions during the period 21-27 October 2020.

At this point, the Secretariat will not have the sufficient time needed to ensure the full, timely and proper preparation of the SBSTTA meeting, should this go ahead in December 2020, which would now be only 6 weeks away, including some pre session documents to be still published. Further continued discussions may be necessary to ensure that all concerns of Parties expressed during briefings are fully taken into account.

The SBSTTA Chair and the Secretariat, having consulted also the COP President and SBI Chair, therefore propose to reschedule the agreed virtual session of SBSTTA-24 from 10-17 December to January 2021.

This may also allow the timetable of the meeting to be adjusted in order to address all agenda items as per the organization of work initially proposed in the draft annotated agenda for the meeting (CBD/SBSTTA/24/1/ADD1) in a first reading as has been requested by a number of Parties.

The modalities would follow those set out in the note circulated on 8 October 2020, except for the possible adjustment of the timing (number of hours per day and/or number of days, and time zones).

The meeting could be held, for example in 10 or less working days, 18-29 January 2021, depending on the length of the meeting required.

The online informal session to test the proposed modalities as was discussed at the joint Bureaux meetings still can be organised on 24-25 November.

The Bureau may consider the organisation of briefing sessions on the post-2020 GBF monitoring framework and on agenda items 4-10 during the week of 14 December 2020.

The Bureau also may provide for its views on the best approach to organise regional meetings and Bureau meetings during the online meeting.

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