

PRESS RELEASE

UN Biodiversity Convention's science body holds online informal session to exchange views on key biodiversity issues

- *Informal session will use virtual online format and exchange opinions on key agenda items for SBSTTA-24, there will be no negotiations or decisions*
- *2000 pre-registered participants, affirming Parties' dedication to critical biodiversity discussions despite pandemic situation*
- *Meeting will provide the necessary contribution to the formal discussions at the 24th meeting of the CBD's subsidiary body on science to be held later this year*
- *Session will be a useful and important step on the road to develop scientifically and technically sound post-2020 global biodiversity framework.*

Montreal, 16 February 2021 – With the participation of 2000 pre-registered participants, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) subsidiary body on science will hold an informal session on 17-19, 24-26 February to prepare for the formal meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-24) scheduled for later this year.

There will be no negotiations or decisions taken during this online meeting. The informal meeting will serve as an opportunity for Parties and observers to explore the virtual format, and to exchange opinions on key agenda items on the road to developing a scientifically and technically sound post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The framework will be further reviewed for adoption later this year at the fifteenth meeting of Conference of the Parties (COP-15) to the CBD that will be hosted by the Government of China.

Parties and observers will exchange views on:

Post-2020 global biodiversity framework: Inputs on the framework, including indicators to monitor progress in implementation, will support the recommendations to be developed by SBSTTA-24 for consideration by the third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and COP-15.

Synthetic biology: Inputs received will inform deliberations on a process for horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment of the most recent technological developments on synthetic biology, and in reviewing new information on potential impacts from synthetic biology on the objectives of the CBD.

Risk assessment and risk management of living modified organisms: Comments received will inform the discussions on the need for guidance to be developed, and any adjustments to the process for identification and prioritization of specific issues of risk assessment, established in decision CP-9/13.

Marine and coastal biodiversity: Importantly, SBSTTA 24 will consider proposed approaches for the future of the CBD process on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) and ways to make the EBSA process more adaptive and able to better integrate growing knowledge of marine ecosystems.

Biodiversity and agriculture: The agenda item on biodiversity and agriculture provides an opportunity for Parties to underscore the critical role of soil biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides to wellbeing and provide comments to the draft plan of action 2020-2030 for the international initiative for the conservation and sustainable use of soil biodiversity.

Invasive alien species: This agenda item is particularly critical, as invasive species are direct drivers of biodiversity loss. Discussions will focus on additional advice produced by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group and provided through the report on broader sectors' collaboration on classification and labelling on environmentally hazardous organisms.

IPBES programme of work: The rolling work programme of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services to 2030 fulfils the request made by the Parties at the last COP. Delegates will consider a possible request for a second global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services, aligning its scope and timing with the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and providing methodological support to help and assist monitoring and reporting, at the national level, of status and trends in biodiversity and ecosystem services and of the drivers of their change.

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, the intergovernmental body responsible for providing scientific, technical and technological advice related to the implementation of the Convention, plays a key role in assessing the current status of the world's biodiversity, identifying solutions and in bringing emerging issues related to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity to the attention of the global community.

To view meeting: <https://broadcaster.interactio.io/join?code=C8E8MMBQY53D>

Informal meeting documents: www.cbd.int/meetings/SBSTTA-24-PREP-03

SBSTTA-24 documents: www.cbd.int/meetings/SBSTTA-24

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 196 Parties so far, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing are supplementary agreements to the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol, which entered into force on 11 September 2003, seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 173 Parties have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies. It entered into force on 12 October 2014 and to date has been ratified by 129 Parties.

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