



**Opening statement by  
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**Second Meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Benefit-sharing from the Use of Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources**

**12 August 2024**

**Distinguished delegates,**

**Dear participants,**

Bonjour.

I am pleased to welcome you all today to the beautiful city of Montreal for the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Benefit-sharing from the Use of Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources.

This is my first engagement in negotiations under the Convention on Biological Diversity in my role as Executive Secretary.

I am honoured to serve at the helm of the Secretariat of the Convention and will continue to work closely with the presidency and the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to advance the objectives of the Convention and its Protocols through the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Digital sequence information on genetic resources is a complex but exciting field of scientific investigation and normative work.

It is refreshing to see that the Parties to the Convention, other Governments and stakeholders are making headway on an issue lying at the intersection of social justice, environmental governance, sustainable development and the cutting edge of science and technology.

In the pursuit of a solution to digital sequence information on genetic resources, innovation is a must, and so is meaningful participation.

I note with great satisfaction the full and active participation of the representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities, women, youth, academia, the private sector and other stakeholders.

The participation of these key stakeholders is crucial and reflects the whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach that lies at the foundation of the Framework.

I will join Liu Ning, the representative of the presidency of the Conference of the Parties, in thanking the Co-Chairs of the Committee of the Whole and the members of the Informal Advisory Group for their work during the intersessional period.



Thank you Mphatso and Will for your remarkable efforts in facilitating the intersessional work alongside your duties as senior civil servants in your home countries.

I would also like to thank our generous donors for supporting the participation of delegates from developing countries and from indigenous peoples and local communities, namely, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I would be remiss to not pay tribute to my team at the Secretariat of the Convention. Their work has been instrumental in catalysing the progress that we have all seen in the negotiations.

I am in debt to the Deputy Executive Secretary, David Cooper, for steering this ship so close to port. Thank you, David, for the wonderful work that you have done and for the extra miles that you will continue to go with the Secretariat team to get us to a successful conclusion at the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

**Distinguished delegates,**

**Dear participants,**

Let us pause for a moment and ponder the significance of what has been accomplished, of what you have accomplished to date.

The Conference of the Parties established at its fifteenth meeting a groundbreaking, multilateral mechanism for benefit-sharing from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources, including a global fund.

That decision marked a watershed moment: consensus among the Parties that benefits from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources should be shared fairly and equitably.

The decision also ushered in a process, a timeline, a framework and a road map. Most importantly, it paved the way for further work to define the modalities according to which the multilateral mechanism and the associated global fund will deliver.

We are witnessing the emergence of a game changer:

- The multilateral mechanism is expected to provide policy guidance on the fair and equitable benefit-sharing from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources.
- It is expected to generate non-monetary benefits that can help to bridge scientific, technical and technological gaps in the way digital sequence information on genetic resources is accessed and used around the world.
- It is expected to provide capacity-building and development and technology transfer where they are needed to access, use, generate and analyse digital sequence information on genetic resources.
- And it is expected to mobilize new streams of additional funding for biodiversity conservation.

We have come a long way.

This journey started in Cancun, then took us to Egypt, where the issue of digital sequence information on genetic resources was still being explored.

We have collectively overcome the restrictions on intergovernmental work imposed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic through a series of webinars that paved the way for the adoption of the decision at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties by which the multilateral mechanism and its global fund were established.

The first in-person meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group took place in November 2023 in Geneva. And here we are now, starting the second meeting in Montreal.

**We owe the progress accomplished thus far to you:**

- Since the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, you have submitted input, shared views and lessons learned from similar processes and mechanisms and pointed to the areas where further investigations are needed.
- You have considered lessons learned from other international funding mechanisms and a synthesis of views on issues that the Conference of the Parties had identified at its fifteenth meeting as needing further consideration.
- Since the beginning of the year, many of you have participated in monthly meetings of the Informal Advisory Group to advance the work, in line with the mandate from your first meeting
- The Co-Chairs of the Committee of the Whole and the Secretariat have been working hard to develop options that you can consider.

In this decisive round of negotiations, we count on your full and constructive engagement in a spirit of good will and compromise.

**Aboard this ship, land is in sight.**

Together, we are edging closer to the operationalization of a cost-effective, efficient and simple multilateral mechanism on benefit-sharing from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources.

I was delighted to hear Liu Ning share his optimistic take on where the negotiations are headed.

We could very well be on the cusp of a historic breakthrough at the forthcoming sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in a couple of months from now.

This is the time where environmental multilateralism can show its mettle and deliver for people and for nature.

The expectations are high.

I wish you a productive week ahead.

Merci beaucoup.

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