



**WRAP-UP DOCUMENT:**  
Civil Society Highlights of the  
CBD's SBSTTA 24 & SBI 3 Formal  
Virtual Sessions



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2021**

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## ■ Introduction

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is in the process of negotiating a new Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), thereby defining biodiversity-related policies for the next decade and beyond that can guide and direct efforts towards halting biodiversity loss and put it on a path to recovery. However, both Parties and observers to the Convention have faced major setbacks due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In an attempt to maintain momentum, formal sessions of both [SBSTTA 24](#) and [SBI 3](#) were convened virtually from May 3<sup>rd</sup> to June 13<sup>th</sup> (see [scenario note](#)), following informal virtual sessions held for both meetings from February [17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>](#) and [24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>](#) respectively.

The next steps in the process towards defining a new GBF include the third meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG3) held virtually in August 2021, the first part of COP15 to take place online in October 2021, followed by face-to-face meetings during the first quarter of 2022 which resumes OEWG3, SBSTTA and SBI, and a later face-to-face COP. As the process continues to be delayed and attention may falter, continued awareness of civil society is paramount.

This document is intended as an information tool for civil society, especially for those who are unable to follow the CBD negotiations, to provide a common ground for the work that lies ahead in preparations for COP 15 and the adoption of a new Post-2020 GBF. It is composed of short information pieces that summarize what was discussed in relation to selected agenda items and highlight a few

key elements base on what was experienced by CBD Alliance members during the online SBI 3 and SBSTTA 24 meetings. **The content does not necessarily represent common positions nor addresses every agenda item, but it does provide a useful and relevant analysis of key issues discussed during the CBD negotiations.**

The goal of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) in this meeting was to provide technical and scientific information and advice related to the goals and targets of the [updated zero draft](#) of the GBF, and to the indicators and baselines of the associated/proposed monitoring framework. The Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) focused on reviewing and assessing the progress of implementation (of Aichi targets, the protocols, etc.), and reviewing and developing strategic action to enhance and strengthen implementation in the coming years.

The table below lists all agenda items that were to be discussed during these sessions, those **summarized in this document are highlighted in green**. Given the extraordinary virtual format of the meetings, the adoption of final draft decision documents (L documents) was deferred to the next in-person meeting and only heavily bracketed conference room papers (CRPs) were produced instead. During the closing plenary, both meetings were suspended –not closed– until a face-to-face meeting can be convened.

## **SBSTTA 24**

### **Item 3. Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework**

### **Item 4. Synthetic Biology**

### **Item 5. Risk assessment and risk management of living modified organisms**

### **Item 6. Marine and Coastal Biodiversity**

### **Item 7. Biodiversity and Agriculture**

**Item 8.** Programme of work of the intergovernmental science-policy platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

**Item 9.** Biodiversity and Health

**Item 10.** Invasive Alien Species

**Item 11.** Other matters

## **SBI 3**

**Item 3.** Review of progress in the implementation of the convention and the strategic plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020

**Item 4.** Assessment and review of the effectiveness of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

### **Item 5. Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework**

### **Item 6. Resource Mobilization and Financial Mechanism**

**Item 7.** Capacity-building, Technical and Scientific Cooperation, Technology Transfer, Knowledge Management and Communication

**Item 8.** Cooperation with other conventions, International Organizations and Initiatives

**Item 9.** Mechanisms for reporting, Assessment and Review

**Item 10.** Review of the effectiveness of processes under the convention and its protocols

### **Item 11. Mainstreaming of Biodiversity within and across sectors and other strategic actions to enhance implementation**

**Item 12.** Specialized international access and benefit-sharing instruments in the context of article 4, paragraph 4, of the Nagoya Protocol

**Item 13.** Global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism (article 10 of the Nagoya Protocol)

**Item 14.** Administrative and budgetary matters

For information on discussions on other agenda items not summarized in this document or any additional information, please refer to the draft reports of each meeting.

Please find a list of [acronyms, abbreviations and a glossary of terms and meanings](#) used in the end of the document.

**Official additional documents can be accessed here:**

**SBSTTA 24 Agenda**

**SBSTTA 24 Documents**

**SBSTTA 24 Draft Report**

**SBI 3 Agenda**

**SBI 3 Documents**

**SBI 3 Draft Report**

## Online negotiations: an unhelpful setting

Author: Nele Mariën

SBI and SBSTTA meetings were held, for the first time in history, as online negotiations. A six-week long schedule was set up, with negotiations continuing during most weekends, and only occasional days off.

Plenaries were always held from 7 to 10 am Montreal time, which implied that people in Asian countries would be working late into the evening. Many contact groups were held even later, implying late night work for them. The result was that participation from Asian countries was very low. Even worse was the situation for most African countries, many of whom had consistent connectivity problems.

It also quickly became apparent that online mode is not a good way for facilitating real dialogue between parties, and that it further excludes indigenous people and local communities (IPLCs) and civil society from significantly participating and contributing to the process.

Despite these negative experiences, in the midst of this negotiation period, it was announced that OEWG3 would be held in online mode from 23rd of August till 3rd of September. After this, the African region made some strong interventions denouncing the very negative impacts of online negotiations on the region's ability to participate, and requesting several SBI texts relating to the GBF to be entirely bracketed, meaning that they could not be considered as 'agreed' (SBSTTA texts had basically been approved by that point). The Africa region made clear that this was not a rejection of the entire texts, but rather an indi-

cation that they did not have the chance to fully engage in these texts and therefore reserve the right to come back to any paragraph in them they deem necessary.

As a consequence, it was decided that all SBI and SBSTTA texts would remain in the status of "L-doc" and go for final approval -or where necessary for new negotiations- in face-to-face meetings to be convened later.

The opposition of some European parties to bracketing the texts as African countries had requested was felt by some as highly cynical: one European party had earlier requested a paragraph to be bracketed because it had had a 10-minute connectivity problem, while at the same time several African Countries could hardly connect at all.

## Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework - GBF

Author: Nele Mariën

Both SBI and SBSTTA discussed several draft decisions that were relevant for the development of the GBF. The most important one was SBSTTA's agenda item 3, which considered scientific and technical information to support the review of the updated goals and targets, and the related indicators and baselines. In practice, this meant discussing the indicators to measure the implementation of goals and targets for the GBF, before any agreement on the actual goals and targets themselves had been reached.

Civil society wrote letters<sup>1</sup> raising concerns regarding this process, describing it as 'putting the cart before the horse'. Many statements by Parties raised similar concerns. The main worry is that the current set of draft goals and targets does not address the systemic drivers of biodiversity loss. Discussing indicators for the goals and targets as they stand in the current draft actually locks the process into staying close to current text. Yet goals and targets will most probably be altered significantly, and Parties need to have the full liberty to negotiate such changes.

The discussions have been on the basis of the updated 'Draft 0' of the GBF but could not question directly to the text of neither Goals or Targets, as only scientific and technical relevant points were welcomed. Also, until now, Parties have not had the chance to negotiate on the Draft 0 text of the GBF, which had been prepared by the Co-Chairs of the process, and therefore have been forced to rely on their good will to listen and interpret Parties' concerns in a proper manner.

Despite the concerns raised by many Parties and observers suggesting that online negotiations don't work, OEWG3 was also conducted online. However, the Co-Chairs stated that the meeting should not be a text negotiation, and instead be in a modality of "discussions

amongst Parties", but this means that the Co-Chairs will again have the prerogative to draw their own conclusions.

We need to move to a Party-driven process as the logical next step in this process, but that is impossible in an online format. Therefore, since the decision to hold a virtual OEWG3 cannot be reversed at this point, a resumed OEWG3 meeting, face-to-face in early 2022 or when in-person negotiations again become possible is of paramount importance.

[The relevant draft SBSTTA decision](#) establishes an Ad Hoc Working Group to "further operationalise" the monitoring framework by COP 16, which implies a de-facto postponement of decisions regarding indicators. It seems a lot of the work on this issue has been futile.

The discussions on indicators have revealed significant differences between Parties regarding setting of baselines. The underlying issue is probably the historical absence of equity considerations in the CBD. Impacts of economic developments by the Global North on biodiversity in the Global South have never been addressed. Also, the fact that there is significantly more biodiversity in the Global South needing to be preserved, resulting in a heavy burden in conservation efforts.

Many groups in the CBD-Alliance consider lack of equity to be an important issue to be addressed. At the same time, we need to ensure that the solutions to this lack of equity do not imply any "right" to further biodiversity destruction, under the allegation that other Parties have done so in the past.

<sup>1</sup> [Letter of Concern and Recommendations about the Conference of the Parties \(CBD COP\) and 3rd meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group \(OEWG\) on the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework \(GBF\) & Letter of Concern about Regression in the draft post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#)

## Rights-Based Approach (RBA)

Author: Cristina Eghenter

The GBF draft states that it will be implemented with a Rights-Based Approach (RBA). As several agencies and experts<sup>2</sup> state, “to protect nature is to protect the human rights of those who live there.” The integration of a RBA is a must for a transformative, comprehensive, equitable, and inclusive post-2020 global biodiversity framework, in line with Member States obligations under international law.

Rights-holders such as Indigenous Peoples, local and rural communities, men and women, and youth, contribute in fundamental ways to all three objectives of the convention. They need to be appropriately recognized and supported. Implementing the GBF with a RBA implies integrating the following:

- The right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.
- Intergenerational equity.
- The recognition of Indigenous peoples as right-holders.
- The rights of IPLCs to land and resources, customary sustainable use and traditional knowledge, and Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

- A gender-responsive approach to support empowerment and leadership of women and girls.
- The full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women and girls and youth.
- Access to adequate financial, capacity building and other resources for rights holders

While several Parties supported RBA elements during the SBSTTA and SBI sessions and showed strong support to the interventions of major groups with proposals to strengthen the language of RBA, much needs to be done to mainstream RBA in systematic ways across all elements, goals and targets of the post-2020 GBF, with associated indicators that strongly reflect human rights and equity considerations<sup>3</sup>. The same considerations extend also to the process of negotiations that needs to be inclusive and equitable.

<sup>2</sup> David R. Boyd, the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment A/75/161 Human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable; <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/ClimateChange/materials/KMBiodiversity26febLight.pdf>; <https://news.trust.org/item/20210603135601-wshfn>.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g.: There are ongoing efforts especially by civil society to suggest language to strengthen RBA in GBF [Human Rights in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. Options for integrating human rights based approach to achieve the Convention on Biological Diversity objectives.](#)

## Synthetic Biology

Authors: Dana Perls, Silvia Ribeiro

One of the main points in discussion was how to operationalize the function of horizon scanning, decided by COP14<sup>4</sup>, and how to include monitoring and assessment. All three are essential as new biotechnologies are being introduced without adequate rules to evaluate their various (potential) impacts. The CBD does not have a mechanism to be prepared in advance for these developments. As mandated, the Secretariat presented a proposal to establish a Multidisciplinary Technical Expert Group (MTEG), without a specific time limit - as many recognise that horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment require a long-term, more permanent mechanism. However, some parties insisted the format to be a temporary Ad Hoc group (MAHTEG), the establishment of which remained undecided as well as the terms for such a group. Furthermore, delegates from countries where GM and Synbio transnational companies are based or active, argued that a new MAHTEG is not needed at all and that SBSTTA could take this role. SBSTTA is already overloaded with issues, so it won't be able to properly follow this. The same countries tried to limit the period of functioning of such MAHTEG to one COP cycle (ie, two years). Other parties argued rightly that such a task must be approved over at least two COPs to do such a complex work, and before any evaluation.

### Important points to focus on at the next COP:

- A few Parties continue to question whether synthetic biology is a new and emerging issue, which is absurd as Synbio has been in the CBD agenda for 5 COPs. Their aim is to limit Synbio to bio-safety aspects at Cartagena Protocol and avoid considering it in the context of the three objectives of the Convention.

- Civil Society and IPLCs encouraged Parties to include strict language against the release of gene drives in the environment, which is not yet included.
- No Gene Drives can be released without explicit Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of all IPLCs in the area where the GD may potentially spread and potentially influence biodiversity or ecosystems. FPIC must be organised in a timely way, providing the necessary time and means for IPLCs to obtain and discuss all required information and to contemplate all the possible implications, and leaving the clear possibility to say “no”
- The precautionary principle must be respected and operationalized in all Synbio and Gene Drive considerations, regulations, or applications.
- Civil Society also encouraged parties to ensure gene drive developments and other new technologies such as transient biotechnologies are covered both by the present Synbio AHTEG and integrated into the horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment process.
- Civil Society and IPLCs advocated that MAHTEG must include full and effective participation and cooperation with indigenous people, local communities and civil society, including women and youth.

An [L-document on Synthetic Biology](#) was produced based on the discussions, but it remains heavily bracketed and will be finally adopted at the next SBSTTA meeting, expected to be in person before the 15th Conference of the Parties.

## Risk assessment and risk management of living modified organisms

Authors: Ricarda Steinbrecher, Lim Li Ching

Agenda item 5 on Risk Assessment and Risk Management focused on the need for (and development of) additional guidance materials on risk assessment of living modified organisms (LMOs), in particular for:

- (a) LMOs containing engineered gene drives and
- (b) LM fish, in line with decision [CP-9/13](#), para7.

The outcomes of the work of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) to analyse this need were welcomed. In addition to an initial plenary session there were two contact group sessions discussing a non-paper by the Chairs, which however could not resolve several issues. The final text<sup>5</sup> thus contains numerous brackets.

- Guidance on LM fish: these pose transboundary and other risks such as potential food web and next-generation effects, including socio-economic implications. Several Parties called for developing guidance, but there was no consensus and delegates decided not to proceed with developing such guidance materials “at this stage”. However, the option to take it up at the eleventh COP-MOP remains on the table, as text referring to this remains bracketed.
- On LMOs containing gene drives, there are two major areas of disagreement:
  - (a) Whether the guidance should solely focus on gene drive mosquitoes, as preferred by some, or first explore the full spectrum of potential negative impacts and risks of gene drive organisms,

and address gene drive mosquitoes in this context. Civil society considers it crucial to first address the wider issues so as not to neglect important levels of assessment by taking too narrow a focus. In addition, while gene drive mosquitoes are likely to be the first application for release, R&D on other gene drive organisms is progressing rapidly.

- (b) Who should be developing an outline and producing a first draft of the guidance? Should this be a selected group of 5-6 experts (who would select them, and what expertise would be considered relevant?) or should this be the AHTEG or a subgroup within it? Strong concerns were voiced regarding a small expert group, as this would limit the range of expertise, areas and types of knowledge.

Consequently, the text remains heavily bracketed, and the issues will be taken up again at a face-to-face meeting.

Given that gene drive organisms are still under development and any release could lead to potentially severe and irreversible harm at many levels, including human health, environmental and socioeconomic impacts, civil society regards it as crucial to not only address general considerations but to do so based on a broad spectrum of expertise, going far beyond that of those currently active in their development.

<sup>5</sup> CBD/SBSTTA/24/L.6

## Marine and coastal Biodiversity

Authors: Vivienne Solis-Rivera, Gadir Lavadenz

The Marine and coastal Biodiversity agenda item discussed a document<sup>6</sup> providing a report on issues such as marine litter and anthropogenic underwater noise, and, in annexes, options for modifying the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, describing new areas, and strengthening scientific credibility and transparency of this process.

What was important about the discussions?

- Civil society requested the inclusion of language to secure the participation and specially the rights of IPLCs, women and youth in the governance and management of their marine territories of life and the recognition of their traditional knowledge as a key element for building knowledge for a better management of the ecosystems as well as the consideration of IPLC's governance models.
- Parties were also called on to halt prospecting and exploration of mineral resources in the deep sea and to ban deep-sea mining both within territorial waters and in areas beyond national jurisdiction. However, the CRP (CBD/SBSTTA/24/CRP2) was not discussed due to time constraints and currently merely: 'Encourages Parties and invites other Governments to minimize and mitigate the impacts of deep-sea mining on marine and coastal biodiversity as well as its impacts on other uses of the marine environment'.

- Civil society and several party delegates expressed their concern on the reduced space allocated for this agenda item. On a negative note, the statements prepared by the CBD Alliance were not delivered because the chair, unlike in other sessions, did not allow civil society to make interventions.

As a result of the discussions, two CRPs were produced and are pending final decisions until a face-to-face meeting of SBSTTA 24 takes place:

- Conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity<sup>7</sup>.
- Ecologically or biologically significant marine areas<sup>8</sup>.

From the discussion, it is clear that there are countries strongly in favour of a 30 x 30 target of conserved areas which, under the 'blue economy' discourse, can be highly risky if parties to the CBD do not comply with FPIC and respect governance models that protect vulnerable groups, in particular IPLCs, from private interests over their traditional territories of life and survival.

<sup>6</sup> [CBD/SBSTTA/24/6](#)

<sup>7</sup> [CBD/SBSTTA/24/CRP2](#)

<sup>8</sup> [CBD/SBSTTA/24/CRP4](#)

## Biodiversity and Agriculture

Authors: Helena Paul

This item was addressed only in plenary so there was no detailed discussion in a contact group. The discussion on this agenda item was centred around a note by the Executive Secretary on the review of the International Initiative for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Soil Biodiversity and updated plan of action<sup>9</sup>, including a suggested recommendation. As an information document, a report on the state of knowledge of soil biodiversity was also made available<sup>10</sup>.

Some of the demands expressed by civil society were reflected in the CRP and include:

1. Remove biochar and biosolids from activity 2.4. in Annex II.
2. Prioritise ending perverse incentives and subsidies as addendums to para 4 of the draft COP decision and point 1.6 of the plan of action in Annex II.
3. Highlight the role of IPLC in soil biodiversity conservation through their traditional farming systems.
4. Add spatial planning, and land use as a new activity 1.12 of Annex II.
5. Include references to CBD decisions III/11 to V/5 that set [the programme of work on Soil Biodiversity] [this] within the broader framework of Agricultural Biodiversity to make sure these important parts of CBD work don't get lost.

However, there is still no target related to soil in the current draft GBF, something we consider to be vital, since soil health is fundamental to biodiversity and human health and nutrition. We therefore continue to call for inserting a paragraph into the SBSTTA decision that could read as follows:

1. “[SBSTTA] Recommends to the Open-ended working group to include a target or element on the conservation and sustainable

use of soils and [the enhancement of] their biodiversity in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework”.

2. We asked for the word “voluntary” in the draft text in points 1 and 11 to be removed on the basis that it could undermine any real commitments to change.
3. In para 2.1 of the annex, after “diversity” (2nd line) we asked for the wording: Promote the improvement of soil health and the enhancement of soil organism abundance and diversity, by reducing pollution to non-detrimental levels and improving their food, water and habitat conditions... etc. and insert in footnote 21 after “optimization and minimization of agricultural chemicals” “and fertilizers to non-detrimental levels” [hrp1].

We still consider that this vital underlying issue of soil health needs to be taken more seriously.

Indeed, we feel strongly that the CBD is still not paying nearly enough attention to agriculture, agricultural ecosystems, and agricultural biodiversity. There are many operative elements in existing agricultural biodiversity decisions that have not been implemented, even though we all depend on the work of millions of farmers, Indigenous Peoples and other small-scale food providers over the centuries in selecting and breeding the crops, that are fundamental to our food and nutrition, in harmony with biodiverse agroecosystems. Yet we continue to marginalise peasant farmers and IPLCs, losing varieties and much of the associated agricultural biodiversity, above and below ground and in waters, that we need for adaptation to the many challenges we collectively face. Living soils are fundamental to all this, a vital part of the food web we tend to take for granted. The conservation, sustainable use and enhancement of soil biodiversity must always be seen in this context.

<sup>9</sup> [CBD/SBSTTA/24/7/Rev.1](#)

<sup>10</sup> [CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/8](#)

## Resource Mobilization and the financial mechanism

Authors: Jessica Dempsey, Lim Li Ching

Agenda item 6 considered the question of how CBD implementation will be funded, including through the financial mechanism (the Global Environment Facility) and the issue of resource mobilization. A Contact Group was set up to discuss these issues.

Under the GEF, the primary debate involved defining the terms for the sixth quadrennial evaluation of the GEF. In the resource mobilization negotiations, Parties were meant to agree on a new resource mobilization strategy and to advance the resource mobilization component of the GBF, but the negotiations stalled only a couple pages in; text is heavily bracketed throughout.

The crux of the debate focused on a foundational principle of the Rio Declaration/process: common but differentiated responsibilities as articulated in Principle 7 of the Rio Declaration and Article 20 of the CBD. Developing countries wanted a reaffirmation of these principles, while developed countries expressed preference to mobilize resources from “all sources”. For developing countries, that term suggests a shift away from promises made in 1992 by the developed countries to pay for the incremental costs of protecting global biodiversity. This debate over who pays and what constitutes a fair share has persisted since Rio, as developed countries have failed to meet these obligations.

It is important to note that the Panel of Experts emphasizes the need for the public sector to “play a lead role in providing a sustained flow of resources for biodiversity conservation” and that “while it will be important to increase private sector finance, this alone will never be sufficient for meeting all of the challenges of achieving the post-2020 global biodiversity framework”<sup>11</sup>. Given the importance of public funding, it is notable that the draft text says nothing about multilateral tax reform.

There emerged debate over the current list of developed country Parties and developing country Parties which voluntarily assume the obligations of the former, and over the eligibility criteria for those who can receive funding. Mostly Northern countries wanted to review the list and eligibility criteria, with Southern countries objecting. What’s at stake is who qualifies for GEF funding and what kind of priorities there should or shouldn’t be for funding flows. While the [CRP text](#) is heavily bracketed, it is clear that Parties agree

that they need to reduce harmful flows of financial resources, including public subsidies/perverse incentives but also private sector financing of biodiversity-degrading industries. But what form that takes remains without agreement. Will they stick with the lowest common denominator voluntary approaches, which essentially allow the fox to guard the henhouse, or will they apply regulatory approaches to the financial sector, requiring disclosure of harms and preventing biodiversity-degrading financial flows?. The text merely encourages the financial sector to do the work, with regulatory agencies bracketed; reducing the harm of the financial sector in bankrolling extinction will need much more than encouragement - Parties need to reflect on the past few decades of wholly inadequate voluntary approaches and realize they actually need to govern finance.

In a first for the CBD (albeit still in brackets), there is a request for a report on the relationship between public debt, austerity measures and the challenges of CBD implementation. Kudos to South Africa for supporting this text, which was recommended by the Global Youth Biodiversity Network.

### Next steps:

The Conference Room Paper (CRP) on the financial mechanism was approved (with brackets remaining) and a final document will be prepared for discussion at a future resumed SBI session. In contrast, the CRP on resource mobilisation remains heavily bracketed, with most of it not even discussed by the Contact Group. Discussion on this CRP has been deferred to the resumed SBI session. The co-chairs also prepared a non-negotiated text which compiles elements for the post-2020 GBF based on Parties views, including many things that made Parties in equal measure happy and unhappy. Clearly there is a lot of work still to be done to resolve the contentious issues.

The direction of the biodiversity debate is yet to be settled: will it continue on a pathway of trying to cobble together scraps of resources “from all sources” while maintaining existing concentrations of wealth and power? Or will Parties advance the necessary task of rewriting the global financial and economic rules to respect Indigenous, peasant, and poor people’s rights, all within planetary boundaries?.

11 From Third report of the panel of experts on resource mobilization. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/5c03/865b/7332bd747198f8256e9e555b/sbi-03-05-add3-en.pdf>, p. 9

## Mainstreaming of biodiversity within and across sectors and other strategic actions to enhance implementation

Authors: Helena Paul, Nele Marien

The mainstreaming discussions concentrated most of its energy on discussing a document<sup>12</sup> providing a report on progress in developing a Long-Term Approach to Mainstreaming (LTAM), how it was constructed and how it might interact with the GBF, and a report on additional activities by the Secretariat. It also included a suggested recommendation that proposes to continue with the Informal Advisory Group (IAG) on mainstreaming as a separate work stream, while again providing no transparency on the continuation and role of the Extended Consultative Network (ECN)<sup>13</sup>, an informal body that was not part of the original proposal for work on mainstreaming, and which included no parties, and several participants with conflicts of interest. Though it included a draft decision on mainstreaming, very little time was spent on the contents of it.

A second document<sup>14</sup> contained the draft Action Plan for the LTAM, but there was no chance to discuss this at all.

### What was important about the discussions?

#### *On procedure:*

- The main problem is that mainstreaming was barely discussed at all at SBI3, in spite of COP 14's determination that it is central to the GBF and urgently addressing the destruction of biodiversity.
- On the other hand, discussion of mainstreaming has been specifically postponed until there is a renewed SBI meeting face-to-face.

#### *On the recommendation:*

- Civil Society objects to the draft recommendation because it implies continuing a non-party driven process, while including other actors that have conflict of interest. The issue now needs to be taken up by all Parties.

- The IAG and ECN both include members of powerful finance and business groups whose interests are in maintaining the current economic model, which is not compatible with the need to protect biodiversity. In fact, the current proposal could be seen as mainstreaming finance in biodiversity, not mainstreaming biodiversity across all sectors.
- On the LTAM, Governments should be the main actors in mainstreaming for biodiversity and they must regulate the business and finance sectors at national and international level, taking a whole of government approach. We cannot expect business to self-regulate, and voluntary actions of self-certification without governmental verification are unacceptable. Unfortunately, the draft LTAM contains very few regulatory elements, and many voluntary measures.
- The draft LTAM contains dangerous terminology referring to offsets, no net loss/net gain, and nature-based solutions (NBS), and these should be deleted. The CBD has its own term, ecosystem approach, which is well-defined, and this should be the basis in any CBD text rather than a new, undefined term.
- Civil society considers that instead of trying to give a financial value to biodiversity as natural capital, we must genuinely address the loss of ecosystems and the marginalisation and destruction of the peoples and cultures closest to them.
- Current language calling for perverse incentives with negative impacts on biodiversity to be banned is welcome and must be retained, but we also need to divest from harmful activities.

<sup>12</sup> [CBD/SBI/3/13](#)

<sup>13</sup> List of participants available here: <https://www.cbd.int/mainstreaming/doc/IAG-ECN-Members-2019-07.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> [CBD/SBI/3/13/Add.1](#)

## ■ Closing reflections

Currently, the CBD has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to correct its past mistakes and adopt a global framework that recognizes and effectively addresses the root causes for biodiversity loss.

In order to do so, it is urgent to define clear limits to future ecological damage so that the world can stay within planetary boundaries since the current economic model of endless growth and concentration of wealth cannot continue. Concepts such as net loss, net gain or offsetting merely promote business as usual, and distract us from the meaningful and necessary change.

A strong rights-based approach should be at the heart of the post-2020 GBF, given that human rights and a healthy planet are mutually dependent. With little or no support, rights holders such as IPLCs have been protecting the vast majority of the biodiversity and ecosystems that remain in the world today. However, they are facing severe human rights violations and increasing negative effects of climate change. The CBD must step up and protect the rights of those who protect nature.

The Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework must consider the [Aichi Targets](#) as the minimum standards and comply with the founding principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Rio Conventions overall that include: the precautionary principle, respect for human rights and indigenous rights, a gender and intergenerational perspective, justice and equity, benefit sharing, respect for all knowledge systems, and the recognition of the intrinsic value of nature.

In a context of pandemic, where often the most vulnerable groups are most affected, the CBD has an even greater responsibility to ensure that all voices are heard, in particular of those of rights-holders. The most privileged countries seem to be rushing for decisions, while not realising that fully inclusive negotiations, based on due processes that have received the necessary time and attention, are the only way to achieve a truly ambitious agreement

that is felt by all as “theirs” and can therefore be implemented. This is the forum to discuss how things should be –as it touches in the fundamental issues that are to sustain life on earth. It is the global agreement that will shape action and funding towards the protection of the world’s biological diversity, natural ecosystems, and the indigenous peoples and local communities that depend on them. We, the peoples of the world, need to oversee what is being said on our behalf and what government leaders are proposing. Creating bridges that bring what happens at local, ground levels to where global discussions, negotiations and decisions are happening is more important now than ever before as we face an unprecedented loss of biodiversity and the increasing vast effects of climate change.

The crisis the world is facing today requires urgent action that involves the whole of society. To start, participation, equity and fairness are essential in the process of constructing a legitimate, broadly adopted post-2020 global biodiversity framework that is to guide the efforts of the coming years into effectively halting biodiversity loss before it is too late.

We invite you to join the [CBD Alliance](#), a network of civil society organizations who have a common interest in the Convention on Biological Diversity. We exist to enhance the cooperation among the different organizations that wish to have a positive influence in the CBD, and we also work to increase the general understanding of all relevant issues. We bring people together on biodiversity and CBD-related contents.

To find out more about the CBD Alliance please visit our [website](#) or contact Gadir Lavadenz at: [gadirlavadenz@gmail.com](mailto:gadirlavadenz@gmail.com).

## Acronyms & Abbreviations

**GBF** - Global Biodiversity Framework

**IPLC** - Indigenous peoples and local communities

**OEWG** - Open ended working group

**SBSTTA** - Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice

**SBI** - Subsidiary Body on Implementation

**Synbio** - Synthetic Biology

**CRP** - Conference Room Paper: This regards a document that already includes comments and/or negotiated text from previous plenaries and/or contact groups, but that will still need a revision by the respective SBI or SBSTTA plenaries -which may include serious discussions- before being turned into an L-document.

## Glossary of terms and meanings

**CRP - Conference Room Paper:** This regards a document that already includes comments and/or negotiated text from previous plenaries and/or contact groups, but that will still need a revision by the respective SBI or SBSTTA plenaries -which may include serious discussions- before being turned into an L-document.

**L document - Last Document:** This is the final outcome of a negotiation process, offered to the SBI or SBSTTA final plenary for its adoption. These outcomes then become formal recommendations by SBI or SBSTTA to the COP. Most often, these are “clean” documents, though occasionally, they still contain brackets, which then will need to be discussed by the COP.

*Different than in normal face-to-face processes, the outcome of the online SBSTTA/SBI negotiations are L-documents, which have not yet been adopted by the final plenary, and which contain a significant amount of unagreed text. Resumed SBI and SBSTTA meetings will take these documents up again, which will probably include opening them up for new negotiations in a number of cases.*

**Plenary - Plenary** is where the conference opens and closes, where major statements are made and broad-ranging debate may be conducted and where all decisions by the conference are taken.

**Contact Group - A** contact group is where detailed discussions, negotiation and drafting takes place. Contact groups are usually conducted only in English and participation of civil society is at the discretion of the chair of the contact group. Contact groups can make recommendations but cannot make decisions.

## Key dates ahead

for the development of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

### 23 August to 3 September, online:

- Third meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Framework Agreement ([www.cbd.int/post2020](http://www.cbd.int/post2020))

### 30 August, online:

- Biodiversity PreCOP Colombia: “Pre-COP” meeting hosted by the President of Colombia in the Colombian Amazon with fellow members of the High Ambition Group for Nature and signatories of the Leaders’ Pledge for Nature. For more information: CBD National Focal Point for Colombia - Sra. Adriana Mejia Hernand, Viceministra de Asuntos Multilaterales Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Calle 10 No. 5-51; +571 381 4000 ext. 1889, ext. 1349; E-Mail: [juliana.arciniegas@cancilleria.gov.co](mailto:juliana.arciniegas@cancilleria.gov.co) [sebastian.acosta@cancilleria.gov.co](mailto:sebastian.acosta@cancilleria.gov.co)

### 11 to 15 October, online:

- UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15/COP-MOP10/COP-MOP4) - Part 1 (Virtual), including online high-level segment
  - COP-15 Part 1, 11 October: Opening ceremony
  - 12 - 13 October: High-level segment
  - Closing news conference, 15 October

### January 2022, Geneva (tentative):

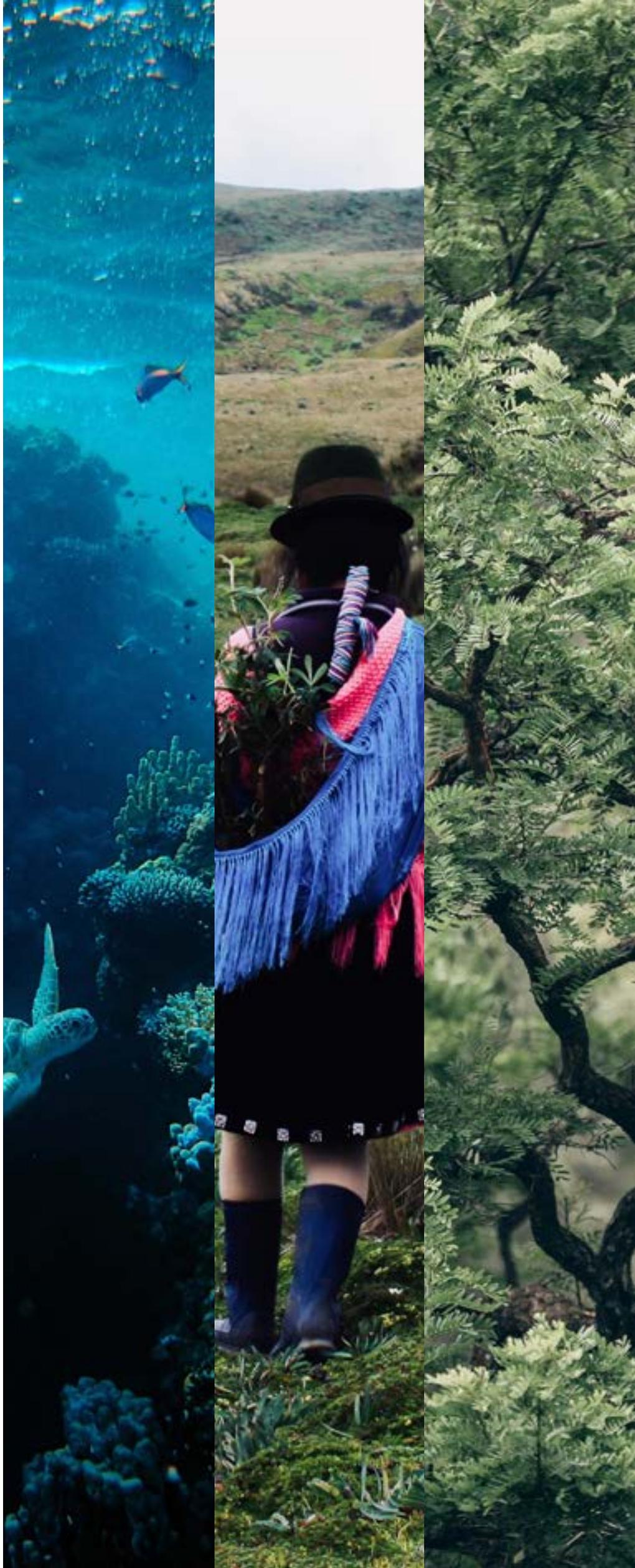
- Open-Ended Working Group (WG2020) on the Post-2020 Global Framework Agreement • CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 24) • CBD Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI 3)

### 25 April to 8 May 2022, in person:

- COP-15 resumes / Part 2, Kunming, China: UN Biodiversity Conference Part 2, meetings resume in-person to conclude negotiations, decide on new Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and will also include a high-level segment

The latest draft of the post-2020 GBF, draft 1, was produced by the co-chairs to the OEWG after SBSTTA 24 and SBI 3. It was published July 5, 2021 and can be found here:

- [Arabic](#)
- [Chinese](#)
- [English](#)
- [French](#)
- [Russian](#)
- [Spanish](#)



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