

Summary of the 2024 UN Biodiversity Conference: 21 October – 1 November 2024

“Biodiversity is fundamental to human well-being, a healthy planet, and economic prosperity for all people, including for living well in balance and in harmony with Mother Earth. We depend on it for food, medicine, energy, clean air and water, security from natural disasters as well as recreation and cultural inspiration, and it supports all systems of life on earth.”

This statement opens the 2022 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). Yet, despite this acknowledgement, biodiversity loss continues unabated. Will the GBF steer the transformative change required to reverse this trend? Focusing on implementation, the 2024 UN Biodiversity Conference reviewed the development of national targets and the alignment of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) with the GBF, with delegates celebrating the submission of 119 national targets and 44 NBSAPs as of 1 November 2024, as the first but necessary step.

Adoption of modalities for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs), following eight years of negotiations, will facilitate implementation of marine conservation and management targets under the GBF and other international agreements, including the UN Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement). A decision on biodiversity and climate change provides the framework for enhancing coordination and synergies between international and national efforts to address the biodiversity and climate crises.

Effective implementation requires legislative and policy efforts by governments, alongside inclusiveness and a whole-of-society and -government approaches. In a historic moment, participants celebrated the decision to establish a permanent Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and other provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) related to Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), as well as a decision on the role of people of African descent in the implementation of the CBD. Thanks to the efforts of the Colombian Presidency, participation was unprecedented as more than 23,000 participants, representing governments, IPLCs, UN and international organizations, civil society, academia and research, and the private sector, registered to follow the negotiations and parallel events. Several thousand more participated in biodiversity-related activities organized in the city of Cali.

Effective implementation also requires equity and justice. Following extensive consultations and a series of President’s non-papers, parties adopted a decision on the operationalization of the

multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism from use of digital sequence information (DSI) on genetic resources and established the Cali Fund. Although it contains non-binding elements and is based on an indicative basis for monetary contributions, the mechanism aims to bridge part of the biodiversity finance gap and reward biodiversity stewards.

Negotiations on means of implementation, including financial resources, were less successful. In the early hours of Saturday 2 November, COP President Susana Muhamad (Colombia) introduced a draft decision on resource mobilization, including a provision establishing a dedicated global financing instrument for biodiversity under the authority of the Conference of the Parties (COP). A debate ensued, with developing countries welcoming a decision implementing CBD Article 21 (Financial Mechanism) and developed countries opposing, citing fragmentation of the global financial landscape. At 8:15 am, as delegates were leaving to catch their flights home, Panama requested to check whether quorum requirements were met. With no quorum, the meeting was unceremoniously suspended at 8:27 am.

Suspension of the meeting means a number of decisions were not adopted. These include decisions on: resource mobilization; the financial mechanism; planning, monitoring, reporting, and review; and importantly, the budget. A resumed meeting of the COP is expected to convene in the coming months, to adopt at least the budget to ensure the uninterrupted operations of the Secretariat.

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The 2024 UN Biodiversity Conference convened from 21 October to 1 November 2024, in Cali, Colombia. It was preceded by the fifth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI 5) from 16-18 October, and an opening ceremony on 20 October. The Conference included concurrent meetings of the governing bodies of the CBD and its Protocols: the 16th meeting of the CBD COP, the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties (MOP 11) to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CP), and the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties (MOP 5) to the Nagoya Protocol (NP) on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits arising from their Utilization (ABS).

A Brief History of the Convention on Biological Diversity

The CBD was adopted on 22 May 1992 and opened for signature on 5 June 1992 at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (the Rio “Earth Summit”). The CBD entered into force on 29 December 1993. There are currently 196 parties to the Convention, which aims to promote the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

The COP is the governing body of the Convention. Four bodies convened during the last intersessional period, including: the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA); the Working Group on Article 8(j) (traditional knowledge) and related provisions; the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI); and the Working Group on benefit-sharing from the use of DSI on genetic resources.

Key Turning Points

Three protocols have been adopted under the CBD. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (January 2000, Montreal, Canada) addresses the safe transfer, handling, and use of living modified organisms (LMOs) that may have adverse effects on biodiversity, taking into account human health, with a specific focus on transboundary movements. It entered into force on 11 September 2003 and currently has 173 parties.

The Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (October 2010, Nagoya, Japan) provides for international rules and procedures on liability and redress for damage to biodiversity resulting from LMOs. It entered into force on 5 March 2018 and currently has 54 parties.

The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits arising from their Utilization (ABS, October 2010, Nagoya) sets out an international framework for the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and technologies, and by appropriate funding, thereby contributing to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of its components. It entered into force on 12 October 2014 and currently has 141 parties.

Other major decisions include:

- the Jakarta Mandate on marine and coastal biodiversity (COP 2, November 1995, Jakarta, Indonesia);
- work programmes on agricultural and forest biodiversity (COP 3, November 1996, Buenos Aires, Argentina);
- the Global Taxonomy Initiative (COP 4, May 1998, Bratislava, Slovakia);

- work programmes on Article 8(j), dry and sub-humid lands, and incentive measures (COP 5, May 2000, Nairobi, Kenya);
- the Bonn Guidelines on ABS and the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (COP 6, April 2002, The Hague, the Netherlands);
- work programmes on mountain biodiversity, protected areas, and technology transfer, the Akwé: Kon Guidelines for cultural, environmental, and social impact assessments, and the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for sustainable use (COP 7, February 2004, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia);
- a work programme on island biodiversity (COP 8, March 2006, Curitiba, Brazil);
- a resource mobilization strategy, and scientific criteria and guidance for marine areas in need of protection (COP 9, May 2008, Bonn, Germany);
- the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including the Aichi Targets, and a decision on activities and indicators for the implementation of the resource mobilization strategy (COP 10, October 2010, Nagoya, Japan);
- agreement to use the terminology “Indigenous peoples and local communities” (COP 12, October 2014, Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea); and
- adoption of the Rutzolijirisaxik voluntary guidelines for repatriation of traditional knowledge (COP 14, November 2018, Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt).

COP 15: Following a lengthy intersessional period due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions, the first part of COP 15 convened virtually from 11-15 October 2021, with a limited number of delegates physically present in Kunming, China. Delegates adopted the Kunming Declaration, which calls for urgent and integrated action to reflect biodiversity considerations in all sectors of the global economy. The second part of the meeting, the 2022 UN Biodiversity Conference took place from 7-19 December 2022, in Montreal, Canada. The meeting adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which seeks to address biodiversity loss and guide global biodiversity policy through four overarching goals for 2050 and a set of 2030 targets. It is accompanied by decisions on: a multilateral mechanism on benefit-sharing from the use of DSI on genetic resources, including a global fund; resource mobilization; capacity building and technical and scientific cooperation; a monitoring framework; and mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting, and review.

SBI 5 was held in Cali, Colombia, immediately prior to the 2024 UN Biodiversity Conference, from 16-18 October 2024. Convening on [16](#), [17](#), and [18 October](#), the meeting focused on progress in national target-setting and updating of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and featured a pilot open-ended forum for voluntary country review of implementation.

2024 UN Biodiversity Conference Report

Following an opening ceremony on [Sunday, 20 October](#), official proceedings began on [Monday, 21 October](#).

Organizational and Procedural Matters: Susana Muhamad, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Colombia, was elected COP 16 and CP MOP 11 President, with Nneka Nicholas, Antigua and Barbuda, elected NP MOP 5 President, as Colombia is not a party to the NP.

Delegates adopted the agendas of COP 16, CP MOP 11, and NP MOP 5 ([CBD/COP/16/1](#) and [Add.1](#), [CBD/CP/MOP/11/1](#) and [Add.1](#), and [CBD/NP/MOP/5/1](#) and [Add.1](#)); and organization of work, including establishment of two Working Groups ([CBD/COP/16/1/](#)

[Add.2](#)). They further elected Charlotta Sörqvist (Sweden) and Hesiquio Benítez Díaz (Mexico) as Chairs of Working Group (WG) I and II, respectively; Somaly Chan (Cambodia) as Rapporteur; and Khangeziwe Mabuza (Eswatini) as the Bureau representative responsible for credentials.

Election of officers: On [Friday, 25 October](#), plenary elected Jean Bruno Mikissa (Gabon) and Clarissa Souza Della Nina (Brazil), as Chairs of SBSTTA and SBI, respectively. On [Wednesday, 30 October](#), plenary elected the following Bureau members: Joséphine Thérèse Babette Beyala Epse Eloundou (Cameroon); Jonas Komi Anthé (Togo); Bilal Qtishat (Jordan); Illam Atho Mohamed (Maldives); Adla Kahrić (Bosnia and Herzegovina); Jakhongir Talipov (Uzbekistan); Corina Sarli (Argentina); Gillian Guthrie (Jamaica); Gaute Hanssen (Norway); and Eric Schauls (Luxembourg). On [Thursday, 31 October](#), plenary nominated new members of the CP and NP Compliance Committees.

Reports: SBSTTA Chair Senka Barudanović (Bosnia and Herzegovina) presented the SBSTTA 25 and 26 reports ([CBD/SBSTTA/25/13](#) and [CBD/SBSTTA/26/9](#)). SBI Chair Chirra Achalender Reddy (India) tabled the SBI 4 and 5 reports ([CBD/SBI/4/17](#) and [CBD/SBI/5/4](#)). Ning Liu (China), on behalf of COP 15 President Huang Runqiu, reported on the 12th meeting of the Working Group on Article 8(j) ([CBD/WG8J/12/8](#)), and on the first and second meetings of the Working Group on benefit-sharing from DSI use ([CBD/WGDSI/1/3](#) and [CBD/WGDSI/2/3](#)).

CP Compliance Committee Chair Rigobert Ntep (Cameroon) presented the Committee's report ([CBD/CP/MOP/11/3](#)). NP Compliance Committee Chair Betty Kauna Schroder (Namibia) presented the Committee's report ([CBD/NP/MOP/5/3](#)).

The two WGs then began their work. The Secretariat introduced the compilation of draft decisions for CBD COP 16, CP MOP 11, and NP MOP 5 ([CBD/COP/16/2/Rev.1](#), [CBD/CP/MOP/11/2](#), and [CBD/NP/MOP/5/2](#)), including draft decisions for all agenda items, except for progress in national target setting and updating of NBSAPs.

CBD COP 16

Budget: On [Monday, 21 October](#), CBD Executive Secretary Astrid Schomaker introduced documents on the budget, requirements for the trust fund for voluntary contributions, and functional review of the Secretariat ([CBD/COP/16/4](#), [Add.1](#), and [Add.2](#)). Delegates then established a budget group, chaired by Charles Gbedemah (Ghana), tasked also with addressing the process for Executive Secretary appointment. The budget group met throughout the two weeks behind closed doors. Plenary heard progress reports on [Friday, 25 October](#), and [Wednesday, 30 October](#).

On Friday, 1 November, during the closing plenary, Chair Gbedemah reported that the budget group met 14 times, discussing new staff posts in the core budget, adding there is one remaining bracket in the document on the appointment process of future Executive Secretaries.

Final Outcome: No final decisions were adopted due to the meeting's suspension.

National Target-Setting and Updating of NBSAPs: On [Monday, 21 October](#), the Secretariat [reported](#) to plenary on submission of national targets and updated NBSAPs. COP 16 President Muhamad said a draft decision would be prepared on the basis of the relevant SBI 5 recommendation, following informal consultations. On Friday, 1 November, President Muhamad introduced a draft decision to plenary, congratulating the 44 parties

that had revised their NBSAPs. Plenary addressed a provision urging parties to implement their NBSAPs, with bracketed references to CBD Article 20 and to the need for support “from all sources on a needs basis.” Plenary agreed to maintain both references and adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.25](#)), the COP congratulates parties that have submitted their revised and updated NBSAPs in light of the GBF, and urges other parties to do so; requests the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to provide timely support to all eligible parties; and urges all parties to implement their NBSAPs in line with CBD Article 20, recognizing the need for enhanced support through adequate, timely, predictable, and easily accessible means of implementation from all sources on a needs basis.

DSI: Chair Sörqvist introduced the agenda item in WG I on [Monday, 21 October](#), and delegates heard progress reports from the first and second meetings of the Working Group on benefit-sharing from DSI use. A contact group, co-chaired by Lactitia Tshitwamulomoni (South Africa) and William Lockhart (UK), was established for further deliberations, holding 11 sessions over the two weeks.

On [Monday, 21 October](#), the contact group focused on the purpose and use of the funding raised by the mechanism. On [Tuesday, 22 October](#), discussions addressed the scope of DSI under the multilateral mechanism, relevant thresholds, and a list of sectors or subsectors that benefit from DSI use necessary for the operationalization of the mechanism. On [Wednesday, 23 October](#), delegates discussed elements for an allocation formula, and provisions dealing with disbursements from the DSI fund with two potential approaches: project-based allocations through a country-driven or community-driven process or direct ones.

On [Thursday, 24 October](#), discussions focused on the host of the DSI fund and data governance. Following deliberations over the weekend on options for monetary contributions, the governance of the multilateral mechanism; and funding allocations and disbursements, delegates continued their work on data governance on [Monday, 28 October](#). On [Tuesday, 29 October](#), the contact group focused on modalities for operationalizing the multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism and how it can be further intensified, including provisions for non-monetary benefit-sharing, compliance, and the relationship with national ABS measures and systems. On [Wednesday, 30 October](#), delegates discussed, among other things, options for contributions, the potential establishment of a new database, and incentives for DSI users.

On Friday, 1 November, in closing plenary, President Muhamad suggested adopting the final decision as a whole. PERU suggested removing a preambular paragraph acknowledging that in some world views, all natural genetic information belongs to Mother Earth. PANAMA emphasized that additional time is needed for technical discussions, lamenting the deletion of a provision devoting 10% of the DSI Fund to capacity-building and technology transfer activities.

Following a request by the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC), the Secretariat clarified changes in the final decision, including requests to the Secretariat to: prepare a study on national and international standards for the identification of small, medium, and large entities; and commission a study on contribution rates, including implications for revenue generation and economic competitiveness. On the basis of these studies, COP 17 will establish

thresholds and contribution rates, and keep them periodically under review.

Further changes include the insertion of provisions noting that: users making monetary contributions will receive a certificate; funding will be disbursed through direct allocations to parties, inviting them to designate or establish a relevant national entity to follow a country-driven or community-driven process and be accountable for ensuring the funds are used transparently; and at least half of the funding of the global fund should support the self-identified needs of IPLCs, including women and youth within those communities, where appropriate and subject to national circumstances.

The final decision was further amended to add animal and plant breeding to the indicative list of sectors that may directly or indirectly benefit from DSI use, and include a footnote noting that the list is “without prejudice to DSI on genetic resources provided for by other international agreements on ABS.”

Following a break for informal consultations, the EU and NORWAY supported adoption, with the EU noting compromises are required from all sides. CANADA emphasized that the decision is an important first step to create an innovative finance stream, sending a strong signal to DSI users, and further stressed the need to attract participation. SWITZERLAND accepted the text, stressing the modalities need to be refined. JAPAN agreed with the text, suggesting minor amendments and requesting reflecting in the meeting’s report that the review process should be conducted thoroughly, and include socioeconomic parameters and consider ways to incentivize contributions to the DSI fund. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA noted the proposed values for thresholds and contributions have not been sufficiently discussed and stressed the need to periodically review them.

South Africa, for the AFRICAN GROUP, and MEXICO noted they are ready to accept the decision. BRAZIL stressed that the decision, albeit not ideal, contains positive elements and highlights the central role of IPLCs in biodiversity conservation. ZIMBABWE, BURKINA FASO, and CUBA said that, despite their reservations, they can accept the outcome, with CUBA highlighting the need for provisions on technology transfer. CHILE supported adoption, emphasizing that the mechanism can be improved over time. PANAMA suggested devoting 10% of the funds to technical and scientific capacity building. PERU, supported by PANAMA but opposed by BOLIVIA, insisted on deleting the preambular paragraph including reference to Mother Earth.

INDIA, opposed by SWITZERLAND and NORWAY, suggested a number of amendments, including: explicit reference that the decision is without prejudice to national ABS measures “related to genetic resources and DSI from genetic resources”; “welcoming” rather than “adopting” the modalities for the operationalization of the multilateral mechanism; and that users “shall” instead of “should” share benefits arising from DSI use.

Following informal consultations, President Muhamad suggested as a compromise to India’s proposals to add that the multilateral mechanism is without prejudice to national obligations or ABS legislation. SWITZERLAND expressed concerns over the addition. The EU underlined that provisions noting the mechanism is without prejudice to national ABS measures are already included in the decision.

The UK urged adoption, underscoring the extraordinary sense of compromise and dedication during the negotiations that allowed

parties to “conquer a phenomenal amount of difficult material and agree on something.”

Following another break for informal consultations, the decision was adopted. PANAMA and PERU reiterated their concerns. ARGENTINA stressed that the food and agricultural sector should not be included, noting many companies carry out plant improvements that do not depend on DSI, further pointing towards the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), and requested the statement be reflected in the meeting’s report.

Final Decision: In the final decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.32.Rev.1](#)), the COP adopts the modalities for operationalizing the multilateral mechanism, including a global fund, the Cali Fund, for the fair and equitable benefit-sharing from the use of DSI on genetic resources. It decides to further explore the modalities of the multilateral mechanism, including possible additional modalities that take products and services into account, and new tools and models for making DSI publicly available and accessible.

The COP invites parties and others to submit relevant views and requests the Secretariat to: synthesize these views; commission a study on options for making DSI publicly available and accessible; and prepare a study on national and international standards for the identification of small, medium, and large entities as well as on contribution rates, including implications for revenue generation and economic competitiveness. The COP requests the SBI to study the information and make relevant recommendations to COP 17.

The modalities for operationalizing the multilateral mechanism are annexed to the decision. They address the scope of the multilateral mechanism and stressed that all users of DSI on genetic resources under the multilateral mechanism should share benefits arising from its use in a fair and equitable manner. Users of DSI on genetic resources in sectors that directly or indirectly benefit from its use in their commercial activities should contribute to the global fund 1% of their profits or 0.1% of their revenue, as an indicative rate, according to their size.

The modalities further include provisions for non-monetary benefit-sharing and for entities operating databases, and tools and models dependent on DSI. Parties and non-parties are invited to take administrative, policy, or legislative measures, consistent with national legislation, to incentivize contributions to the Cali Fund, which are expected to be made directly.

Funding should be allocated in a fair, equitable, transparent, accountable, and gender-responsive manner, and should support the realization of the objectives of the CBD in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing states (SIDS), and countries with economies in transition. A formula for funding allocation will be determined by COP 17. Funding will be disbursed through direct allocations to parties, which are to designate or establish a relevant national entity that will be responsible for resource allocation through a country- or community-driven process and accountable for transparent distribution. Where appropriate and subject to national circumstances, at least half of the funding allocated from the global fund should support the self-identified needs of IPLCs, including women and youth within those communities. The COP may set aside a proportion of funds to support capacity building. The fund will be administered by the UN through the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, under the authority of the COP.

The multilateral mechanism will be implemented in a way that is mutually supportive of and adaptive to other international ABS instruments on DSI. The effectiveness of the multilateral mechanism, including the global fund, will be regularly reviewed, starting at COP 18.

The decision contains six enclosures, namely:

- (A) an indicative list of sectors that may directly or indirectly benefit from the use of DSI on genetic resources;
- (B) an indicative list of criteria for funding allocation;
- (C) terms of reference (ToRs) for the Ad-hoc Technical Expert Group on Allocation Methodology;
- (D) ToRs of the Steering Committee to oversee the operations of the Fund's host;
- (E) functioning of the Secretariat; and
- (F) factors to be considered in the review.

Planning, Monitoring, Reporting, and Review (PMRR): On [Monday, 21 October](#), WG I addressed this item, and established a contact group to address outstanding matters in the GBF monitoring framework and the mechanisms for PMRR, including the global review of collective progress in the implementation of the GBF. The contact group was co-chaired by Gillian Guthrie (Jamaica) and Carolina Caceres (Canada). Discussions of the draft decision and associated annexes on the GBF monitoring framework in the contact group were co-facilitated by Ntakadzeni Tshidada (South Africa) and Anne Teller (EU). The contact group met on [Thursday, 24 October](#), [Friday, 25 October](#), [Monday, 28 October](#), [Tuesday, 29 October](#), and [Wednesday, 30 October](#). Discussions focused on procedures for the global review, and the content and sources of information for both the global review and report; as well as guidance on indicators under the GBF monitoring framework. On [Wednesday, 30 October](#), the contact group Co-Chairs noted that, due to unresolved differences on mechanisms for PMRR, consultations would continue, also at the ministerial level.

On [Wednesday, 30 October](#), WG I addressed a draft decision on the monitoring framework for the GBF, approving most elements of the draft decision and the three associated annexes with minor amendments. Delegates agreed to request the GEF to provide financial resources to contribute to the development and implementation of national biodiversity monitoring systems in response to requests by “all eligible parties” and according to its mandate. Delegates further agreed to encourage provision of “support, including resources,” for community-based monitoring and information systems. The annexes were approved, with brackets remaining on: indicator 7.2, concerning “pesticide environment concentration” and/or “aggregated total applied toxicity,” in the annex on technical updates to the headline and binary indicators in the GBF monitoring framework; and component indicators under Target 16 (sustainable consumption), namely “global environmental impacts of consumption” and “ecological footprint,” in the annex on optional disaggregation of the headline indicators and voluntary component and complementary indicators in the GBF monitoring framework. Delegates approved the decision with these amendments and remaining brackets, before it was bracketed as a whole following an intervention by the DRC, noting that PMRR, resource mobilization, and financial mechanism decisions constitute a package, and should be adopted together.

Final Outcome: The draft decision on the **GBF monitoring framework** ([CBD/COP/16/L.26](#)) and the draft decision on **mechanisms for PMRR**, including the global review of collective

progress in the implementation of the GBF to be conducted at COP 17 and 19 ([CBD/COP/16/L.33](#)), which was prepared as a President's proposal, were not adopted due to suspension of the COP.

Resource Mobilization: On [Monday, 21 October](#), Chair Sörqvist invited delegates in WG I to begin consideration of this agenda item and established a contact group, co-chaired by Ines Verleye (Belgium) and Patrick Luna (Brazil) to continue deliberations. The contact group met nine times over the two-week meeting.

On [Tuesday, 22 October](#), the contact group addressed the relationship between the strategy for resource mobilization and the non-exhaustive list of actions, as well as the most appropriate way to address the proposed new instrument for biodiversity finance. On [Wednesday, 23 October](#), delegates began textual negotiations on the strategy's guiding elements and enabling actions. On [Thursday, 24 October](#), the contact group focused on the proposal for a new, dedicated global instrument for biodiversity finance, including options to: establish a new instrument under the authority of the COP; defer the decision to COP 17; decide that the GEF will continue to operate the financial mechanism; and explore different ways forward on the basis of the work of the Advisory Committee on Resource Mobilization. On [Friday, 25 October](#), delegates addressed the operational part of the draft decision.

On [Monday, 28 October](#), discussions focused on options for an intersessional process, namely: establishing an expert advisory committee on resource mobilization; mandating the SBI to lead intersessional work; or establishing an intersessional working group. On [Tuesday, 29 October](#), the contact group discussed a non-paper containing clusters of elements to be addressed depending on the final decision on an intersessional process toward establishing a dedicated global instrument for biodiversity finance. On [Wednesday, 30 October](#), delegates addressed a non-paper containing the revised resource mobilization strategy 2025-2030. On [Thursday, 31 October 2024](#), the contact group continued deliberations on the non-paper on the revised resource mobilization strategy, focusing, among other things, on its objectives.

On Friday, 1 November, in the closing plenary, President Muhamad introduced the draft decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.34](#)), which contained a decision on the establishment of dedicated global financing instrument for biodiversity to receive, disburse, mobilize, and articulate funding from all sources, under the authority of the COP, to be made fully operational by 2030. The decision further contained a provision on an intersessional process to determine the relevant modalities by COP 18.

The EU and SWITZERLAND emphasized that they cannot accept the establishment of a new fund, with the EU noting it would further fragment the biodiversity financing landscape, and stressing that “a new fund does not mean new funding.” The EU further stressed that it is difficult to see the difference between a new instrument and a fund, calling for not undermining the GEF. SWITZERLAND stressed they could consider adopting such an instrument at COP 18 but not “here and now.” CANADA, NORWAY, AUSTRALIA, and JAPAN echoed these concerns. NEW ZEALAND noted the proposal for a new fund needs further work, expressing openness to discussing next steps, and stressing that the GBF Fund offers the best potential to deliver on collective commitments.

ZIMBABWE, SOUTH AFRICA, EGYPT, TANZANIA, and ZAMBIA underscored that the African Group supports adoption, stressing the importance of a dedicated fund. FIJI supported the

proposal, noting they were the last remaining representative of the Pacific SIDS at the meeting. BOLIVIA supported adoption, highlighting commitments under CBD Articles 20 and 21. BRAZIL highlighted that the decision is groundbreaking and historic, stressing the draft proposes a plan and structures the process for further reflection. They further emphasized that such important issues should be discussed in a timely manner, and stressed “We are not ready to discuss anything else until we have a solution for this.”

PANAMA, supported by BRAZIL, invoked Rule 30 of the rules of procedure, noting that decisions may be taken only when representatives of at least two-thirds of the parties are present. President Muhamad announced that quorum was not met and suspended COP 16.

Final Outcome: The final decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.34](#)) was not adopted due to the meeting’s suspension.

Financial Mechanism: On [Monday, 21 October](#), Chair Sörqvist introduced the relevant documents and delegates exchanged general views. On [Tuesday, 22 October](#), discussions continued in plenary focusing on, among other things, the GEF and the review of effectiveness of the financial mechanism. A contact group, co-chaired by Laura Bermúdez Wilches (Colombia) and Ladislav Miko (Czechia) was established to continue deliberations.

On [Thursday, 24 October](#), the contact group addressed a non-paper containing the draft decision, focusing on the review of effectiveness of the financial mechanism. On [Monday, 28 October](#), delegates resumed negotiations on a revised non-paper, addressing a list of requests to the GEF under the section on the review of effectiveness of the financial mechanism. On [Thursday, 31 October](#), the contact group addressed outstanding issues in the draft decision and addressed the four-year outcome-oriented framework of biodiversity programme priorities.

On Friday, 1 November, the contact group finalized its deliberations, addressing preambular provisions, submissions from other contact groups, and an annex containing further guidance to the GEF.

In preambular provisions, delegates reached agreement on, among other things: underlining the continued efforts to improve the strategic guidance provided by the COP to the GEF as the institutional structure operating the financial mechanism of the CBD on an interim and ongoing basis; and recognizing the importance of strengthening country leadership, ownership, and accountability on activities supported by the GEF.

A lengthy discussion took place, without reaching consensus, on a provision recalling the importance of appropriate burden sharing among developed country parties in the implementation of biodiversity obligations, including in their contributions to the GEF. Some parties requested deletion, while others suggested reference to Article 20. Delegates decided to limit references to Articles 20 and 21 to the first preambular paragraph.

On inputs from other groups, delegates decided to request the GEF to provide financial assistance to all recipient countries for projects that address the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health, deleting reference to lack of “prejudice, discrimination, or bias.” They deleted a request to the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to elaborate a global project to facilitate capacity building and development related to using the clearing-houses of the CBD and its Protocols, further requesting an invitation to the GEF to provide relevant support.

The contact group decided to support “as appropriate the operationalization and eligible activities of the regional and

subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centers in developing country parties.” Delegates further addressed provisions relevant to the CP and NP.

Regarding additional guidance to the GEF (Annex II), some parties requested deletion, but the contact group decided to defer consideration to SBI 6. A proposal “recognizing and considering the living in harmony with nature and the living well in balance and harmony with Mother Earth to achieve human well-being, a healthy planet, and economic prosperity for all people” was retained as a preambular provision.

Final Outcome: The final decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.31](#)) was not adopted following the meeting’s suspension.

Capacity-building and Development, Technical and Scientific Cooperation, the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM), and Knowledge Management: On [Tuesday, 22 October](#), WG I addressed the item containing two draft decisions: on capacity building and development and technical and scientific cooperation (TSC); and on the CHM and knowledge management. WG I established a contact group on the matter, co-chaired by Mukondi Matshusa (South Africa) and Holly Kelley-Weil (UK). The contact group met on [Tuesday, 22 October](#), [Wednesday, 23 October](#), and [Monday, 28 October](#).

Delegates addressed an updated draft of the two decisions on [Thursday, 31 October](#). On Friday, 1 November, plenary addressed both draft decisions. In the draft decision on capacity building and development, TSC and technology transfer, they agreed to revise language on requests to the GEF to continue to support country-driven projects “in all eligible countries,” and to delete paragraphs on issuing a second call for regional and subregional centers.

In the draft decision on CHM and knowledge management, delegates agreed to: delete references to people of African descent; retain references to data sovereignty “subject to relevant national policies and legislation as well as international regulations regarding data-sharing;” and for the GEF to consider funding requests from “all eligible parties.” They adopted the decisions with these amendments.

Final Decisions: The decision on **capacity building and development, technical and scientific cooperation, and technology transfer** ([CBD/COP/16/L.13](#)) is composed of two sections on: capacity building and development; and technical and scientific cooperation and technology transfer.

On capacity building and development, the COP welcomes the indicators proposed by the Informal Advisory Group on Technical and Scientific Cooperation, and decides that the monitoring and reporting of progress in the implementation of the long-term strategic framework for capacity building and development and the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism will be conducted in conjunction with the process for monitoring and reporting of progress in GBF implementation.

The COP requests the Informal Advisory Group to:

- identify suitable options to further address the technological, technical, and institutional capability gaps identified for consideration by SBI held before COP 17; and
- prepare TORs for the independent evaluation of the relevance and effectiveness of the long-term strategic framework for capacity-building and development and the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism, to be undertaken in 2029 in conjunction with the global review of collective progress in GBF implementation.

The COP requests the Secretariat, with the support of the Informal Advisory Group, to:

- further identify and map, in collaboration with the regional and subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centers and relevant initiatives and partnerships, a global overview of their coverage and share the information collected through the CHM; and
- continue to develop and implement joint capacity-building activities and programmes with the Secretariats of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the biodiversity-related conventions.

On technical and scientific cooperation and technology transfer, the COP decides that the global coordination entity of the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism will be hosted by the CBD Secretariat, and adopts the modalities for operationalizing the entity, as presented in the annex to the decision.

The COP requests the selected regional and subregional support centers to develop a biennial workplan for the period 2025-2026, and for the COP Bureau to consider and approve, on an interim basis, the first programme priorities and workplan of the entity following its establishment.

The COP invites:

- parties and others to provide financial and in-kind contributions and resources to support the programmes and activities supported by the regional and subregional support centers and the entity; and
- the Kunming Biodiversity Fund to support technical and scientific cooperation, technology transfer, and capacity-building and development support programmes and activities in developing countries.

The COP requests the Secretariat to:

- initiate operations of the global coordination entity as soon as possible, in accordance with the modalities set out in the decision's annex;
- identify and facilitate the mobilization of additional financial resources and technical assistance to enable the regional and subregional support centers to initiate support programmes and activities;
- develop, in collaboration with the Informal Advisory Group, criteria for evaluating the performance of the regional and subregional support centers and the global coordination entity; and
- prepare a progress report on the technical and scientific cooperation, including operations of the regional and subregional support centers, for consideration by the SBI 6 and COP 18.

Annex I provides the entities and organizations selected to host the regional and subregional support centers, and Annex II included the modalities for operationalizing the global coordination entity of the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism.

The decision on the **CHM and knowledge management** ([CBD/COP/16/L.16](#)) contains two sections.

On the CHM, the COP adopts the programme of work for the period 2024-2030, contained in an annex; and encourages parties to nominate a CHM national focal point or update information on their CHM national focal points and communicate them to the Secretariat. It further urges parties, and invites others, to provide financial and technical support to biodiversity capacity-building and development activities to implement the programme of work. It further requests the Secretariat to facilitate capacity-building and development

activities for implementation, and to further develop and strengthen the central portal of the CHM.

On **knowledge management**, the COP, among other things, adopts the knowledge management strategy to support GBF implementation, contained in an annex; and urges parties and invites others to provide financial and technical support to biodiversity capacity-building and development activities to implement the knowledge management strategy.

The COP requests the Secretariat to:

- support the implementation of the knowledge management strategy, with the guidance of the Informal Advisory Group on Technical and Scientific Cooperation;
- implement the Knowledge Management for Biodiversity Initiative, in collaboration with others;
- further develop, with the guidance of the Informal Advisory Group on TSC, biodiversity-related vocabularies, taxonomies, ontologies, and metadata standards through the CHM; and
- submit a report on the implementation of the activities for consideration by SBI 6 and COP 17.

The decision contains two annexes: on the programme of work for the CHM for the period 2024-2030, and on the knowledge management strategy to support the implementation of the GBF.

Cooperation: On [Tuesday, 22 October](#), during WG I, delegates focused on the relevance of cooperation and discussed links to other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), such as the UNFCCC and the BBNJ Agreement, and to the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA). Several parties lauded the Bern Process for identifying actions for strengthening cooperation. On [Friday, 25 October](#), during WG I, delegates resumed the discussions and exchanges regarding which related MEAs to include in the draft decision and whether to establish a joint work programme among Rio Convention secretariats.

On Friday, 1 November, WG I addressed a conference room paper (CRP). They bracketed preambular paragraphs addressing cooperation between the CBD and the BBNJ Agreement. The EU proposed re-inserting a paragraph on collaboration between the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and the UNCCD Science-Policy Interface (SPI), opposed by ARGENTINA. Delegates agreed to:

- invite parties to the Rio Conventions to strengthen synergies and coordination in the implementation of each convention in accordance with national circumstances and priorities, following interventions by the EU, BRAZIL, CHILE, ARGENTINA, MEXICO, SWITZERLAND, and INDIA;
- welcome the sixth joint work plan 2024-2030 of the CBD and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands;
- invite parties to consider the report of the Bern III Conference, removing provisions on sharing its conclusions and considering actions to implement the outcomes, following a suggestion by the RUSSIAN FEDERATION; and
- invite the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to develop tools and guidance on a human rights-based approach to the implementation of the GBF and convey the results to the CBD Secretariat.

Certain provisions remained bracketed, including invitations and requests to:

- the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) to prepare a draft plan of action for the initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition;

- UNEP to continue its reflections on the rights of nature; and
- the governing bodies of the chemicals and waste conventions, FAO, and others to collaborate with the three Rio Conventions and the future legally binding instrument on plastic pollution.

Bracketed requests to the Secretariat address: continuing collaboration with the Secretariats of the UNFCCC and UNCCD to identify opportunities for cooperation, including by exploring the potential for a joint work programme among the Rio Conventions; collaborating with the interim Secretariat of the BBNJ Agreement; and facilitating the exchange of initiatives with others to support different value and knowledge systems, the rights of nature, and the rights of Mother Earth.

Final Outcome: Plenary did not consider the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.30](#)) due to suspension of the meeting.

Article 8(j): WG I addressed the item on [Monday, 21 October](#), including draft decisions on a new programme of work and institutional arrangements, Recommendations from the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), and an in-depth dialogue on the role of languages in the intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledge. Delegates agreed to establish a contact group, co-chaired by Lucy Mulenkei (International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, IIFB) and Pernilla Malmer (Sweden). Discussions focused on: the need for adequate support, robust institutional arrangements, and substantive financial mechanisms for IPLCs; terminological questions; whether to include people of African descent in the agenda; and whether to establish a dedicated subsidiary body on Article 8(j), along with budgetary considerations. Chair Sörqvist said she would hold informal consultations on the Recommendations of UNPFII, and prepare a non-paper on the in-depth dialogue on the role of languages in the intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledge.

The contact group met on [Monday, 21 October](#), [Tuesday, 22 October](#), [Wednesday, 23 October](#), [Thursday, 24 October](#), and [Monday, 28 October](#). Contact group discussions focused on, among other things: elements and tasks within the Article 8(j) work programme, and prioritization related to GBF implementation; inclusion of language on direct drivers of biodiversity loss; access to direct funding for IPLCs; requesting parties to mobilize financial and provide non-financial resources to enhance IPLCs' collective actions to implement NBSAPs; a proposal by Brazil and Colombia on inclusion of people of Africa descent in CBD processes and implementation; and institutional arrangements, including whether to establish a dedicated subsidiary body.

On [Monday, 28 October](#), delegates heard a report from a Friends of the Co-Chairs group indicating that the proposal for a draft decision on the role of people of African descent would be issued as a separate decision. On [Wednesday, 30 October](#), WG I addressed three non-papers on the work programme, institutional arrangements, and on the role of people of African descent. On Friday, 1 November, delegates adopted the decisions on institutional arrangements, the role of people of African descent, and on the UNPFII recommendations.

Work Programme: Plenary agreed, on [Wednesday, 30 October](#), to a compromise proposal on the general principles of the new work programme, acknowledging its aims are to address the specific challenges faced by all IPLCs, while recognizing the particular challenges of IPLCs from developing countries in the work of the CBD, as well as the challenges faced by developing country parties in promoting implementation of Article 8(j). On further tasks of the work programme, delegates agreed to support

efforts for the mobilization of financial resources for IPLCs, in line with and including within the scope of the revised resource mobilization strategy. Delegates agreed to retain a reference to taking national legislation, circumstances, and priorities into account, as appropriate. They also removed explicit reference to women and girls, children and youth, persons with disabilities, and environmental human rights defenders, over which there had been divergence. The decision and work programme were adopted as amended.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.5](#)), the COP implements the work programme on Article 8(j) and other related provisions, as well as prioritizes tasks of the work programme that contribute directly to the timely implementation of the GBF. The decision also:

- requests parties, and invites others, to report on progress on the implementation of the work programme, including the application of existing and relevant standards and guidelines in their national reports;
- requests all parties and stakeholders to continue efforts to mobilize financial resources from all sources, and provide non-financial resources for IPLCs in order to enhance collective actions to implement NBSAPs; and
- encourages parties to engage with IPLCs as on-the-ground implementation partners.

It requests the Secretariat to establish and support a global network of national focal points on Article 8(j), and to collaborate with other relevant global processes and mechanisms to facilitate an exchange in relation to the implementation of Article 8(j) and decision 15/21 (Recommendations from the UNPFII to the CBD).

Annex I contains the programme of work, including elements on: conservation and restoration; sustainable use; benefit-sharing; knowledge and culture; strengthening implementation and monitoring progress; full and effective participation of IPLCs; human rights-based approach; and access to funding.

Institutional Arrangements: Plenary addressed the draft decision on institutional arrangements on [Wednesday, 30 October](#), with divergence among parties on the establishment of a permanent subsidiary body and its *modus operandi*. On Friday, 1 November, plenary approved a compromise text, based upon informal consultations, deciding to establish a Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) (SB8J).

IIFB celebrated this “unprecedented moment in the history of MEAs,” noting IPLCs of the world are connected through their knowledge systems in caring for life and biodiversity, and recalled the long path toward establishment of the subsidiary body. She said the subsidiary body will be a reference point for the rest of the world. The GLOBAL YOUTH BIODIVERSITY NETWORK (GYBN) expressed unwavering support for the establishment of the subsidiary body, noting it lays the foundation for respect, resilience, and responsibility for generations to come, and for a biodiversity policy that is “much stronger and wiser.”

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.6](#)), the COP acknowledges the unique role of IPLCs, their innovations, practices, and traditional knowledge in the implementation of the CBD, its Protocols, and the GBF, and the work of the Working Group on Article 8(j); and recognizes the need for the full and effective participation of IPLCs through a permanent subsidiary body. The decision establishes a SB8J, with the mandate to provide advice to the COP, other subsidiary bodies and, subject to their request, the MOP to the CP and NP, on matters of relevance to IPLCs that are

within the scope of the CBD and its Protocols. It requests SB8J, at its first meeting, to further elaborate and finalize its *modus operandi*, contained in an annex, and submit it for consideration by COP 17 with a view to its adoption. It further decides to apply the *modus operandi* of SBSTTA and established procedures and practices applied under the Working Group on Article 8(j) on an interim basis.

The decision requests the SB8J to take the following elements into account when developing its *modus operandi*:

- need for the full and effective participation of IPLCs;
- cost efficiency of the SB8J's operations and management compared to those of the Working Group on Article 8(j);
- full recognition of the operations of the SB8J as a party-led process;
- criteria and process for selection of IPLC representatives from the seven UNPFII sociocultural regions to participate in its work; and
- interaction with other permanent subsidiary bodies with a view to minimize duplication and any additional burden to these bodies, while enhancing synergies.

It encourages parties and others to provide additional support to representatives of IPLCs to participate effectively in the meetings of the SBSTTA, SBI, and SB8J.

People of African Descent: On a draft decision on the role of people of African descent, comprising collectives embodying traditional lifestyles in CBD implementation, plenary agreed, on [Wednesday, 30 October](#), to remove brackets around the word “collectives” in the title of and throughout the decision over which there had been divergence. Plenary further agreed to amend a footnote on the term, following an EU compromise proposal to state that “the term collectives in this decision refers to a form of organization of these groups to convey their shared cultural identity.” Delegates also agreed to “recognize” the contributions of people of African descent in CBD and GBF implementation; and approved the decision text as amended. On Friday, 1 November, plenary adopted the decision, following adoption of the decision on institutional arrangements.

Representatives of people of African descent cheered the adoption. COLOMBIA commended this historic milestone on CBD implementation and the recognition of the fundamental contributions of Afro-descendant peoples to biodiversity conservation. BRAZIL lauded the adoption of a “historic and unprecedented” decision within the CBD, which “brings out of invisibility the Afro-descendant communities that with their way of life, help us to conserve biodiversity.”

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.7](#)), the COP invites parties, as appropriate, in line with national legislation or circumstances, to recognize the contributions of people of African descent, comprising collectives embodying traditional lifestyles, their shared knowledge, and connection with their lands in the implementation of the CBD and the GBF, while ensuring that nothing in such recognition may be construed as diminishing or extinguishing the rights that Indigenous Peoples currently have or may acquire in future.

The COP encourages parties, as appropriate, in line with national legislation and circumstances, to facilitate the full and effective participation of this group in implementing the CBD and the GBF, and to collaborate with them to protect and promote their shared knowledge, innovations, and practices that support the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

It invites parties and others, on a voluntary basis, to consider providing financial support and enhancing capacity building to protect the shared knowledge, innovations and practices of this group.

The COP further encourages parties to communicate through their national reports on the contributions of people of African descent to the implementation of the CBD and the GBF for the information of the subsidiary bodies, and requests the Secretariat to compile the information submitted and make it available through the CHM.

In-Depth Dialogue: Plenary adopted the decision on the in-depth dialogue on Friday, 1 November.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.14](#)), the COP, among other things, decides that the theme of the next in-depth dialogue shall be “Strategies for mobilizing resources to ensure the availability of and access to financial resources and funding, as well as other means of implementation, including capacity-building, development and technical support for IPLCs, including women and youth, to support the full implementation of the GBF.”

UNPFII Recommendations: Following informal consultations, plenary addressed the decision on the UNPFII recommendations on Friday, 1 November. TOGO reported on the final compromise language for the decision. The DRC, supported by INDIA and the CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, requested adding a footnote stating that “nothing in this document can be interpreted as meaning the separation between Indigenous Peoples and local communities.” Plenary adopted the decision as amended.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.15](#)), the COP takes note of the UNPFII recommendations and requests exchanging information with the UNPFII on activities undertaken in the context of the Convention.

Communication, Education, and Public Awareness

(CEPA): On [Friday 25, October](#), WGI Chair Sörqvist noted a non-paper will be prepared, reminding delegates that the SBI did not review the annex to the draft decision.

On Friday, 1 November, Chair Sörqvist introduced the CRP ([CBD/COP/16/WG1/CRP.4](#)). On preambular provisions, WG I reached agreement on:

- recognizing the importance of linking revisions to the programme of work on CEPA with the GBF, deleting references to particular GBF sections and targets, following suggestions by the EU and ARGENTINA;
- recognizing that developing countries face significant challenges in the implementation of the GBF and the development of actions for CEPA, and that adequate resourcing is necessary to support these actions in accordance with CBD Article 20, following interventions by ARGENTINA, the EU, PERU, TOGO, COLOMBIA, and CHILE; and
- referring to “transformative actions” to implement the GBF, rather than to “transformative change.”

Plenary addressed the draft decision later on Friday. On a provision encouraging parties to implement actions at the national level to align the work programme on CEPA with the GBF, delegates decided to include reference to the global plan of action on education, which was bracketed. On a provision inviting the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), IPBES, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and GYBN, to collaborate to develop a global plan of action for education on biodiversity, BRAZIL and ARGENTINA, opposed

by the EU and NORWAY, suggested deleting reference to IUCN. ZAMBIA and PERU suggested approving the provision. The reference to IUCN was removed and the decision was adopted.

Final Decision: In the final decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.29](#)), the COP welcomes the suggested actions as a flexible voluntary framework, to align the programme of work on CEPA with the GBF, and encourages parties to implement relevant actions at the national level. The COP invites: UNESCO, IPBES, and GYBN to collaborate to develop a global plan of action for education on biodiversity; and parties and others to provide resources for CEPA at all levels, including for the continued implementation of the communications strategy.

The COP further requests the Secretariat to:

- collaborate toward the development of a global plan of action for education on biodiversity;
- implement the actions to align the CEPA work programme with the GBF;
- submit a progress report to SBI and COP 17; and
- continue to implement the communications strategy.

Annexed to the decision are suggested actions to align the CEPA work programme with the GBF.

Scientific and Technical Needs for GBF Implementation: WG II established a contact group on [Monday, 21 October](#), to discuss this matter alongside the IPBES Work Programme. The contact group, co-chaired by Wataru Suzuki (Japan) and Senka Barudanović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), convened on [Thursday, 24 October](#), and [Tuesday, 29 October](#).

On [Thursday, 31 October](#), WG II addressed and approved a CRP. Discussions focused on areas for further work to support GBF implementation and enhance biodiversity. Delegates debated extensively, reaching no agreement, whether to include an area of work on equity, gender equality, and the human rights-based approach to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from utilization of genetic resources. They also disagreed on whether to include “different value systems” as an area of work.

During plenary on Friday, 1 November, several delegates, including SIDS, URUGUAY, PANAMA, BRAZIL, and NAMIBIA, supported retaining the area of work on equity, gender equality, and human rights-based approaches, noting a clear gap in scientific and technical support tools and guidance for implementing human rights-based approaches. The EU preferred requesting the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to carry out a study on human rights-based approaches to GBF implementation. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION agreed to compromise with an addition to the chapeau introducing the areas of work to state that “work could be advanced in the following areas.” Delegates also agreed to include an area of work on different value systems, and adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.12](#)), the COP welcomes the establishment of the regional and subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centers, and recognizes their potential and important role in supporting GBF implementation, while recognizing the CBD work programmes remain important tools to support GBF implementation, although some programmes of work may need to be updated.

The COP further decides that work could be advanced in the following areas: biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning; pollution and biodiversity; sustainable biodiversity-based activities, products, and services that enhance biodiversity; equity, gender equality, and the human rights-based approach relating to the conservation and

sustainable use of biodiversity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources; and different value systems.

It encourages parties and others to make use of relevant tools and guidance to support GBF implementation, adapted to national contexts as needed, and to share through the CHM their experience and lessons learned on the use of tools and guidance.

The COP requests the Secretariat to:

- continue to facilitate the compilation of and access to scientific and technical tools and guidance, and the development and updating of the tools and guidance to support GBF implementation;
- integrate the considerations for GBF implementation into tools and guidance being developed under relevant MEAs, processes, and organizations in order to support biodiversity-inclusive actions;
- provide a summary of the submissions of views and relevant experiences on the work areas and make proposals for potential further work for consideration by SBSTTA before COP 17; and
- conduct a strategic review and analysis of the CBD work programmes in the context of the GBF to facilitate its implementation and prepare draft work programme updates and submit them for consideration by SBSTTA before COP 17.

IPBES Work Programme: This matter was addressed in WG II and in the contact group on scientific and technical needs to support GBF implementation on [Thursday, 24 October](#), and [Tuesday, 29 October](#).

Delegates considered and approved a CRP on [Thursday, 31 October](#), focusing on proposals for topics for future IPBES assessments. Plenary adopted the decision on Friday, 1 November.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.11](#)), the COP requests SBSTTA to consider IPBES outputs according to the annexed schedule of IPBES assessments and their consideration under the CBD (2024-2030) and invites IPBES to consider the following request for potential additional assessments in its rolling work programme: pollution and biodiversity; cities and biodiversity; biodiversity and poverty; and biodiversity and climate change. It also invites IPBES to explore ways to raise awareness of, and include matters related to, the human rights-based approach, as relevant, in its work.

The COP encourages parties to make use of, as appropriate, IPBES assessments and deliverables to support GBF implementation, to engage with the review processes for the preparation of the assessments and deliverables, and to enhance communication, information sharing, and coordination between IPBES and CBD focal points at national level.

The COP requests the Secretariat to:

- facilitate the participation of the IPBES Secretariat in meetings of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions, where relevant;
- update the overview of previous and future IPBES deliverables and their relevance in CBD decision making, make it available on the CBD website, and provide an update on joint activities between the Secretariat and the IPBES at a SBSTTA meeting during each intersessional period; and
- continue its close cooperation with the IPBES analyzing and identifying further ways in which the IPBES may contribute to GBF implementation and to the global review of collective progress, including by identifying opportunities to make use,

as appropriate, of the deliverables for each of IPBES' four functions.

Mainstreaming: On [Monday, 21 October](#), WG II Chair Benítez established a contact group co-chaired by Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias (Brazil) and Sanne Kruid (the Netherlands), to meet that evening to address the operative paragraphs of the draft decision not discussed during SBI 4. On [Monday, 28 October](#), WG II addressed a CRP approving most elements of the draft decision with minor amendments. Delegates resolved differences on the list of actors to be invited to mainstream biodiversity in all relevant processes and a footnote regarding the understanding of biodiversity mainstreaming “within and across all sectors.” On [Wednesday, 30 October](#), WG II continued deliberations on the CRP, agreeing on text requesting additional activities ahead of COP 18. Some bracketed text remained.

On Friday, 1 November, plenary agreed to retain bracketed text inviting parties, relevant organizations, initiatives, and stakeholders to provide relevant information with regard to biodiversity mainstreaming through their seventh national reports “or through information by non-state actors,” as proposed by the EU. Plenary adopted the decision with this and other minor amendments.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.9](#)), the COP urges parties and stakeholders, as appropriate, to undertake biodiversity mainstreaming as reflected in the GBF; and encourages parties to promote and support the private sector in its contributions to CBD objectives. The COP also requests the Secretariat to:

- integrate the consideration of biodiversity mainstreaming into regional and subregional dialogue meetings;
- strengthen collaboration with relevant convention secretariats and organizations in order to achieve biodiversity mainstreaming at all levels;
- support capacity-building and development activities related to biodiversity mainstreaming;
- provide a structured overview to support biodiversity mainstreaming within and across sectors and foster sector-specific communities of practice ahead of COP 17; and
- prepare a progress report on the aforementioned activities for consideration by SBI before COP 17.

Diverse Values of Biodiversity: On [Monday, 21 October](#), WG II considered the item, and agreed that a CRP should be prepared. On [Thursday, 31 October](#), WG II addressed the CRP, agreeing to support and develop participatory processes to promote various sustainability pathways. BOLIVIA proposed establishing a programme of work on different value systems to examine different world visions and values for implementation.

On Friday, 1 November, WG II resumed consideration of the CRP ([CBD/COP/16/WGII/CRP.5](#)) on the findings of the IPBES assessment on diverse values and valuation of nature. BOLIVIA agreed to compromise on the language of proposed areas of work on diverse values of nature. On Friday, 1 November, plenary adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.19](#)), the COP encourages parties and others to make use of, in their implementation of the CBD and the GBF, the [Methodological Assessment Report on the Diverse Values and Valuation of Nature of IPBES](#), which calls for recognizing and integrating diverse knowledges and value systems, valuation methods and concepts and world views of nature in policymaking and decision-making. It further encourages parties and others to develop capacities for implementation of the findings,

provide support from developed to developing countries, and ensure the full and effective participation of IPLCs and others in incorporating diverse values and knowledge systems in decision making. The decision encourages parties to take a number of steps, including to:

- address the diverse values of nature in ongoing and new valuation processes;
- meaningfully include the diverse intrinsic, relational, and instrumental values of nature in decision-making;
- support and develop participatory processes to promote various sustainability pathways; and
- consider assessing diverse values when developing measures for implementation of GBF Target 14 (integration of biodiversity in decision-making).

Sustainable Wildlife Management: On [Monday, 21 October](#), WG II discussed the item with focus on requests for complementary guidance to support GBF implementation on the basis of SBSTTA recommendation 25/7. On [Thursday, 24 October](#), WG II addressed a CRP, with debate focusing on a reference to challenges to sustainable use, including from “technological developments.” On [Friday, 25 October](#), plenary adopted a decision, including a reference to “technological developments that result in unsustainable practices.” ARGENTINA and BRAZIL recorded their reservation to this reference in the report of the meeting.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.2](#)), the COP encourages parties and others to use the IPBES [Thematic Assessment on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species](#) in implementing the GBF's goals and targets, and consider the seven suggested policy actions or “key elements” from the assessment, referred to in SBSTTA recommendation 25/7.

It requests the Secretariat to:

- enhance synergies in the field with the secretariats of other MEAs;
- compile submissions by parties and others for consideration by SBSTTA 27; and
- facilitate regional dialogues to build common understanding on the application of the seven key elements.

Marine and Coastal Biodiversity, and Island Biodiversity:

EBSAs: On [Monday, 21 October](#), WG II Chair Benítez established a contact group co-chaired by Erica Lucero (Argentina) and Gaute Hanssen (Norway). The group met on [Tuesday, 22 October](#), focusing on long-standing divergent views regarding the modalities for the modification of descriptions of EBSAs and the description of new areas, finding common ground, among other things, on the withdrawal of EBSA descriptions from the list. On [Thursday, 24 October](#), the contact group resolved all pending issues, except for the paragraph on synergies between the EBSA description process and the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement. On [Wednesday, 30 October](#), the WG II addressed a CRP agreeing on the language related to the BBNJ Agreement, and the plenary adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.8](#)), the COP:

- extends the term of the Informal Advisory Group on EBSAs;
- adopts the modalities for the modification of descriptions of EBSAs and the description of new areas;
- acknowledges the potential synergies between the process to facilitate the description of areas meeting the criteria for EBSAs and the future implementation of the BBNJ Agreement; and
- requests the Secretariat to develop voluntary guidelines on peer-review processes for the description of areas meeting the criteria for EBSAs.

Annexed to the decision are the modalities for the modification of descriptions of EBSAs and the description of new areas: Section I is on guidance in the implementation of the modalities; Section II addresses the repository and information-sharing mechanism for EBSAs; Section III provides the modalities, including for areas within and beyond national jurisdiction; and Section IV covers the correction of editorial errors.

Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine and Coastal Biodiversity: WG II Chair Benítez established a contact group co-chaired by Erica Lucero (Argentina) and Gaute Hanssen (Norway). On [Wednesday, 23 October](#) and [Thursday, 24 October](#), the group focused on a list of areas of work in need of additional focus to support GBF implementation. On [Wednesday, 30 October](#), WG II addressed a CRP focusing on a paragraph on geoengineering under the London Convention on marine pollution, which was deleted. On [Thursday, 31 October](#), WG II resumed consideration of the CRP, focusing on the annex on gaps and areas in need of additional focus. They agreed on most of the draft decision, except paragraphs related to the BBNJ Agreement. Consensus was then reached to “acknowledge” the BBNJ Agreement’s adoption.

Deliberations continued on Friday, 1 November. CHILE reported compromise from the small group discussion, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION maintained their position against supporting the BBNJ Agreement, and both texts remained unresolved. The CRP was approved with these amendments and remaining brackets.

During plenary, CHILE presented a new compromise solution developed following informal consultations: on the paragraph acknowledging the adoption of the BBNJ Agreement, to delete the sentence stressing the crucial importance of its rapid entry into force; and on the paragraph requesting the Secretariat to convene an expert workshop on opportunities for specific areas of scientific and technical work, to delete reference to SBSTTA consideration before COP 17. The plenary adopted the decision as amended.

The COOK ISLANDS, on behalf of Pacific SIDS present at COP 16, called for the establishment of a standalone agenda item on island biodiversity and the development of a dedicated decision on island biodiversity and its programme of work at future meetings of the COP. ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIA, ICELAND, SEYCHELLES, CABO VERDE, SAINT LUCIA, FIJI, MALDIVES, and PANAMA supported the statement.

The EU urged parties and invited other governments to accelerate the ratification of the BBNJ Agreement for rapid entry into force. CHILE, ICELAND, NORWAY, the UK, and FIJI supported it. CHILE reaffirmed the importance of recognizing the linkages between the CBD and the BBNJ Agreement, particularly regarding GBF Target 3 (conserve 30% of land, waters, and seas); and regretted that the agreed language did not include specific references to a gender-responsive, human rights-based approach.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.17](#)), the COP: acknowledges the adoption of the BBNJ Agreement; urges parties, and invites others to accelerate the implementation of priority actions for coral reefs and closely associated ecosystems; encourages parties, and invites other governments, to ratify, approve, accept, or accede to the Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments; and notes there are gaps and areas in need of additional focus to support implementation of the GBF, listed in the annex.

The COP further requests the Secretariat, among other things, to enhance cooperation and collaboration with MEAs and others, as appropriate, for:

- implementing the UN system-wide strategy for water and sanitation;
- strengthening efforts to prevent overfishing and illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing;
- convene an expert workshop on opportunities to contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction; and
- continue to facilitate capacity-building and partnership activities and enhance cooperation, collaboration, or synergies, as appropriate, on various thematic issues related to marine and coastal biodiversity and island biodiversity to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Annexed to the decision are the gaps and areas in need of additional focus under the CBD to support GBF implementation with regard to marine and coastal, and island biodiversity.

Invasive Alien Species (IAS): WG II addressed this matter on [Monday, 21 October](#), deciding to prepare a CRP. On [Friday, 25 October](#), WG II addressed the CRP, diverging on whether to “welcome” or “take note” of the IPBES IAS assessment; with a footnote expressing one party’s reservations remaining contentious. WG II approved the CRP on [Monday, 28 October](#), with the reference to the IPBES IAS assessment pending.

On Friday, 1 November, plenary addressed the Russian Federation’s reservations on welcoming this assessment report, because of reference to the Global Invasive Species Database. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION stated the database was not accessible to users in its territory due to sanctions. The EU reported that the lack of access was due to technical reasons that have since been resolved. Following informal consultations, delegates agreed to “welcome” the report and adopted the decision with an amended footnote stating that the Russian Federation expresses reservations on the word “welcome” because the database was not accessible due to technical restrictions.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.4](#)), the COP welcomes the IPBES [Thematic Assessment Report on IAS and Their Control](#) (IAS Assessment), including its summary for policymakers and key messages, and notes its relevance to the work undertaken under the CBD and for GBF implementation.

It encourages parties and others to make use of the information contained in the assessment in the implementation of the CBD and the GBF, including when updating or revising and implementing NBSAPs and during the preparation of the seventh and subsequent national reports; and urges developed country parties and others to provide support to developing countries in this regard.

The COP highlights the fact that access to adequate and sustained financial and other resources underpins and improves the effectiveness of actions for the long-term management of biological invasions. It endorses a set of annexed elements of voluntary guidance developed on the basis of the work of the *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on IAS and further complemented through a peer review process to support GBF implementation; and urges parties to make use of the elements of voluntary guidance for NBSAP updating and implementation and to inform national and subnational actions for IAS management.

It urges parties to:

- make use of the information available in the assessment;
- support and/or develop policy instruments that seek synergies among relevant sectors to manage IAS;
- develop or strengthen existing national regulatory instruments to reduce IAS movement and introduction;

- develop or strengthen capacity for the early detection and rapid response to newly introduced alien species to prevent their establishment;
- address knowledge and data gaps identified in the assessment;
- support, including through the provision of financial resources, the development, updating and long-term operation of open and interoperable information platforms, systems, infrastructures, and data-sharing to support IAS management;
- seek opportunities to enhance coordination and collaboration, and to ensure that sustained strategic actions are taken to manage IAS; and
- conduct knowledge-sharing and capacity-building activities to support implementing GBF Target 6 (IAS).

The COP requests the Secretariat to further strengthen collaboration among relevant organizations through the Inter-agency Liaison Group on IAS; and hold an online forum to facilitate the exchange of relevant information and experiences and to report on progress at future meetings of SBSTTA.

Biodiversity and Health: On [Monday, 21 October](#), WG II Chair Benítez established a contact group on biodiversity and health, co-chaired by Barbara Engels (Germany) and Stanislas Mouba (Gabon). The group convened their first meeting that evening, and subsequently on [Tuesday, 22 October](#), and [Wednesday, 23 October 2024](#).

Delegates addressed a CRP on [Monday, 28 October](#), and approved it on [Wednesday, 30 October](#). Discussions focused on the global action plan on biodiversity and health, with lengthy deliberations on inclusion of the term “derivatives” of genetic resources in the measures on GBF Target 13 (benefit sharing).

On Friday, 1 November, plenary considered a draft decision. TOGO presented consensus reached in a small group to delete “derivatives.” Delegates accepted this suggestion and adopted the draft decision.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.10](#)), the COP adopts the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health, as a voluntary plan for supporting GBF implementation, and invites:

- governments and others to raise awareness of the Global Action Plan, and contribute to mainstreaming across sectors;
- IPLCs and relevant stakeholders, to contribute to the implementation of the Global Action Plan; and
- the World Health Organization (WHO) to take synergies into account in its work on biodiversity and health.

The COP encourages parties and invites others to provide financial and technical support for capacity building and development for the effective implementation of biodiversity and health interlinkages and of the Global Action Plan.

The COP requests the Secretariat, among other things, to:

- complete the work conducted on the development of integrated science-based indicators, metrics, and progress measurement tools on biodiversity and health;
- facilitate, in collaboration with partners, capacity building, technical and scientific cooperation, and technology transfer activities to support parties, IPLCs, and stakeholders in the uptake and implementation of the Global Action Plan;
- enhance and strengthen cooperation with international organizations and the secretariats of other MEAs, health, and human rights agreements with regard to biodiversity and health interlinkages;
- explore, in consultation with the WHO and the other members of the Quadripartite Alliance on One Health, the development of

an online information platform to collate knowledge, tools, and experiences on interlinked biodiversity and health policies and actions; and

- report on the outcomes of that work to SBSTTA before COP 17, and to the 79th World Health Assembly.

Plant Conservation: On [Monday, 21 October](#), WG II Chair Benítez announced the preparation of a CRP. On [Wednesday, 23 October](#), WG II addressed the CRP, focusing on the development of indicators for each complementary action related to plant conservation to support the GBF, and approved the relevant annex with minor amendments and brackets on a footnote on an action for Target 6 (IAS), and an alternative formulation for the action under Target 17 (biosafety). On [Friday, 25 October](#), the plenary addressed a draft decision. Delegates agreed to delete bracketed text regarding Target 6. Agreement could not be reached on a reference to “agri-food systems” under Target 17, which was supported by BRAZIL and opposed by the EU. On Friday, 1 November, following a final attempt to reach an agreement on wording for actions related to Target 17, delegates agreed to delete all actions related to it, and the plenary adopted the decision as amended.

Final Decision: In the final decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.3](#)), the COP, among other things, adopts the voluntary complementary actions related to plant conservation, as an update to the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, to support the implementation of the GBF; and invites parties and other governments to: include progress towards the voluntary complementary actions in their national reporting; consider appointing national focal points for the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation; and, alongside business and stakeholders, support botanical garden initiatives. Annexed to the decision are the voluntary complementary actions related to plant conservation to support implementation of the GBF targets.

Synthetic Biology: On [Monday, 21 October](#), WG II established a contact group on the item. Co-chaired by Martha Kandawa-Schulz (Namibia) and Marja Ruohonen-Lehto (Finland), the contact group met on [Tuesday, 22 October](#), [Friday, 25 October](#), [Monday, 28 October](#), and [Wednesday, 30 October](#). Debates focused on the continuation and ToRs of the AHTEG and the development of a capacity-building action plan. Opinions diverged on the AHTEG and the horizon-scanning process of synthetic biology applications: some appreciated the work done and suggested the process be extended, further noting that horizon scanning and capacity building are interlinked. Others expressed concerns and opposed continuation of the AHTEG’s work, calling for focus on the benefits of synthetic biology for GBF implementation and on capacity building to reap such benefits.

On Friday, 1 November, WG II addressed a CRP ([CBD/COP/16/WGII/CRP.12](#)). The EU, BRAZIL, and TÜRKIYE supported re-emphasizing the application of a precautionary approach for the environmental release of synthetic biology applications. Delegates reached agreement on a list of tasks to be undertaken by the Secretariat. On AHTEG ToRs contained in the annex, delegates agreed that the group will “review and synthesize” the compilations of submissions and identify the “current and potential” benefits of synthetic biology. WG II approved the CRP as amended. On the same day, plenary adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.21](#)), the COP decides to develop a thematic action plan on capacity building, technology transfer, and knowledge sharing in the context of synthetic biology, and establishes a new AHTEG on synthetic biology. It invites parties and others to submit information to support

preparation of the thematic action plan, as well as information on their priority areas related to synthetic biology. It requests the Secretariat to: prepare the thematic action plan for peer review and consideration by SBSTTA and SBI; commission an independent scientific study on synthetic biology applications that are relevant for the GBF; synthesize submissions; and convene an online forum to support the AHTEG.

The AHTEG will review and synthesize the compilation of submissions and the online forum outcomes; identify the current and potential benefits of synthetic biology, its potential positive and negative impacts for the CBD objectives and GBF implementation; provide advice on capacity building; and prepare a report for SBSTTA consideration.

Biodiversity and Climate Change: On [Monday, 21 October](#), WG II established a contact group co-chaired by Clarisse Kehler Siebert (Sweden) and Xiang Gao (China). The group met on [Tuesday, 22 October](#), [Wednesday, 23 October](#), [Friday, 25 October](#), and [Monday, 28 October](#). Discussions focused on the Voluntary Guidelines on ecosystem-based approaches to climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction, supplementary guidelines for nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches, and references to Mother Earth-centric actions and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

On Friday, 1 November, WG II resumed the consideration of a CRP ([CBD/COP/16/CRP.10](#)), agreeing on a compromise solution presented by COLOMBIA on a paragraph regarding the actions undertaken toward the achievement of GBF Targets 8 (Climate Change) and 11 (Nature's Contributions to People). On a paragraph requesting the Secretariat to develop a supplement to the Voluntary Guidelines of Ecosystem-based Approaches to Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction, delegates agreed on the language after deleting "nature positive" as well as references to GBF section C (considerations for the implementation of the GBF), and the principles and mandates of the respective MEAs.

Regarding requests to the Secretariat regarding the possibility of establishing a joint work programme among the Rio Conventions, the UK suggested compromise language and delegates supported it. Regarding information exchanges, delegates debated whether to include the issue of loss and damage. The reference was kept in brackets. The EU suggested, and delegates agreed, to involve the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions in addressing the compilation of views on options to enhance policy coherence among the Rio Conventions, such as areas for potential joint work programmes. ARGENTINA opposed referring to the CBD and "the" GBF and the UNFCCC and "the" Paris Agreement and requested replacing it with "its," which was opposed by AUSTRALIA and kept in brackets. The paragraph regarding the UNEA 6 process on nature-based solutions was deleted, following a proposal by the RUSSIAN FEDERATION. The CRP was approved as amended, with remaining brackets.

During Friday's plenary, delegates considered the draft decision, debating on whether to refer to biodiversity loss, climate change, ocean acidification, desertification, land degradation, IAS, and pollution, as interdependent "crises" or "global challenges." Following consultations, the Secretariat introduced amendments, including: deleting a bracketed preambular paragraph recognizing that climate geoengineering activities could result in serious and irreversible impacts on biodiversity and the livelihoods of IPLCs; deleting explicit reference to the Ramsar Convention in a general reference to other biodiversity-related conventions; and introducing

footnotes noting that the Paris Agreement is under the UNFCCC as well as acknowledging the human right to a clean, safe, and sustainable environment. NORWAY underscored that the Paris Agreement is an independent agreement and is not correct to present it as subject to the UNFCCC. The decision was adopted as amended.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.24](#)), the COP welcomes and takes note of the findings the [Sixth Assessment Report of the IPCC](#) (IPCC-6); and the IPBES 10 decision to foster further collaboration with the IPCC.

The COP urges parties, when undertaking actions towards achievement of GBF Targets 8 and 11, and related targets to:

- identify and maximize potential synergies between biodiversity and climate actions;
- consider integrating and promoting nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches, non-market-based approaches, and Mother Earth-centric actions to climate change adaptation and mitigation and disaster risk reduction into their revised NBSAPs and relevant national targets; and
- take into account the diversity of values, worldviews, and knowledge systems to ensure contextually relevant actions for respecting, protecting, promoting, and fulfilling human rights.

The COP encourages parties to use the tools and information available under the CBD, and to take into account the existing and projected impacts of climate change and climate-related policies on biodiversity when implementing the GBF.

The COP calls on the COP 16 President to engage with the UNFCCC COP 29 and 30 Presidents on opportunities for strengthened multilateral coordination on climate change and biodiversity loss; and requests the Secretariat to:

- promote synergies and closer cooperation with the biodiversity-relevant MEAs, organizations and processes, and integrated approaches to addressing biodiversity loss, climate change, and land and ocean degradation;
- facilitate collaboration among parties and others to implement capacity-building and increase awareness and understanding of the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change;
- in collaboration with the secretariats of the UNFCCC, the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, and the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UNDOALOS), explore opportunities to address the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus in an integrated manner to achieve the GBF goals;
- develop a supplement to the Voluntary Guidelines providing voluntary guidance and tools for nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation; and
- develop guidelines and tools for carrying out conservation and restoration in a changing climate.

Liability and Redress (Art. 14.2): WG I considered this item on [Tuesday, 22 October](#), and agreed that a CRP would be prepared. Delegates considered the CRP on [Friday, 25 October](#), and [Thursday, 31 October](#), focusing on whether to include a provision to review the topic of liability and redress at COP 18. On Friday, 1 November, plenary adopted a decision.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.18](#)), the COP takes note of recent developments in the area of liability and redress; invites parties to take appropriate measures to address damage to biological diversity, including response measures; and

decides to review the topic of liability and redress at COP 18, taking relevant developments into account, including progress in the implementation of the GBF.

Review of Effectiveness: On [Friday, 25 October](#), WG I addressed the joint draft decision for the CBD and its Protocols, containing: options to further improve the effectiveness of processes; procedures for convening virtual and hybrid meetings; and procedures on conflicts of interest in expert groups. Delegates agreed to address unresolved issues regarding effectiveness of processes and procedures for virtual meetings in a Friends of the Chair group, and for a CRP to be prepared on conflicts of interest. WG I approved the CRPs on [Thursday, 31 October](#), and plenary adopted a series of decisions under the Convention and its Protocols on Friday, 1 November.

Final Decisions: In the decision on **options to further improve the effectiveness of processes under the Convention and its Protocols** ([CBD/COP/16/L.22](#)), the COP recommends limiting the number of parallel sessions to the number of delegates per developing country whose participation has been supported by the Secretariat. It requests the COP and SBSTTA Bureaus to identify a pool of representatives to serve as Chairs or facilitators on the basis of their skills and knowledge; and the Secretariat to facilitate additional financial support to increase participation from developing countries, and orientation or training sessions for Chairs and facilitators, as well as to continue to develop options for further improving the effectiveness of meetings, for SBI 6 consideration.

Mirrored decisions were adopted under the Protocols ([CBD/CP/MOP/11/L.10](#) and [CBD/NP/MOP/5/L.11](#)).

In the decision on **procedures for convening online and hybrid meetings** ([CBD/COP/16/L.20](#)), the COP reaffirmed that meetings of the COP and of the subsidiary bodies should only be held virtually when extraordinary circumstances render the holding of in-person meetings impractical for an extended period of time. It requests the Secretariat, when scheduling online meetings, to enable equitable participation of parties across all regions, including by rotating time zones, limiting online sessions to two consecutive hours, and implementing measures to facilitate effective online participation by all participants, including support such as providing use of meeting facilities at UN country offices.

Mirrored decisions were adopted under the Protocols ([CBD/CP/MOP/11/L.9](#) and [CBD/NP/MOP/5/L.9](#)).

In the decision on a **procedure for avoiding or managing conflicts of interest in expert groups** ([CBD/COP/16/L.27](#)), the COP amended the interest disclosure form contained in the appendix to the annex to decision 14/33; and requested the Secretariat to enhance the application of the procedure, including by: disclosing significant interests that have been declared to other members of the expert group; publishing a summary of all declarations made and actions taken to manage any actual or potential conflicts of interest; preparing a report on the implementation of the procedure; and proposing updates and amendments to the procedure for consideration by SBI at a meeting held before COP 19. It also requested the SBI to consider the report and submit a recommendation to COP 19.

Mirrored decisions were adopted under the Protocols ([CBD/CP/MOP/11/L.11](#) and [CBD/NP/MOP/5/L.12](#)).

Multi-year Programme of Work: On [Thursday, 31 October](#), WG II Chair Benítez said a CRP compiling relevant inputs, including those of WG I, will be prepared.

On Friday, 1 November, WG II addressed the CRP ([CBD/COP/16/WGII/CRP.13](#)). Chair Benítez noted it includes brackets and placeholders pending agreement on decisions in other groups. BRAZIL noted that updating the programme of work is not feasible if agreement is not reached on essential elements of GBF implementation, such as DSI and the financial mechanism. The EU, supported by CANADA and SWITZERLAND, proposed new language to request the Secretariat to: provide a list of standing items for COP 18 and 19 to facilitate the review and update of the programme of work by COP 17; and prepare an analysis of cross-cutting issue-related items for COP 18 and 19 with a proposal to align these items with the GBF. BRAZIL opposed, noting that aligning the programme of work with no ambitious commitments on resource mobilization to support developing country parties is “wishful thinking,” and suggested alternative language deciding that there will be no update until 2030, which CANADA opposed. With no consensus reached, Chair Benítez noted a compilation of views would be reflected in brackets in the draft decision.

Final Outcome: The decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.23](#)) was not adopted due to the meeting’s suspension.

Cartagena Protocol MOP 11

MOP 11 decisions on the review of effectiveness of processes under the CBD and its Protocols are included in this report’s section on the CBD COP.

Report of the Compliance Committee: On [Tuesday, 22 October](#), Rigobert Ntep (Cameroon), Chair of the CP Compliance Committee, reported on the work of the Committee to WG II. Delegates focused on the Committee’s recommendation to further consider the implications of diverging interpretations of the definition of LMOs under the CP, establishing a Friends of the Chair group to find a compromise solution. On [Monday, 28 October](#), WG II approved a non-paper. On [Wednesday, 30 October](#), during the evening plenary, PANAMA requested a minor amendment to facilitate an accurate translation to Spanish. Delegates adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/CP/MOP/11/L.7](#)), the MOP recalls parties facing difficulties with complying with obligations under the CP that are urged to seek assistance from the Compliance Committee; and urges parties and invite other governments to provide voluntary funds in support of the parties that have developed compliance action plans.

The MOP cautions Belize, Libya, and Papua New Guinea, requesting them, as a matter of urgency, to submit their fourth national reports. The MOP requests the Secretariat, among other things, to compile information contained in the Biosafety Clearing-house (BCH) and other sources regarding current national legislation, regulations, and guidelines on new developments in modern biotechnology, and to submit that information for consideration by CP MOP 12.

Financial Mechanism and Resources: On [Tuesday, 22 October](#), WG I addressed this item. The AFRICAN GROUP and GUATEMALA, opposed by JAPAN and SWITZERLAND, called on the GEF to set up a stand-alone window dedicated to biosafety.

On [Friday, 25 October](#), WG I approved most elements of the draft decision. On Friday, 1 November, in plenary, delegates addressed the draft decision. They decided to recommend that, in adopting its guidance to the GEF with regard to the CP, the COP should

request the GEF to create a stand-alone window for biosafety for consideration by CP MOP 12. The final decision was adopted with this and other minor amendments.

Final Decision: In the final decision ([CBD/CP/MOP/11/L.8](#)), the MOP recommends the COP request the GEF to, among others:

- make funds available to support eligible parties in preparing their national reports, implementing the CP, and undertaking activities in a list of areas, including risk assessment and risk management, detection and identification of LMOs, knowledge sharing and technology transfer, and socioeconomic considerations;
- further explore modalities to reform its operations, including through the consideration of how to increase funds dedicated to CP implementation; and
- simplify the process for submission of biosafety project proposals.

The MOP further encourages eligible parties to submit proposals to the GEF for CP implementation, including through regional and subregional joint projects; and include relevant provisions in their national biodiversity finance plans.

Biosafety Clearing-House: On [Tuesday, 22 October](#), WG II delegates lauded the Secretariat on the improved BCH portal and on capacity-building support to developing countries, and decided to prepare a CRP. On [Friday, 25 October](#), WG II approved this with minor amendments. Plenary then adopted the decision without amendment.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/CP/MOP/11/L.2](#)), the MOP urges parties to make all required information available on the BCH and requests parties to review their published records on the BCH for accuracy and to ensure they are up-to-date. It requests the Secretariat, among other things, to:

- continue to maintain the BCH and to make necessary improvements to it, including those recommended by the Informal Advisory Committee and those requested by the MOP;
- develop a customized biosafety national website template using the Bioland tool and to make it available to parties wishing to build a national biosafety website with linkages to the BCH;
- continue to develop capacity-building materials and to provide training on the new functionalities of the BCH; and
- continue to collaborate with other biosafety-related databases and organizations.

Cooperation: On [Tuesday, 22 October](#), the Secretariat presented WG II with an update on cooperative activities with other international organizations ([CBD/CP/MOP/11/8/Rev.1](#)). Delegates took note of the report.

Risk Assessment and Risk Management: On [Tuesday, 22 October](#), WG II focused on whether an AHTEG to work on additional guidance materials on the risk assessment of living modified fish should be established. A contact group, co-chaired by Martha Kandawa-Schulz (Namibia) and Marja Ruohonen-Lehto (Finland), was established. On [Wednesday, 23 October](#), contact group Co-Chair Ruohonen-Lehto explained that the proposed AHTEG would now evaluate needs and priorities for further guidance material on specific topics, and delegates focused on the AHTEG's ToRs. On [Monday, 28 October](#), delegates approved a CRP. During the plenary on [Wednesday, 30 October](#), delegates adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/CP/MOP/11/L.6](#)), the MOP: calls for the consideration of the related issues set out in the additional voluntary guidance materials to support case-by-case risk assessments of LMOs containing engineered gene drives in the

decision-making process; decides to establish an AHTEG on risk assessment, tasked with the evaluation of the needs and priorities identified and submitted by parties for further guidance materials on specific topics of risk assessment of LMOs; and decides to extend the online forum on risk assessment and risk management to support the analysis of further topics of risk assessment, and to consider at its 12th meeting additional issues on which guidance materials on risk assessment may be needed, if any.

The MOP requests the Secretariat to:

- prepare a synthesis of the information submitted by parties and others that have used the voluntary guidance materials on their experiences and assessment of its applicability and usefulness for consideration by CP MOP 12;
- prepare a synthesis of information submitted by parties on their needs and priorities for further guidance materials to support the work of the AHTEG on Risk Assessment; and
- convene at least one meeting of the AHTEG on Risk Assessment and capacity-building and development activities in support of risk assessment with a particular focus on the risk assessment of LMOs containing engineered gene drives.

Annexed to the decision are the ToRs for the AHTEG on Risk Assessment.

Detection and Identification of LMOs: On [Tuesday, 22 October](#), WG II Chair Benítez announced the preparation of a CRP, which was considered by WG II on [Friday, 25 October](#). Delegates could not find common ground on references to the detection and identification of “unauthorized” LMOs, and a Friends of the Chair group was established. On [Monday, 28 October](#), delegates resumed consideration of the CRP and approved it with amendments. During plenary on [Wednesday, 30 October](#), delegates adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/CP/MOP/11/L.5](#)), the MOP invites parties and others to submit technical reference documents and other relevant materials in order to complement and update future editions of the Training Manual on the Detection and Identification of LMOs in the Context of the CP; invites parties to share through the BCH their experience with new detection techniques, including those for detecting newly developed and unauthorized LMOs; and urges parties and invites others to provide financial resources to laboratories, in particular in developing countries, especially least developed countries, SIDS, and in countries with economies in transition.

The MOP requests the Secretariat, among other things, to:

- prepare a compilation of technical reference materials and publications submitted related to new quantitative polymerase chain reaction techniques, digital polymerase chain reaction, next-generation sequencing, and isothermal amplification techniques in order to complement and update future editions of the Training Manual on the Detection and Identification of LMOs in the Context of the CP for consideration by MOP 12;
- provide capacity-building support to parties in the field of detection and identification of LMOs; and
- raise awareness of the usefulness of the sampling, detection, and identification portal on the BCH.

Socio-economic Considerations: On [Wednesday, 23 October](#), WG II discussed this item, focusing on the voluntary guidance on the assessment of socioeconomic considerations, and on the need for capacity-building and awareness-raising activities. Delegates agreed to prepare a CRP. On [Friday, 25 October](#), delegates approved it, and plenary adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/CP/MOP/11/L.3](#)), the MOP invites parties and others to use the voluntary guidance on the assessment of socio-economic considerations and share their experiences in their fifth national reports or in the BCH virtual library, and to carry out capacity-building and awareness-raising activities in support of the implementation plan and capacity-building action plan for the CP. It requests the Secretariat to synthesize the information provided in the fifth national reports for consideration by CP MOP 12.

Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress: WG II discussed this item on [Wednesday, 23 October](#), focusing discussions on capacity-building initiatives to support implementation. On [Friday, 25 October](#), WG II approved a CRP with minor amendments, and plenary adopted the decision on the same day.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/CP/MOP/11/L.4](#)), the MOP notes with regret the limited number of parties to the CP that have ratified the Supplementary Protocol, and invites those who have not yet done so to ratify it. The MOP invites parties to share information on financial security mechanisms, together with other information on national implementation measures in their fifth national reports, and invites parties and others to carry out capacity-building and awareness-raising activities for ratification and implementation of the Supplementary Protocol. It requests the Secretariat to use the information on financial security mechanisms and on national implementation when preparing the documentation for the first assessment and review of the effectiveness of the Supplementary Protocol, and to continue to undertake awareness-raising and capacity-building activities and to provide support to parties for implementation.

Nagoya Protocol MOP 5

Decisions on the review of effectiveness of processes under the CBD and its Protocols, and DSI are included in this report's section on the CBD COP.

Report of the Compliance Committee: On [Monday, 21 October](#), in plenary, the NP Compliance Committee Chair Betty Kauna Schroder (Namibia), presented the Committee's report ([CBD/NP/MOP/5/3](#)). Later in the day, WG II Chair Benítez announced the preparation of a CRP. On [Wednesday, 23 October](#), delegates approved the CRP. On [Friday, 25 October](#), plenary adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/NP/MOP/5/L.2](#)), the MOP, among other things:

- urges parties to comply with their obligations under the [NP](#);
- encourages parties to include ABS in the revision or updating of their NBSAPs;
- requests parties to put in place the legislative, administrative, or policy measures necessary to implement the NP, and include the designation of competent national authorities and checkpoints;
- reminds parties of the deadline of 28 February 2026 for submitting their first national reports on the implementation of the NP;
- encourages parties to the NP to contribute to national processes for the preparation of the seventh national reports under the CBD, including by providing information related to ABS; and
- encourages parties to include the priorities of IPLCs in their proposals for funding from the GEF, including the GBF Fund.

Financial Mechanism and Resources: On [Tuesday, 22 October](#), following an exchange of initial comments in WG I, Chair Sörqvist noted that a CRP would be developed. On [Friday, 25 October](#), delegates addressed the CRP and approved most elements of the draft decision. On Friday, 1 November, delegates adopted the final decision without further discussion.

Final Decision: In the final decision ([CBD/NP/MOP/5/L.10](#)), the MOP encourages parties to:

- ensure their funding needs and priorities are reflected in their national biodiversity finance plans;
- include the priorities of IPLCs in their funding proposals to the GEF, including the GBF Fund; and
- give priority to ABS projects in the programming of their eighth replenishment country allocations.

The MOP further recommends that the COP requests the GEF to: make funds available in a timely manner for NP national reports; strengthen its funding for NP implementation; support implementation of the NP capacity-building and development action plan, as well as activities in eligible parties in a list of areas, including integration and mainstreaming of ABS on genetic resources in policies and activities related to biodiversity and development of long-term ABS-related institutional capacities.

Capacity Building and Development, and Awareness Raising: On [Monday, 21 October](#), Chair Benítez informed WG II that a CRP will be prepared, which was addressed on [Thursday, 24 October](#). Discussion focused on the action plan annexed to the decision, including its outputs and capacity-building activities under thematic key areas. WG II approved the CRP as amended.

Final Outcome: The decision ([CBD/NP/MOP/5/L.4](#)) was not adopted due to the meeting's suspension.

ABS Clearing-House and Information Sharing: WG II discussed this item on [Monday, 21 October](#), including the report on progress in the operation of the ABS Clearing-House. Delegates agreed to prepare a CRP. On [Wednesday, 23 October](#), delegates approved the CRP, agreeing to add language on capacity constraints related to accessing, managing, and utilizing the ABS Clearing-House, and retaining in brackets language on invitations to UNEP and the GEF to develop a global capacity-building project. On [Friday, 25 October](#), delegates approved most elements of a draft decision, tasking an informal group to address divergence on the invitation to UNEP and the GEF. On [Wednesday, 30 October](#), delegates adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/NP/MOP/5/L.3](#)), the MOP urges parties to publish all mandatory information available at the national level on the ABS Clearing-House. The MOP invites parties and others, in coordination with the Secretariat, to include activities that contribute to fulfilling the information-sharing obligations under the NP in capacity-building and development plans and projects. It invites UNEP to develop a global capacity-building project to enhance the ability of developing countries to use and contribute to the global operations of the ABS Clearing-House, and invites the GEF to provide financial support to projects related to the ABS Clearing-House. It requests the Secretariat to:

- continue to develop and administer the ABS Clearing-House, taking into account feedback from parties and the Informal Advisory Committee to the ABS Clearing-House;
- provide technical support and guidance to parties on using the ABS Clearing-House; and
- hold a meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee and report on the outcomes at MOP 6.

Assessment and Review of Effectiveness: On [Monday, 21 October](#), Chair Benítez informed WG II that a CRP will be prepared, which was addressed on [Thursday, 24 October](#). Delegates approved the CRP, deleting a preambular paragraph on synthetic biology. Plenary adopted a decision on [Friday, 25 October](#).

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/NP/MOP/5/L.5](#)), the MOP agrees to conduct the second assessment and review of NP effectiveness on the basis of elements and sources of information listed in an annex. It urges parties and others to publish relevant information on the ABS Clearing-House; emphasizes that parties should submit their first national reports to facilitate the analysis for the assessment; and requests the Informal Advisory Committee on Capacity Building and the Compliance Committee to contribute to the assessment, on the basis of a commissioned scoping study and a synthesis of information prepared by the Secretariat, and to submit their conclusions to SBI 6.

Cooperation: On [Tuesday 22, October](#), the ITPGRFA, UNDOALOS, and WHO reported on activities of relevance to WG II. Delegates took note of the reports.

Enhancing Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol in the Context of the GBF: On [Monday, 21 October](#), WG II Chair Benítez announced the preparation of a CRP. On Friday, 1 November, plenary adopted the decision without amendments.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/NP/MOP/5/L.6](#)), the MOP invites parties and encourages other governments to: address all elements of GBF Goal C and Target 13 on benefit-sharing when developing national targets and revising or updating NBSAPs; include capacity and financial needs for collecting national information on monetary and non-monetary benefits received; and put in place the mechanisms and tools necessary for the collection of national information on monetary and non-monetary benefits received to be able to report on progress in achieving Goal C.

Specialized International ABS Instruments: On [Monday, 21 October](#), WG II Chair Benítez established a contact group co-chaired by Patience Gandiwa (Zimbabwe) and Mery Ciacci (EU). On [Tuesday, 29 October](#), the contact group focused on bracketed paragraphs regarding a possible process for the recognition of specialized international ABS instruments. On Friday, 1 November, WG II adopted a CRP with minor amendments. The plenary adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/NP/MOP/5/L.8](#)), the MOP invites parties and others to submit views on the relationship among specialized international ABS instruments; and requests the Secretariat to synthesize the submitted views and provide information on developments in relevant international forums for SBI 6 consideration.

Global Multilateral Benefit-sharing Mechanism: WG II discussed this item on [Monday, 21 October](#), and [Thursday 31 October](#), with some supporting deferring consideration to the next MOP. On Friday, 1 November, WG II addressed and adopted a CRP, followed by adoption in plenary.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/NP/MOP/5/L.7](#)), the MOP decides to revisit the issue of the need for and modalities of a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism at MOP 6.

High-Level Segment

The High-level Segment convened on [Tuesday, 29](#), and [Wednesday, 30 October](#). It featured a series of statements by Heads of State, Ministers, and other high-level officials, the launch of Colombia's Initiative "World Coalition for Peace with

Nature: A Call for Life," as well as ministerial dialogues on GBF implementation, financing, biodiversity and climate change, and peace with nature.

COP 17 Date and Venue

On [Wednesday, 30 October](#), President Muhamad noted that the Secretariat has received two offers to host COP 17 from parties in the Central and Eastern Europe regional group, Armenia and Azerbaijan. On [Thursday, 31 October](#), parties voted by secret ballot, on the venue of COP 17. Armenia was elected host of COP 17, to be held in 2026, with 65 votes, while Azerbaijan received 58 votes. The decision was adopted on Friday, 1 November, by the plenary.

Final Decision: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.28](#)), the COP agrees COP 17 and associated Protocol meetings will be held in Yerevan, Armenia, in the last quarter of 2026, and requests the Secretariat to consult with Armenia on hosting arrangements. It further invites interested parties from Latin America and the Caribbean to share their offers to host COP 18.

Closing Plenary

At 10:00 pm on Friday, 1 November, COP President Muhamad opened the plenary noting her initiative, over the last two days, to advance deliberations on resource mobilization, DSI, and PMRR, and drawing attention to the draft decisions tabled for plenary's consideration reflecting the outcomes. WG Chairs Sörqvist and Benítez reported on their respective WGs.

In view of the upcoming retirement of CBD Deputy Executive Secretary David Cooper, Bilal Qtishat (Jordan) and Lucy Mulenkei (IIFB) presented him with parting words and gifts on behalf of parties and IPLCs, respectively, expressing the CBD community's deep appreciation for his work over the last thirty years. Achalender Chirra Reddy (India) then shared the meeting's appreciation to the retiring Secretariat officer Neil Pratt. Cooper underlined the beauty of accompanying a global community "that has come together to agree on issues that actually matter in spite of their different backgrounds, perspectives, and political pressures."

Plenary then proceeded to adopt decisions on its agenda items. Following a debate over the draft decision on resource mobilization, PANAMA requested to check whether quorum requirements were met. With no quorum, the meeting was suspended at 8:27 am on Saturday, 2 November. A series of decisions were not adopted, including on: resource mobilization; the financial mechanism; PMRR; and the budget. A resumed meeting of the COP is expected to convene in the coming months to ensure the uninterrupted operations of the Secretariat and adopt the remaining decisions.

A Brief Analysis of the UN Biodiversity Conference

La vida es la cosa mejor que se ha inventado / Life is the best thing that's ever been invented – Gabriel García Márquez

With the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) scheduled to end on *Día de los Muertos*, Day of the Dead, delegates were poignantly reminded of the symbol of the meeting, the Inírida flower, a symbol of resilience and immortality. For many, this was a signal of the resilience and ambitions needed for COP 16 to sustain and maintain life on the planet to 2030 and beyond. Biodiversity loss is a cross-cutting issue, with interlinkages to climate change, pollution, and land degradation. And biodiversity has a foundational role for

many sectors of society, from food to biotechnology and timber to pharmaceuticals.

As the first COP since the landmark adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) in December 2022, COP 16 was dubbed by some as the “implementation COP.” With calls made, and possibly heeded, to bring all of society on board in achieving the objectives of the CBD, COP 16 was also labeled as the “People’s COP.” Beyond mere inclusivity, the Convention calls for fairness, equity, and champions the full and meaningful participation of all relevant actors, including, importantly, the voices of biodiversity stewards, Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs).

While deliberations on various aspects of implementation, equity, and justice filling every moment of the conference, in the end COP 16 was unable to agree and adopt everything on its full agenda. Following nearly 24 hours of deliberations on the last day, in the early hours of Saturday, 2 November 2024, COP President Susana Muhamad (Colombia) introduced a draft decision on resource mobilization, including a provision establishing a dedicated global financing instrument for biodiversity under the COP’s authority. A debate ensued, with developing countries welcoming this decision implementing CBD Article 21 (Financial Mechanism), but developed countries opposed it, citing fragmentation of the global financial landscape. At 8:15 am, as delegates were leaving to catch their flights back home, Panama requested a quorum check. There, indeed was no quorum and the meeting suspended at 8:27 am.

This brief analysis will assess the 2024 UN Biodiversity Conference’s outcomes, key challenges, and necessary next steps through three lenses: implementation, inclusivity, and justice.

The Never-ending Story: Implementation

El tiempo no pasaba... sino que daba vueltas en redondo / Time was not passing... it was turning in a circle – Gabriel García Márquez

A critical component to the GBF’s successful implementation is a fit-for-purpose monitoring framework. Lessons learned from the Framework’s predecessor, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and its Aichi Targets, emphasized the need to have a robust and simplified framework to measure progress. Following long hours in contact group deliberations, delegates agreed on the indicators against which parties will assess their progress through their national reports, with two exceptions: on pesticides and sustainable consumption. Close to the finish line and with time running out, Working Group I nonetheless never approved the draft. As one party tellingly noted, mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting, and review “are a package” with resource mobilization and the financial mechanism. Due to its suspension, plenary never had the opportunity to debate and adopt the decision.

Nonetheless, COP 16 had several successes in putting implementation back on track. Chief among these is the adoption of the modalities for modifying the description of ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs) and description of new ones. Reaching this agreement took eight years of difficult, delicate, and sometimes deadlocked negotiations, with obstacles taking the shape of concerns on sovereignty, jurisdictional rights, territorial claims, and related disputes. In turn, the approved modalities, based on scientific and technical evidence, enable the application of ecosystem and integrated approaches to ocean management at both

the international and national level. They thus provide a crucial tool to support implementation of conservation targets of the GBF.

The decision furthermore feeds directly into the marine landscape of other international processes and agreements. As some negotiators highlighted, the complementarities between EBSAs and marine protected areas set to be generated through the UN Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) are evident. Experienced participants also reflected on the potential linkages these adopted modalities will have for discussions on deep-sea mining under the International Seabed Authority.

Hasta la Victoria Siempre: Inclusivity

Cuanto más transparente es la escritura más se ve la poesía / The more transparent the writing, the more visible the poetry – Gabriel García Márquez

As cited in the GBF, implementation requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. Mainstreaming biodiversity considerations within and across sectors at national and subnational levels is fundamental for CBD and GBF implementation, and this requires coordination both among ministries at the national level and among conventions and processes. Efforts to promote such coordination were visible in several streams of deliberations, including on health and on climate change.

With over 23,000 registered participants, a broader understanding of the far-reaching and multidimensional impacts of biodiversity loss has visibly widened the scope of “interested parties” attending the COP. Positioning Colombia as the “uniting bridge” both geographically and politically, President Gustavo Petro set the stage for the tireless behind-the-scenes negotiations that brought two lauded successes of COP 16: decisions on Article 8(j) on IPLCs and on the multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism from use of digital sequence information (DSI) on genetic resources.

For decades, the Convention has had an open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j)—a temporary structure—convening to discuss ways of recognizing, protecting, and institutionalizing the roles and contributions of IPLCs toward the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The group made strides in bringing the voices of the custodians of biodiversity to the decision-making table, and in breaking away from narrow concepts of what counts as knowledge—broadening this base from the “accepted” Western science to recognize Indigenous and traditional knowledge and systems as instrumental to protecting biodiversity.

While some worried that establishing a permanent subsidiary body on Article 8(j) (SB8j) risks siloing IPLC issues rather than mainstreaming them, the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity stressed that a permanent structure would cement participation and help redress imbalances experienced by IPLCs at the national level. Marking a landmark moment in the sphere of multilateral environmental agreements, the SB8j will provide a dedicated platform for those who have been historically excluded from decision-making spaces despite their unquestionable contribution to biodiversity stewardship. Many also placed high expectations on a joint proposal by host country Colombia and Brazil to recognize the role and contributions to biodiversity of people of African descent embodying traditional lifestyles. While some underscored that this issue is of regional rather than

universal interest, many praised the proponents' commitment to find compromises acceptable to the global community.

As IPLCs have long argued, addressing biodiversity loss, and the ways of life and livelihoods of those who depend on biodiversity, requires recognizing the multitude of ways that people relate to the natural world, and the knowledges and practices that have ensured healthy coexistence. The Article 8(j) agenda, including establishment of the subsidiary body, is the culmination of decades of work led by IPLCs. Raw elation filled the normally sedate plenary hall following the late-night adoption of both decisions on Friday, accompanied by *Hasta la Victoria Siempre* chants, in a clear sign that for many, a win for IPLCs is also a win for the Convention.

Transforming our Future: Justice

Es la vida, más que la muerte, la que no tiene límites / It is life, more than death, that has no limits – Gabriel García Márquez

Achieving fairness and equity and redressing imbalances is also critical for effective implementation. Justice-related considerations have been central to the Convention, and this meeting was no exception. Deliberations on means of implementation, including financial resources and fit-for-purpose capacity building, as well as on access and benefit-sharing (ABS), were central to the agenda.

Establishing a multilateral mechanism for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from DSI use, together with the newly agreed Cali Fund—a global fund dedicated to the mechanism—adds to the list of COP 16's historic moments. DSI refers to the information content of genetic resources which, in light of rapid technological developments, is exchanged in its own right, making access to physical genetic resources unnecessary, with the risk of bypassing benefit-sharing obligations. Expectations were high prior to the meeting; as UN Secretary-General António Guterres emphasized, the world's developing countries “are being plundered” as the scientific discoveries and economic growth derived from their “extraordinary riches” are benefiting others. Halting this plunder that has historically benefited the few could go a long way towards achieving the third objective of the CBD—fair and equitable benefit-sharing—that remains out of reach.

It is still too early to assess the extent to which the new multilateral mechanism will be enough to “make those profiting from nature contribute to its protection and restoration,” answering the Secretary-General's call. The decision calls on large companies from sectors benefiting from DSI use (including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and animal and plant breeding), to contribute 1% of their profits or 0.1% of their revenue, as an indicative rate, to the Cali Fund.

According to many exhausted delegates at the end of the final 24-hour-long negotiation session, the mechanism lays the foundation for an inclusive solution towards bridging the biodiversity finance gap and increasing equity and justice in biodiversity-based innovation. Some celebrated, noting this development was unthinkable two years ago. Others were more cautious. Implementation of this mechanism relies on national implementation, and the decision allows “too much discretion” to parties, while the rates for contributions remain only indicative.

Further elaboration of the modalities will take place in the lead up to COP 17, which will establish a formula for funding allocations and criteria on companies' size. One success is clear, however. Half of the funding that will be distributed through direct allocations to parties should support the self-identified needs of IPLCs.

To be Continued...

La humanidad, como los ejércitos en campaña, avanza a la velocidad del más lento / Humanity, like armies in the field, advances at the speed of the slowest – Gabriel García Márquez

Although multilateralism often moves slowly, some seasoned delegates remarked on the need to streamline the Convention processes and agenda. With hundreds of pages of decision in front of them, and unfinished business due to the meeting's suspension, discussions will undoubtedly circle back to this at the resumed session of the COP. Some believe that resuming the COP to focus exclusively on financial matters may, after all, be productive, allowing dedicated time to focus on this crucial matter. Suspension of the meeting means that a lot of decisions are still pending, including on resource mobilization, the financial mechanism, and importantly, the budget. The budget committee was still deliberating when the gavel dropped on the meeting's suspension. Without a budget, the operations of the Secretariat could be interrupted.

While the inability to agree on resource mobilization and the financial mechanism soured the possibility of a celebratory end to this COP, its successes stand as indicators of progress. Its decisions, including the SB8j, the multilateral DSI benefit-sharing mechanism, and the EBSA modalities, in addition to other decisions, provide an array of important implementation tools.

In the wee hours of the closing plenary, a bat that had been flying around the plenary over the last few days was finally able to find the emergency exit. Will the meeting's suspension be an opportunity rather than an emergency exit, and enable parties to move beyond business as usual and finally resolve entrenched North-South differences with regard to finance and means of implementation? The transformation required to achieve the GBF needs more than rhetoric—it needs political will and commitment to change.

Upcoming Meetings

2024 UN Climate Change Conference: This event will include the 29th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 29), the 19th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 19), and the sixth meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 6) that will convene to complete the first enhanced transparency framework and the new collective quantified goal on finance, among other matters. **dates:** 11-22 November 2024 **location:** Baku, Azerbaijan **www:** unfccc.int/cop29

Plastics Treaty: The 5th meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, is the last scheduled meeting of the INC. **dates:** 25 November - 1 December 2024 **location:** Busan, Republic of Korea **www:** unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution/session-5

UNCCD COP 16: This meeting of the COP to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification will review global progress toward land degradation neutrality and confront pressing issues like enhancing drought resilience, promoting women's land rights, and combating sand and dust storms. **dates:** 2-13 December 2024 **location:** Riyadh, Saudi Arabia **www:** unccd.int/cop16

IPBES 11: The meeting of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services will consider the assessment on interlinkages among biodiversity, water, food, and health, and the transformative change assessment. **dates:** 10-16

December 2024 **location:** Windhoek, Namibia **www:** ipbes.net/events/ipbes-11

68th Meeting of the GEF Council: The GEF Council customarily meets twice annually but is meeting three times in 2024, the third time virtually in December. **dates:** 16-20 December 2024 **location:** virtual **www:** thegef.org/events/68th-gef-council-meeting

78th Meeting of the CITES Standing Committee: The Standing Committee provides policy guidance to the Secretariat on the implementation of the Convention, oversees the management of the Secretariat's budget, and oversees and coordinates the work of other committees and working groups. **dates:** 3-8 February 2025 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** cites.org/eng/sc/78

CGRFA 20: The 20th regular session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture will address a range of issues related to its Multi-Year Programme of Work. **dates:** 24-28 March 2025 **location:** Rome, Italy **www:** fao.org/cgrfa

ITPGRFA Working Group on the MLS: The thirteenth meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture will continue discussing the enhancement of the Treaty's Multilateral System of ABS. **dates:** 31 March - 4 April 2025 **location:** Rome, Italy **www:** fao.org/plant-treaty/meetings/meetings-detail/en/c/1712761

BBNJ Agreement Preparatory Commission: The Commission will meet to ensure the BBNJ Agreement is operational upon its entry into force. **dates:** 14-25 April 2025 (TBC) **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** un.org/bbnjagreement

UNFF 20: The UN Forum on Forests will review progress in implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030, progress in implementing mid-term review outcomes, and other international forest-related developments. **dates:** 5-9 May 2025 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** un.org/esa/forests/

Third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC-3): Co-chaired by France and Costa Rica, the Conference aims to generate transformative action and provide solutions the Ocean needs, supported by ocean science and funding for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 (life below water). **dates:** 9-13 June 2025 **location:** Nice, France **www:** sdgs.un.org/conferences/ocean2025

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP 15): The 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP15) will convene to review the Convention's implementation. **dates:** 23-31 July 2025 **location:** Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe **www:** ramsar.org/meetings

IUCN World Conservation Congress: Held once every four years, the World Conservation Congress brings together leaders and decision-makers from government, civil society, Indigenous peoples, business, and academia, to harness the solutions nature offers to global challenges. **dates:** 9-15 October 2025 **location:** Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates **www:** iucn.org

ITPGRFA GB 11: The next meeting of the Governing Body will conclude the revision of the Treaty's Multilateral System of ABS and will address other issues, including on farmers' rights. The meeting is expected to adopt the outcome of the Working Group on the enhancement of the MLS. **dates:** 24-29 November 2025 **location:** Peru **www:** fao.org/plant-treaty

UNEA-7: The seventh meeting of the UN Environment Assembly will set the global environmental agenda, provide overarching policy guidance, and define policy responses to address emerging environmental challenges. **dates:** 8-12 December 2025 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** unep.org/environmentassembly

UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 17): COP17 will convene in 2026 in Armenia on a date to be determined. **dates:** last quarter, 2026 (TBC) **location:** Yerevan, Armenia **www:** cbd.int
For additional upcoming events, see sdg.iisd.org

Glossary

ABS	Access and benefit-sharing
AHTEG	<i>Ad Hoc</i> Technical Expert Group
BBNJ	Marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction
BCH	Biosafety Clearing-House
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CHM	Clearing-House Mechanism
COP	Conference of the Parties
CP	Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety
CRP	Conference room paper
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DSI	Digital sequence information
EBSAs	Ecologically or biologically significant marine areas
GBF	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GYBN	Global Youth Biodiversity Network
IAS	Invasive alien species
IIFB	International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPLCs	Indigenous Peoples and local communities
ITPGRFA	International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
LMOs	Living modified organisms
MEAs	Multilateral environmental agreements
MOP	Meeting of the Parties
NBSAPs	National biodiversity strategies and action plans
NP	Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits arising from their Utilization
PMRR	Planning, Monitoring, Reporting, and Review
SBI	Subsidiary Body on Implementation
SBSTTA	Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice
SIDS	Small island developing states
ToR	Terms of Reference
TSC	Technical and scientific cooperation
UNCCD	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDOALOS	UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea
UNEA	UN Environment Assembly
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNPFII	UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
WG	Working Group
WHO	World Health Organization