



PRESS RELEASE

Governments embark on transformative agenda to achieve global biodiversity targets and prepare the way forward beyond 2020

- *Countries urged to ramp up actions to achieve global biodiversity targets by 2020*
- *Stage was set for discussions on the process for post 2020 global biodiversity framework*
- *Canadian astronaut Roberta Bondar urges governments to take action*
- *Seminar on transformational change inspires delegates to explore the transitions needed for long term biodiversity sustainability pathways*

18 July 2018 – Inspired by discussions on the possibilities of transformational change, a keynote address by Canadian astronaut Roberta Bondar, and a celebration of indigenous culture, more than 1,000 delegates from around the world concluded two critical meetings of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Montreal, Canada.

The meeting resulted in recommendations to accelerate and scale up actions needed to achieve existing global biodiversity targets by 2020 (the Aichi Biodiversity Targets). Governments also addressed the process for negotiating a new and more effective global biodiversity framework for the post-2020 period.

Dr. Cristiana Paşca Palmer, UN Assistant Secretary-General and CBD Executive Secretary, noted that “The results in Montreal reflect governments’ awareness of the need for accelerated actions to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The outcomes of these meetings identified key areas that require additional attention. What we need now is to turn these discussions into effective and inclusive actions on the ground.”

The 22nd meeting of the Convention’s Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-22) and the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI-2), which were held from 2 to 13 July 2018, represented the last preparatory processes before the UN Biodiversity Conference 2018¹ being held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt this November.

¹ Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, 17 - 29 November 2018 Egypt; Ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, 17 - 29 November 2018; Third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing, 17-29 November 2018; and the High-Level Segment of the fourteenth meeting of Conference of the Parties and concurrent meetings of the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols, 14-15 November 2018.

An Atmosphere to Inspire Transformational Change

The negotiations took place in an atmosphere shaped by a desire to bring about transformational change and achieve the goals of building a future of life in harmony with nature. A seminar, organised by the Secretariat in the weekend between the two subsidiary body meetings, brought together social scientists, representatives of the World Economic Forum, governments and a full range of stakeholders active in the Convention process, for a “deep dive” into possible sustainability transitions pathways for systemic change.

During the open dialogue, Dr. Paşca Palmer invited participants to reflect on solutions for moving away from the linear way of thinking and path dependencies, to take a systems view approach in our relationship with nature and biodiversity. She framed the discussion around the question: “How do we empower the agents of change and frontrunners to build new pathways or accelerate transition to sustainability?” The resulting discussion provided a variety of insightful perspectives on the possibilities for change.

Delegates to the SBI meeting were also inspired by the words of Canadian astronaut and member of the order of Canada, Roberta Bondar, who delivered a keynote address featuring breathtaking images of the earth from space. Dr. Bondar said “I envy all of you because you are in a position to create change... and encourage others to make change. We know we can do it, we just have to keep our energy alive.”

The government of Canada sponsored a reception at the opening of the SBI meeting, where indigenous traditions, culture and music were shared with the delegates, providing a lived experience of the key role that traditional knowledge plays in building a future of life in harmony with nature.

Looking beyond 2020: Setting the Stage for Negotiations

Inspired by the overall possibilities and the need for urgent action, delegates assessed progress under the Convention, and advanced a proposal for the negotiating path towards the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Stressing that “2020 is just around the corner,” the CBD Executive Secretary observed that the process for designing the post-2020 biodiversity framework needs to be science-based, transparent, and inclusive. The meeting requested inputs from Parties and stakeholders on ways to move forward with the process by August 15.

Meetings Outcomes:

Delegates recognized the need to leverage emerging new scientific research including the work of the **Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)**, such as the recently released regional assessments. Parties also invited greater collaboration between the IPBES and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

A major topic addressed at the meeting was **mainstreaming** of biodiversity into sectors that depend on biodiversity, and whose actions cause potential adverse impacts to ecosystems and species. Governments recommended a package of actions for governments, businesses and other stakeholders, to facilitate the incorporation of biodiversity considerations into the energy, mining, infrastructure, manufacturing and processing, and health sectors.

Advances in the Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol

Countries noted considerable progress in setting access and benefit-sharing frameworks. However, the delegates underlined, that further efforts are needed to make the Protocol fully operational. The meeting also addressed the way forward for advancing on a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism, and on the question of specialised international instruments related to access and benefit-sharing in the context of Article 4.4 of the Protocol.

Digital Sequence Information

Governments generally recognised the positive contribution of digital sequence information on genetic resources for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, but important divergences in views remain with respect to the implications of this issue for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources. The understanding of the different perspectives achieved during the meeting will underpin the important decisions to be taken on this topic in Egypt, decisions that could influence the future work of the Convention and its Nagoya Protocol.

Synthetic Biology

On the question of **synthetic biology**, due to uncertainty around the impacts of organisms with engineered gene drives, countries were called to apply a precautionary approach for the release of such organisms, including when it comes to experimental releases. Underlining that more research and analysis are needed, governments called for broad international cooperation to assess the possible impacts on biodiversity of this technology.

On **risk assessment of living modified organisms**, including organisms containing engineered gene drives, countries agreed on a process for identifying topics that may warrant the development of international guidelines. Delegates requested the CBD Executive Secretary to commission a study on organisms containing engineered gene drives and modified fish.

On a few elements, consensus was not possible and further discussions were tabled for the November meeting.

Other Thematic and Cross Cutting Issues

Countries looked at the question of mechanisms for conservation of biodiversity that extend beyond existing notions of protected areas and recommended that the definition '**other effective area-based conservation measures**' be considered by the COP, along with technical advice on guiding principles.

A methodology and a set of principles to guide the assessment of the role and contribution of **indigenous peoples and local communities** to the overall implementation of the Convention was also addressed in a draft decision to be taken up by the COP in November.

Governments recognised that, as new scientific information continues to emerge, there may be a need to modify existing **ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs)**. Countries also identified the need for agreed-upon means and approaches to describe new EBSAs in areas where EBSA workshops have already been held. A proposal for processes to revise existing, and describe new, EBSAs was advanced to the COP.

Delegates recommended that COP 14, this November, adopt the global action plan 2018-2030 for the **conservation and sustainable use of pollinators**. Governments urged the engagement of businesses, indigenous peoples and local communities, and other relevant actors, involved in production landscapes, to address the drivers of loss of wild and managed pollinators in all ecosystems.

NOTE TO EDITORS

The **Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice** plays a key role in assessing the current status of the world's biodiversity and in bringing emerging issues related to the conservation of biodiversity to the attention of the global community.

Meeting results: www.cbd.int/meetings/SBSTTA-22

The **Subsidiary Body on Implementation** has four areas of work: (a) review of progress in implementation; (b) strategic actions to enhance implementation; (c) strengthening means of implementation; and (d) operations of the Convention and the Protocols.

Meeting results: www.cbd.int/meetings/SBI-02

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 196 Parties so far, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing are supplementary agreements to the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 171 Parties have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies. It has been ratified by 107 Parties. For more information visit: www.cbd.int. For additional information, please contact: David Ainsworth on +1 514 287 7025 or at david.ainsworth@cbd.int; or Johan Hedlund on +1 514 287 6670 or at johan.hedlund@cbd.int
