

SBI 4 Highlights:

Monday, 27 May 2024

The fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI 4) addressed conference room papers (CRPs) on: the financial mechanism; and on review of implementation, including progress in the preparation of revised or updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) and the establishment of national targets in alignment with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). The contact groups on resource mobilization met in the evening.

Review of Implementation

SBI Chair Chirra Achalender Reddy (India) opened discussion of [CBD/SBI/4/CRP.1](#).

BRAZIL and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION suggested deleting a provision noting with appreciation the role of multi-stakeholder initiatives and coalitions supporting GBF implementation, such as the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People and the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership, with ARGENTINA, CAMEROON, the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC), EQUATORIAL GUINEA, and SOUTH AFRICA suggesting either deleting the listed examples or adding many other initiatives.

The EU, CHILE, COLOMBIA, COSTA RICA, the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, GEORGIA, MEXICO, and NORWAY asked to retain the specific examples, pointing to the broad membership of the High Ambition Coalition, noting that they were established specifically to support GBF implementation, and indicated a compromise text, proposed by AUSTRALIA, to clarify that the list is non-exhaustive. With no agreement in sight, Chair Reddy suspended discussions.

On a paragraph recognizing that SBI 5 will review progress in GBF implementation, “including through an open-ended forum on voluntary country review,” BRAZIL, ARGENTINA, CÔTE D’IVOIRE, and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION suggested deleting the reference to the open-ended forum, noting it is still under discussion. NORWAY accepted the deletion on the grounds that “piloting of a *modus operandi* of the open-ended forum” will still go ahead. The reference was deleted.

A lengthy discussion took place on a paragraph recognizing with concern the challenges that many parties face in revising or updating their NBSAPs, including relevant financial support.

The SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC, supported by the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, PAKISTAN, INDONESIA, TAJIKISTAN, EGYPT, CHINA, CUBA, SOUTH AFRICA, the DRC, and others, emphasized that some parties have not received any financial support. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION urged reflecting that some parties “have not received or have been denied financial support.”

NORWAY, strongly opposed by the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, noted that some projects are not approved by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) due to technical weaknesses. ARGENTINA emphasized the need to establish a body that will ensure all parties benefit from relevant assistance.

The UK proposed, as a compromise, reflecting the suggestion by the Russian Federation in a separate paragraph with SBI “noting” it rather than “recognizing it with concern.” The proposal was supported by the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, INDONESIA,

MEXICO, SWITZERLAND, and others, but opposed by the EU, AUSTRALIA, CANADA, and ICELAND, who emphasized that this discussion should take place at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16) or under the agenda item on the financial mechanism. Many delegates underscored that the discussion should be retained under the review of implementation.

AUSTRALIA suggested a short version recognizing with concern the challenges that many parties have faced in revising or updating their NBSAPs, attracting some support. MEXICO proposed stressing the importance for further financial and technical support in a timely manner. The provision was shelved pending further discussions.

Delegates discussed a paragraph stressing with concern that the provision of means of implementation to developing country parties since adopting the GBF has not been commensurate with the challenges faced by those countries, and that the levels of funding made available to the GBF Fund are not sufficient for GBF implementation.

GABON, supported by CÔTE D’IVOIRE and NORWAY, suggested deleting language on the GBF Fund and addressing it under the financial mechanism. The EU preferred addressing the entire paragraph under the financial mechanism. BRAZIL strongly urged retaining the text, emphasizing the interlinkages between the provision of implementation means and the revision or updating of NBSAPs as well as relevant obligations under the CBD. He stressed that without addressing implementation means, it would be difficult to approve the CRP. Noting disagreement, Chair Reddy suspended discussions on this matter.

On an operative paragraph urging parties to revise or update their NBSAPs, ARGENTINA, supported by CÔTE D’IVOIRE, CUBA, and TAJIKISTAN, suggested deleting “as soon as possible.” MEXICO called for recognizing that parties not in a position to submit their NBSAPs can submit their national targets as a standalone submission, in line with Decision 15/6. Delegates approved the text.

Regarding a provision on improving mainstreaming and coherence through awareness raising about the process of revising or updating NBSAPs, INDIA and BURKINA FASO proposed reflecting consideration of parties’ capabilities; using a whole-of-government and society approach; and including reference to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women, youth, and other stakeholders.

MALAWI proposed referencing the global analysis in a provision on submitting national targets, which BRAZIL and BURKINA FASO opposed. BURKINA FASO further requested explicit reference to the online reporting tool.

Chair Reddy suspended discussions on the CRP.

Financial Mechanism

Chair Reddy opened consideration of [CBD/SBI/4/CRP.2](#).

On the preamble, regarding a provision referring to Article 21 (financial mechanism) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), AUSTRALIA and SWITZERLAND suggested “recalling” the article, with the DRC, PAKISTAN, and GABON preferring to retain “reaffirming.” BRAZIL, CANADA, the EU, SWITZERLAND, and others cautioned reopening agreed language.

On a paragraph addressing the role of the GEF in operating as the CBD financial mechanism on an interim and ongoing basis, the DRC, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, and CAMEROON opposed reference to “and ongoing,” pointing to CBD Article 39 (financial interim arrangements). CANADA preferred retaining the text. Both provisions remain bracketed.

On language welcoming with appreciation the actions by the GEF to support CBD and GBF implementation, delegates agreed to include explicit reference to “countries with economies in transition,” as proposed by GEORGIA and supported by GABON and ZIMBABWE. Welcoming “with appreciation” was bracketed following a request by the DRC and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION. A proposal by the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, clarifying that there are steps yet to be taken for the GBF Fund to become fully operational was also bracketed, following opposition by SWITZERLAND, NORWAY, and COLOMBIA.

Regarding a provision noting with concern the lack of project proposals on Cartagena Protocol (CP) implementation and the limited number on Nagoya Protocol (NP) implementation, the DRC, CHINA, CÔTE D’IVOIRE, EGYPT, NIGERIA, and TOGO noted that such projects had been submitted but not approved. They supported an alternative paragraph proposed by the DRC, noting with concern that the GEF does not consider project proposals for CP and NP implementation in a balanced way. SWITZERLAND, NORWAY, and CANADA supported the original formulation. Following debate and clarification sought from the GEF, both the original language and the suggestion by the DRC were bracketed.

AUSTRALIA, CANADA, and SWITZERLAND asked to bracket a provision noting with concern the lack of funds made available to the GBF Fund, pointing to the brief time period since its establishment. BRAZIL and CUBA suggested highlighting the provision’s importance and, opposed by SWITZERLAND, extending the reference to the GEF, pointing to the overall lack of funds.

Delegates bracketed a paragraph noting with concern the exclusion of a number of eligible parties from access to GEF support, following a request by AUSTRALIA and the EU.

On operative paragraphs, delegates approved a provision noting with appreciation the report of the GEF Council to COP 16.

Lengthy discussions were held over a provision inviting the GEF, in collaboration with the Secretariat, to encourage recipient parties to submit project proposals in support of implementing GBF Target 17 (strengthen biosafety and distribute the benefits of biotechnology), and the implementation plan and capacity-building action plan for the CP.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION, supported by SOUTH AFRICA, suggested referring to “all eligible countries” instead of “recipient countries.” The two alternatives were bracketed. SOUTH AFRICA, supported by CÔTE D’IVOIRE and CHILE, added that parties should be “invited” rather than “encouraged” to submit proposals, with the two options bracketed.

The DRC, supported by SOUTH AFRICA, CÔTE D’IVOIRE, and CHILE, proposed “encouraging” rather than “inviting” the GEF; and, supported by the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, BRAZIL, and TOGO, and opposed by the EU, CANADA, COLOMBIA, the UK, and SWITZERLAND, noted that the GEF is not under the COP’s authority. BRAZIL proposed “instructing” the GEF if all parties agree that it is under the COP’s authority. The three alternatives were bracketed.

On a provision inviting participation in the ninth replenishment cycle of the GEF to support eligible developing countries, GEORGIA, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, COLOMBIA, and others requested to add countries with economies in transition, and standard language regarding least developed countries and small island developing states, which was agreed. A suggestion by CHINA to specifically reference the role of developed country parties was opposed by SWITZERLAND and subsequently bracketed.

On the part of the draft recommendation pertaining to the GBF Fund, TOGO, supported by the DRC and others, questioned whether the GBF Fund is truly operational, suggesting language to express appreciation to the GEF for “progress made” in establishing and operationalizing the Fund, bracketing reference

to its “timely” establishment and operationalization. CANADA, NORWAY, the UK, COLOMBIA, and others opposed these amendments, saying that the GBF Fund’s establishment and operationalization is a fact. BRAZIL stressed the need to convey a positive message to donor countries that the GBF Fund is operational to increase contributions. The provision remains bracketed.

On a paragraph expressing regret that the GBF Fund had not adopted terms of reference for the auxiliary body and advisory group, many noted it is factually accurate. NORWAY, supported by SWITZERLAND, the EU, and the UK, suggested deleting the provision, noting that terms of reference are likely to be adopted at the GBF Fund’s upcoming Council meeting in June 2024. COLOMBIA suggested specifying that the paragraph refers to the GBF Fund’s “first meeting.” The provision remains bracketed.

Regarding a provision noting with appreciation current contributions to the GBF Fund, BRAZIL sought clarification on whether the noted amount of USD 236 million refers to pledges, signed agreements, or paid contributions. The GEF clarified that current pledges amount to USD 225 million. The EU, supported by the UK, JAPAN, and SWITZERLAND, asked to bracket the amount, noting it will change following further contributions.

On an invitation to all developed country parties, other governments in a position to do so, and others, to make contributions to the GBF Fund, COLOMBIA suggested including the private and financial sector. The EU, supported by CANADA and JAPAN, and opposed by CHINA, CUBA, the DRC, INDONESIA, CAMEROON, NIGERIA, SOUTH AFRICA, and ZIMBABWE, suggested inviting all parties rather than “developed country parties” and clarifying that the GBF Fund is not the only mechanism for meeting the GBF financial targets.

Chair Reddy noted that controversial provisions would be bracketed in their entirety. Many delegates expressed concern on the way forward, stressing that not all agenda items under SBI 4 can be considered at this pace. Chair Reddy stressed that the Bureau will be deliberating on these concerns early on Tuesday morning prior to plenary.

Contact Group on Resource Mobilization

The contact group, co-chaired by Shonisani Munzhedzi (South Africa) and Salima Kempenaer (Belgium), spent considerable time discussing the way forward, with some delegates proposing to focus on the most contentious paragraphs on: noting a positive trend in development finance for biodiversity as well as underlining the finance gap; a dedicated global instrument for biodiversity finance; and the establishment of an open-ended, intergovernmental, and inclusive intersessional process to operationalize the global instrument.

Discussions continued into the night.

In the Breezeways

Delegates arrived on Monday ready to consider a long list of CRPs addressing the matters that were not the subject of in-depth discussions in contact groups. The desired speed never materialized, as discussions stagnated. Entrenched positions reflecting developed and developing country party lines held the plenary’s attention back on the very first item, an SBI recommendation on progress in revising or updating NBSAPs, which some considered a low hanging fruit. In particular, text addressing means of implementation and the financing gap, as well as the challenges faced by some parties regarding how the GEF awards funds, proved thorny.

Without resolution in sight, the text was parked, and discussions moved on to the financial mechanism in the afternoon. Delegates made limited progress, as discussions returned to the same lines heard in the morning. With the evening fast approaching, many expressed concerns on the pace of discussions and the way forward, with one questioning “how long are we going to keep doing this for?” As only two days remain to conclude their work, a seasoned negotiator remarked that this “oppositional thinking” is leading to “a fight leading nowhere,” urging focus on the common desire to meet the CBD objectives and GBF Goals and Targets.