

Summary of the Second Resumed Session of the 2024 UN Biodiversity Conference: 25-27 February 2025

“The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) is a public policy with the power to unite the world, especially in the current divided geopolitical landscape.” Colombia’s Susana Muhamad, President of the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), set the tone during the opening of the resumed meeting of the governing bodies of the CBD and its protocols. Urging delegates to work collaboratively for a matter that “transcends our differences and interests: our capacity to sustain life on this planet,” she warned them that, unless they reach agreement on crucial decisions on resource mobilization and monitoring, “we have created an important policy without the means to implement it.”

With global biodiversity vanishing at unprecedented rates, adoption of the GBF in 2022 was a much-needed policy step towards putting nature on a path to recovery. It is its implementation, however, that will show whether it can steer the necessary transformative change. The first part of the conference, held from 21 October to 1 November 2024, in Cali, Colombia, took a number of important steps in this direction. It reviewed the alignment of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) with the GBF, giving an impetus to national action. It established a Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and other provisions related to Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), offering a permanent platform to give voice to biodiversity stewards. It operationalized the multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism from use of digital sequence information (DSI) on genetic resources, aiming for both justice in research and development, and finance for conservation. The negotiations, however, were suspended due to loss of quorum, following difficult negotiations on resource mobilization. As a result, a number of decisions were left pending.

Deliberations at the resumed session continued where they left off in Cali, with resource mobilization attracting significant negotiating time and effort. The first round of discussions indicated persistent divergence of views between developed and developing countries, with disagreement centering on the efficiency and equity of the global financial architecture with regard to biodiversity finance flows, the role of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the need for a dedicated financial instrument with fair and representative governance under the guidance and authority of the COP. A series of elements, however, made consensus possible. Participants hailed the strategic and inclusive leadership of President Muhamad, and awarded her with an extended standing ovation during the closing

plenary. Ample negotiating time in plenary and various informal groups allowed delegates to share their concerns and build common understanding and ownership of the process. Finally, a proposal by Brazil, on behalf of BRICS, provided a solid foundation for consensus-building.

Agreement on resource mobilization enabled the adoption of the interlinked decision on the financial mechanism, including guidance to the GEF, and provided the necessary impetus and goodwill for adoption of other pending decisions, which are vital to promote implementation of the GBF. A decision on the GBF monitoring framework will assist with assessment of implementation at the national level, while another on mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting, and review (PMRR), including a global review of collective progress toward GBF implementation, will promote transparency and accountability. A decision on cooperation with other relevant agreements can enhance synergies and biodiversity mainstreaming across international processes. Overall, as President Muhamad noted during the closing plenary, the meeting managed to “give the arms, legs, and muscles” to the GBF, “so that it does not remain an empty shell.”

The second resumed session of the 2024 UN Biodiversity Conference convened from 25-27 February 2025, at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), in Rome, Italy. The session resumed the concurrent meetings of the governing bodies of the CBD and its Protocols: the 16th meeting of

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the CBD COP, the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CP MOP 11), and the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties (MOP 5) to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits arising from their Utilization (NP MOP 5). Approximately 900 participants attended the session, representing governments, UN and international organizations, IPLCs, civil society, academia, and industry.

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. Decision making is assisted by three subsidiary bodies: the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA); the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI); and the Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and other provisions related to IPLCs (SB8j).

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 142 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 Rutzolijirixaxik voluntary guidelines for repatriation of traditional knowledge (COP 14, November 2018, Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt).

2022 UN Biodiversity Conference: 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. 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 GBF, 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.

2024 UN Biodiversity Conference: Held from 21 October to 1 November 2024, in Cali, Colombia, the meeting established the SB8j; adopted a decision on the operationalization of the multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism from DSI use, including establishment of the Cali Fund; adopted modalities for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas; and reviewed the development of national targets and the alignment of NBSAPs with the GBF. Following protracted negotiations on resource mobilization, however, the meeting was suspended due to loss of quorum, with a number of decisions left pending.

First resumed session of COP 16: The integrated budget of the Convention and its Protocols was adopted by silence procedure from 3-6 December 2024.

Report of the Meeting

On [Tuesday, 25 February](#), President Susana Muhamad (Colombia), opened the second resumed session of COP 16 and CP MOP 11, emphasizing the need to send a strong signal and deliver on the GBF, a “public policy with the power to unite the world, especially in the current divided geopolitical landscape.” NP MOP 5 President Nneka Nicholas (Antigua and Barbuda) noted the only substantive item left for NP MOP 5 to consider is on DSI.

Organizational Matters: Following confirmation that the Bureau continues to serve, delegates adopted the annotated agendas ([CBD/COP/16/Add.4](#), [CBD/CP/MOP/11/1/Add.4](#), and [CBD/NP/MOP/5/1/Add.4](#)) and organization of work and scenario note for the sessions ([CBD/COP/16/1/Add.5](#)).

CBD COP 16

Mechanisms for PMRR: On [Tuesday](#), plenary addressed this item, with the Secretariat noting edits and an adjustment to the timeline for the global review reflected in the draft decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.33](#)). Many parties supported adopting the draft decision, emphasizing that it lays the foundations for a party-driven and participatory global review of collective progress, while some proposed amendments. Informal consultations were convened with a view to reaching consensus. On [Wednesday](#), discussions focused on the process for reporting commitments by non-state actors to the online reporting tool of the Clearing-house Mechanism (CHM), and communications to the parties on these commitments.

On Thursday, the Secretariat outlined the Presidency's compromise footnote to provide clarity and define the phrase "non-objection basis" regarding the process for reporting commitments by non-state actors, which states that the phrase means that "all submissions from actors other than national governments would be available for national focal points to review. After a period of four weeks, the submitted commitment would be published if the relevant national focal point has not objected, with the understanding that the commitment could be withdrawn from publication at any time if there is an objection."

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION requested reflecting in the report of the meeting that the 15 experts for the *Ad Hoc* Scientific and Technical Advisory Group for the preparation of the global report on collective progress in implementing the GBF must be selected on an equal basis, representing all five regions.

In the evening, President Muhamad introduced a revised draft decision, noting it is clean text. The decision was adopted.

Final Outcome: In the 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/Rev.1](#)), the COP, among other things:

- endorses the revisions to the national reporting template for the seventh and eighth national reports, as outlined in Annex I, according to which parties are requested to submit by 28 February 2026 and 30 June 2029, respectively; and
- adopts the core reporting elements for commitments by non-state actors, as contained in Annex II, recalling that actors other than national governments are invited to report their commitments and contributions to NBSAPs and the implementation of the GBF.

On the global review of collective progress in the implementation of the GBF, the COP decides:

- the review will be done in a facilitative, non-intrusive, and non-punitive manner, respecting national sovereignty, following a party-driven process, and avoiding duplication of effort; and
- the basis for the review will primarily consist of national reports and a global report on collective progress in implementing the GBF.

On the global report, the COP decides that it will:

- consider the specific challenges, in particular of least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS), in implementing the GBF;
- draw on best available peer-reviewed scientific, technical, and technological information, as well as traditional knowledge accessed following the principle of free, prior, and informed consent; and
- include a target-by-target assessment of progress towards the 23 targets, the 2030 mission, and other elements of the GBF, as well

as an analysis of progress towards the goals of the GBF and the 2050 vision.

Regarding the report's governance, the COP decides to establish an *Ad Hoc* Scientific and Technical Advisory Group for its preparation, with work mandated to COP 17.

The COP also requests the Secretariat to further develop a mechanism for tracking the commitments of non-state actors, and to support IPLCs, women, and youth in sharing information that they have developed to inform the global review, among other things.

GBF Monitoring Framework: Plenary considered this item on [Tuesday](#), with President Muhamad recalling that the draft decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.26](#)) had been thoroughly discussed in Cali and inviting delegates to focus their deliberations on bracketed text.

Delegates discussed headline indicator 7.2 for Target 7 (pollution), which contained bracketed text around "pesticide environment concentration" and/or "aggregated total applied toxicity," contained in the annex on technical updates to the headline and binary indicators in the GBF monitoring framework.

The UK presented a compromise proposal suggesting that: "parties may choose to report on either pesticide environment concentration or aggregated total applied toxicity headline indicator, depending on the availability of methodology and in accordance with their national circumstances and technical capacities"; and that "it is acknowledged that work is under way to further develop and test aggregated total applied toxicity headline indicator by FAO, which is defined as the responsible organization of Table 1 of Annex II to document CBD/SBSTTA/26/2."

Following clarifications provided by FAO and the CBD Secretariat on the process for further work, delegates approved the compromise text.

Divergence ensued on whether to retain component indicators on "global environmental impacts of consumption" and "ecological footprint" under Target 16 (sustainable consumption) in the annex on optional disaggregations of the headline indicators and voluntary component and complementary indicators in the GBF monitoring framework, with President Muhamad inviting consultations.

On [Wednesday](#), the EU presented a compromise resulting from informal consultations, to: delete the "global environmental impacts of consumption" component indicator; retain the "ecological footprint" component indicator; and add a footnote to Annex II, which contains the indicators, to note that "in line with decision 15/5, Annex I, paragraphs 2(a) and (b), the methodology and relevant data must be publicly available and accessible." Delegates agreed to the compromise language and to a request by the RUSSIAN FEDERATION to add "for all" to the end of the footnote.

On Thursday, the closing plenary adopted the decision.

Final Outcome: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.26/Rev.1](#)), the COP:

- endorses the technical updates to the headline and binary indicators in the monitoring framework for the GBF contained in Annex I;
- takes note of the optional disaggregation of the headline indicators and voluntary component and complementary indicators in the monitoring framework for the GBF contained in Annex II, also noting that their use is optional and subject to national circumstances and priorities; and
- adopts the list of binary indicator questions contained in Annex III.

The COP decides that further work is needed to develop component indicators and their methodology on subsidies

harmful to biodiversity, taking into account the optional sectorial disaggregation of headline indicator 18.2 (value of subsidies and other incentives harmful to biodiversity), as well as positive incentives to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The COP further decides that the reporting burden and the technical and financial constraints faced particularly by developing countries need to be considered in the further development of the indicators.

The COP urges parties to strengthen their monitoring systems to facilitate the reporting against indicators in the seventh national report, due by February 2026. The COP invites parties to make use of, where relevant: the guidance provided by the *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group on Indicators; the Global Ecosystem Typology; and the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators.

The COP urges developed country parties to enhance international cooperation to address the technical and financial challenges faced by developing country parties in implementing the monitoring framework.

It further urges parties and others to take GBF section C (Considerations for implementation of the GBF) into consideration when implementing the monitoring framework and invites them to exchange knowledge and build capacity. It further invites organizations, IPLCs, women, and youth to support parties in the implementation of the monitoring framework at the national level.

The COP invites the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and relevant initiatives to share information on relevant monitoring initiatives with the CBD Secretariat and requests the Secretariat to make this information available through the CHM; and invites the secretariats and governing bodies of MEAs and other processes to consider the indicators in Annexes I and II.

The COP requests:

- the GEF to provide adequate, timely, and predictable financial resources to contribute to the development and implementation of national biodiversity monitoring systems to support the reporting efforts of parties, in response to requests by all eligible parties; and
- the regional and subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centers and the global coordination entity to provide support for capacity building and development for the implementation of the monitoring framework.

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

- support inclusive and participatory processes to facilitate the operationalization of the monitoring framework;
- ensure that the guidance on the monitoring framework is easily accessible alongside the national reporting template; and
- prepare an analysis of the usage of the headline, binary, component, and complementary indicators and of national indicators in national reports, and share this information with the *Ad Hoc* Scientific and Technical Advisory Group.

The COP further requests the Secretariat to:

- work with relevant organizations to further develop the metadata for headline indicators 1.1 (percentage of land and sea area covered by biodiversity-inclusive spatial plans), 7.2 (pesticide environment concentration and/or aggregated total applied toxicity), and 9.1 (benefits from the sustainable use of wild species), and to update metadata of other headline indicators, especially for those at a lower level of development;
- compile submissions from parties, the secretariats of MEAs, institutions and organizations, including the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership, IPLCs, women, and youth, for the

inclusion of additional headline indicators that meet the criteria for inclusion;

- compile submissions from parties to support the development of a methodology for additional component indicators for headline indicator 18.1 (positive incentives in place to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use) and 18.2 (value of subsidies and other incentives harmful to biodiversity); and
- compile submissions from parties and IPLCs to support the development of a methodology for headline indicator 22.1 (indicator on biodiversity information for monitoring the GBF).

The COP requests SBSTTA, at a meeting held before COP 17, to:

- review updated metadata for headline indicators and the list of component and complementary indicators that have met the criteria for inclusion in the monitoring framework, for use by parties in their eighth national reports; and
- to review the needs of parties in implementing the monitoring framework and consider how to address any technical or capacity gaps.

The decision contains three annexes: technical updates to the headline and binary indicators in the monitoring framework for the GBF (Annex I); optional disaggregations of the headline indicators and voluntary component and complementary indicators in the monitoring frameworks for the GBF (Annex II); and a list of binary indicator questions (Annex III).

Resource Mobilization: This item was addressed on [Tuesday](#) and [Wednesday](#) in plenary and high-level informal consultations and closed groups on the basis of draft decision [CBD/COP/16/L.34](#) and a President's reflection note ([CBD/COP/16/INF.43/Rev.1](#)). These documents, published following intersessional consultations at the ministerial level, identify points of convergence and include suggestions on the way forward. Debate centered on ways and means to close the biodiversity finance gap and governance-related considerations, with continued divergence of views on the need to establish a dedicated financial instrument for biodiversity under the control and authority of the COP, in implementation of CBD Article 21.

On Thursday, President Muhammad provided an overview of the discussions from Wednesday evening, stressing the need to clarify certain elements to enhance common understanding. She emphasized the need to bring together the resource mobilization strategy and provisions on institutional capacity, noting that while they do not depend on each other, they are both elements of the broader strategy. She outlined the structure of a revised draft decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.34/Rev.1](#)), underscoring it has three key parts: the draft decision; criteria for implementation; and the road map for intersessional work.

President Muhammad noted that divergent, and sometimes contradictory, views had been expressed on the road map, with some opining that the process remains heavy and complicated, while others wanted additional steps. On the timeline for operationalization, she reminded delegates that the original draft decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.34](#)), which attracted broad support in Cali, already stated 2030 as the target date. She concluded that what is at stake is “giving the arms, legs, and muscles to the GBF,” emphasizing that “otherwise we created an important policy without the means of implementation.” She invited delegates to work collaboratively toward reaching consensus, stressing that “the ball is now in your hands.”

Zimbabwe, for the AFRICAN GROUP, noted that the draft accommodated most views by parties and was a firm foundation for

negotiations. The group stressed the need to operationalize CBD Article 21 as soon as possible, calling for a precise process, specific commitments, and stronger language for bridging the biodiversity finance gap in the road map.

Brazil, for BRICS, proposed alternative text, which included a decision to address the global biodiversity finance gap and to fully implement Article 21 by 2030 by: assessing and improving the mobilization of finance from all sources and the performance of existing financial instruments; and establishing the permanent arrangement for the financial mechanism envisaged in Article 21. The proposal then addressed actions needed to meet the two goals of improving finance mobilization and implementing Article 21, as well as a road map to COP 19.

Canada, for JUSCANZ, expressed readiness to engage in constructive discussions. Noting that the draft focuses on a process and not on establishing a new fund, the group called for improving some areas, such as provisions on increasing the contributors' base, and suggested deleting Annex II B (assessment of the effectiveness of the GEF and possible elements for its reform).

Jamaica, for the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), identified two distinct but interconnected workstreams: resource mobilization and closing the biodiversity finance gap; and the financial mechanism, including implementation of Article 21, stressing that tangible outcomes are required for both. They outlined issues requiring further discussion, including: implications associated with expanding the contributors' base; provisions on complementarity and replacing existing instruments, noting outcomes should not be prejudged; the outcomes of the road map, suggesting advancing the timelines; and the criteria for the development of an instrument on biodiversity finance.

Cambodia, for the ASIA-PACIFIC GROUP, and supported by PACIFIC SIDS and others, stressed the need to restructure the draft decision to clearly demarcate the two workstreams and outline clear outcomes and intersessional processes under each.

Fiji, for PACIFIC SIDS, emphasized that the draft decision must outline clear criteria for enhancing global biodiversity finance, particularly on coordination and complementarity, enabling conditions, transparency, and timely access to financial resources for IPLCs.

The EUROPEAN UNION (EU) stressed the central role of existing instruments, the integrity of the GEF, and the need to broaden the contributing base to private actors; and noted, among other things, that the draft decision must add elements to deal with the phasing out and reform of harmful incentives.

Drawing attention to the systemic barriers that sanctioned countries face in accessing biodiversity finance, IRAN called for the draft decision to specify that the financial mechanism will provide fair, equitable, and non-discriminatory access to finance. MALAWI urged leveraging findings of previous studies on access to existing instruments for biodiversity finance and taking a clear decision on the establishment of a dedicated financial instrument. GUATEMALA expressed concern that the road map would delay discussions on the establishment of a dedicated instrument "indefinitely," and called to revise the timeline to ensure that the financial mechanism is operational by 2030. PERU called for clearly defining the dedicated instrument and urged for adoption of the revised resource mobilization strategy. The DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC) pointed to opportunities for local biodiversity financing, citing global-level financing difficulties.

Agnès Pannier-Runacher, Minister of Ecological Transition, France, called for more clarity on the actions required leading to COPs 17 and 18. She urged flexibility and pragmatism to enable "work to start today," and stressed the need to mobilize resources from all sources to implement the GBF.

JAMAICA emphasized that the elements of the dual-track process must occur in parallel and stressed that the resource mobilization strategy still lacks an implementation plan, which must be addressed during the intersessional period prior to COP 17 and reviewed at COP 18. Underscoring that the Convention is still operating under Article 39 (Financial Interim Arrangements) and not Article 21, she proposed that a dedicated instrument accountable to the COP is designed or decided by COP 17, with the operating entity and governance arrangements confirmed at COP 18.

President Muhamad mandated a small group of representatives from negotiating and/or regional groups to address outstanding matters, with a view to producing a revised draft decision for the evening plenary's consideration.

In the evening, a representative of the Presidency presented a [non-paper](#) resulting from intense, party-driven, informal discussions. He said discussions were based on the BRICS proposal to organize the document in two workstreams. He emphasized that a single pair of brackets remained in the document, and noted that Section B of Annex II (assessment of the effectiveness of the GEF and possible elements for its reform) would be deleted, contingent on its inclusion in the decision on the financial mechanism.

Delegates then addressed the criteria for any entity that would form an institutional structure envisaged by Article 21, noting that the entity should be accessible by all eligible parties, with bracketed text on language noting that this should be done "in a fair, timely, simplified, equitable, inclusive, and non-discriminatory manner."

EGYPT, FIJI, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, CHINA, and BRAZIL strongly suggested retaining the bracketed text, with the RUSSIAN FEDERATION stressing that the current interim arrangement for the financial mechanism applies discriminatory measures to a number of eligible parties, and BRAZIL emphasizing that this principle unites the developing world.

The EU preferred deleting the text in brackets, noting that the matter relates to the autonomy and authority of the relevant governing bodies of the financial instruments that determine the way funding is organized. They further suggested: deleting a provision commissioning a study benchmarking the GEF against those financial mechanisms or similar instruments of other relevant MEAs, noting that any salient elements should be integrated into the assessment process under the decision on the financial mechanism; and aligning the timeline for further developing the criteria for the institutional structure to operate the financial mechanism with the timeline of the assessments of the financial mechanism. BRAZIL cautioned against reopening clean text.

During the closing plenary, the Secretariat introduced [CBD/COP/16/L.34/Rev.2](#), focusing on amendments made to the previous version following informal discussions, and noting that some of the changes relate to the draft decision on the financial mechanism ([CBD/COP/16/L.31/Rev.1](#)), as the two issues are interlinked.

The Secretariat noted, among other things, that:

- an annex on the assessment of the effectiveness of the GEF and possible elements for its reform, as well as a provision commissioning a study benchmarking the GEF against those financial mechanisms or similar instruments of other relevant

MEAs, were transferred from the draft decision on resource mobilization to the one on the financial mechanism;

- a number of brackets in the draft decision on the financial mechanism were lifted following progress on the draft decision on resource mobilization; and
- the term “recipient countries” was replaced by “eligible countries” in the draft decision on the financial mechanism.

Delegates adopted the decision by acclamation, followed by a standing ovation.

Final Outcome: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.34/Rev.2](#)), the COP adopts the revised resource mobilization strategy for the period 2025-2030 and encourages parties and others to use it as flexible guidance in mobilizing new and additional resources from all sources and aligning financial flows to implement the CBD, its protocols, and the GBF.

The COP urges parties to:

- continue and enhance their efforts to substantially and progressively increase the level of financial resources from all sources, to reach GBF Target 19 (mobilize at least USD 200 billion per year by 2030);
- continue and enhance their efforts towards achieving GBF Target 18 by eliminating, phasing out or reforming incentives, including subsidies, harmful for biodiversity; and
- put in place and enforce social and environmental safeguards and apply a human rights-based approach in developing or scaling up biodiversity and finance instruments.

The COP further urges developed country parties to continue and enhance their efforts to increase total biodiversity-related international financial resources, including official development assistance, to developing countries, in particular LDCs and SIDS, as well as those with economies in transition, to reach GBF Target 19(a) (mobilize at least USD 20 billion per year by 2025 and at least USD 30 billion per year by 2030).

The COP encourages:

- parties to develop, update, and implement national biodiversity finance plans or similar instruments, and to take the strategy for resource mobilization into account for NBSAPs, national targets, and national biodiversity finance plans;
- developed country parties to reflect their financial contribution to developing country parties in their national finance plans; and
- developing country parties, as appropriate, to provide relevant information in their national biodiversity finance plans.

The COP invites parties and others to provide relevant information in order to support the review of the strategy for resource mobilization. It acknowledges that strategies for resource mobilization have also been adopted under other relevant instruments, and encourages increased cooperation and synergies.

The COP further calls upon: developed country parties and others to make or increase their contributions to the GBF Fund; and parties and others to improve access to and increase financial resources for IPLCs, women, and youth for GBF implementation.

The COP decides to implement Articles 21 and 39 and to address the global biodiversity finance gap by 2030, by establishing the permanent arrangement for the financial mechanism and assessing and improving the mobilization of finance from all sources. It recognizes a list of actions that can contribute to addressing the global biodiversity finance gap.

The COP further recognizes that the operation of the financial mechanism envisaged by Article 21 can be entrusted to one or more

entities—new, reformed, or existing—fulfilling at least the following criteria:

- it functions for the purpose of implementing the Convention and its Protocols;
- it is under the authority and guidance of, and accountable to, the COP;
- it operates within a democratic and transparent system of governance, ensuring a structure that is fair, equitable, inclusive, efficient, and representative; and
- it is accessible by all eligible parties in a fair, timely, simplified, equitable, inclusive, and non-discriminatory manner.

The COP decides to establish an intersessional process to further develop the criteria for the institutional structure by COP 17 and, by COP 18, to: review the progress in the reform of relevant existing financial entities; decide whether to establish a new entity and, if appropriate, develop the relevant terms of reference and modalities; and act upon the stocktake review on the operations and performance of the GBF Fund. The COP notes that at the latest by COP 19, it shall determine the institutional structure permanently operating the financial mechanism.

The COP decides on concrete deliverables regarding the intersessional process, to:

- identify impediments to the effectiveness of global biodiversity finance and recommend elements for enhancement by COP 17;
- identify and implement measures to enhance global biodiversity finance, as well as assess the performance of existing instruments by COP 18; and
- integrate a strategy for resource mobilization by COP 19.

The COP requests the SBI to consider relevant elements and report on progress to COP 17, including opportunities for broadening the contributors’ base, and requests the Secretariat to prepare relevant documentation and commission a study to identify opportunities to strengthen tracking of the various finance sources.

The COP further requests the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to: facilitate an international dialogue of Ministers of Environment and Finance; commission studies on the relationship between debt sustainability and CBD implementation, how the guidance on safeguards in biodiversity finance mechanisms has been implemented, and the relationship between biodiversity and climate finance; and integrate a platform in the CHM for exchanging relevant information.

Annex I contains the revised strategy for resource mobilization with sections on: its aim; enabling actions; and objectives and actions, namely an increase in international biodiversity-related financial flows and financial resources from all sources and a significant increase in domestic resource mobilization from all sources.

Annex II contains possible criteria for the development of an instrument on biodiversity finance.

Financial Mechanism: Plenary addressed a draft decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.31](#)) on [Tuesday](#) and [Wednesday](#), acknowledging interlinkages with deliberations on resource mobilization. Deliberations focused on the textual formulation of requests to the GEF, including enhancing synergies among the CBD and other biodiversity-related conventions, and increasing flexibility in project cycles.

During the closing plenary on Thursday, President Muhamad introduced the draft decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.31/Rev.1](#)), noting that a compromise had been reached on an outstanding paragraph. The EU presented the compromise, requesting “the GEF and

the Council of the GBF Fund to explore ways to enhance and strengthen predictability in financing the timely implementation of the Framework, including through multi-annual pledges and consideration of the opportunities of voluntary indicative scales of contribution, and report thereon for consideration by COP 17.”

JAPAN suggested extending a request to the Secretariat to commission a study benchmarking the GEF against other financial mechanisms, subject to the availability of resources. BRAZIL urged against undoing the delicate balance achieved.

Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Canada, emphasized that the decision strikes a good balance and supported its adoption, stressing that “multilateralism can present hope in turbulent times.” Highlighting Montreal’s motto, *Concordia Sala* (well-being through harmony), he highlighted national conservation efforts, including on Indigenous marine protected areas.

Delegates adopted the decision with no further comments.

Final Outcome: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.31/Rev.1](#)), the COP takes note of the report on the sixth review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism. The decision contains sections addressing: the GEF Trust Fund; the GBF Fund; the four-year outcome-oriented framework of biodiversity programme priorities of the CBD and its Protocols; funding needs assessment; further guidance to the GEF; and the review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism.

Regarding the **GEF Trust Fund**, the COP requests the GEF to:

- encourage eligible countries to submit project proposals in support of implementing GBF Target 17 (biosafety) and the implementation plan and the capacity-building action plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;
- identify, in collaboration with eligible countries, the causes for the underuse of the notional allocation available for the protocols and propose adequate measures to address those causes; and
- consider how to integrate Mother Earth-centric actions into its programming directions.

The COP encourages the GEF to continue to explore potential opportunities for maximizing the contribution of its integrated programmes to the implementation of the GBF, and, with eligible countries, maintain the contribution of the international waters focal area and extend that practice to other focal areas. It requests the GEF and the Council of the GBF Fund to explore ways to enhance and strengthen predictability in financing the timely implementation of the GBF. The COP further invites: relevant parties to the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols to access proactively the notional allocation available; and developed country parties to participate in the ninth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund (GEF-9).

On the **GBF Fund**, the COP expresses its appreciation to the GEF for its establishment and operationalization, and notes with appreciation the contributions made to its capitalization. The COP underscores the need to significantly scale up the mobilization of adequate and predictable resources made available to the GBF Fund and invites developed country parties and others to make or increase their contributions. The COP regrets the lack of contributions from the private and financial sectors and others, requesting the GEF and the Council of the GBF Fund to explore ways to enhance resource mobilization. The COP further welcomes the aspirational programming share of 20% by 2030 to support actions by IPLCs, urging the GEF to ensure that projects are implemented in consultation and partnership with IPLCs.

The COP adopts the **four-year outcome-oriented framework of biodiversity programme priorities of the CBD and its Protocols** as the main guidance for GEF-9 and requests the GEF to include in its report information on its responses and how those contribute to the achievement of each GBF target. It encourages the governing bodies of the various biodiversity-related conventions to provide strategic advice concerning national actions that may support cooperation to achieve the CBD objectives, and invites their secretariats to participate in and provide input when developing the inputs of the CBD Secretariat to draft programming directions and policy recommendations for the negotiations for GEF-9.

On **funding needs assessment**, the COP requests the Secretariat to: compile and transmit the information on funding needs received from all eligible developing country parties, in particular LDCs and SIDS, and parties with economies in transition, to the GEF Secretariat and to participants in GEF-9 negotiations; and prepare draft terms of reference for conducting the fifth determination of funding needs for GEF-10 for consideration by the SBI.

The COP adopts **further guidance to the GEF**, annexed to the decision, and requests the SBI to consider, prior to COP 17, draft elements for additional guidance. The COP further requests the GEF to: continue to support partnerships with IPLCs, women, and youth and explore ways to further improve, facilitate access to, and increase direct funding to them; and inform the COP on how it is taking into account the voluntary guidelines on safeguards in biodiversity financing mechanisms.

On the **review of effectiveness of the financial mechanism**, the COP requests the Secretariat to: prepare draft terms of reference for the seventh quadrennial review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism, taking into account the compilation of views annexed to the decision, for consideration by the SBI prior to COP 17; and to commission a study benchmarking the GEF against those financial mechanisms or similar instruments of other MEAs.

The COP further requests the GEF to, among other things:

- continue to strengthen its efforts to mobilize resources to support the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols and, in particular, the GBF;
- further increase flexibility in project cycles for all eligible parties, in particular LDCs and SIDS, further taking into consideration the most environmentally vulnerable countries;
- consider increasing support for sustained programmatic approaches and capacity building;
- continue to enhance country and local ownership;
- further explore modalities to enhance the effectiveness of processes for funding activities under the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols;
- further promote support for IPLCs, ensure that reports to the COP include data related to IPLCs, and ensure the effective engagement of IPLCs, women, and youth in decision making;
- contribute to the implementation of the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach for the GBF;
- enhance efforts to meet all its current reporting requirements;
- explore alternative programming modalities, procedures, and processes for facilitating and expediting access to increased financial resources;
- request its Council to explore ways to enhance equitable geographical representation within and among its constituencies, and invite its Assembly in the context of GEF-9 to consider reforms to its governance structures on the basis of the recommendations by its Council; and

- continue to liaise with the Secretariat of the Green Climate Fund with a view to enhancing collaboration and support for the Convention.

Annex I contains the four-year outcome-oriented framework of biodiversity programme priorities of the CBD and its Protocols for GEF-9, including sections on the objective; elements; strategic considerations; and reporting. It further contains two enclosures with additional elements for the four-year outcome-oriented framework.

Annex II includes additional guidance to the GEF on: biodiversity and health; NBSAPs; the CHM; knowledge management; capacity building and development, technical and scientific cooperation, and technology transfer; the monitoring framework for the GBF; and the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols.

Annex III contains provisions on the assessment of the effectiveness of the GEF and possible elements for its reform.

Appointment of Executive Secretaries: On Thursday, President Muhamad invited an exchange of views on the draft decision on matters related to the appointment of executive secretaries of the Convention ([CBD/COP/16/L.35/Part.B](#)). Discussions focused on a provision related to the length of terms of office for executive secretaries, with bracketed text addressing the possibility for reappointment for one or two additional terms based on performance.

Delegates agreed on the possibility for reappointment of executive secretaries. Some preferred that reappointment is possible for one term, noting this is standard practice across the UN, while others indicated their preference for the possibility of reappointment for two terms, stating that continuity in leadership can ensure stability in the work under the Convention. BRAZIL said the possibility for reappointment should only apply to “future” executive secretaries, noting that the current Executive Secretary was not appointed through the transparent and inclusive process envisaged in the draft decision. SAUDI ARABIA queried who would evaluate the performance of executive secretaries, preferring entrusting the Bureau with this role.

The UK, supported by others, proposed that the term of office for executive secretaries should be three rather than two years, noting this would enable better preparation of, and sharing of knowledge between, COP meetings. INDONESIA, supported by many, stressed that the two-year term of office of executive secretaries was clean text and should not be reopened. Noting that the process envisaged in the draft decision is not common for other MEAs, KENYA sought clarity on how the decision interacts with UN rules and regulations regarding appointments of executive secretaries. President Muhamad invited informal consultations.

In the evening, BELGIUM noted that a potential compromise proposal had been tabled, but the small group had not reached a solution due to lack of time and of clarity on whether the decision challenges UN rules. BRAZIL outlined the compromise proposal, to:

- decide that the term of office for all executive secretaries shall be two years with the possibility of reappointment for one additional term, on the basis of performance;
- delete a provision wherein Bureau members must engage with their constituencies to consider the proposed nomination, noting this will enable the Bureau to undertake consultations in full confidentiality; and
- amend a provision regarding reporting by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Executive Director on the selection of a potential candidate “to the UN Secretary-General on the

discussions in the Bureau, be they consensual or expressing different views. The Bureau will be given one month to consider the information provided to it, in a manner that is consistent with the rules that apply to recruitment processes.”

Following a brief discussion, the proposal was accepted in the spirit of compromise and the draft decision was adopted as amended.

Final Outcome: In the decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.35/Part.B](#)), the COP welcomes the appointment of Astrid Schomaker effective from 1 July 2024; sets a number of conditions to consider itself properly consulted in the appointment process of the CBD Executive Secretary, including for the UNEP Executive Director to report the Bureau’s views to the UN Secretary-General; and decides that the term of office for all executive secretaries shall be two years, with the possibility of reappointment for one additional term, based on performance.

Cooperation: On Thursday, President Muhamad introduced [CBD/COP/16/L.30](#), outlining paragraphs in brackets that require further discussion.

On a preambular paragraph on collaboration between the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and the Science-Policy Interface of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, delegates discussed whether to “stress the need for” or “encourage” further collaboration, as well as whether to retain the entire paragraph.

Many parties, including PAKISTAN, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, MEXICO, CUBA, EGYPT, INDIA, NORWAY, the UK, and others suggested retaining the paragraph. The AFRICAN GROUP, SWITZERLAND, BAHRAIN, and NORWAY expressed flexibility on the introductory verb despite individual preferences, with some, including ARGENTINA, INDIA, and SAUDI ARABIA, preferring “encouraging.” Following discussions, delegates decided to retain the paragraph “encouraging” further collaboration between the aforementioned bodies.

In the evening, a revised draft decision was tabled ([CBD/COP/16/L.30/Rev.1](#)), and the Secretariat outlined the changes made, including:

- deleting provisions highlighting the importance of, and requesting, future collaboration and information sharing with the Agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), noting a similar request is contained in [Decision 16/17](#) (Marine and coastal biodiversity, and island biodiversity);
- lifting the brackets on a provision inviting the FAO and other interested partners to prepare a draft action plan for the implementation of the international initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition in alignment with the GBF, for consideration by SBSTTA before COP 17;
- deleting a provision inviting the Sustainable Ocean Initiative to update its action plan, noting this has already occurred;
- lifting brackets and adding a footnote reference to [UN Environment Assembly resolution 6/8](#) (Promoting sustainable lifestyles) on a provision inviting UNEP to continue its work on the rights of nature;
- lifting brackets on a provision inviting relevant conventions to collaborate with a view to addressing pollution; and
- retaining a provision inviting the CBD Secretariat to collaborate with the secretariats of the Rio Conventions on climate change

issues, which had been bracketed pending the adoption of [decision 16/22](#) (Biodiversity and climate change).

ICELAND, opposed by the RUSSIAN FEDERATION and BRAZIL, called for retaining the provisions on cooperation with the BBNJ Agreement. JAPAN expressed reservations about maintaining the invitation to the FAO to prepare an action plan on biodiversity for food and nutrition. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION, with INDIA, opposed reference to the “future legally binding instrument on plastic pollution” in the context of an invitation to relevant conventions to collaborate toward pollution reduction.

President Muhamad suggested deferring the decision’s consideration to COP 17. BRAZIL, the EU, SWITZERLAND, and ZIMBABWE urged plenary to accept the draft as presented. ARGENTINA preferred deferring discussions.

ICELAND withdrew their suggestion, but the RUSSIAN FEDERATION maintained their opposition to the reference to plastics negotiations. ARGENTINA then proposed: amending the invitation to the FAO to continue its work on biodiversity for food and nutrition; deleting references to the different value and knowledge systems in the context of the invitation to UNEP to continue its work on the rights of nature; and deleting a reference to collaboration with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UN-Water in the context of the 2026 UN Water Conference to Accelerate the Implementation of SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation for all).

SWITZERLAND and the EU accepted the Russian Federation’s amendment. Following a brief discussion on how to proceed with regard to Argentina’s suggestions, plenary decided to adopt the decision as amended by the Russian Federation and Argentina, in the spirit of compromise and to avoid delaying decision making. The COOK ISLANDS put on record their disappointment regarding the deletion of reference to the future treaty on plastic pollution.

Final Outcome: The final decision ([CBD/COP/16/L.30/Rev.1](#)) recognizes the importance of enhancing cooperation and synergies among all relevant conventions, organizations, and initiatives for achieving global biodiversity objectives, as well as the contribution of regional strategies, frameworks, plans, and initiatives to the implementation of the GBF.

In the decision, the COP, among other things, invites UNEP to continue supporting cooperation and collaboration among biodiversity-related conventions and relevant MEAs, and continue its reflections on the rights of nature in the context of the environmental rule of law. It further invites the governing bodies of the chemicals and waste conventions, FAO, and others, to collaborate with the three Rio Conventions on GBF Target 7 (Reduce pollution to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity), and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to develop tools and guidance on a human rights-based approach for implementing the GBF.

Parties are encouraged to, among other things, strengthen cooperation through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, including by strengthening subnational and local governments’ capacities to contribute to the Convention’s implementation. Parties are also invited to implement the international initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition in line with the GBF, and to collaborate with the FAO in preparing an action plan for implementing the initiative.

The COP requests the Secretariat to, among other things, continue collaborating with the secretariats of the Rio Conventions through the Joint Liaison Group, and explore the potential for a joint

programme of work, in line with [decision 16/22](#), to be considered by SBSTTA prior to COP 17.

Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW): On Thursday, the Secretariat announced that the draft decision on the MYPOW of the COP ([CBD/COP/16/L.23](#)) will be deferred to COP 17 due to lack of time. Plenary agreed to the oral proposal by the Secretariat to request the Secretariat, under the guidance of the Bureau, to prepare a list of issues for consideration at COP 17, and to review and update the MYPOW up to 2030 at COP 17.

Nagoya Protocol MOP 5

DSI: On Thursday, NP MOP 5 President Nicholas introduced the draft decision on DSI ([CBD/NP/MOP/5/L.13](#)), which takes note of [COP decision 16/2](#) (DSI). The decision was adopted.

In the evening, SPAIN requested reflecting in the report of the meeting their regret that the final text of decision 16/2 does not fully enable fair and equitable benefit-sharing towards the countries providing the genetic resources that DSI comes from, particularly those that have regulated access in accordance with the CBD provisions.

Final Outcome: In the decision ([CBD/NP/MOP/5/L.13](#)), the MOP takes note of COP decision 16/2 on the modalities for operationalizing the multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism from DSI use, including the Cali Fund.

Closing Plenary

Plenary adopted decisions as noted under the relevant agenda items.

Other Matters: Regarding decisions on the GBF monitoring framework, mechanisms for PMRR, and resource mobilization, ARGENTINA requested reflecting in the report of the meeting: their dissociation from references to the SDGs; their request that references to climate change follow a scientific, evidence-based approach, cautioning against a “dogmatic approach”; and that a “gender” perspective is too narrow, calling for a broader perspective based on “vulnerability,” also applicable to references to IPLC participation, rather than to broader groups of stakeholders.

The DRC suggested holding an additional SBI session to deal with tasks outlined in the decision on resource mobilization. President Muhamad and Executive Secretary Schomaker noted the request would be discussed by the Bureau. FIJI requested reflecting in the meeting’s report their disappointment on not reaching consensus on the MYPOW. TOGO emphasized that work needs to be done on the implications of the multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism from DSI use for the Nagoya Protocol.

Adoption of Reports: Rapporteur Somaly Chan (Cambodia) introduced the meeting reports of NP MOP 5 ([CBD/NP/MOP/5/L.1/Rev.1](#)) and CP MOP 11 ([CBD/CP/MOP/11/L.1/Rev.1](#)), covering the deliberations of the first part of the meetings held in Cali, the silence procedure, and the resumed meeting in Rome, which were adopted. The COP 16 meeting report ([CBD/COP/16/L.1/Rev.1](#)) was adopted with minor amendments to correct factual inaccuracies.

Closing Statements: Regional and negotiating groups and many parties delivered closing statements, applauding the progress made at the meeting. Delegates expressed their appreciation to President Muhamad for her dedication and strategic leadership from Cali to Rome with an extended standing ovation. Thanking participants, CBD Executive Secretary Schomaker noted they “have demonstrated that multilateralism will endure,” and underscored that the adoption of the monitoring framework alongside decisions on PMRR and

resource mobilization provide the means to steer the course towards the “defining task” of GBF implementation.

The GLOBAL YOUTH BIODIVERSITY NETWORK applauded decisions that recognize and support the custodians of biodiversity, and stressed that important gaps remain, including on ensuring direct access to resources for IPLCs, women, and youth. They urged against further delays in implementation, calling for youth’s meaningful engagement in policy processes, and emphasized that the road to making peace with nature “must be rooted in collective action, justice, and reciprocity.” The CBD ALLIANCE emphasized that COP 16 provided significant results for rights holders and biodiversity stewards, sending a “strong signal that multilateralism is as relevant as ever in addressing critical challenges.” They stressed the need for: a dedicated instrument for biodiversity financing with equitable governance and accountable to the COP; increasing financial resources from developed to developing countries and addressing harmful flows for biodiversity, including perverse subsidies; and funding actions of IPLCs, women, and youth, and protecting their rights. The WOMEN’S CAUCUS lamented their participation in COP 16 as silent observers, noting they were not given the opportunity to contribute.

ARMENIA, as host of COP 17, expressed readiness to work in a collaborative and constructive manner to build on COP 16 outcomes. Expressing her appreciation to participants for their commitment and hard work, President Muhamad noted that the road from Cali to Rome “sends a light within dark times,” while NP MOP 5 President Nicholas invited participants to “be the agents of change, collectively and individually.”

The meeting was gaveled to a close at 1:42 am on Friday, 28 February.

A Brief Analysis of the Meeting

Nella politica, come in tutto il resto della vita, per chi non è un balordo, contano quei due principi lì: non farsi mai troppe illusioni e non smettere di credere che ogni cosa che fai potrà servire / In politics, as in every other sphere of life, there are two important principles for a man of any sense: don't cherish too many illusions, and never stop believing that every little bit helps – Italo Calvino

With global biodiversity vanishing at unprecedented rates, the international community celebrated adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) in 2022 as a much-required global policy towards putting nature on a path to recovery. Challenges have increased since then, amid war, heightened nationalism, and unilateralism. As noted, however, by Colombia’s Susana Muhamad, President of the 16th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), “The GBF is a public policy with the power to unite the world, especially in the current divided geopolitical landscape.” The 2024 UN Biodiversity Conference was tasked with spearheading the GBF’s implementation, to move beyond “business as usual” and steer the transformative change needed.

The first part of the conference, held in October 2024 in Cali, Colombia, took important steps in this direction, by giving an impetus to national action through the review of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), establishing a Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and other provisions related to Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), and operationalizing the multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism from use of digital sequence information (DSI) on genetic resources.

The negotiations, however, were abruptly cut due to loss of quorum following difficult negotiations on resource mobilization, and a number of decisions were left pending. On top of resource mobilization and the financial mechanism—two items at the heart of the negotiations—these included decisions on the monitoring framework of the GBF, and mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting, and review (PMRR), including the global review of collective progress toward GBF implementation.

The GBF risks living a life on paper unless it is accompanied by adequate means of implementation, including financial resources, and provisions on monitoring and review, which can promote responsibility and accountability. This brief analysis places the outcomes of the resumed COP meeting in Rome within the broader policy context, arguing that its decisions on resource mobilization and monitoring lay a solid foundation toward the successful implementation of GBF commitments.

Gathering the Winds: Resource Mobilization

Discussions on resource mobilization and the financial mechanism often present serious challenges, which were evident during the first part of COP 16 in Cali and largely led to the meeting’s suspension, following a marathon closing plenary. Prior to the resumed session in Rome, most participants were skeptical about whether additional negotiations could bridge delegates’ divergent views and reach consensus.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) operates as the financial mechanism for the CBD, as well as for the other Rio Conventions. According to CBD Article 39, this operation “shall be on an interim basis, for the period between the entry into force of this Convention and COP 1 or until the COP decides which institutional structure will be designated in accordance with Article 21” (Financial Mechanism). Thirty-two years after the Convention’s entry into force and 31 years since COP 1 in the Bahamas, the COP has not decided on the permanent institutional structure. This is hardly a coincidence. Discussions on the financial mechanism since the Earth Summit in 1992 reflect archetypal dichotomies between the developed and developing world.

Developing country parties’ concerns over the GEF’s *modus operandi* are not new. Twenty-seven years ago, following the first GEF Assembly, developing countries expressed concern about project assignments, calling for a more transparent and participatory approach, and stressing that lack of clear definitions, as a negotiator from India underscored, “leaves huge scope for such assignments being arbitrary and dominated by industrialized nations.”

This meeting’s deliberations provided a vivid illustration of both developing country parties’ grievances and developed country parties’ positions. Developing country parties pointed to the difficulty in accessing GEF funds; the bureaucracy and intricacy embodied in the GEF’s governance structure vis-à-vis provisions for direct access for eligible parties; the complex project cycle, which includes several states of review and approval, including by GEF implementing agencies, that may lead to inefficiencies and delays; lack of equitable, democratic participation in decision-making processes, including project prioritization; and the exclusion of certain eligible parties from GEF funding, such as Iran.

Developed country parties, on the other hand, stressed the importance of an efficient decision-making process, further emphasizing that all project-related activities need to be cost-effective. They systematically rejected the proliferation of funding mechanisms to serve multilateral environmental agreements, and

further pointed to the GEF's evolving contributions, resisting calls for restructuring the financial architecture.

Given the polarized positions, the COP 16 decision on resource mobilization is considered ground-breaking by many delegates, as it establishes a road map with tangible outcomes to permanently determine the institutional structure operating the financial mechanism by COP 19 at the latest. The permanent instrument will need to fulfil a series of criteria, including being under the authority of, and accountable to, the COP, operating within a democratic and transparent system of governance, and being accessible by all eligible parties in a fair, timely, simplified, equitable, inclusive, and non-discriminatory manner. With the jury still out on whether an evolving GEF might fulfil these criteria, the next three COP meetings will be key in future developments—with most delegates expecting difficult negotiations.

Some delegates opined that reaching agreement on the financial mechanism would have been easier if developed country parties honored their commitments to provide financial resources. Bridging the biodiversity finance gap is a recurring theme in CBD discussions. Unfortunately, data shows that significant efforts will be required to come close to the targets set in the GBF and progressively fulfil obligations under the Convention. Donor governments have argued that the requisite financial resources simply do not exist in times of fiscal constraints. More cynical participants, however, pointed to the disproportionate amounts spent on financial flows harmful to biodiversity, including perverse subsidies, stressing that “it is not funds we are missing, but rational prioritization.”

Watching the Currents: Monitoring and Review

While financial matters were undoubtedly at the forefront of delegates' deliberations, the resumed session saw the adoption of other decisions vital to the realization of the GBF's goals and targets: the GBF's monitoring framework, alongside mechanisms for PMRR and the global review of progress in GBF implementation.

The GBF sought to improve upon lessons learned from the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Aichi Targets, and guide implementation by developing a comprehensive set of indicators and standardized reporting templates. Monitoring-related decisions had been extensively negotiated in Cali and consensus was considered within reach. The intersessional period and the resumed COP provided delegates the time, in between difficult negotiations on biodiversity finance, to find pragmatic compromises that would iron out, or at least accommodate, remaining differences. These included divergent views on the methodological maturity and universal applicability of indicators on pesticides and sustainable consumption, which were eventually resolved by enshrining a degree of flexibility. Similarly, flexibility was the key for alleviating concerns about the use of the CBD's Clearing-house Mechanism for greenwashing purposes. Such concerns were expressed during discussions on reporting on commitments by non-state actors, with parties wishing to retain the right to review and reject such commitments.

The monitoring framework and review mechanisms are seen as critical not only to measuring the state of biodiversity and progress towards GBF targets, but also to promoting transparency and accountability for the realization of GBF commitments and across the work of the Convention more broadly. Nevertheless, as delegations and observers remarked, the work on indicators is far from complete. In this respect, some delegates noted that a mechanism for assessing the implementation of commitments, including by states and non-state actors, is still lacking. Youth delegates also lamented the lack of indicators to measure their

participation and contributions, urging their “invisible work to be made visible” and highlighting the challenges they face in meaningfully participating in the work of the Convention and biodiversity conservation more generally.

Steering Course: The Road Ahead

Amidst increased geopolitical divisions and polycrises affecting both people and planet, the need for renewed trust in multilateralism has been urgently signaled across international intergovernmental processes. Discussions during the resumed session of COP 16 were not untouched by these dynamics, as the first two days of meetings saw entrenched party positions and slow progress towards finding common understanding. As the meeting drew nearer to midnight on its third and final day, observers shared their worries that a conclusion might not be reached.

Meanwhile, a small group of negotiators worked for six hours to find solutions on resource mobilization, “locked in a room without much oxygen,” as one noted. The trust assigned by delegates to their colleagues bore fruit, and in a warmly celebrated turn of events, those decisions that underpin the Convention's implementation and future work were adopted by acclamation in the early hours of Friday, 28 February. A seasoned observer opined that the current, turbulent geopolitical climate may in fact have enabled the COP to conclude its work, noting that negotiators “felt the responsibility to show that multilateralism still works.” Most, however, pointed to the inspiring leadership of COP President Susana Muhamad, who, according to one delegate, “showed that the spirit of multilateralism is alive and well.”

The challenges this session encountered are not unique. Several ongoing international processes are also addressing the need to reform and restructure the international financial architecture and international financial institutions (IFIs), and exploring ways of redirecting and aligning financial flows. Finance gaps persist in fulfilling original, often ambitious, commitments, for biodiversity, climate, and development finance, and improving direct access to this finance remains a challenge across the Rio Conventions and IFIs. Negotiating positions at recent talks for establishing a UN convention on international tax cooperation and the preparatory committee for the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development mirrored many of those heard in Rome during the week.

Across the board, the Global South called for removal of barriers to access funds, taking into account the needs and circumstances of the most vulnerable, and for fair, representative, and inclusive governance. Taking shape over the course of the meeting, a unified BRICS position urged promoting access to information, tools, and finance, and to safeguard against potentially discriminatory approaches. Representatives from the Global North, on the other hand, preferred improving existing financial mechanisms and institutions, and called for broadening the donor base and for including the private sector. To that end, the Cali Fund, launched in the margins of the session as part of the multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism from DSI use, promises to leverage funding from companies making use of DSI and allocate it to support GBF implementation, including to Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

As noted by President Muhamad, decisions coming out of COP 16 provide the “arms, legs, and muscles” of the GBF, while the meeting's success signaled a renewed commitment to multilateralism, “sending a light within dark times.” At the same time, to quote Nagoya Protocol MOP 5 President Nneka Nicholas, progress on

implementation at the national level and intersessional developments on the road to COP 17 in Yerevan, Armenia, will show whether the biodiversity community and each delegate will be “the agents of change, collectively and individually.”

Upcoming Meetings

CGRFA 20: The 20th regular session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture will address a range of issues according 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, set to be finalized by ITPGRFA GB 11. **dates:** 1-4 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 **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 SDG 14 (life below water). **dates:** 9-13 June 2025 **location:** Nice, France **www:** sdgs.un.org/conferences/ocean2025

ITPGRFA Working Group on the MLS: The fourteenth 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, set to be finalized by ITPGRFA GB 11. **dates:** 7-11 July 2025 **location:** Peru (TBC) **www:** fao.org/plant-treaty/meetings/en/

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

IUCN World Conservation Congress: Held once every four years, the World Conservation Congress brings together several thousand leaders and decision-makers from government, civil society, Indigenous Peoples, business, and academia, with the goal of conserving the environment and harnessing the solutions nature offers to global challenges. **dates:** 9-15 October 2025 **location:** Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates **www:** iucncongress2025.org

CBD SBSTTA 27: The 27th meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice will address matters of relevance to the implementation of the Convention and the GBF. **dates:** 20-24 October 2025 **location:** Panama City, Panama **www:** cbd.int/meetings

CBD SB8(j) 1: Held back-to-back with SBSTTA 27, the first meeting of the Convention's Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) will address matters related to Indigenous Peoples and local communities. **dates:** 27-30 October 2025 **location:** Panama City, Panama **www:** cbd.int/meetings

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 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:** Lima, 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): COP 17 and Meeting of the Parties to the protocols 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
BBNJ	Marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CHM	Clearing-House Mechanism
COP	Conference of the Parties
CP	Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety
DSI	Digital sequence information
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
GBF	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IPLCs	Indigenous Peoples and local communities
LDCs	Least developed countries
MEAs	Multilateral environmental agreements
MOP	Meeting of the Parties
MYPOW	Multi-Year Programme of Work
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
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SBI	Subsidiary Body on Implementation
SBSTTA	Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice
SB8j	Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions
SIDS	Small island developing states
UNEP	UN Environment Programme