

UN Biodiversity Conference Highlights: Thursday, 31 October 2024

Working Group II considered conference room papers (CRPs) throughout the day. Two contact groups addressed resource mobilization and the financial mechanism, while Presidency consultations were held on resource mobilization and on digital sequence information (DSI). An evening plenary took a vote on the venue of the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 17). Working Group I addressed CRPs late into the night.

Working Group II

(CBD) Multi-Year Programme of Work: Chair Hesiquio Benítez said a CRP compiling relevant inputs, including those of Working Group I, will be prepared.

(CBD) Marine and Coastal Biodiversity: Conservation and Sustainable Use: Delegates resumed consideration of a CRP ([CBD/COP/16/WGII/CRP.8](#)). They had lengthy discussions on bracketed paragraphs and provisions of the annex on gaps and areas in need of additional focus, and agreed that further efforts are needed to: “improve the understanding of the impacts of geoeengineering activities on marine and coastal biodiversity in line with the precautionary approach,” following a proposal by CHINA, amended by CHILE and CANADA; improve understanding of marine biodiversity across mesopelagic, deep-sea, and benthic ecosystems; enhance the use of nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches; and map, monitor, restore, and effectively manage marine and coastal ecosystems that contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. They further agreed on the need to improve integration of the multiple values of biodiversity across marine and coastal areas, and “take effective” measures “at all levels, as appropriate,” to ensure benefit-sharing from marine genetic resources and DSI. On a paragraph on subsidies, delegates accepted language proposed by the RUSSIAN FEDERATION and amended by Chair Benítez to address INDIA’s preference to exclude “subsidies to fisheries,” to identify, understand, and avoid the negative impacts of incentives, in sectors harmful for biodiversity in marine and coastal ecosystems, and to eliminate, phase out, or reform such incentives in line with relevant international obligations. The EU, with BRAZIL and ARGENTINA, proposed referencing in a footnote the World Trade Organization agreements, including the agreement on fisheries subsidies.

On island biodiversity, delegates agreed on the need to enhance the use of ocean accounting and marine spatial planning, and deleted two paragraphs related to biodiversity mainstreaming and maintaining nature’s contributions to people.

On the draft decision, PANAMA proposed, and delegates accepted, requesting the Secretariat to strengthen efforts to prevent

overfishing and illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing to support implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and Sustainable Development Goal 14 (life below water). Delegates debated references to the Agreement on marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement). The RUSSIAN FEDERATION called for the deletion of any mention of the BBNJ Agreement. Consensus was reached to “acknowledge” its adoption. Informal consultations continue on language encouraging signing and pursuing ratification.

(NP) Global Multilateral Benefit-sharing Mechanism: TOGO highlighted the importance of NP Article 10 (Global Multilateral Benefit-Sharing Mechanism), particularly in light of technological developments, and requested action. A CRP will be developed.

(CBD) Diverse Values of Biodiversity: Delegates addressed a CRP ([CBD/COP/16/WGII/CRP.5](#)) on the findings from the [Methodological Assessment Report on the Diverse Values and Valuation of Nature](#) of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). A lengthy discussion took place on a provision encouraging parties toward certain activities, with delegates eventually agreeing on supporting and developing participatory processes to promote various sustainability pathways, as supported by the RUSSIAN FEDERATION and ARGENTINA, and amended by SAUDI ARABIA. BOLIVIA proposed establishing a programme of work on different value systems to examine different world visions and values for implementation. Consultations continued.

(CBD) Scientific and Technical Needs: Delegates addressed a CRP ([CBD/COP/16/WGII/CRP.9](#)). On areas for further work to support GBF implementation, they agreed to the following: biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning; pollution and biodiversity; and sustainable biodiversity-based activities, products, and services that enhance biodiversity. Delegates differed on whether to call for further work on equity, gender equality, and the human rights-based approach. As a compromise, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, the UK, and the EU suggested requesting the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to carry out a study on human rights-based approaches to GBF implementation. This area for further work remained in brackets. BOLIVIA proposed adding different value systems as a new area for further work, which was bracketed. CHILE proposed that work on fungi conservation be considered in the future, and delegates agreed to reflect this in the meeting report. A proposal by ARGENTINA to amend the chapeau by indicating that further work “could” be undertaken on the listed areas, did not resolve differences, and was retained in brackets. The CRP was approved with these amendments and remaining brackets.

IPBES Work Programme: Delegates considered a CRP ([CBD/COP/16/WGII/CRP.11](#)). On rights-based approaches, delegates agreed to a new paragraph, inviting IPBES to “explore ways to raise awareness to include matters related to the human-rights based approach relevant to the work of IPBES.” The CRP was approved with this and other minor amendments.

(CBD) Biodiversity and Climate Change: Delegates considered a CRP ([CBD/COP/16/CRP.10](#)), with bracketed text remaining in the preamble and operative paragraphs. After lengthy deliberations on preambular language stressing the urgency of action on climate change for achieving the GBF and vice versa, delegates agreed to a streamlined proposal by the UK, as amended by NEW ZEALAND, removing reference to emissions reduction and “recognizing that the risks and impacts of climate change on biodiversity will be much lower at the temperature increase of 1.5°C degrees compared with 2°C degrees.” Delegates agreed to preambular language recognizing that biodiversity and ecosystem resilience to climate change “are decreased by actions that may lead to increased risk of adverse climate-related outcomes,” as proposed by CHINA, and deleted references to “adverse adaptation and mitigation” and “maladaptive actions,” over which there was divergence. Discussions will continue.

Contact Groups

Resource Mobilization: The Co-Chairs invited delegates to continue deliberations on a [non-paper](#) containing the revised resource mobilization strategy. Discussions focused on the strategy’s objectives, namely to increase international and domestic biodiversity-related financial flows and resources from all sources. Delegates negotiated relevant actions, including related to: new and additional resources; the elimination, phasing out, or reform of harmful financial flows; and enhancement of accessibility, effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, and accountability in resource provision and use. They focused on, among other things: obligations under Article 20 (Financial Resources); investments by multilateral development banks and other relevant international financial institutions; leveraging international private finance, promoting blended finance, and encouraging the private sector to invest in biodiversity; and improving market access for sustainable biodiversity-based activities.

Financial Mechanism: Delegates made progress, focusing on outstanding issues in the draft decision contained in a [non-paper](#). On provisions related to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), they agreed, among other things, to: request the GEF to consider how to integrate Mother Earth-centric actions in its programming directions; and underscore the importance of providing adequate and predictable support to developing countries for national reports, national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and national biodiversity finance plans or similar instruments.

Regarding the GBF Fund, delegates agreed to underscore the need to significantly scale up the mobilization of adequate and predictable resources made available to the GBF Fund to contribute to the timely implementation of the GBF, in particular for its Target 19 (mobilize USD 200 billion annually for biodiversity). They further agreed to terminology around “developed country parties and other parties which voluntarily assume the obligations of developed country parties,” and regretted the lack of contributions from, among other entities, the private and financial sectors. A lengthy discussion, which did not reach consensus, took place on a reference to a voluntary indicative scale of contributions for the GBF Fund.

Delegates further addressed the four-year outcome-oriented framework of biodiversity programme priorities, agreeing to its adoption as the main guideline for the ninth replenishment period of the GEF (GEF-9). Consensus could not be reached on two provisions requesting the GEF Council to: explore ways of enhancing equitable geographical representation within and between its constituencies; and ensure the effective engagement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women, and youth in decision making given their contribution to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

Delegates agreed to request the Secretariat to prepare draft terms of reference for the seventh review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism for consideration by the sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation and COP 17. The contact group concluded its deliberations, focusing on the preambular paragraphs of the draft decision as well as Annex I containing the four-year framework of programme priorities of the CBD for GEF-9 (2026-2030).

Evening Plenary

Plenary elected new members for the Compliance Committees for the CP and the NP.

COP 17 Venue: Parties voted, in a secret ballot, on the venue of COP 17. Armenia was elected host of COP 17, to be held in 2026, with 65 votes, while Azerbaijan received 58 votes. ARMENIA expressed their appreciation to parties and aspired to “transfer the spirit of Cali to Yerevan.”

Working Group I

Chair Charlotta Sörqvist (Sweden) invited delegates to resume consideration of three CRPs that were parked last week, on the financial mechanism and resources for the CP and NP ([CBD/CP/MOP/11/WGI/CRP.1](#) and [CBD/NP/MOP/5/WGI/CRP.1](#)), and on liability and redress under the Convention ([CBD/COP/16/WGI/CRP.2](#)). She noted that 13 further CRPs have been prepared for the Working Group to address. Deliberations continued into the night.

In The Corridors

Time is running out and energy levels are low, yet negotiations continue forging ahead. The celebratory moment from Wednesday’s adoption of modalities for the modification of descriptions of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas and the description of new ones was short-lived, as focus returned to the many pending items. Many wondered about the decision-making process. While additional meetings resulted in progress in the contact groups on resource mobilization and the financial mechanism, one delegate pointed to the next-door bilateral consultations organized by the Colombian Presidency, noting that “this is where the real negotiations happen.” On DSI, some delegates warn that a potential compromise, while desirable, may mean bargaining for a weaker outcome. “We might have a mechanism, but is a voluntary benefit-sharing mechanism worth sacrificing our sovereign rights to genetic resources and DSI for?” one participant wondered.

Despite the long list of decisions still to be considered, expectations remain high. Winds may yet change, and something may be brewing backstage (and between several hurdles strewn along the corridors). The reappearance of a bat in the negotiation rooms signified, for some participants, the call of nature, and a reminder of what is at stake.

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of the 2024 UN Biodiversity Conference will be available on Monday, 4 November 2024 at enb.iisd.org/un-biodiversity-conference-cbd-cop16