



# 2021



UN environment programme | 50 | 1972-2022



Convention on Biological Diversity

## Highlights

- Pioneered the first virtual negotiations of the Rio Conventions
- Launch of the UN common framework on biodiversity
- The first Biodiversity Pre-COP, hosted by the Government of Colombia, with 5 participating Heads of State and Government
- Held COP 15.1: the first hybrid event in the history of the Convention
- Kunming Biodiversity Fund established + more commitments announced
- Launch of a new platform of the Biosafety Clearing house
- Launch of the long-term vision of the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNDF)



## A Year in Review

2021 was a year of many firsts for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Protocols. With an impressive display of adaptive management, Parties, stakeholders, partners and the Secretariat rose to the occasion, accomplishing a series of great achievements in the face of the unprecedented challenges.

One singular challenge for the CBD's community has been finding effective ways to advance the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF) negotiations and maintain momentum of this critical process, while moving ahead with existing programmes of work, positioning them for a decade of ambition and action. Following informal virtual sessions of SBSTTA and SBI in February and March, the CBD was the first of the Rio Conventions to move ahead with formal virtual negotiations and opened SBSTTA-24 and SBI-3 in May and June, and WG2020-3 in August, in online settings. Despite the many challenges, including different times zones and connectivity problems in some countries, a lot of work was advanced. The online segments of the subsidiary bodies helped the Co-Chairs of WG2020 to successfully prepare the first official draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework prior to the online segment of WG2020-3 and helped advance

other key issues. Among others, draft strategies for capacity-building, resource mobilization and for an enhanced framework for monitoring and review of progress in implementation were advanced. General support for the content and approach of the draft post-2020 global biodiversity framework, including its goals and targets, was made evident and key proposals for adjustment and differences of opinion have also been made clear. Strong foundations have been laid for SBSTTA, SBI and WG2020 to complete their work when they reconvene, in-person, in early 2022.

To address urgent issues, including the adoption of an interim budget for 2022 and to build political momentum for the adoption of a strong post-2020 global biodiversity framework, the first part of the UN Biodiversity Conference was convened in a hybrid modality in October 2021. The High-Level Segment (HLS) witnessed the adoption of the Ministerial Kunming Declaration and an announcement by President Xi Jinping of the Kunming Biodiversity Fund with a 1.5 billion yuan



commitment (about \$230 million USD). Other significant pledges were made during the HLS, including a new 17 million USD pledge by Japan for the extension to a second phase of the Japan Biodiversity Fund (JBF) and a commitment by France to dedicate 30% of its climate funds to biodiversity, among many other commitments and pledges made by UN organizations, business and non-governmental organizations. This was

## More Highlights...

- “We’re part of the solution” - 2021 International Day for Biological Diversity slogan
- Launched **two** new online tools: Statement upload tool and the Virtual Display Table
- New **portal** created for the Sharm El-Sheikh to Kunming Action Agenda for Nature and People
- Drafted the post-2020 **GBF monitoring framework** for Parties’ consideration
- Major **stakeholder** engagement in the CBD process and especially in the post-2020 GBF
- Role of **biodiversity and ecosystem** based approaches **highlighted** at COP26
- Extensive traditional and social media coverage of COP 15 in **almost all countries**



followed by other key announcements made during UNFCCC’s COP 26 including a doubling of the United Kingdom’s international Climate Finance where at least £3 billion of that will be invested in nature and nature-based solutions, land and sea, and the European Union announcing a €1 billion pledge to protect, restore and sustainably manage forests worldwide.

In parallel to these efforts, the Secretariat was busy with its existing programmes of work. It maintained and strengthened engagement of critical partners, contributed to ongoing biodiversity mainstreaming in diverse sectors by completing major activities and events including the EMG Nexus Dialogue on Gender and Biodiversity; the Global Thematic Dialogue for IPLCs; the meeting of the Sustainable Oceans Initiative, and the Business and Biodiversity week held after COP-15.1; the Edinburgh Declaration concerning the commitment of subnational and local authorities to biodiversity objectives and the GBF; and workshops with the finance sector and establishment of the Taskforce of Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) which has enormously contributed to raising awareness of the finance community on impact, dependencies and opportunities of their activities on biodiversity, among others.

Moreover, as the COVID-19 pandemic reminded us of the intricate linkages between the health of the planet and the health of the people, as well as the linkages between biodiversity and emerging infectious diseases, the Secretariat continued to support the uptake of One Health approaches that recognize the benefits of biodiversity for the health of all living beings. Similarly, the Secretariat continued to

“2021 has been no easy feat, yet we have accomplished so much despite so many challenges”

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary,  
Convention on Biological Diversity

build on the work it has undertaken with its partners over the past decade on the intricate linkages between biodiversity and climate change, which was rewarded with a strong focus on nature and nature-based solutions to climate change at UNFCCC’s COP 26. Biodiversity received more prominence in the climate agenda than ever in the history of climate negotiations resulting in the recognition of the need to protect, conserve and restore nature and ecosystems, and more than 100 countries pledging to halt and reverse deforestation, pledging \$19.2 billion to this end.

Regarding the Cartagena Protocol, a new and improved Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) platform was developed and launched to assist Parties in implementing the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The BCH was first established almost 20 years ago, hence upgrading it to a modern platform with greater functionality has been a key milestone. In addition, the Secretariat is now part of the UN Biorisk group, which will not only provide advice to the UN Secretary General on these issues but will enable us to mainstream the importance of biorisk in relation to biological diversity. In addition, a Study on Financial Security Mechanisms under the Nagoya – Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress (NKLSP) was released.



2020 UN BIODIVERSITY CONFERENCE  
COP 15 - CP/MOP10 - NP/MOP4  
Ecological Civilization-Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth  
KUNMING-CHINA

The Secretariat also strengthened its work on capacity development, technical and scientific cooperation and knowledge management. Thus, a total of 16 new technical and scientific cooperation projects, involving partners in 40 countries, were launched with the support of the Bio-Bridge Initiative. In addition, new collaborative partnerships on capacity development were initiated with the University of Cambridge Conservation Leadership Programme, FAO e Learning Academy, IUCN-PANORAMA, University of Massachusetts Boston, UNFCCC, UNCCD and UNDESA.

Virtual technologies were enhanced through further development of the Kronos registration system and refinement of its interoperability with Interactio to streamline the registration process. Two new tools, the statement upload tool and the virtual display table were developed and integrated into the meetings support platform to increase efficiency and transparency of the online meetings. In addition, the Secretariat facilitated holistic and integrated clearing-house mechanisms of the Convention by merging them within one coherent and integrated system with joint modalities of operation, including the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House (ABSCH) and the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH).

Cooperation with UN and other international organizations was enhanced to support biodiversity mainstreaming and to facilitate their effective engagement in CBD processes and in the development of the post-2020 GBF. Stakeholders and IPLCs were supported to ensure their effective engagement in key meetings and processes, and were mobilized to promote biodiversity, including through the Global Youth Biodiversity Network and other youth initiatives, and the Global Partnership on Subnational and Local Action for Biodiversity and its Advisory Committees. FAO convened a summit to engage ministers from the food and agriculture sectors in the preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. An online forum on the Action Agenda/Biosafety also took place, inspiring action of non-state actors towards issues related to biosafety and protection of biodiversity. The Secretariat also worked closely with the secretariats of other conventions, including through the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions and the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions. It facilitated the strong participation of biodiversity-related conventions in the CBD processes and contributed to discussions that will enable the alignment of the strategic plans of these MEAs with the GBF when adopted.

Two more Parties joined the Nagoya Protocol making 132 Parties that have ratified/acceded to it. Formal and informal discussions on digital sequence information (DSI) were intensified by both Parties and other stakeholders.

Last but not least, great achievements were made on the communications front, including through the media results of COP 15. Traditional media coverage was seen in almost all countries of the world and the potential reach of social media was in the billions. More than 157,000 followers were gained across all CBD social media channels.

## Prospects for 2022

In appreciating the great milestones and achievements realized this year, it remains important to look forward and prepare for the equally busy 2022 that lies ahead. This will include servicing the in-person meetings of the two subsidiary bodies of the Convention and WG2020; preparing and holding the second part of COP 15 and COP/MOPs in person; and adopting an ambitious and robust post-2020 global biodiversity framework. But despite the uncertainty of the ongoing pandemic, with the dedication, resilience and commitment that characterizes the CBD community, we are confident we will accomplish with successes the great work planned for 2022 and leave a historic mark in the biodiversity agenda!

## The Year in Numbers

- **3** major virtual/hybrid events serviced
- **Record number** of registered delegates (1419 for SBSTTA-24/ 1024 for SBI-3/ 1688 for WG2020-3)
- **39** webinars/online workshops held
- **35** meetings of the COP Bureau
- **125** participating Ministers in the HLS of COP15.1
- **16** new technical and scientific cooperation projects
- Gained over **157,000** followers across social media
- **132** ratifications/accessions to the Nagoya Protocol

