



Meeting of the Bureau of the CST 14

Date: Wednesday, 6 April 2022

Time: 16:00 – 18:00 (CEST)

Working language: English

Virtual Platform: Zoom

- Minutes of the CST Bureau meeting -

1. The Chair of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), Mr. Bongani Simon Masuku opened the meeting and welcomed all participants (see Annex I).

2. On behalf of the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, the Chief of the Science, Technology, and Innovation Unit (STI), Mr. Johns Muleso Kharika, welcomed all participants to the well-timed meeting of the CST Bureau in the run up to the 15th session of the Committee of the Science and Technology (CST 15) that will be held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 11–13 May 2022. He highlighted the COP 15 theme, 'Land. Life. Legacy: From scarcity to prosperity', is a call to action to ensure land, the lifeline on this planet, continues to benefit present and future generations, as well as the fundamental role of science for successful and effective actions.

3. In view of preparing for the CST 15, the Chief of the STI acknowledged the work of the Bureau members, serving as both the CST Bureau and the Science-Policy Interface (SPI), ensured the SPI outcomes and contributions to the CST 15 are actionable policy-oriented recommendations to be considered for COP decisions. He also noted the important role of the CST Bureau in bridging science and policy, nurturing forward in a positive way the process of negotiations during CST 15 session. Recalling the availability of the secretariat in providing support to the work of the Bureau, he wished the Bureau members a successful meeting.

4. An overview of matters discussed, and decisions taken by the Bureau are presented below.

Segment 1 (open to the CST Bureau and the secretariat)

I. Adoption of the agenda

5. Following an introduction of the agenda items by the Chair of the CST, the provisional agenda was adopted without amendments.

II. Update on the COP Bureau Meeting of 17 March 2022

6. The Secretary of the CST, Ms. Xiaoxia Jia, provided an update on the outcomes of the eighth intersessional COP 14 Bureau meeting held virtually on 17 March 2022, which addressed:



- a. The status of preparations for COP 15, including the COVID-19 protocol, the High-Level Segment and Head of States Summit, and the forthcoming third mission on security.
- b. Options and implications of the scheduling of COP 16, including the implications to the CST and SPI related work. The options presented were: i) COP 16 in late 2023; ii) COP 16 in 2024. These two options were in accordance with the article 22 of the Convention. The decision on the venue and date of COP 16 will be taken during COP 15.

7. The CST Chair gave further information on the discussion that took place during the COP 14 Bureau meeting held on 17 March, and the implications of the two options for COP 16 schedule for the work of the CST and the SPI. The Chair invited members to consider that the scenario of having COP 16 in 2024 might imply having a special COP to discuss the budget for 2024-2025, which requires additional costs. The Chair then opened the floor for comments.

8. A CST Bureau member expressed preference for the first option (2023) but expressed concern for how this timing might impact the work of SPI. Based on these concerns, the SPI co-chair, The SPI co-Chair was then asked to comment on possible challenges associated with implementing the SPI work programme in a shorter time frame. The SPI co-Chair explained that, based on past experience in the biennium, at least 18 months are necessary for the SPI work programme to complete its work. The Chief of the STI invited the CST Bureau members to also consider the options (COP 16 in late 2023 or in 2024) and their possible impacts on the UNCCD National reporting processes.

Segment 2 (open to the CST Bureau, the secretariat and, on invitation, SPI independent scientist and co-Chair)

III. Organization of the CST 15 session

9. The CST Chair opened the segment and welcomed the SPI independent scientist and co-Chair, Ms. Nichole Barger.

10. The CST Secretary provided an overview of the mandate of the CST and COP 14 requests concerning the organization of CST 15, and provided more detail on specific organization matters relevant to the CST 15, including:

- a. **CST and SPI logistic arrangements**, including i) travel arrangements for Science Technology Correspondents (STCs) as well as SPI members all scheduled to arrive one day before the opening of CST 15/COP 15 and to depart after the Science Day (14 May 2022); ii) travel arrangements for the CST Bureau members scheduled to arrive one day before regional meetings, departing at the end of the COP 15; ii) provision of meeting room, office and other facilities for the CST Bureau and the SPI.
- b. **Key roles and responsibilities of the CST Bureau members and the SPI**, including i) the role of CST Bureau in overseeing the organization of the CST sessions and any procedural matters of the CST, ii) the role of the Chair of the CST in



advancing the agenda items and facilitating plenary discussion and the thematic dialogue of the parties with SPI, appointment of the contact group facilitator based on regional consultations, and coordinating for adoption of the CST report including draft decisions for COP 15 consideration, the rapporteur served by a vice CST Chair, iii) the election of the Vice Chairs at the final meeting of the CST 15 session and the election of the Chair of the CST at final meeting of the COP 15, iii) the role of the SPI during CST 15, including assisting in the organization of the thematic dialogue, identifying SPI speakers to present the outcomes of the SPI in the CST plenary, and serving as resources persons supporting the CST contact group negotiations and potentially other events on request.

c. **Plans and schedule of work of CST 15**, covering *the CST 15 plenary sessions* (11 to 13 May 2022), ii) *the CST Bureau meetings* (7-13 May 2022), *the CST contact group* (11 to 13 May 2022), *the joint CST 15/CRIC 20 contact group* (12 May 2022), and *the Rio Conventions Pavilion Science Day* organized by the SPI (14 May 2022). The CST Bureau will meet initially on 7 May 2022, 14:00-15:00 pm, with the option of daily meetings thereafter from at 13:00-14:00 pm through to 13 May 2022. The CST Bureau meeting(s) during COP 15 will focus on final preparations of CST 15, the process of negotiation, and the transition to the newly elected CST 15 Bureau. If scheduling permits, the anticipated future members of the incoming CST 16 Bureau will be invited to attend the 13 May 2022 meeting, and if not, a virtual informal meeting of both the incoming CST 16 Bureau members and the outgoing CST 15 Bureau members will be arranged following COP 15 by the secretariat. The CST contact group will be established at the end of the first session of the CST 15 plenary on 11 May and continue to meet through 13 May 2022, as needed. A CST-CRIC joint contact group will be established following at the end of the first plenary session of CRIC 20 in the morning of 12 May 2022 and convene its meeting right after the CST 15 plenary in the afternoon of 12 May.

11. The CST Chair noted that, during COP 15, the CST will have overall two and a half days to conduct its work and compete negotiations. Considering that the CST contact group is also foreseen to start work on the evening of 11 May 2022 and will have limited time for negotiations, the Chair asked for clarification on the appointment of the contact group facilitator.

12. The secretariat clarified that candidates to serve as the facilitator of the CST contact group should be nominated based on by the regional groups and eventually appointed by the Chair of the CST in the CST Plenary. In the extreme case that there are no candidates, then the CST Chair can facilitate the CST contact group.

13. The secretariat explained that, in addition to the CST contact group working through to 13 May 2022, there will also be a joint CST-CRIC contact group foreseen for 12 May 2022. The outputs of both contact groups will be considered in the final session of the CST plenary on 13 May 2022, which will be focused on adoption of the report of the CST and the submission of its draft recommendations to the COP for final consideration and adoption.



14. A CST Bureau member suggested that all regional groups be invited to identify and propose candidate CST contact group facilitators during the regional consultations that will take place on 7 and 8 May 2022 ahead of the COP 15. The CST Chair acknowledged the proposal to have a pool of candidates for the role of facilitator as early as possible.

IV. Update on Science Day

15. Following a brief introduction by the Lead Scientist, the SPI independent scientist co-Chair provided a presentation on preparations made by and SPI Organizing Committee for Science Day, which will take place on Saturday, 14 May 2022, at the Rio Pavilion, the day after closing of the CST 15. She explained that the Science Day will focus on two overarching themes: land restoration and drought. It was expressed that the Organizing Committee is engaged in finalizing the list of speakers, confirming the participation of a prominent journalist to serve as a moderator, confirming the virtual logistics necessary to engage a graphic recorder, developing promotional material for the event, and ensuring adequate interaction with youth and press.

16. The Bureau discussed the logistical, procedural, and financial challenges that might impede the participation of some potential speakers proposed for Science Day. The SPI co-Chair clarified that these challenges had been considered by the COP 15 Organizing Committee, and while the list of speakers invited is not finalized yet, at present, all these challenges had been addressed for planned speakers.

17. Two CST Bureau members requested clarification on DSA coverage for the participation of STCs at COP 15. The secretariat clarified that, based on the information received from the Administration Unit of the UNCCD, STCs could plan to travel with arrival one day before the beginning of the COP (8 May 2022), and departure after Science Day on 14 May 2022.

- The secretariat explained that CST Bureau members will be needed through COP 15 and thus should plan on participating until May 2022. With respect to funding, those coming from a developing country will be covered by DSA until the same date. Those CST Bureau members serve as STCs, if not coming from a developing country, are requested to fund the costs for staying after the 14 May 2022 on their own.
- The secretariat clarified that SPI members who are not CST Bureau members and not representing observer organizations will have DSA coverage between 9 and 14 May 2022.
- The secretariat will provide support to SPI members for the booking of the flights, while hotels must be arranged by members themselves.

V. Insights on SPI modalities

18. The Chief of the STI unit of the secretariat was requested by the CST Chair to introduce the background of the agenda item V. He explained that both agenda items would focus on (a) governance issues, (b) the upcoming transition of the SPI and (c) the proposed evaluation of the SPI for COP 16.



19. Following past practices, the SPI co-Chair was asked to provide her preliminary insights, pending a more comprehensive report to be submitted after COP 15, on SPI modalities, with particular focus on issues related to (a) SPI governance, and (b) the upcoming SPI transition and renewal after COP 15, based on past experiences.
20. The SPI co-Chair gave an overview of the experiences/lessons learnt in the SPI working modalities, presenting among other things, (i) the Early Career Scientist Fellowship Programme; and (ii) the SPI governance, focusing on the election of the SPI co-Chair and adherence of SPI members to the Terms of Reference, Code of Conduct and Communication Strategy.
21. The SPI co-Chair reported on the successful piloting of the Early Career Scientist Fellowship Programme, noting with appreciation the excellent contributions of the two fellows over the biennium. She noted that despite only one opportunity for face-to-face interaction, both fellows made significant contributions to the work of the SPI.
22. The SPI co-Chair acknowledged the support the secretariat provided to the SPI co-Chairs when requested to help them respond to SPI governance challenges. She acknowledged the amount of effort of all involved in responding to these challenges and noted with appreciation the support always provided by the secretariat, itself impacted by these challenges.
23. The CST Chair thanked the SPI co-Chair and the secretariat for their participation in the meeting thus far and gave them leave to depart for the next segment. The SPI co-Chair and the secretariat staff left the meeting accordingly.

Segment 3 (closed to all but CST Bureau members)

VI. Pathways forward for the SPI: Governance, transition, evaluation

24. The CST Bureau proceeded with the third segment of the meeting in a closed format.
25. At the end of the closed segment, the CST Chair invited the secretariat back into the meeting. He reported that the agenda item was discussed with an emerging consensus on the issue(s) discussed. The Chair also mentioned that further consultations were to follow among the CST Bureau members and that the secretariat would be informed in due course through the Chief of the STI.

Segment 4

VII. Any other business

26. No other matters were discussed.
27. Before the closing meeting, the CST Chair asked the Chief of the STI to make final remarks. On behalf of the Executive Secretary, he expressed profound thanks to the excellent steering role that the CST Bureau performed during one of the most difficult times of the modern era due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. He expressed that, in his view, the Parties of the UNCCD would be very pleased to see that all efforts were made to ensure that the SPI work



programme as well as the CST work programme were discharged despite the not so conducive environment. He wished the Bureau members all the best for COP 15 and after they ceased to be in the CST Bureau.

28. Finally, the CST Chair thanked all the Bureau members for attending and their valuable contributions throughout the biennium. He then thanked the Secretariat for their ongoing support and closed the meeting.



Annex I – List of Participants

COUNTRY

Bongani Simon Masuku
(CST Chair)

Raja Muhammad Omer
(CST Vice-Chair)

Pablo Viegas
(CST Vice-Chair)

Anna Luise
(CST Vice-Chair)

REGION

Africa Group

Asia Group

Group of Latin America
and the Caribbean

Western Europe and
Other Groups

UNCCD SPI

Nichole Barger co-chair of the SPI, Regional scientist (USA)

UNCCD Secretariat

Johns Muleso Kharika

Barron Joseph Orr

Xiaoxia Jia

Furkan Dosdogru

Lawrencia Eposi

Vittoria Semplici



Annex II - Provisional Agenda

Meeting of the Bureau of the CST 14

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Bureau CST 14

Item I

- Provisional Agenda -

Segment 1 (closed)

- I. Adoption of the agenda (CST Chair)
- II. Update on the COP Bureau Meeting of 17 March 2022 (secretariat)

Segment 2 (open on invitation to the SPI co-Chair)

- III. Organization of the CST 15 session (secretariat)
- IV. Update on Science Day (SPI co-Chair)
- V. Insights on SPI modalities (SPI co-Chair)

Segment 3 (closed)

- VI. Pathways forward for the SPI: governance, transition, evaluation (CST Chair)
- VII. Any other business (CST Chair)