



Meeting of the CST Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology

Date: Wednesday, 11 September 2019
Venue: Expo Center and Mart, Greater Noida,
New Delhi, India
Meeting Room: MET-05

Working language: English
Working hours: 16:00 – 17:30

- REPORT -

I. Introduction and welcome

The acting chair of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) opened the meeting and welcomed all participants. The meeting was attended by the CST14 Bureau members. The CST15 Bureau Members and the SPI Co-Chair, Mrs. Mariam Akhtar-Schuster, joined the meeting as the respective agenda items were discussed. The meeting was a stock taken one and focused mostly on lessons learnt.

II. Adoption of the Agenda

After item I and the presentation of the provisional agenda by the Acting CST Chair, the agenda was adopted (Annex II).

III. Brief Meeting with incoming CST14 Bureau Members¹

The CST14 members who were available were invited to the meeting (Ms. Karma Dema Dorji, representing Asia region and Ms. Anna Luise representing Western Europe and Other Groups; Mr. Ratko Ristic representing Central Eastern Europe and Pablo Viegas representing Latin America and the Caribbeans were unavailable as they had left the COP conference).

The chair welcomed them and indicated that the meeting with them was to have an informal dialogue. Ms. Karma Dema Dorji and Anna Luise introduced themselves. They shared their experience on the Convention and asked a few questions on the work of the Bureau. They indicated that they were inspired by the achievement of the CST13 Bureau and

¹ Elected members (Ms. Karma Dema Dorji - Asia, Mr. Ratko Ristic -CEE, Mr. Pablo Viegas - LAC & Ms. Anna Luise – WEOG) will invited to attend this segment.



the Science-Policy Interface. They hoped to be able to rise to the occasion and maintain the high standard set by the outgoing team. CST13 Bureau members thanked them for responding to their invitation and then shared their experiences over the past biennium and responded to questions the CST 14 Bureau members raised.

The CST13 Bureau highlighted the need for the Bureau members to bring the policy angle to the work of the SPI in order to help ensure that scientific assessments result in policy-relevant key messages and proposals at CST 15.

IV. Discussion of CST Negotiations (L-Decisions) and Plenary of COP14

The CST Contact Group negotiations and the CST14 Plenary were discussed. It was acknowledged that Parties had access to the relevant documents rather late. However, the Bureau members expressed satisfaction that the SPI was able to support the secretariat in communicating their results through the design, content and delivery of their presentations during Plenary prior to the contact group negotiations. Feedback they received in regional meetings indicated these presentations were very helpful to Parties. The presentations enabled Parties to have a good understanding of the issues captured in the official documents regarding objective 1, 2 and the Coordination activities relating to the SPI work programme 2018-2019.

All CST Bureau members present were actively involved in the contact group discussions and their knowledge of the content of the documents was very supportive and helped Parties adhere to the findings of the SPI captured in the official documents. The Bureau was happy that all regions and interest groups came well prepared with their positions on draft decisions and proposed wording of draft decisions which they felt required amendment or reformulation. However, it was also noted that several of the Parties did not actively engage in the negotiations. The Bureau thought that this could be due either to their comfort with the original draft text for negotiations, though another possibility raised was that some might not have been fully conversant with the issues in the official documents. In the regional groups, there were concerns raised about limited time between NFPs and STCs to discuss the essence of the draft negotiated texts for some Parties. The CST 13 Bureau was of the view that regional group preparatory meetings prior to the COP, as was done by the Africa Group, is necessary for effective negotiations.

The meeting was informed that the regional groups, apart from the Africa Group which had their preparatory meeting with funds provided by the African Union and the South African Government, were unable to hold preparatory meetings due to lack of funding. The secretariat explained that funding for stand-alone regional preparatory meetings was not a core budget activity of the secretariat hence the CST Bureau recommended that regional groups should make effort to source funding for preparatory meetings.

The Bureau thought that sending official documents to Parties earlier would enable them to study the documents and be more informed about the issues. The CST Bureau members who represent their regions should, in future, facilitate the process by establishing



strong links with their constituents to enable them access the official documents ahead of the COP.

The CST13 was of the view that bringing the STCs to COP earlier and providing an extra day for CST contact groups would ensure all negotiators have the opportunity to discuss the recommendations to be negotiated at the same time, which will enhance the quality of negotiations and its outcomes.

V. Discussion of CST Bureau Work- lessons learnt and recommendations.

The CST 13 Bureau members identified some challenges encountered during their work for the outgoing biennium namely:

- The CST Bureau members recounted the significant support and cooperation rendered to them by the secretariat in performing their duty; they expressed their full of appreciation. The renewal of the SPI, the formation of working groups for SPI objectives and coordination activities, the initial SPI meeting and the development of concept notes for the execution of each SPI objective went smoothly during the first months of the biennium.
- However, one very serious challenge encountered was the subsequent delay in getting the working groups to start the actual work under the various objectives of the SPI work programme. This was attributed to the challenges the SPI had in obtaining approval for funding their proposed activities, which led to delays of 6 to 9 months. While the SPI worked during this period without previously planned meetings and the support of subject matter experts (e.g., consultants that would prepare key background papers), these significant delays increased the pressure on all SPI members and observers (all of whom are volunteers), and it was reported that this almost led to the resignation of several co-leads who were concerned that the quality of the work of the SPI might be compromised. The problem was eventually solved by narrowing the scope of planned work – but it is clear the SPI, in future, must have the confidence that funds that, within allocated funds for their activities, they can propose the specific activities necessary to achieve their objectives and these will be funded from the outset.
- CST Bureau members noted that there was a perception from certain regions that the work of the SPI was not as open and accessible to Parties during the biennium as may have been desired. In most cases, due to the highly compressed work schedule, the first real opportunity to consider the work of the SPI was when it was completed. As a result, Parties did not have the chance to provide inputs although the COP Bureau Members were provided with draft for review and comments. It was proposed that this could be addressed through more systematic communication between the secretariat and the CST Bureau on key milestones followed by communication from Bureau members to the NFPs and STCs in their respective regional groups.



The lessons learnt:

- Recognizing early the diversity in perception and expertise was very important in maintaining cohesion in the team;
- Leveraging the unique strengths of each member enabled the team to achieve much within the limited time available;
- Working together and staying in touch on a continuous basis and providing continuous feedback between the Secretariat and the bureau members kept team focused on the assignments and provided the necessary support for the SPI to complete its tasks;
- The team members worked for each other with the understanding that achieving success meant glory for all;
- Sharing challenges encountered by individuals enabled mutual solutions to be found.

VI. Discussion on SPI – Follow up recommendations²

The CST Bureau members discussed and exchanged some ideas with the SPI Co-Chair. She commended both the SPI and the Bureau for their fantastic work and the technical support received from the Secretariat. The discussion centered on two aspects of the SPI, work namely procedural matters and technical issues:

- *Procedural matters:* The arrangement to have two co-Chairs (the independent scientist and the CST Bureau Chair) visibly driving and coordinating the work of the SPI should be maintained with a common identity behind the SPI process.
- *Substantive scientific aspects:* Future calls of SPI should continue to be based on a set of strong criteria should be used to select experts who would be able to commit enough time to its work. These include:
 - High level of scientific excellence;
 - International experience, and ideally, experience with intergovernmental processes. Most preferably, this would include having worked on science-policy interfaces and clear experience of experience linking science and policy;
 - High proficiency in English, the working language of the SPI;
 - Clear evidence of interdisciplinary expertise and experience, including social science, economics, gender expertise, capacity building.
 - Expertise in the domains needed to meet the specific SPI work programme objectives identified in the related COP decision.

² The current independent scientist SPI co-Chair (Mariam Akhtar-Schuster) was invited to attend this segment



The lessons learnt:

- The working structure of having 2 co-leads per working groups was a good one and should be maintained. The addition of a designated advisor from one of the observer organizations was also effective.
- Future calls for SPI members and observer organizations should include information that the work is voluntary, and no remuneration should be expected. The amount of time required of the expert should also be specified (e.g, 20%).
- Clarity in the process for obtaining approval for funding SPI activities is essential, so that work can begin very soon after concept notes are produced.
- The variability in effort among SPI members was voiced as a concern, and the co-Chairs should establish a stock-taking on a periodic basis so that any lack of contribution can be addressed, as outlined in the SPI terms of reference.

VII. **Any other business**

The CST Bureau and the secretariat should consider a proposal made by SPI members to set up a fellowship programme young scientists to serve as contributing authors to SPI work. The notion of contributing authors could extend beyond this to specialized subject matter experts that might be interested in contributing background papers or other support to the SPI.

The COP 14 Rio Conventions Pavilion “Science Day” was viewed as a tremendous success, both by the participants of this well-attended event, and by feedback received from the regional groups. The secretariat should evaluate this and consider a proposal from the CST Bureau that the event become standard to future COPs. However, if this is considered, the Bureau emphasized that the key to success was that it was designed, organized and executed by the SPI in close collaboration with the secretariat communications team – both elements working together was viewed as the reason this event was so successful. If it is made standard, consideration to the possibility of running it not in parallel with Plenary or negotiations so that more representatives from delegations can participate.

The CST Bureau recommends careful consideration be given to the proposal made by Egypt in the plenary to have the STCs arrive at the COP at the same time as NFPs so that they can participate in the initial preparatory meetings when the CST documents are presented and discussed in detail.

The CST Bureau appreciated the work done by Prof. Matti Numellin, Facilitator of the CST14 contact group and recommend that the secretariat writes officially to thank him.

The CST Bureau also acknowledges the immense support of the secretariat for their work in the biennium.



ANNEX I – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

CST13 BUREAU MEMBERS		
Mr. Carl Kojo Fiati (CST-Vice Chair)	Africa Group	Environmental Protection Agency Accra- Ghana Tel: +(233) 302 664697/8 Fax: +(233) 302 662690 Email: carl.fiati@epa.gov.gh; cfiati@hotmail.com
Mr. German Kust (CST-Vice Chair)	Central and Eastern Europe Group	Institute of Geography Russian Academy of Sciences 119017 Staromonetnyi pereulok 29 Moscow - Russia Email: gkust@yandex.com, gskust@gmail.com
Ms. María Angélica Fernández García (CST-Vice Chair)	Group of Latin America and the Caribbean	Subdirección de Ecosistemas e Información Ambiental Instituto de Hidrología, Meteorología y Estudios Ambientales Bogotá - Colombia Tel: +(57)1 3323400 E-Mail: mafernandez@ideam.gov.co fernandez.mariaangelica@gamil.com
Mr. Ahmet Senyaz (CST-Vice Chair)	Western Europe and Other Groups	FAO-Turkey Forestry Partnership Programme (FTFP) Sub-regional Office for Central Asia (FAO-SEC) Ivedik Caddesi No: 55 06170 Ankara - Turkey Tel: +90-312-307 95 80 Email: Ahmet.Senyaz@fao.org; asenyaz@ormansu.gov.tr
INCOMING CST14 BUREAU MEMBERS		
Ms. Karma Dema Dorji (CST-Vice Chair)	Asia Group	National Soil Services Centre (NSSC) Ministry of Agriculture and Forests Thimphu - Bhutan Tel : +975 -2-351182 ; Fax : +975-2-351038 Email: kddorji@gmail.com; kddorji@moaf.gov.bt
Ms. Anna Luise (CST-Vice Chair)	Western Europe and Other Groups	Institute for Environmental protection and Research (ISRPA) Via Cesare Pavese 305 00144 Rome - Italy Tel: +393489051281; Fax: +390650072657 Email: anna.luise@isprambiente.it; nnaluseit@yahoo.it
UNCCD SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACE (SPI)		
Ms. Mariam Akhtar-Schuster (Co-Chair)	Science-Policy Interface	Project Management Agency German Aerospace Center (PT-DLR) Rosa-Luxemburg-Strasse 2 10179 Berlin - Germany Tel: +49 30670557911 Email: mariam.akhtar-schuster@dlr.de



ANNEX II – AGENDA

Date: 12 September 2019

Venue: Expo Center and Mart, Greater Noida,
New Delhi, India
Meeting Room: MET-05

Working languages: English
Working hours: 14:30 – 16:30

DRAFT AGENDA

- I. Welcome address
- II. Adoption of the agenda
- III. Brief Meeting with incoming CST14 Bureau Members
- IV. Discussion of CST Negotiations (L-Decisions) and Plenary of COP14
- V. Discussion of COP14 CST Bureau Work- lessons learnt and Recommendations.
- VI. Discussion on SPI – Follow up recommendations
- VII. Any other Business