

Statement by Third World Network

Informal Session in Preparation for the Third Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation 8–14 March 2021

Agenda item 10: Review of the effectiveness of the processes under the Convention and its Protocols

Thank you, Chair.

The pandemic has brought to the forefront the issue of equity. A case in point is the current inequitable access to COVID vaccines and other therapies for developing countries, a situation that may well prolong the pandemic and further delay face-to-face meetings.

Despite the inability to meet physically, much can still be done to address the biodiversity crisis. The pandemic must not be used as an excuse to avoid existing obligations under the CBD and its Protocols, which Parties can and must still implement.

In the efforts to conclude the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, we need to ensure that the both the process and outcomes are equitable and balanced.

The pressure to convene formal virtual negotiations in the midst of multiple crises affecting developing countries may exacerbate inequity. Formal virtual negotiations will likely disadvantage developing countries, which may face challenges in participating effectively and dynamically.

They would be inequitable for many reasons including the digital divide affecting internet connectivity and technical capability, limited capacity and resources and other challenges for regional and other coordination. In addition, time zone differences may disproportionately disadvantage a particular region while inclusivity and transparency in how decisions are made would also be impacted.

While virtual meetings – such as online forums, webinars and even small meetings of technical expert groups – have their place and may well continue to be convened in the future even after the pandemic, they have to be convened in a transparent and inclusive manner.

There has to be full and effective participation of developing country Parties as well as of observers, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities, smallholder farmers, women and youth. The lack of interpretation in these meetings has already been a challenge and unfairly privileges those of us who can communicate in English. Digital inequality also remains an issue, particularly for those in developing countries or in rural areas.

For the processes under the Convention and its Protocols to be effective, they have to be just and equitable for all.

Thank you.