



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Edging closer to operationalizing an agreement on the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources**

#### **In Montreal, negotiators advance text determining how the groundbreaking Multilateral Mechanism will work in practice**

- Negotiators agreed on a draft Recommendation to be considered by COP 16 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which will take place in two months in Cali, Colombia.
- The five days of intense negotiations in Montreal narrowed down options for operationalizing the multilateral mechanism and the associated global fund.
- The development of the mechanism and its related global fund mark a pivotal moment in the global endeavour to live in harmony with nature – ensuring that benefits derived from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources are shared fairly and equitably with the promise to yield considerable financial resources for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

**Montreal, 16 August 2024**—In a major development under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), negotiators agreed this week to recommend that COP 16 of the CBD (21 October – 1 November 2024) in Cali, Colombia, adopt a decision setting out the modalities for operationalizing the multilateral mechanism for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources, including a global fund (the Multilateral Mechanism).

Operationalization is expected to mobilize new streams of additional funding for biodiversity action worldwide, in support of the Convention’s three overarching objectives: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Benefit-sharing from the Use of Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources met in Montreal, Canada, from 12 - 16 August 2024. Negotiators from Parties to the Convention and non-Party governments, representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities and civil society, industry, research and academia as well as other observers had before them a number of issues that needed further consideration during the five-day meeting. The issues had been set out in the Annex to [decision 15/9](#) by COP 15 of the Convention, which established the Multilateral Mechanism.

The negotiations held in Montreal this week narrowed down a wide spectrum of technical and policy options pertaining to crucial operational modalities of the Multilateral Mechanism, including the associated global fund: who will pay for using digital sequence information on genetic resources, how much they will pay, what would trigger such payments, how the collected payments will be disbursed and how the entire set-up would be managed and governed. The draft Recommendation on the operationalization of the Multilateral Mechanism provides four options on contribution to the fund by the users of digital sequence information on genetic resources and two options for disbursement, and indicates potential factors for allocation of resources from the global fund.

Additionally, the text encompasses draft terms of reference for a potential expert group on allocation methodology and addresses the review of the Multilateral Mechanism by COP 18 of the Convention as well

as interfacing with other international benefit-sharing instruments associated with the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources, with a view to enhancing mutual supportiveness and coherence.

“The draft Decision that will be considered by COP 16 will require further consensus-building in Cali, but we clearly have come a long way. The negotiators tirelessly worked their way through a bulky set of technical and policy options in a great show of compromise and consensus-building. We are proud of what this group has achieved,” said the Co-Chairs of the negotiations, Mphatso Kalemba of Malawi and William Lockhart of the United Kingdom in a joint statement.

At COP 16 in Cali, the Parties are expected to fine-tune agreement on pending issues, including aspects pertaining to data governance, the formula to be used for allocating resources from the global fund and the portion that would be earmarked for indigenous peoples and local communities, including women and youth, as custodians of biodiversity and holders of invaluable traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources. Other areas where compromise will be sought include how national circumstances and the level of development of Parties would be considered in allocation decisions to ensure fairness and equity.

In Montreal, negotiators deliberated on a list of sectors and subsectors highly dependent on the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources that the operational modalities of the multilateral mechanism and the associated fund would apply to. These include pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, plant and animal breeding and agricultural biotechnology, industrial biotechnology, laboratory equipment associated with the sequencing and use of digital sequence information on genetic resources and information, scientific and technical services related to digital sequence information on genetic resources.

“I am confident that the Parties will find the path and the courage to compromise in Cali for the operationalization of a cost-effective, efficient and simple solution,” said Astrid Schomaker, the Executive Secretary of the CBD. “What we have seen here in Montreal this week is an impressive display of environmental multilateralism at its best.”

The multilateral mechanism and the associated global fund were adopted at COP 15 as part of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF)— the world’s masterplan to halt and reverse biodiversity loss through the pursuit of 23 targets to be achieved by 2030. The monetary and non-monetary benefits distributed through the multilateral mechanism, including the global fund, would boost the implementation of the KMGBF, bridge capacity gaps among the Parties to the CBD and constitute a game-changer in the way biodiversity conservation is funded.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

Final documents of the meeting at: <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/wgdsi-2/wgdsi-02/documents>

The meeting in Montreal built on previous milestones:

- The [first meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Benefit-sharing from the Use of Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources](#) (WGDSI-1, 14-18 November 2023, Geneva, Switzerland), where Parties, non-Parties, indigenous peoples and local communities and other stakeholders discussed policy options and other elements pertaining to the operationalization of the fund. Their work drew upon intersessional work, including lessons learned from other international funding mechanisms and a synthesis of views on issues that were identified by Parties in COP-15 as needing further consideration.
- Although DSI was not on the agenda of SBSTTA-25 a, the Parties addressed related issues in the context of discussions on the monitoring framework of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
- Deliberations of the Informal Advisory Group on digital sequence information on genetic resources, established by WGDSI-1 to work in the intersessional period.

**About DSI:**

There is no internationally agreed definition of digital sequence information on genetic resources, and it is not the only term used. In this context the term refers to information on the basic building blocks of life that are encapsulated in DNA.

**About genetic resources:**

the term means genetic material of actual or potential value derived from non-human sources, including the DNA of plants, animals or microorganisms.

**Related media material:**

- [Press release](#): UN Publishes Negotiation Proposals for Sharing Benefits from Plant, Animal, Microbial DNA Sequences to Support Countries and Communities Protecting Nature
- [Press release](#): Fairly and equitably sharing valuable benefits from digital sequence information — the digital versions of plant, animal, and microorganism DNA: crucial week of UN negotiations begin in Montreal 12 August
- [Media Advisory](#): Final Day Media Update (Fri., 16 August): UN Negotiations on Benefit Sharing from Uses of Digital Sequence Information, Reminder / Confirmed Time 2 PM EDT.

**About COP 16:**

In Cali, Parties to the CBD [will take stock of progress](#) towards the goals and 23 ambitious targets for 2030 agreed to in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Resource mobilisation and technical and scientific cooperation will be central to the negotiations. The financial ambitions set out in the Plan include investing US\$ 200 billion a year from all sources and reforming US\$ 500 billion in government subsidies that undermine biodiversity.

The upcoming UN Biodiversity Conference in Cali is comprised of:

- the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity
- the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety
- the 5th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing.

**Story:** “On the road to COP 16 in Cali: three priority areas for action”: <https://bit.ly/4faX3aN>

**About the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD):** [www.cbd.int/convention/guide/](http://www.cbd.int/convention/guide/)

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