



SBSTTA-20

Montreal, Canada, 25 - 30 April 2016

Agenda Item 6 of the provisional agenda

Synthetic biology

I am speaking on behalf of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB). We thank the Secretariat for preparing the document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/8.

IIFB would like to note that Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, are concerned with the increasing development and use of synthetic biology, which has largely unknown impacts on biodiversity, environment, socio-economic, cultural, and health aspects.

At the moment there are no relevant international instruments to regulate the application of synthetic biology including its associated products. At the same there is limited research on possible risks and adverse effects that it is likely to have on the environment and on indigenous peoples and local communities, their society, culture and health. It is our submission that synthetic biology will have a serious impact on our food security as its reckless use may result in the loss of our traditional seed and livestock varieties.

We believe that a precautionary approach must be taken to synthetic biology in order to avoid of unforeseeable negative risks. IIFB urges parties to consider putting in place preemptory regulatory and assessment systems of synthetic biology, which in our view is uncertain and unpredictable.

IIFB would like to expressed the need for development of relevant Scenarios, that show possible impact of the use of synthetic biology products, on socio-economic and cultural development of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, taking into account the potential adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in our territories.

Regarding to suggested recommendations, the IIFB would like to propose:

72. Recommendation to the Conference of the Parties

(d) Encourages Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to:

(i) Conduct research on the positive and negative impacts of synthetic biology, on biodiversity, **socio-economic and cultural aspects**, with a view to filling knowledge gaps and identifying how those impacts relate to the objectives of the Convention and its Protocols;

(f) Requests the Executive Secretary:

(vii) To promote the full engagement **and participation** of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in future activities related to synthetic biology under the Convention.

Thank you Mr. Chair.