



SBSTTA 22

Montreal, Canada, 02 - 07 July 2018

Agenda Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Synthetic biology

Mr./Madam Chair,

The International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB) would like to thank the Secretariat for preparing the document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/22/4.

We would like to thank the support of Swedbio, and the co-coordination of ETC group, Third World Network, International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity and the Indigenous Women Network on Biodiversity from Latin America and the Caribbean to organize the Synthetic Biology Workshop for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities that was held last June 30 in Montreal.

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities are concerned that a full range of studies on the socio-economic, cultural, spiritual, health, and ethical considerations of synthetic biology has not yet been carried out. They are aware of the risks, challenges and impacts of synthetic biology. We therefore recommend to ensure the recognition, free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), full and effective participation at all levels, and the respect of human rights before the introduction of activities that will destroy the Mother Earth. IPLCs would like to reiterate the application of the precautionary approach and the establishment of effective measures to regulate the environmental release of organisms, components or products resulting from synthetic biology techniques as well as to regulate the use of secure containments.

The IIFB would like to propose the following text recommendations on the following:

6. Further recognizes that, while there could be potential benefits to the development of organisms containing engineered gene drives, additional research and guidance is needed before any organism containing engineered gene drives is considered for release into the environment, including the lands and territories of indigenous peoples and local communities, and ***the need to secure their free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and ensure their full and effective participation before implementing such activities***, given the current uncertainties regarding engineered gene drives, urges Parties and other Governments to take a precautionary approach in the development and release of organisms containing engineered gene drives, including experimental releases, in order to avoid potentially significant and irreversible adverse effects to biodiversity, ***and their possible habitats***;

The IIFB would like to propose an additional paragraph 6 (a) that reads:

6 (a) The development of protocols of traceability and rastreability of organisms, components and products from synthetic biology. Because of the high risks to Mother Earth of gene drive organisms, IIFB urges Parties to establish a moratorium on the release of these organisms.



7. Calls upon Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, ***including indigenous peoples and local communities*** to develop and implement well-designed strategies in order to prevent or minimize the exposure of the environment to organisms, components and products of synthetic biology under contained use, ***with special attention to the centres of origin of important crops***;

10. *Also decides* to extend the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology to support the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology, and *invites* Parties, other Governments, indigenous ***peoples*** and local communities and relevant organizations to continue to nominate experts to take part in the online forum on synthetic biology;

12 (d) . Requests the Executive Secretary to explore ways to facilitate, promote and support capacity-building and knowledge sharing regarding synthetic biology, taking into account the needs of Parties and of indigenous peoples and local communities, including through necessary funding, and the co-design of ***informational and*** training materials in the official languages of the United Nations and, where possible, in local languages.

Thank you chair.