

7 May 2021

**2021 sessions of the Subsidiary body for Scientific and Technological Advice  
and the Subsidiary body for Implementation**

**Note by the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies  
on the modalities for session organization in the first sessional period  
(31 May–17 June 2021)**

**I – Introduction**

1. While the COVID-19 crisis continues to require the attention of governments and other stakeholders to ensure people’s health and well-being, the urgency of addressing climate change remains. Throughout 2020, momentum in the UNFCCC process was maintained through the active engagement of Parties and observers in a series of informal activities organized by us as the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies, in cooperation with the current and the incoming Presidencies of the governing bodies and under the guidance of the Bureau, particularly during the June Momentum and the Climate Dialogues. Accordingly, we were able to advance informal work and convene, to the extent possible, mandated events for 2020 in order to maximize progress and minimize delays in 2020.
2. In April 2021, the [Bureau](#) agreed to extend the first sessional period of the subsidiary bodies in 2021, from 31 May 2021 to 17 June 2021, to account for the challenges and constraints of remote participation. This session will allow Parties to make progress in the high volume of work accumulated in the absence of sessions in 2020, which needs to be tackled by the subsidiary bodies in preparation for the Glasgow Climate Change Conference in November of this year.
3. In 2021, the subsidiary bodies will undertake work mandated for 2020 (SB 52–53) and 2021 (SB 54–55). These mandates are reflected, respectively, in the revised draft provisional agendas (DPAs) for the 2021 SBI session and the 2021 SBSTA session, issued by the Executive Secretary with our agreement.<sup>1</sup>
4. The series of informal events convened in 2020, referred to in paragraph 1 above, enabled Parties and relevant stakeholders to gain experience and learn lessons related to remote participation in events. Convening sessions of the subsidiary bodies with remote participation is a new challenge in our process. To provide advance information to Parties on the organization of and modalities for our work in June, the Bureau requested us to prepare notes on the organization of the sessions and make them available three weeks in advance of the sessions.
5. In response to this request from the Bureau, we prepared the following notes, which should be considered together:
  - a. The present note on modalities for session organization in the first sessional period of the year, to be held from 31 May to 17 June 2021, including information on type, number and schedule of meetings;
  - b. Our scenario notes outlining the scope of and approach to the work of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI).<sup>2</sup>

**II – Overarching considerations**

6. In planning and preparing for the sessions in June, our work is guided by the following considerations:
  - a. The three-week sessions follow the guidance of maximizing progress and minimizing delay and will allow for adequate coordination time and account for the challenges and constraints of remote participation;
  - b. Work will be organized informally, and conclusions will be adopted only at the next in-person meetings of the subsidiary bodies;
  - c. Modalities for participation should follow, to the extent possible, the rules and practices pertaining to in-person meetings, including for observers;

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<sup>1</sup> [DPA SBI](#), [DPA SBSTA](#)

<sup>2</sup> The notes are available on the respective session pages: [SBI session](#), [SBSTA session](#).

- d. No side events will be organized during this period;
- e. Scheduling of meetings should follow, to the extent possible, the SBI recommendations that apply to in-person meetings.<sup>3</sup>

### III - Organization of work

7. As mentioned in paragraph 3 above, the DPAs reflect the work mandated for the subsidiary bodies for 2020–2021, meaning up to and including their sessions in Glasgow, where they will conclude their work for 2020–2021. We see the first sessional period in 2021 as an opportunity to initiate this work with a view to resuming and concluding it when the subsidiary bodies meet again later in the year. In this respect, in June the first part of the 2021 SBSTA and 2021 SBI session would be convened, with the sessions being resumed, for the last part, in November 2021, in conjunction with the twenty sixth-session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) in Glasgow. This does not preclude convening an additional part of the sessions between June and November if possible and necessary.
8. We attach great importance to openness in our work and would like to encourage Parties to allow all informal consultations to be open to observers wherever possible, in accordance with the relevant past conclusions of the SBI.<sup>4</sup> We look forward to meeting observers during the session. We will aim to ensure they have a chance to present their views on the work of the subsidiary bodies in the joint plenary meeting.
9. We intend to consult groups and Parties in the days before the session on how best to achieve its objectives, including on the approaches outlined in our respective scenario notes.
10. The SBSTA and the SBI sessions will open on Monday, 31 May 2021 in respective plenary meetings, held back-to-back. The respective provisional agendas will be proposed for adoption only when the subsidiary bodies meet in person in a later sessional period. We will provide an overview of the organization of work and launch informal work on the various matters, in accordance with the approaches and guidance in our respective scenario notes.<sup>5</sup> We will briefly outline these approaches in the respective opening meetings.
11. Following the opening meetings of the SBSTA and the SBI, we will convene a joint SBSTA–SBI plenary meeting to hear statements from groups, Parties and observers. As per modalities for in-person meetings, statements should be no more than five minutes long for groups of Parties and three minutes for individual Parties and two minutes for observers. We invite all groups, Parties and observers to upload their full statements to the submission portal in advance of the meeting.<sup>6</sup>
12. In organizing our work at the June session, due attention was paid to the fact that participants will work in a virtual setting, from all time zones. In consultation with the secretariat, time slots have been established for all three weeks, based on the principle that no region benefits or is affected disproportionately.
13. The time slots for consultations will generally be 90 minutes long, with two consecutive time slots each day from Tuesday, 1 June, through Wednesday, 16 June.<sup>7</sup> Short breaks between the two slots will be provided to allow delegates to move between virtual meeting rooms as needed. Sufficient virtual rooms will be available on the conference platform for informal consultations and other meetings. Organization and scheduling of meetings will take into account previous relevant SBI conclusions,<sup>8</sup> and all efforts will be made to avoid clashes. Our guidance to the secretariat is to limit the number of simultaneous meetings to four, to the extent possible.
14. Please refer to the overview schedule available on the UNFCCC website<sup>9</sup> for information on the pre-established time slots, as well as a tentative schedule of the mandated and presiding officers' events. To account for the challenges and constraints of remote participation, in advance of each week a detailed meeting schedule for that week will be made available on the UNFCCC website.

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<sup>3</sup> FCCC/SBI/2014/8, paras. 218–221.

<sup>4</sup> FCCC/SBI/2011/7, para. 167, FCCC/SBI/2014/8, paras. 222–223.

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 2 above.

<sup>6</sup> Type in “statements June 2021” in the search bar at <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/submissionsstaging/Pages/Home.aspx>.

<sup>7</sup> There will be no meetings on Sundays (6 and 13 June).

<sup>8</sup> As footnote 4 above.

<sup>9</sup> [SBI session](#), [SBSTA session](#), [May-June session](#).

15. We will provide in advance of the sessions the list of facilitators who will assist us with the informal consultations. For mandated documents prepared for the session, see the relevant agenda item on the SBI and SBSTA session pages.<sup>10</sup>
16. A joint plenary meeting of the SBSTA and SBI will be convened at the end of the first week to take stock of progress. This stocktaking meeting will aim to enhance transparency of the work and to provide an opportunity for participants to share brief reflections on progress, as well as for the Chairs to make any adjustments in the organization of work for the remainder of the sessions.
17. We may undertake, as needed, further consultations during the session to discuss how to address specific issues and ensure the advancement of work and the preparations for the next session, as well as bilateral consultations with groups. These consultations might include meetings of heads of delegation on specific issues if deemed helpful for progress during the session.
18. Progress made during the sessions will be captured in informal documents to be prepared under our own authority. The informal documents will be made available on the SBSTA and SBI session web pages.
19. A number of mandated events under the subsidiary bodies will be held in this sessional period. Please refer to the scenario notes for more information on these events, and to the overview schedule for a tentative schedule. We will also convene a number of informal events as presiding officers for the purpose of informing participants, facilitating exchange and complementing the informal negotiation work.
20. Mandated events under the governing bodies will also be held during the session. Moreover, the COP 25 Presidency and the COP 26 incoming Presidency will convene consultations and/or informal events aimed at facilitating an inclusive and balanced outcome at COP 26. Please refer to the UNFCCC website for more information.<sup>11</sup>
21. The SBSTA and the SBI will hold their final plenary meetings in the sessional period consecutively on 17 June 2021. We will then convene a joint plenary meeting of the SBSTA and the SBI to hear statements from groups, Parties and observers.
22. After hearing the statements, we will propose to suspend the SBSTA and SBI sessions.

#### **IV- Registration, support and other technical information**

23. Please refer to the notifications sent to Parties, observer States and observers for detailed information on the technical arrangements for the session,<sup>12</sup> as well as updated information on the UNFCCC website.<sup>13</sup>
24. The online registration system (ORS), which allows Parties to electronically nominate individuals to attend the sessions is open. Considering the virtual nature of the SBs, the secretariat urges national focal points to register their delegations as soon as possible so that the necessary technical preparations can be made. Nonetheless, ORS will remain open for registration for the sessions until the end of the Conference.
25. Online registration is the only official channel for nominating participants for these sessions. The ORS is available at the following web address: <https://onlinereg.unfccc.int/>. Requests for technical support can be sent to the following e-mail address: [onlinereg@unfccc.int](mailto:onlinereg@unfccc.int).<sup>14</sup>
26. The Executive secretary has issued a letter to Parties on 6 May to present specific information on the support that the secretariat could be in a position to provide to groups and Parties to facilitate participation in sessions and meetings prior to COP 26 in the COVID-19 context. The letter includes the following information:
  - a. For all virtual meetings, including coordination meetings for Negotiating Groups, preparatory meetings of the Negotiating Groups for the May-June sessions, and participation in the May-

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<sup>10</sup> [SBI session, SBSTA session.](#)

<sup>11</sup> <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/may-june-2021-climate-change-conference-sessions-of-the-subsidiary-bodies>

<sup>12</sup> <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/parties-non-party-stakeholders/the-big-picture/notifications-to-parties-and-observers>.

<sup>13</sup> See footnote 11 above.

<sup>14</sup> The user manual for the ORS is available at: [https://onlinereg.unfccc.int/onlinereg/public/UNFCCC\\_ORIS\\_User\\_Manual-Parties\\_and\\_Observer\\_States.pdf](https://onlinereg.unfccc.int/onlinereg/public/UNFCCC_ORIS_User_Manual-Parties_and_Observer_States.pdf)

June sessions, the secretariat will offer support<sup>15</sup> and cover related financial costs for a virtual venue platform that will support participation and active engagement of delegates, including the following:

- i. Technical training pre- and in-session/meeting
  - ii. Dedicated ICT and user technical support
  - iii. Breakout rooms with concurrent event capabilities
  - iv. Document collaboration capabilities
  - v. Video broadcasting capabilities, when necessary and where possible
  - vi. Live interpretation capabilities, when necessary and where possible
  - vii. Secure closed meeting capabilities
  - viii. Scalable active engagement capabilities
  - ix. Mobile and tablet compatibility capabilities
- b. For those delegates and accredited observers that need support for any of the virtual meetings (including the coordination meetings) with regard to internet access, the secretariat will liaise with relevant UN offices in the location to explore logistical support or facilities that can be provided, subject to COVID-19 restrictions and safety and security requirements that are currently in place in that location.
  - c. The secretariat will provide 20 per cent of the Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) to delegates normally eligible to receive support at in-person negotiating sessions, at the rate of the city where the participant is stationed, for each day of attendance at the session and its preparatory meeting, as applicable, to be used for connectivity and other logistical aspects of their participation.
  - d. The secretariat will make available the virtual platform and facilitate up to four virtual coordination meetings of Negotiating Groups – May to September 2021 – and provide interpretation services in English and French for these meetings, if requested.
  - e. The secretariat will provide dedicated staff to provide virtual support to the meetings, as required.
  - f. The secretariat will make all efforts to seek and provide financial support, subject to the availability of financial resources, for Parties who may consider organizing in-person meetings.
  - g. To ensure that support is provided in a timely and efficient manner, the secretariat will appreciate receiving specific requests through the designated representatives no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting.

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<sup>15</sup> The support of the secretariat will follow the UN system-wide Guidance on Official Travel during the pandemic, issued on 19 August 2020, according to which UNFCCC staff are not allowed to travel until further notice. In this regard, the support of the secretariat staff described in this paper will be virtual.