

SMC Network Delegation Report

UN Convention for Biological Diversity Conference of Parties no 16 (CBD COP16) Colombia, Oct 18th - 28th 2024



The SMC Network Delegation to CBD COP16

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1) Introduction

The **Convention for Biological Diversity Conference of Parties no 16** (CBD COP16), organised by the CBD Secretariat in Montreal and hosted by the Government of Colombia, took place 20 October to 1 November 2024 in Cali, Colombia

The main theme of COP16 was **Peace with Nature**. The conference had 23 000 registered participants from nearly 200 countries.

This report was elaborated jointly by the delegates of the SMC Network Delegation and provides overall information regarding CBD COP16, its content, the purposes of the delegation and the results in relation to SMC's goals.

2) Background to CBD and COP16

The Convention on Biological Diversity

The **Convention on Biological Diversity** (also known as UN Biodiversity) <https://www.cbd.int/convention> is one of the three Rio Convention from the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, along with the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** (also known as UN Climate Change) and the **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification** (UNCCD).

The **Convention on Biological Diversity** (CBD) was the first global agreement to cover all aspects of biological diversity: 1) the conservation of biological diversity, 2) the sustainable use of its components and 3) the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

The **Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity** (CBD Secretariat), is based in Montreal, Canada. Its primary functions are to organize meetings, such as regular Conferences of the Parties (COP), prepare reports, assist member governments in the implementation of the various programmes of work, coordinate with other international organizations and collect and disseminate information.

The CBD COP15 in Montreal in Nov 2022 created a momentum with the development of the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework** (GBF) <https://www.cbd.int/gbf> which includes the requirement that the member states should present updated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP) at CBD COP16. This meant an opportunity for CSO's around the globe to engage in advocacy and consultations on national level for development of NBSAPs.

The Cartagena Protocol

The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international agreement on [biosafety](#) as a supplement to the [Convention on](#)

[Biological Diversity](#) (CBD) effective since 2003. The Biosafety Protocol seeks to protect [biological diversity](#) from the potential risks posed by [genetically modified organisms](#) resulting from modern [biotechnology](#).

The Nagoya Protocol

The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity, also known as the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS), is a 2010 supplementary agreement to the 1992 [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (CBD).

The goals of CBD COP16 (summary):

- 1) Implementation: All countries must have national implementation plans in place before COP16.
- 2) Financing: Developing countries need to gain the capacity to implement the framework. 30 billion dollars must be given annually from rich countries to developing countries from 2030, and 20 billion already from 2025.
- 3) Fair distribution of benefits: Agreement on "genetic material", i.e. genetic parts of plants or animals and how these should be used in, for example, the manufacture of medicines and the like. It is regulated in the supplementary agreement, the Nagoya protocol.

Section 10 below includes a summary of the outcome of the conference.

3) SMC Network Delegation to CBD COP16

Engagement for Biodiversity is a part of **SMC's Joint Action Plan for Environment, Climate and Resilience 2023-2026**. SMC emphasizes on the options for advocacy in relation to the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework and the formation of delegation to CBD COP16 was an important part in strengthening advocacy and policy implementation within the SMC network.

The network delegation had in total **nine representatives** from SMC, member organisations and cooperating partners that are motivated and in the forefront in promotion of biodiversity. SMC's role was to lead the preparations, facilitate participation and facilitate the participation during the COP, based on the interest among the delegates.

The delegates were from Entropika in Colombia (partner of Ancla Foundation), Friendship in Bangladesh (partner of ERIKS), IAS Kenya (partner of LM Int.), Tinada Kenya (member of Kenya4Resilience CoP), UMN Nepal (partner of Interaction and PMU), Ancla Foundation in Sweden, LM Latin America Regional Office in Panama and two representatives from SMC.

The delegates had been encouraged to also be a part of national CSO delegations to CBD COP16, for optimal advocacy on national level in relation to NBSAP.

4) The purpose of the participation at COP16

SMC has formulated the following key learning question for COP16:

- How can smaller or mid-size CBOs/FBOs who are working with community development, agroforestry, livelihood etc, engage strategically in planning and implementation of the NBSAP processes on national and local level?

The specific purposes of the joint delegation were the following:

- To contribute to the three goals of the CBD COP16 as formulated by UNEP/CBD Secretariat, see **Annex 1** below.
- To collaborate with Faith for Biodiversity Coalition and support its Policy Priorities, see <https://docs.google.com/document/d/19sQeQCno7jOyGAzzZHEl1GTIAYTlbRUUIA4oplDDXGA/edit?usp=sharing>
- To facilitate meetings between the delegation members and the official delegations from their countries, together with relevant national networks and CSO's, to advocate for inclusive and multi-stakeholder NBSAP planning and implementation on national and local level, including CSO and FBO.
- To meet with Official Swedish delegation, including the Ministry of Environment, the Swedish Parliament, Sida and Swedish IUCN members etc, together with other Swedish CSO's, and advocate for inclusive and multi-stakeholder NBSAP planning and implementation on national and local level, including CSO and FBO, based on Policy Priorities.
- To strengthen the general networking and collaboration among CSO and FBO for further engagement in Biodiversity with a focus on the countries represented in the SMC Network Delegation.
- To learn more about, and share, successful methods and approaches related to protection and restoration of ecosystems and for biodiversity, at formal seminars and at informal meetings during CBD COP16.
- For the delegates to share their learnings with other members/partners in the SMC network. This could mean to be part of capacity development webinars etc.

5) Results of the participation at COP16

Below the learning questions for COP16 are listed, followed by the responses from the evaluation among the SMC delegation participants:

How can smaller or mid-size CBOs/FBOs who are working with community development, agroforestry, livelihood etc., engage strategically in planning and implementation of the NBSAP processes on national and local level?

1. In this COP, there was an advance in securing inclusion and participation mainly from indigenous people, afro descent communities and farmers. The inclusion of the article 8j is a big advance. Nonetheless, from my personal perspective I think in order to actually implement this article, the CBD needs to be stronger about funding allocation and voluntary payments is not the most effective way to move forward. I see the urgency to improve local capacities for local people worldwide. All the conservation agreements are not easy for illiterate people to understand the scope of their participation in conservation. Good intentions but not too realistic for isolated people in tropical forests.
2. Get to know the government delegations involved in NBSAP negotiations and will be relevant to approach to work in community development in relation to livelihoods and natural resource management.
3. During COP16, the engagement of smaller and mid-sized CBOs and FBOs in the NBSAP processes showed both promising developments and areas for improvement. On the positive side, CBD office made efforts to include smaller organizations in discussions around biodiversity, community development, agroforestry, and sustainable livelihoods, recognizing their critical role in local ecosystems and biodiversity. Some strategic forums and workshops were dedicated to showcasing how these organizations can align their work with national and local NBSAP goals, offering valuable insights into policy engagement and practical implementation strategies. However, while these efforts were encouraging, there were challenges in fully integrating smaller CBOs and FBOs into NBSAP planning and implementation. Many smaller organizations still face barriers to participation, such as limited resources, technical expertise, and knowledge of complex policy frameworks. Although COP16 provided a platform to address these gaps, there is still a need for more accessible, ongoing support that would help these organizations contribute effectively to the NBSAP process beyond the conference. Going forward, stronger support mechanisms, including capacity-building initiatives, resource allocation, and localized policy guidance, would enhance their strategic involvement and allow them to play a more influential role in NBSAP planning and implementation at both national and local levels.
4. National levels are still very inaccessible for CBOs/FBOs, however, it is easier to put pressure after attending this COP

5. Engaging with NBSAP needs more attention and mobilization to be facilitated by the government and international communities.
6. The CBD16 contributed to build engagement between NGOs/CBOs with respective govt/expert agencies. Different sessions also helped to understand and ways to contribute and follow up. The opportunity to be part of accelerator program by CBD will be enhanced.

During COP16, what topics were most relevant to your work and interests?

1. Engagement of Faith based leaders/communities, Rio's conventions, Biodiversity finance gaps, biodiversity funding sources/experts/agencies, landscape and biodiversity, mangroves and wet land.
2. ONEHEALTH approach. Faith for biodiversity. Bio trade. Education for conservation. Implementation of the GBF. The inclusion of article 8j regarding the participation of local people in conservation decisions. The Global Environment Facility and financial support for local communities. Protected areas in Peru and the governmental strategies to expand them. Access to genetic resources and how communities will be benefited (unfortunately funding provisions were not established, apart of voluntary contributions).
3. NBSAPs negotiations, side events and other parallel events where we could directly discuss and present our voice to high level delegations.
4. During COP16, several topics closely aligned with my work and interests, particularly those related to community-driven approaches to capacity building, biodiversity conservation, environmental resilience, mental health integration, faith for resilience, and sustainable livelihoods. Sessions on climate resilience and sustainable development were highly relevant, especially in terms of how localization can support climate adaptation and mitigation within vulnerable communities. Additionally, discussions on biodiversity protection through agroforestry and sustainable land use directly connected with my focus on community-based health and wellbeing, as these approaches foster healthier environments that benefit both mental and physical health. The integration of indigenous knowledge into these discussions was particularly valuable, as it highlighted the importance of traditional practices in biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable land management.

The emphasis on inclusive frameworks for National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) was especially engaging, as it highlighted ways to strengthen local organizations' involvement in national policy. This aligns with my interest in empowering community-based organizations (CBOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs) through Kenya for Resilience, enabling them to become active stakeholders in biodiversity and climate action. I also found the discussions around funding accessibility and capacity-building for smaller organizations particularly valuable, as they address common barriers

preventing grassroots organizations from fully participating in policy-making and implementation. Finally, the intersection of mental health and climate change emerged as an important area of interest, emphasizing the need for holistic approaches that address the social and psychological impacts of environmental stressors on communities, while recognizing the critical role indigenous knowledge plays in promoting both environmental and mental health resilience.

5. Faith based engagement
6. Mangroves contributes to three cops, and it can reduce biodiversity finance gaps. I learned different dynamics of landscape interventions. Explored and connected with different funding and technical assistance opportunities.

What were the most valuable insights or takeaways you gained from COP16?

1. Rio's conventions, Biodiversity finance gaps, biodiversity funding sources/experts/agencies, landscape and biodiversity, mangroves and wet land.
2. I have a better understanding of the CBD agreements, and as I had the opportunity to work with the Colombian ministry of environment and the ministry of health, I have more information about the advances of the ONEHEALTH approach in Colombia.
I had the opportunity to talk to high rank public servants from Colombia, CITES, TRAFFIC, etc and I could present an overview of the climatic emergency in the Amazon basin.
I had the opportunity to meet the rest of members from the SMC delegation, making this COP very enjoyable.
I learnt about ways to use the forest in a sustainable way, at least the theory.
I met a lot of people who in the future I could contact to get advice and possibly funding for our work with local people in San Pablo, Peru.
3. Negotiations are highly technical, however through participating in various parallel and side events we can analyse the progressive trends of biodiversity conservation. The topic is highly sensitive for future of our planet, and we need more capacity building in this trend to advocate for the same.
4. COP16 provided valuable insights into the importance of localized, community-driven approaches to climate action, emphasizing the need for inclusive participation from community-based organizations (CBOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs). A key takeaway was the recognition that empowering local organizations to actively engage in shaping and implementing climate policies, such as the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), is essential for sustainable and effective climate adaptation and mitigation, particularly in vulnerable regions.

The conference also highlighted the critical role of indigenous knowledge in biodiversity conservation and environmental resilience. Traditional practices in agroforestry, land management, and climate adaptation were acknowledged as valuable, and integrating this indigenous knowledge into modern policy-making can enhance the overall effectiveness of climate action.

Faith for resilience emerged as another key theme, recognizing the power of faith-based organizations in promoting community solidarity, advocating for climate justice, and fostering sustainable living. Faith leaders and organizations play a vital role in building resilience within communities, helping to drive behavioral change and strengthen local climate action.

Furthermore, COP16 emphasized the need for capacity-building and improved funding accessibility for smaller organizations, ensuring that they have the resources and technical support to fully participate in climate policy development and implementation. Finally, the conference underscored the growing intersection of mental health and climate change, stressing the importance of holistic approaches that address both environmental and mental health challenges in building climate resilience.

5. One takeaway is that there are much know-how and expertise available, and that these kind of meeting places are excellent for learning and networking. Coordination is extremely important and the SMC delegation, as well as the Faith Hub, was brilliant platforms to network and to advance insights.
6. Engage faith-based leaders/communities more than before.

6) Key learnings of the delegates

SMC's survey responses from participants of the SMC delegation to COP16 Colombia provide valuable insights into their experiences, key takeaways, and perspectives on future engagement. Many attendees expressed appreciation for the communication and planning prior to COP16, highlighting the effectiveness of the organising team in ensuring smooth coordination. The delegation meetings were generally well-received, with participants emphasizing that they provided a valuable space for sharing reflections, clarifying objectives, and strategising around biodiversity advocacy.

Participants noted that smaller and mid-sized community-based organisations (CBOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs) play an essential role in biodiversity conservation and community development. However, they pointed out challenges in strategic engagement, particularly in securing representation at national and international policy levels. Many respondents found that COP16 created

opportunities to strengthen engagement between these organisations and global policy processes, although there remains a need for better access and recognition.

Key topics of interest included faith-based engagement in environmental advocacy, the One Health approach, biodiversity finance gaps, and negotiations on National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). Many attendees highlighted the importance of understanding the technical aspects of international biodiversity agreements and found COP16 valuable in bridging the gap between policy discussions and grassroots actions.

The collaboration with Faith for Biodiversity was widely appreciated, with many participants emphasising the need to formalise this initiative as an international advocacy body. They viewed faith-based organisations as critical actors in mobilising communities for biodiversity conservation and resilience-building. Respondents also expressed strong support for continued collaboration and further development of such networks.

Regarding national engagement, the impact of COP16 participation varied. Some participants reported increased recognition and motivation to contribute to NBSAP processes in their respective countries, while others felt that bureaucratic hurdles still limited their influence. Many found COP16 beneficial in learning about successful ecosystem protection and restoration approaches, though the extent of knowledge gained varied among respondents.

Overall, participants valued the opportunity to attend COP16, with several expressing gratitude for the well-organised delegation experience. They recognized the importance of continued collaboration, policy engagement, and capacity development to strengthen biodiversity conservation efforts. The survey reflects a strong commitment among attendees to integrating faith-based and community-driven approaches into broader environmental resilience strategies.

7) The Way forward - mobilisation

At the end of the conference the delegates discussed ideas and plans for the way forward and mobilisation within their own organisation as well as within the larger SMC network.

SMC encourages all member and cooperating partner organisations to develop their organisational strategies, work plans and programs to more specifically consider biodiversity.

At the time of COP16 only 44 of the member countries had presented updated NBSAP. This means that this work remains in most of the member states. According to the guidelines for the NBSAP review processes, they should be multistakeholder and inclusive which, mean that the civil society should be

included. Thus, there is still an opportunity to link up the relevant national NGO networks for participation in national NBSAP review processes.

- Find the current NBSAP of your own country here <https://www.cbd.int/nbsap>
- The CBD website include a list of the National Focal Points at the responsible departments of the member states <https://www.cbd.int/doc/lists/nfp-cbd.pdf>

Hosting follow-up webinars is a strategic and necessary step to build on the momentum generated during the conference and ensure sustained engagement on biodiversity within the SMC network and beyond. At the conclusion of the conference, delegates discussed concrete plans for mobilisation within their own organisations as well as within the broader SMC network. Follow-up webinars will provide a structured platform for delegates to translate these discussions into action, share progress, and refine their strategies based on emerging opportunities and challenges.

SMC actively encourages its member and cooperating partner organisations to integrate biodiversity considerations into their organisational strategies, work plans, and programs. However, the process of incorporating biodiversity into development initiatives requires access to the correct tools, methods, and best practices. Webinars will serve as a key learning space where participants can engage with expert insights, practical case studies, and available resources. This will help ensure that biodiversity is not just a secondary concern but a core component of organisational planning and decision-making.

Furthermore, follow-up webinars will help sustain the collective energy and commitment from COP16, ensuring that discussions do not end with the conference but instead translate into concrete actions. They will provide a platform for organisations to report on their efforts, seek guidance on challenges, and identify synergies for joint advocacy and project implementation. By keeping the dialogue alive, these webinars will strengthen the impact of civil society in shaping biodiversity policies and enhance collaboration within the SMC network and beyond.

8) Joint advocacy efforts by SMC and the delegation

SMC did not have the intention, nor the capacity, to formulate any own advocacy messages in relation to CBD COP16 but has joined the following networks for exchange and developing of joint messages. The delegates have also been linked to Faith for Biodiversity:

CONCORD Sweden/Joint Nordic Effort for Biodiversity (JNEB)

During 2024 SMC has been collaborating with the CONCORD Sweden Environment and Climate Justice Working Group, and the special initiative Joint Nordic Effort for Biodiversity (JNEB), formed by CONCORD Sweden and its sister organisations in Denmark and Norway. Some of the SMC Member organisations are part of the CONCORD group, and also WWF, SNF, Diakonia and ACT Church of Sweden etc. <https://concord.se/eng-about-us>

The Joint Nordic Effort for Biodiversity arranged a Biodiversity conference in Oslo 27-28 August, for Nordic NBSAP monitoring, and for CBD COP16 participation. SMC participated at the conference and also Diakonia, Afrikagrupperna, WWF and Nordic Youth Coalition for Biodiversity with its Swedish representatives. See <https://concord.se/sa-paverkar-du-internationella-toppmoten>

JNEB developed a comprehensive publication with recommendations from the Nordic organisations in relation to the 23 targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework. This included recommendations for implementation on Nordic level as well as on International level. SMC contributed with statements regarding the importance of religious literacy, role of faith and faith-based actors in relation to four of the most relevant targets (no 10, 16, 20 and 22) related to International implementation. See <https://www.norden.org/en/publication/joint-nordic-effort-biodiversity>

There was no formal sign-on process for the publication but a possibility to express support for the publication. SMC and some of its member organisations (LM and PMU) supported the publication. It was uploaded on the website of the Nordic Council of Ministers and CONCORD shared it with Committee on Environment and Agriculture of the Swedish Parliament.

Faiths for Biodiversity Coalition

During 2024 SMC has also been collaborating with Faiths for Biodiversity which is connected to UNEP Faith for Earth Coalition. Faiths for Biodiversity is a global space for faith-based organizations and conservation groups to network and jointly advocate for biodiversity at key international meetings, see <https://www.biodiversity.faith/>.

Prior to the conference Faith for Biodiversity developed COP16 policy priorities/recommendations for the Coalition. This document was to support the Coalition advocacy efforts. It was an internal document and not a public statement: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/19sQeQCno7jOyGAzzZHEl1GTIAYTlbRUUIA4oplDDXGA/edit?usp=sharing>

Those are the six main points:

1. **Ambitious Implementation of the KMGBF (Agenda item 8)**
Ensure countries are on track to deliver on the 2030 goals set in the GBF.
Advocate for a whole-of-society approach in developing national biodiversity

targets, emphasizing the participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), women and youths, as well as faith communities.

2. **Synergies between the Rio Conventions** (*Agenda items 13, 20 & 25*)
Strengthen the integration of biodiversity, climate and ecosystem restoration policies to maximize synergies and ensure mutually reinforcing efforts both at international and national levels.
3. **Resource Mobilization and Financial Mechanism** (*Agenda item 11*)
Ensure adequate funding for biodiversity conservation. This included a push for the establishment of mechanisms to ensure direct access to resources for IPLCs, with an aspirational target of 20% of funds dedicated to these groups.
4. **Monitoring Framework and Reporting** (*Agenda item 10*)
Adopt a comprehensive monitoring framework that includes indicators relevant to community-led (including faith-based) conservation efforts.
5. **Inclusive Participation and Rights-based Approaches**
Ensure the full and effective participation of IPLCs, women, and youth, including faith communities, in biodiversity conservation efforts.
6. **Mainstreaming Biodiversity Across Sectors** (*Agenda item 17*)
Integrate biodiversity considerations into all relevant sectors and policies to address the root causes of biodiversity loss. This includes promotion of interfaith dialogues and collaborations that mobilize collective action for biodiversity across different sectors of society.

Faith for Biodiversity was managing a space for Faith Based Organisations Hub at Place Quebec, a space for various stakeholder groups at the conference centre. A number of interesting side-events were arranged by the about 40 member organisations present, including the side event **Faith for biodiversity: Integrating Knowledge, Action and Justice in Biodiversity Decision-Making** by Kenya4Resilience, Entropika and Friendship.

CBD Alliance

CBD Alliance is a network of 400 CBOs engaged in nature protection civil society advocacy in relation to CBD COPs. <https://cbd-alliance.org/en> Prior to COP16 SMC assessed the relevance of CBD Alliance membership but decided to not join this alliance as it's a network of CSO specialised in nature protection.

SMC had a brief meeting with a representative of CBD Alliance during COP16 and it was confirmed that this Alliance is focusing on advocacy through participation in the COP16 working groups and committees during the conference, which is not the capacity of SMC.

9) Meetings with official national delegations

Through the formation of the SMC Network Delegation, SMC facilitated meetings between the delegates and the official delegations from their countries, together

with relevant national networks and CSO's, to advocate for inclusive and multi-stakeholder NBSAP planning and implementation on national and local level, including CSO and FBO.

Prior to the conference the Swedish CSO's present at COP16 (all CONCORD member organisations) had a coordination meeting and has a Teams meeting with representatives of the official Swedish Delegation to COP16.

At the conference we also got the opportunity to meet with the Swedish delegation including the Head of Delegation Charlotta Sörqvist and seven other representatives. The CSO which were present were WWF, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, Ancla Foundation, ACT Church of Sweden, Diakonia and SMC.

Most of the delegates did meet with representatives of delegations of their home countries. One key takeaway is that not all planned meetings with national delegations were successful. For example, a delegate mentioned their difficulty in meeting with the Kenyan government team at COP16, despite attempts to engage them regarding the status of their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). This highlights the challenge of accessing government representatives at such high-profile international events and the need for better coordination and follow-up strategies to ensure engagement.

However, there were successful interactions, such as meetings with the Nepali delegation, including the Ministry of Forest and Environment Joint Secretary. These engagements provided opportunities for knowledge-sharing, networking, and discussing the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in biodiversity governance.

A significant lesson from the conference was the increasing recognition of faith-based organisations (FBOs) in biodiversity discussions. The Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) assured delegates that faith-based voices would be included in future COP events and planning processes. This represents a milestone in the integration of diverse stakeholders into biodiversity governance.

Overall, the meetings with national delegations and participation in COP16 provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities for biodiversity governance. While engagement with national delegations was sometimes difficult, the experience emphasised the importance of persistence, strategic networking, and leveraging global platforms to push for more inclusive and effective biodiversity policies.

10) Outcomes of COP16 and official reporting from the COP16

The conference aimed to advance the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). From a critical Civil Society Organization (CSO) perspective, the outcomes were mixed and highlighted several areas of concern. As the negotiations were not finalised during COP16, the remaining questions were postponed to a part two in Rome in February 2025. The following outcomes are from the COP16 in Colombia.

Key Outcomes and Agreements

1. **Cali Fund for Genetic Resources:** One of the significant achievements was the establishment of the “Cali Fund,” a mechanism for benefit-sharing from the use of digital sequence information (DSI) on genetic resources. This fund aims to ensure that benefits derived from genetic resources are shared more equitably with developing countries and Indigenous Peoples¹. While this is a positive step, CSOs argue that the implementation details remain vague, and the fund’s effectiveness will depend on robust governance and transparency mechanisms.
2. **Indigenous Peoples’ Permanent Body:** COP16 saw the creation of a permanent body for Indigenous Peoples, allowing them to have a direct advisory role in biodiversity COPs¹. This inclusion is a critical step towards recognizing the rights and contributions of Indigenous communities. However, CSOs stress that true empowerment requires not just advisory roles but also decision-making power and adequate funding to support Indigenous-led conservation initiatives.
3. **Lack of Consensus on New Fund:** The conference failed to reach a consensus on establishing a new financial mechanism to support biodiversity efforts¹. This deadlock underscores the persistent funding gaps that hinder the implementation of biodiversity targets, particularly in developing countries. CSOs criticize the lack of political will from developed nations to commit substantial financial resources, which is essential for achieving global biodiversity goals.
4. **Implementation of KMGBF:** Progress on the KMGBF was a focal point, but the results were underwhelming. Only 44 out of 196 parties submitted new biodiversity plans, reflecting a significant lag in national commitments¹. CSOs highlight that without concrete national actions and accountability, the ambitious targets of the KMGBF will remain unattainable. The lack of progress is attributed to insufficient funding and support for developing countries to formulate and implement their plans.
5. **Mainstreaming Biodiversity:** Efforts to integrate biodiversity considerations into other sectors, such as agriculture, fisheries, and

climate change, were discussed². While there were commitments to mainstream biodiversity, CSOs argue that these discussions often lack actionable plans and timelines. The integration of biodiversity into broader policy frameworks is crucial, but it requires concrete steps and measurable outcomes.

Critical CSO Perspective

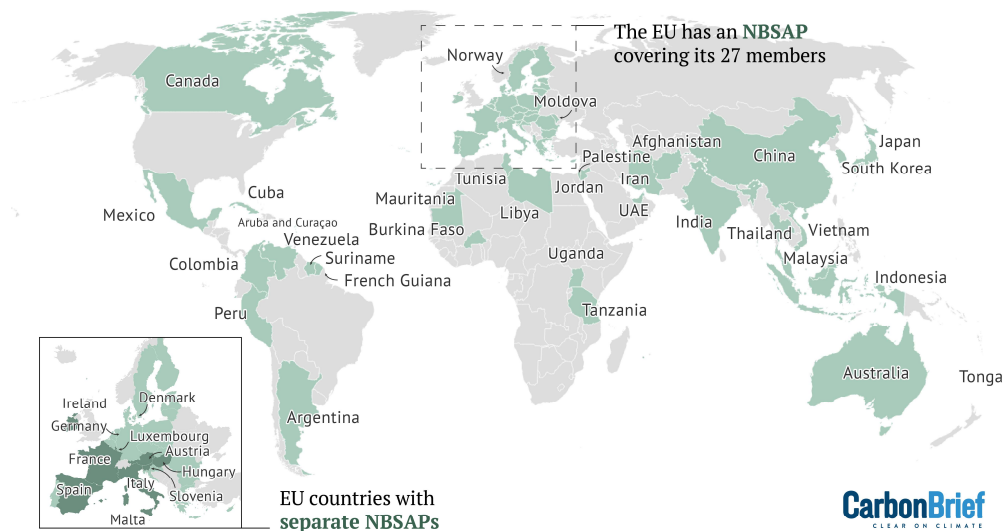
From a CSO perspective, COP16's outcomes reflect a mix of progress and persistent challenges. The establishment of the Cali Fund and the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples are positive developments, but their success hinges on effective implementation and genuine empowerment. The failure to agree on a new financial mechanism and the slow progress on national biodiversity plans highlight the ongoing issues of inadequate funding and political commitment.

CSOs call for greater transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in the decision-making processes. They emphasize the need for developed countries to fulfill their financial commitments and support developing nations in their biodiversity efforts. Additionally, there is a pressing need to move beyond rhetoric and ensure that biodiversity considerations are genuinely integrated into all relevant sectors.

In conclusion, while COP16 made some strides towards its goals, the critical perspective of CSOs underscores the need for more decisive action, adequate funding, and genuine inclusion of all stakeholders to achieve meaningful progress in global biodiversity conservation.

1: [Carbon Brief](#) 2: [Convention on Biological Diversity](#)

Countries with new biodiversity pledges (NBSAPs)



By the summit's end on 2 November, only 44 out of 196 parties had produced new NBSAPs. The map shows the countries with new national biodiversity strategies

and action plans (NBSAPs) as of 1 November. Data source: UN Convention on Biological Diversity. Map by Joe Goodman and Kerry Cleaver for Carbon Brief

For a full summary of the outcome of COP16, see

<https://enb.iisd.org/un-biodiversity-conference-cbd-cop16-summary>

11) Logistics

The conference took place in Centro Eventos Valle de Pacífico in northern Cali. The SMC Network Delegation stayed at Hotel Ayenda 1415 Las Vegas Granada and Hotel El Rincón de Granada Casa de Huespedes just north of Cali city centre. A system for bus transportation from the conference hotel area to the conference centre had been set up.

The Government of Colombia had taken strong actions for security arrangements around the conference so assure the safety of the delegates.

2025-04-16

Lennart Nolvall & Erik Bäckelid

Desk Officer and Advisor
SMC – Faith in development

The delegates

- Angela Maldonado, Director, Fundación Entropika, Colombia
- Douglas Roy, Executive Director, Tinada Youth Organisation, Kenya
- Ingrid Brauer, Vice Chairman, Ancla Foundation, Sweden
- Kazi Amdadul, Senior Director – Strategic Planning & Head of Climate Action, Friendship, Bangladesh
- Maria Wåhlin, Regional director, LM International, Panama
- Mary Githiomi, Country Director, International Aid Services, Kenya
- Niki Maskey, Thematic Lead – Resilient Livelihoods, UMN, Nepal
- Lennart Nolvall, Desk Officer, DRR and Resilience FP, SMC, Sweden
- Erik Bäckelid, Advisor, SMC, Sweden

Photomemoria



The SMC Delegation and the Tower



Starting Day 1: Peace for Nature Conference

The SMC Delegation





Meet with Nepali Delegates at CoP16



Ministry of Forest and Environment Joint Secretary (3rd from Left)



Women's Role in Community Forest Management at Women Pavillion in Quebec Center



Angela introducing us to Indigenous people of Colombia