



## United Nations Decade on Biodiversity

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5 December 2017

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your letter of 4 December 2017 concerning the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology, and the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Synthetic Biology, and for bringing to my attention your concerns regarding the integrity of these processes.

The Secretariat is committed to ensuring the transparency, integrity and effectiveness of all processes under the Convention and its Protocols. Online fora have been established by Parties to allow for a wide range of views to be provided. The online forum and the AHTEG on Synthetic Biology are being conducted and prepared in accordance with our established procedures. However, we keep under review all processes under the Convention and its Protocols with a view to improving these processes whenever needed.

In fact, the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, in July 2018 is due to consider an agenda item on "Review of the effectiveness of the processes under the Convention and its Protocols." This may provide a timely opportunity for Parties to consider possible improvements.

In this context, we may draw upon our established policies related to disclosure of interest and avoidance of conflict of interest for the compliance committees of the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols and also for the roster of biosafety experts under the Cartagena Protocol. We have also been reviewing the experience with regards to avoidance of conflict of interest in other Conventions, UN organizations and other bodies (including IPBES and IPPC) to identify best practices that may be appropriate for work under the Convention.

I intend to bring this matter to the attention of the bureaux of the Conference of the Parties and of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at their upcoming meetings at the end of this week.

We remain vigilant in ensuring the integrity of the process and, of course, to this end, we also count on the cooperation of all those involved.

Thank you for your interest in the work of the Convention.

Yours sincerely,

Cristiana Paşca Palmer, PhD  
Executive Secretary

To: African Centre for Biodiversity, Corporate Europe Observatory, Econexus, Ecoropa, ETC Group, Friends of the Earth U.S., Sustainability Council of New Zealand, Testbiotech and Third World Network

