

MINUTES OF MEETING
Biodiversity and High Conservation Value Working Group (BHCVWG) – 53rd
Meeting (Virtual)

Date : 05 February 2025
Time : 4:00 PM to 6:20 PM (MYT)

Attendance:

<p><u>Members and Alternates</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lee Swee Yin (SDG) 2. Hendi Hidayat (GAR) 3. Bungaran Naibaho (GAR) 4. Lim Sian Choo (Bumitama) 5. Matthew Gerard Nowak (SIPEF) 6. Arie Soetjiadi (HCVN) 7. Harjinder Kler (HUTAN) 8. Eleanor Spencer (ZSL) 9. Imogen Fanning (ZSL) 10. Michelle Desilets (OLT) 11. Marcus Colchester (FPP) 12. Chin Sing Yun (Wilmar) 13. Syahrial Anhar (Wilmar) 14. Dita Galina (Musim Mas) 15. Yunita Widiastuti (Cargill) <p><u>Absent with apologies</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arnina Hussin (SDG) 2. Paola Despretz (OLAM) 3. Quentin Meunier (OLAM) 4. Martin Mach (Bumitama) 5. Anne Rosenbarger (WRI) 6. Bukti Bagja (WRI) 7. Ahmad Furqon (WWF) 8. Angga Prathama Putra (WWF) 9. Sophie Gett (SIPEF) 10. Cahyo Nugroho (FFI) 11. Mahendra Primajati (FFI) 12. Lanash Thanda (BCI) 13. Dayang Norwana (BCI) 14. Patrick Anderson (FPP) 15. Sally Chen Sieng Yin (SEPA) 16. David Wong Su Yung (SEPA) 17. Athirah Insani (Musim Mas) 18. Per Bogstad (Haleon) 	<p><u>RSPO Secretariat</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aloysius Suratin 2. Akmal Razali 3. Alfred Prasetia 4. Lydia Tan 5. Daniel Liew 6. Durgha Periasamy <p><u>Invited Expert</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Josiah Jeevanraj Joseph (Agridence)
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Meeting Agenda:

No.	Agenda	PIC
1	Opening and welcoming remarks	RSPO Secretariat/ BHCV Co-Chairs
2	Confirmation of MoM	RSPO Secretariat
3	Finalising the BHCV ToR, TF Composition and TF Start Dates	RSPO Secretariat
4	RaCP Workshop	RSPO Secretariat
5	prisma Development Overview	RSPO Secretariat/ Agridence
6	AoB	RSPO Secretariat

Note: As a quorum was not reached, decisions made during the meeting are provisional and will be formalised through email communication.

Summary of key points:

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1	Finalising the BHCV ToR, TF Composition and TF Start Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agreement to include a smallholder seat in the composition (under the palm oil growers category), starting with one substantive and one alternate member (selected in order of application), with the option to expand if demand increases. To be brought to SSC for approval. ○ The current number of seats will be maintained as it is effective, with the addition of a smallholder seat. ○ The group leaned towards maintaining flexibility in allowing representatives from either the same or different organisations, considering past recruitment challenges. ○ Alternates can participate in discussions. Their decision-making role applies only if the substantive member is absent, in which case they will be designated to vote. ○ Quorum will be based on filled seats—2/3 of filled seats must be present. If not all groups are represented, the existing structure will remain in place to cover gaps. ○ The retailer sector should remain listed as a potential group to encourage downstream engagement under shared responsibility.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The WG to provide feedback/input on a mechanism or procedure for managing invited experts. ○ A consolidated ToR will cover everything, with TFs listed in annexes. ○ The ToR to specify whether individuals from the same organisation, who are not BHCVWG members, can still be invited. ○ Key elements and important information should be included directly in the ToR subsections rather than in separate documents. ○ The TF composition should be accommodative rather than strictly structured, considering the high number of documents the group needs to work on. ○ To simplify the document development process. ○ To provide a clear breakdown of document prioritisation, including required amendments, changes, and a complete timeline. Highlight which documents have already started and which have not.
2	RaCP Workshop	A brief overview of the RaCP workshop was presented during the previous meeting. The workshop's objectives are to align RaCP v2 with the latest updates to the RSPO standard, ensuring its practical applicability, particularly for smallholders. Additionally, the workshop aims to ensure alignment with the new RSPO standard and the integration of prisma.
3	prisma Development Overview	An overview of the prisma system was presented - its development process and its impact on document development. Phase 2 is scheduled for release in June.
4	AoB	JAWG is seeking the endorsement of the BHCVWG for the HCV-HCS methodology to be used in field trials under the Jurisdictional Approach, as required by the JAWG ToR. This endorsement is necessary for the next steps in the group's work.

Minutes:

No.	Agenda	Action
1	<p><u>Opening and welcoming remarks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members were welcomed by the RSPO Secretariat to the 53rd BHCVWG virtual meeting. • The meeting’s housekeeping details and RSPO antitrust policy statement, consensus-based decision-making, and conflict of interest declaration were read. No conflict of interest was raised by the members. • The Secretariat provided updates on changes to the BHCVWG composition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Arie Soetjiadi (HCVN) replaced Ruth Silva (HCVN) ○ Marcus Colchester (FPP) swapped roles with Patrick Anderson (FPP), becoming the alternate while Anderson undertook the substantive role • The Secretariat welcomed a new team member to the RSPO Biodiversity unit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dimas Alfred Prasetia, Biodiversity Manager • The current composition of the BHCVWG was presented. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The seat for the LATAM grower and financial institutions seats are currently vacant. 	
2	<p><u>Confirmation of MoM</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minutes of the 52nd meeting (10 Nov 2024) were presented to the members. The minutes were accepted subject to amendments noted below: <p><i>Feedback/questions from the members:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member emphasised the need to address the social aspect alongside the environmental aspect of the RaCP, as raised during the 52nd meeting. They noted that this was not strongly reflected in the minutes and requested it be strengthened. <p>Previous minutes sentence:</p> <p>“A member questioned whether the consideration document prepared by the Secretariat aimed to outline agreed and pending actions of the RaCP for WG feedback. They expressed concern that the document overlooked social aspects, which had been repeatedly raised in meetings and should be integral to the group's considerations. They</p>	<p>Secretariat to strengthen the text in the 52nd meeting minutes accordingly.</p>

No.	Agenda	Action
	<p>requested that future documents address both social and environmental aspects comprehensively. The Secretariat acknowledged the feedback” - p.5</p> <p>“A member emphasised the importance of ensuring that RaCP V2 integrates both social and environmental aspects. It was noted that there is a social subgroup that would need to be reactivated, with a focus on addressing any remaining issues.” - p.18</p> <p>Amended and strengthened to (bolded):</p> <p>“A member questioned whether the consideration document prepared by the Secretariat aimed to outline agreed and pending actions of the RaCP for WG feedback. They expressed concern that the document overlooked social aspects, which had been repeatedly raised in meetings and should be integral to the group's considerations. They requested that future documents comprehensively address both social and environmental aspects with equal priority. The Secretariat and members agreed, committing to ensuring that social liabilities will be given the same equal priority as environmental liabilities when addressing land cleared without an HCV(-HCS) assessment. Both aspects will be developed simultaneously.”</p> <p>“A member stressed the importance of ensuring that RaCP V2 equally prioritises both social and environmental aspects throughout its development. It was noted that there is a social subgroup that would need to be reactivated, with a focus on addressing any remaining issues.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Note: An email has been sent by the member regarding this point for further details] 	
3	<p><u>Finalising the BHCV ToR, TF Composition and Start Dates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A key area for streamlining the ToR is decision-making, particularly in the absence of a quorum. These challenges arise from the structure of the WG (Working Group), TF (Task Force), and potential TF subgroups under BHCV. Direct references were made to the original ToR during its revision. • Feedback raised during the ToR circulation via email was further addressed: 	

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	<p>1. <i>Reduction of NGO seats</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There is no intention to reduce the number of NGO seats. The reference to "equal representation" in the original ToR was noted as somewhat vague from the Secretariat's standpoint. <p>2. <i>Smallholder Representation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Currently, only CTF2 includes ISH representation - with one organisation (substantive and alternate). There is no actual ISH representation within the BHCV composition. The agreed approach from the last WG meeting was for TFs to handle technical discussions, with decisions made at the WG level. However, for smallholder matters, the absence of ISH representation could undermine the validity of decisions. Secretariat sought advice on whether to proceed with adding a new sector specifically for ISH representation in the composition. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The group reached an overall agreement to include a smallholder seat in the composition (under the Palm Oil Growers Category), recognising its central role in BHCV work. The decision was to begin with one substantive and one alternate member (selected in order of application), with the possibility of expanding if demand increases. However, it was cautioned that increasing the number of seats may complicate meeting attendance and consensus-building, emphasising the importance of finding the right balance. ■ Another member highlighted the need to clarify the type of smallholder representation, such as whether it pertains to cooperatives or institutions. The RSPO definition of smallholder was also mentioned - its criteria could be used when selecting an ISH representative. It was noted that changes affecting smallholder representation would require amendments to the SOP and approval from the SSC. Additionally, it was recommended to identify existing RSPO smallholder members to invite them to join the WG. ■ The current standard-setting SOP categorises smallholder groups under the palm oil growers sector, including larger plantation groups, smallholder groups, associations, and researchers. ■ Regarding the selection process for smallholder representation, the Secretariat sought clarification on whether it should be based on chronological application or require a specific approval process. A member suggested following the NI Task Force 	<p>Secretariat to include an ISH representative (RSPO member) into BHCVWG composition (under the grower category) and to be brought to SSC for approval.</p>

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	<p>alternate can be designated to vote, ensuring their participation is counted as valid in the decision process. The Secretariat to clarify in the ToR that alternates can participate in discussions, while their role in decision-making should be defined and amended as discussed. [Note: To nominate/designate an alternative as a substantive in their absence, it would require notifying the Secretariat and Co-chairs in writing].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In the case of the BHCV Working Group, where some members are also part of CTF2, a conflict of interest must be declared, whether it involves both organisations, only one, or either. ■ It was noted that there are still unfilled sectorial groups and questioned whether the SSC should be informed that efforts are being made to fill these positions or if certain positions should be acknowledged as difficult to fill, with the possibility of proceeding without them. These unanswered questions need to be addressed with the SSC. Secretariat agreed, noting that this situation could impact operational matters, quorum, and the decision-making process. It was pointed out that other WGs have included a caveat stating that work must continue in the absence of certain sectoral representations. However, the current ToR lacks such a caveat. ■ A member noted that the quorum should be based on the seats that are filled. So, 2/3rd of the filled seats need to be present, and efforts should be made to actively fill the remaining seats. Once those seats are filled, the issue will no longer arise, provided they are active and participating. If this is unclear in the ToR, it should be addressed, pending SSC approval. The suggestion is to add a statement clarifying that quorum should be based on filled seats and that there will be active efforts to fill the vacant ones. Additionally, it may be helpful to include a line stating that if not all groups are represented, the existing structure will still stand, covering any potential gaps. ■ It was also noted that retailers have never been discussed as part of the BHCVWG, and it may be worth considering the merit of adding them. However, it was acknowledged that securing retailer participation is challenging. While their inclusion is important, it might prove nearly impossible to achieve. It was suggested that they 	<p>Secretariat to add a statement in the ToR clarifying that quorum is based on filled seats and that the structure remains valid even if some groups are unrepresented.</p> <p>Secretariat to include Retailers in the WG composition</p>

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	<p>remain listed as a potential group - encourage downstream engagement as part of the shared responsibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A question was raised about whether listing smallholders as a separate category would affect quorum rules or if including them under the grower category would make achieving quorum easier. The Secretariat clarified that it would not significantly change the situation, as a quorum is based on the number of substantive members present at a meeting. <p>4. <i>Invited Experts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ With the upcoming document development processes, the attendance of invited experts may be required depending on the topics discussed. The draft ToR currently states that invited experts will not participate in decision-making or voting, and their involvement will be on an as-needed basis. This clause was included because not every BHCVWG meeting will require the same number of experts, and there are financial and logistical implications in inviting them. Additionally, there is no official mechanism for managing invited experts at present. Feedback on this approach was requested. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Questions were raised about whether to establish clear, defined rules for invited experts or leave it open to interpretation as it currently stands. Another point was whether we want to set terms for how long an invited expert should sit in the group, or keep it open. Agreed that there is a need for clearer definitions moving forward. The Secretariat noted that it's important to include procedures for invited experts, especially regarding financial and logistical support, as this needs to be factored into budget reviews. <p>[Note: No decision/agreement was reached for matters related to invited experts during the meeting. Discussion will continue via email.]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A brief walkthrough of the composition for each TF was provided. The three new TFs do not have a similar structure to the BHCVWG and CTF2 (i.e., there are no substantive and alternate roles), and sectoral representation is not fixed. During the nomination process for these TFs, volunteers from BHCV were asked to participate instead of going through sector-specific representatives. All TFs are linked to specific deliverables (e.g., CTF2 focuses on RaCP). Once the 	<p>WG to provide feedback/input on a mechanism or procedure for managing invited experts</p>

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	<p>development process is completed, the TF would need to be disbanded to focus on other document development processes. The inconsistency between the composition of CTF2 and the other TFs was raised, and feedback was requested on how to address this. Clarification was sought regarding the composition structure and the ideal number of members for each TF.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It was agreed and noted that social NGOs need to be engaged in developing these standards. A member explained that FPP will not participate in the CTF2 discussion due to a conflict of interest, as the organisation works with smallholders and communities. ○ For the HCV-HCS M&M TF, both representatives from the growers' sector are currently from the rest of the world. A suggestion was made to add one more representative from Malaysia or Indonesia. A member has volunteered to be added to the composition. ○ It was questioned whether the new TFs have any existing ToR developed. It was clarified that no ToR currently exists. In the last meeting, it was noted that to facilitate each TF's work on the document development process, the Secretariat will prepare documents outlining the objectives, relevant context regarding the standard and compliance, and a list of supplementary references to avoid starting from scratch. If a ToR would be helpful for all TFs, this could be considered pending agreement from members. ○ However, a member noted that the intention was not to have separate ToRs for each TF but rather a single ToR covering everything, with the TFs listed in annexes. It was suggested that the ToR should clarify whether individuals from the same organisation, who are not BHCVWG members, can still be invited in. It was also questioned whether RSPO has a standard approach for such scenarios in working groups. Another pointed out that benchmarking with other groups, could be useful and perhaps follow a similar approach. The Secretariat noted that for CTF2, one ToR was developed, and conflict-of-interest considerations were disseminated as part of it. It was highlighted that a decision on this matter needs to be reached, as it will likely be scrutinised at the SSC level during the approval process. ○ Another noted that while there could be more flexibility for subgroups, TFs are different. TFs are expected to comply with the same requirements unless the ToR explicitly allows for variations and the SSC approves it. It was suggested to keep things simple by including key elements and important information directly in the ToR 	<p>Secretariat to update the HCV-HCVS M&M composition table (include an additional member)</p> <p>Secretariat to clarify in the ToR if individuals from the same organisation but not part of the WG can be included.</p> <p>Secretariat to include key elements and</p>

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	<p>subsection rather than having separate documents since the BHCVWG manages a number of items.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regarding the structure of the TF (i.e., composition), a question was raised about whether it should be flexible or strictly structured. It was noted to be accommodative, given the high number of documents the group needs to work on. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A list of 18 documents that fall under the WG's purview for review or development was presented. A general overview of the document development process, outlining 9 steps and the corresponding timeline was provided. 	<p>information of the TFs in the WG ToR as a subsection</p>																																																																																																	
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9	SSC Approval/Endorsement	Secretariat presenting the document to the SSC	Agreed Guidance																																																																																																

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	<p>deliverables before disbanding and forming a new TF or "subgroup" for the next document development process. Emphasis was placed on having the ToR remain flexible to accommodate future document development that might arise. It was also noted that it depends on what is proposed to the SSC, along with justification.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A concern was raised about the lack of clarity regarding when the current 4 TFs are expected to conclude their work, noting the possibility that it might run for an entire year. Additional concerns were raised about the management of TFs and the WG. It was noted that not all TFs start from the same baseline, as some may already have more progress than others. Additionally, concerns were raised that the Gantt chart does not align with the document development overview table, making it difficult to identify key milestones, such as where the PC is supposed to occur. A suggestion was made to create a clear list of planned activities, specifying expected outputs and timelines. Emphasis was placed on ensuring that the Gantt chart is coherent and practical. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Secretariat clarified the rationale for presenting the document list, highlighting three points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Whether to formalise TF composition and operations. b. The need to consider content and background work, as timelines may vary by document. c. Whether the Secretariat should list necessary amendments to help prioritise tasks. If agreed upon, this would enable the development of a work plan to better understand what can realistically be achieved within 2025. ○ Clarification was sought on the decision to focus on only four documents out of the 18 identified and to work on. Concern was raised about whether the SSC would accept this, given their stringent expectations for completing required amendments, guidance, and supporting documents for the standards. It was emphasised that the Secretariat should provide an overview of the 18 documents/sections, highlighting which ones have already started and which have not. The Secretariat was urged to quickly pull together these nuances, followed by a quick meeting to prioritise and justify the selection to focus, ensuring the WG can respond if questioned by the SSC. It was clarified that the group had agreed in the previous meeting to prioritise the four selected documents. Additionally, it was noted that these four documents were chosen because they directly relate to the group's scope of work. However, concerns were still 	<p>Secretariat to provide an overview of the prioritisation, including amendments and required changes, along with a complete timeline</p>

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	<p>raised regarding the remaining 14 documents, as it had been indicated that the group is responsible for all 18. It was emphasised that a clear justification is needed to explain why the rest do not fall within the group's purview.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A member expressed concern that the ongoing discussions suggest potential delays in developing an adjusted RaCP for Jurisdictional Approaches (JA), which is urgently needed to support Pilot JA schemes in progressing toward compliance. However, this document was not listed in the presented priorities. The Secretariat clarified that the prioritisation was based on what is stipulated in the standard but acknowledged the importance of the JA approach. ○ A member pointed out that the group also need to focus on HFCCs. The Secretariat explained that while the work stream is relevant to BHCVWG, the guidance on HFCCs is now in the preamble of P7 which means that RSPO members will not be audited against this requirement. Requirements that are stipulated in the indicators will need to be prioritized at the moment 	
4	<p><u>RaCP Workshop</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A brief overview of the RaCP workshop discussed in the previous meeting was presented. The workshop aims to achieve two key objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Align RaCP v2 with RSPO updates and ensure practical applicability (particularly for smallholders) ○ Ensure alignment with the new RSPO standard and prisma integration. ● The workshop design was planned around issues previously analysed and identified as needing to be addressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strengthen data integration across RSPO systems ○ Refine approval and corrective measures procedures to enhance clarity and fairness ○ Improve document structure to facilitate ease of implementation ○ Clarify scope and applicability to ensure practical and effective adoption ● The proposed participants include CTF2 members and RSPO Secretariat representatives (prisma Team, Assurance, and Technical/Smallholders). Proposed invited experts are the Certification Body/ASI, HCSA, SEARRP, and additional ISH representatives. Suggestions from the WG for additional invited experts were welcomed as well. 	<p>Secretariat to share the workshop overview, agenda, and proposed dates for BHCVWG feedback.</p>

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5	<p><u>prisma Development Overview</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of the prisma system, presented by Agridence (a development partner), covered its development process and implications for the document development process. Additionally, prisma's Phase 1 achievements and expectations for Phase 2, slated for release in June, were presented. • prisma integrates siloed processes for seamless data sharing. Disclosure data, often isolated during pre-membership or pre-certification, will now be accessible for audits, LUCA assessments, remediation, NPP submissions, and peatland inventories. If required, disclosure data will feed into the LUCA process and, if necessary, guide the remediation and compensation plan. • prisma aims to simplify member submissions and ensure data alignment across processes. It enables seamless data flow, enhancing integrity and helping members track submissions. Verified disclosures are stored as non-editable data in the Entity Management database, accessible to both the Secretariat and members. The system will digitise current Excel and email-based submissions, fostering transparency, communication efficiency, and accountability. <p><i>Feedback/questions from the members:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A concern was raised about resubmitting previous disclosures, with growers questioning why the Secretariat couldn't handle it, given the numerous past revisions. Agridence representative assured that past decisions would remain unchanged. The resubmission is solely to verify data accuracy and alignment, with no further back-and-forth. This step ensures accurate data for future prisma audits. • A member stressed sharing insights with the BHCV Secretariat to expedite RaCP process enhancements. They noted that addressing delays in RaCP approvals would be highly valued. Agridence acknowledged this and would have ongoing communication with both groups, gathering requirements, and identifying pain points (e.g. delays in RaCP) while noting developing a proper solution could take time. • Concerns were raised despite reassurances about resubmissions not affecting past decisions. Growers highlighted that disclosures from 2014 and 2015 might be unavailable due to personnel or system changes. They 	<p>Secretariat to circulate the deck presented by Agridence.</p>

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	<p>suggested an option to KIV missing data or make decisions without issue, fearing impacts on site recertifications. Feedback also noted the complexity of submissions, including extensive information requirements and land title challenges for estates with many titles. Agridence acknowledged these concerns and committed to collaborating with the RSPO Integrity team to find solutions.</p> <p>[Note: Suggestion was made to have a separate session with a wider audience (i.e., outside BHCVWG) to discuss matters related to prisma]</p>	
6	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>1. <i>HCV-HCS Methodology and Jurisdictional Approach</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A request was made from JAWG regarding the methodology on HCV-HCS. As outlined in the JAWG ToR, endorsement from the BHCVWG is required. A subgroup consisting of members from both BHCVWG and JAWG reviewed the draft methodology from HCVN and agreed it is suitable for field testing and submission for SSC endorsement. However, as per the ToR, formal endorsement from both BHCVWG and JAWG is required. ● Relevant documents to be shared, with a couple of weeks allocated for feedback from BHCVWG members. If no feedback is received by the deadline, it will be assumed there are no objections, and the process will proceed. <p>2. <i>2025 BHCVWG Meeting Dates</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meeting date options for 2025 to be circulated via email for selection. 	<p>Secretariat to share relevant documents. WG to provide feedback, if any.</p> <p>Secretariat to email 2025 BHCWG meeting date selection</p>
7	<p><u>End of meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The RSPO Secretariat thanked all the members for their participation in the meeting, and the meeting was adjourned. 	