

## IPBES-1 HIGHLIGHTS TUESDAY, 22 JANUARY 2013

IPBES-1 met for its second day in Bonn, Germany, on Tuesday, 22 January 2013.

In the morning, delegates continued their deliberations on the initial work programme of IPBES, discussing the role of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP) in overseeing the preparation of the initial work programme, and possible institutional arrangements for the implementation of the work programme. They also debated a joint proposal by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) on administering the IPBES Secretariat.

In the afternoon, delegates started discussing financial and budgetary arrangements. A contact group on rules and procedures and an open-ended informal group on the link between IPBES and the UN system also met.

### INITIAL WORK PROGRAMME OF THE PLATFORM

**ROLE OF THE MEP IN OVERSEEING THE PREPARATION OF THE INITIAL WORK PROGRAMME:** Delegates discussed document IPBES/1/2. Many delegations stressed the need to guarantee the independence of the MEP and for the MEP to focus on science, leaving political considerations to the Bureau and the Plenary.

Ireland, for the EU's IPBES members, supported by BRAZIL and ETHIOPIA, said the MEP should represent different knowledge systems and disciplines, and, supported by CHILE, noted that regions not represented, such as the Antarctic and high seas regions, should be taken into account when appropriate. CANADA, supported by COLOMBIA highlighted the need to prioritize the activities of the MEP. MALAYSIA, supported by THAILAND and SOUTH AFRICA, stressed the need for the Plenary to provide the MEP with appropriate guidance, while assuring its independence.

BOLIVIA, supported by PERU, CHILE, MEXICO, COLOMBIA, BRAZIL and JAPAN, highlighted adopting a regional network structure. AUSTRALIA advocated integrating new regional structures with existing ones.

FIJI said scientific assessments should take into account local conservation efforts. INDONESIA and NEPAL stressed the need to ensure financial support for full participation of all members in the MEP. MEXICO supported separate MEP working groups to conduct assessments and support IPBES work on capacity building. The US said IPBES-1 should focus on the terms of reference for the MEP and its working groups, and, with KENYA, felt other issues can be addressed intersessionally. JAPAN identified capacity building as a priority of IPBES and called for a bottom-up approach. ETHIOPIA, supported by

MALAYSIA, highlighted the need of developing countries to benefit from IPBES in terms of technology transfer and capacity building.

The INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE (ICSU) approved of the tasks allocated to the MEP in the intersessional period before IPBES-2. The LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES reported on a resolution accepted by Arab Ministers in December 2012 highlighting the importance of capacity building for biodiversity conservation and adequate facilitation for participation of all States in IPBES.

### POSSIBLE INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME:

Many participants highlighted the importance of operationalizing IPBES as soon as possible. NORWAY, supported by COLOMBIA, PERU and CHILE stressed that a decision on the establishment of working groups should follow a decision on the work programme, with COLOMBIA, supported by MALAYSIA, highlighting that the proposed options for the establishment of working groups are not mutually exclusive. COTE D'IVOIRE stressed the need to reduce overlap between the working groups. ICSU cautioned against establishing too many working groups, also suggesting membership should be guided by scientific excellence and policy relevance. INDIA preferred working groups organized according to the four main functions of IPBES. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA stated knowledge generation and policy support are closely related.

BRAZIL, supported by SOUTH AFRICA and INDONESIA, but opposed by INDIA, supported regional structures for IPBES work. BOLIVIA, COSTA RICA and NEPAL supported a decentralized MEP structure. The INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE (IUCN) noted the Busan Principle on collaboration with other organizations in order to expedite the IPBES work programme. The LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES said the economic value of biodiversity has been underestimated in the Arab Region.

Session Chair Alfred Apau Oteng-Yeboah (Ghana) established a contact group, chaired by Zakri Abdul Hamid (Malaysia) and Ivar Andreas Baste (Norway), to discuss these issues later in the week.

### INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

**SECRETARIAT:** The Secretariat presented document IPBES/1/7/Rev.1 (joint proposal on administering the IPBES Secretariat by UNEP, UNESCO, FAO and UNDP).

Salvatore Arico, UNESCO, on behalf of the four UN agencies, highlighted collaborative arrangements for administrative work including: a senior management group with administrative roles; that the trust fund be managed through the Multi-Partner Trust Fund office of UNDP; and that recruitment of IPBES staff follow UNEP rules.



COLOMBIA, supported by IRAN, ETHIOPIA, LIBERIA, NEPAL, UGANDA, ECUADOR, NEPAL and TURKEY, preferred linking IPBES to UNEP only, for reasons of efficiency. SWITZERLAND acknowledged the added value of all four UN organizations, and, with NIGERIA, COLOMBIA and ZIMBABWE, suggested that UNEP be the lead agency. JAPAN and FIJI said the proposal still lacked clarification on the type of support the UN agencies would provide.

SWITZERLAND, supported by Ireland for the EU's IPBES members, NORWAY and the US, requested clarification on the role of the management group comprised of senior staff from each of the organizations. BRAZIL supported the establishment of the management group and requested clarification on the relationship between the different regional structures. Ireland, for the EU's IPBES members, supported by NORWAY, found a decision on regional structures premature, and urged for the IPBES Secretary to be recruited as soon as possible. FIJI emphasized that the multidisciplinary nature of IPBES requires different expertise, noting different UN institutional strengths in different regions.

The US asked clarification on which agency would be responsible as employer, the added value of having multiple agencies involved and the UNDP administration of the trust fund, and suggested, supported by NIGERIA, it would be premature to decide on the composition of the Secretariat before a decision on the work programme has been taken. ARGENTINA, supported by JAPAN, asked for clarification on the overhead, with JAPAN, opposed by BRAZIL and ETHIOPIA, requesting the Plenary to be engaged in the recruitment of the Secretary.

Caroline Petersen, UNDP, and Ibrahim Thiaw, UNEP, on behalf of the four UN agencies, clarified that: UNEP would be responsible for staff recruitment in consultation with the other agencies and the IPBES Bureau; the proposal of the four agencies was developed in response to requests from the meetings in Busan, Nairobi and Panama; and the agencies would also be involved in the implementation of the work programme. They also proposed to change the name 'management group' to 'administrative oversight group'. NORWAY did not support the name change, because of the importance of the involvement of senior management.

SOUTH AFRICA suggested a cost-benefit analysis of the joint proposal. GRENADA, supported by CHILE and ETHIOPIA, urged for the Plenary to assign tasks to UNEP, with ETHIOPIA also requesting UNEP to proceed with the employment of the Secretariat. ARGENTINA suggested establishing a Friends of the Chair group to discuss the issue. In response, Chair Oteng-Yeboah announced the Bureau would come back to the Plenary with a proposal on how to take the issue forward.

**LINK BETWEEN THE PLATFORM AND THE UN SYSTEM:** An open-ended informal group, established by the Bureau and facilitated by Spencer Thomas (Grenada), met in the evening to discuss the link between IPBES and the UN system (IPBES/1/11). Delegates discussed how to ensure the scientific independence of IPBES and the involvement of the four UN agencies with the work of IPBES, noting that the precise role of these agencies will need to be decided by the Plenary. Delegates also discussed requesting the Bureau to continue this discussion and report to IPBES-2. Thomas said he would report on the group's discussions in the Plenary.

#### **FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY ARRANGEMENTS**

**FINANCIAL PROCEDURES:** The Secretariat presented the relevant document (IPBES/1/6). ARGENTINA questioned the basis for a 20% leeway that the Secretariat would have over the

budget reallocation. The Secretariat responded that this proposal, as well as the one on miscellaneous funds, had been lifted from the IPCC financial procedures, which formed the basis of the current document.

Ireland, for the EU's IPBES members, advocated using the euro as the currency. The US supported the budget, and noted that in-kind contributions should be subject to Memorandums of Understanding. BOLIVIA called for clarification on the form and possible sources of miscellaneous income.

**INITIAL BUDGET OF THE PLATFORM:** Neville Ash, UNEP, introduced the document (IPBES/1/10). NEW ZEALAND, supported by NORWAY, CANADA and SWITZERLAND, acknowledged the need to budget multiple meetings for the Bureau and the MEP, especially in the early phase, but felt budgeted figures need to be clarified. JAPAN expressed its support to IPBES, but questioned whether efficiency could be improved, suggesting reducing travel and using communication technologies to hold virtual meetings. NORWAY, supported by the US, suggested the IPBES Secretariat should reflect the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Secretariat in its level of staffing and salary.

ARGENTINA asked for clarification regarding draft financial procedures, noting possible contradictions in various documents. The US pointed to high figures for certain activities, including communication activities and Plenary costs. Neville Ash clarified budgetary figures, including that Plenary budgets reflect expenses of past meetings, and suggested that staffing reflect the broad nature of IPBES activities.

#### **RULES AND PROCEDURES**

Chair Oteng-Yeboah established a contact group on the rules and procedures for the operations of the Plenary of IPBES (IPBES/1/3), co-chaired by Robert Watson (UK) and Leonel Sierralta Jara (Chile). This contact group met during lunchtime and following the afternoon Plenary. Delegates debated, among other things, whether the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Bureau should also be full members of the MEP, and whether MEP members should be elected in their personal capacity. Although some progress was made, the group did not reach agreement on these items, and Co-Chair Watson decided to reconsider these and other issues on Wednesday.

#### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

Issues regarding the composition of the MEP were a source of constant exasperation among delegates on the second day of IPBES-1. One delegate noted a feeling of "déjà vu", recalling similar long-winded debates in Panama, including on the issue of geographical representation. According to some delegates, the MEP's independence relies on ensuring its non-political basis, with one delegate stating "if the MEP becomes politicized, we will be in the same predicament as the CBD SBSTTA, whose meetings have almost transformed into mini COPs rather than meetings of technical biodiversity experts." Others felt the terms of reference for the MEP's work should be the main focus of this meeting, preferring issues such as geographical representation to be tackled intersessionally.

An additional concern was to ensure the multidisciplinary composition of the Panel. Some delegates echoed the concern raised in the Plenary that the MEP should comprise a balanced assortment of scientific viewpoints: not only natural sciences should be represented, but also social sciences, allowing the MEP members to collectively understand the underlying causes of a particular biodiversity concern and advise on how to appropriately address it.