



IPBES-4 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2016

IPBES-4 delegates met in plenary during the morning and early afternoon for an initial exchange of views on scoping reports for: a global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services; a methodological assessment on the diverse conceptualization of multiple values of nature and its benefits; a thematic assessment on invasive alien species (IAS); and a thematic assessment on the sustainable use of biodiversity. Delegates also took note of, and provided initial comments on, the following agenda items: tools for policy support; the 2016-2017 budget; nomination of bureau members; rules of procedure; procedures for review of the Platform; observers; and communications, stakeholder engagement and strategic partnerships. IPBES-4 Chair Zakri then established two contact groups which met in the afternoon and in the evening to continue discussions on these items.

Contact Group I engaged in negotiation of the SPM for the pollination, pollinators and food production assessment. Contact Group II discussed the scoping report for a global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

PLENARY

The Secretariat introduced the scoping reports for future assessments under the IPBES work programme, documentation on policy support and methodologies, and the budget.

GLOBAL ASSESSMENT: Delegates commented on documents IPBES/4/8 and INF/8 on the scoping report for a global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The US noted its reluctance to approve a global assessment that goes beyond evaluating existing evidence, noting they would not agree to any assessment until an agreement had been reached on a fully elucidated budget. GRULAC cautioned against overlap with the first World Ocean Assessment. The EU IPBES MEMBERS suggested that improved definitions of the relevant policy questions could improve the assessment's relevance to policy makers. NORWAY welcomed links to the SDGs and proposed informing the High-Level Political Forum of IPBES' work. PAKISTAN suggested the global assessment draw on national reporting requirements. NEPAL urged ensuring the linkages between the assessments and sustainable development.

BRAZIL stressed that the assessment use available information, and scenario and modeling efforts that are already underway. The AFRICAN GROUP called for integrating IPBES' regional and thematic assessments.

SWITZERLAND said there is a need for clear information in the baselines on the levels of biodiversity, ecosystems and ecosystem services from which the trends are evaluated.

ASSESSMENT OF VALUES: Delegates considered documents IPBES/4/9 and INF/13 on the revised scoping report for a methodological assessment on the diverse conceptualization of multiple values of nature and its benefits.

Noting the cross-cutting nature of the assessment across all IPBES deliverables, The AFRICAN GROUP stressed the report's importance. The US expressed concern that the assessment's scope is too broad and, opposed by IIFBES, would not provide value to current decision-making. GERMANY, supported by the UK, proposed postponing this activity until the completion of regional and sub-regional assessments in order to benefit from the latter's findings. JAPAN said prioritization of work in these assessments should be subject to available resources.

MOROCCO said revised guidelines will be instrumental to implement national work programmes and noted the assessments relevance to achieving Aichi Biodiversity Target 1 on raising awareness of the values of biodiversity. BOTSWANA called for valuation of natural resources or natural capital, to be mainstreamed into economic and development policies.

ETHIOPIA noted the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) has taken a decision on valuing the natural capacity of the region.

STAKEHOLDERS and IUCN affirmed that the assessment is essential to the work and purpose of the IPBES. FUTURE EARTH noted the contribution it can make to the global assessment.

INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES: Delegates considered documents IPBES/4/10 and INF/12 on the scoping report for a thematic assessment on IAS.

The US called for narrowing the scope. BRAZIL suggested that workers responsible for health and epidemiology be included in the list of relevant stakeholders. GERMANY said tourism should be included as a driver of IAS. MEXICO and NEW ZEALAND called for prioritizing this assessment. NORWAY suggested the thematic assessment on IAS could be part of the global assessment.

JAPAN called for more work on controlling the spread of established IAS. INDONESIA said states continue to lack guidance in controlling transboundary movement of IAS. ECUADOR noted the topic of international trade as relevant. GUATEMALA said legal regulations regarding the management of IAS should be considered.

SUSTAINABLE USE OF BIODIVERSITY: Delegates considered documents IPBES/4/11 and INF/12 on the scoping report for a thematic assessment on sustainable use of biodiversity.

BOLIVIA lamented the report lacks a reflection of sustainable use of biodiversity "in its totality," such as a holistic and integrated social approach to living in harmony with nature. The US suggested that this assessment be taken up under the second work programme. BRAZIL said that while the scoping



was adequate, there should be more emphasis on lessons learned. THE AFRICAN GROUP said the assessment's results should be "easy to incorporate in national development plans."

MEXICO with URUGUAY called for collaboration with CITES work on sustainable use. FRANCE noted the need for long-term monitoring and evaluation in this area. ETHIOPIA opposed limiting the species under consideration to just wild species. PAKISTAN suggested that the assessment be aligned with the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Use (ABS Protocol) to enhance the Protocol's implementation.

POLICY SUPPORT: Delegates considered documents IPBES/4/12 and INF/14 on work on policy support tools and methodologies.

BUDGET: Delegates commented on document IPBES/4/13 and 13/Add.1 outlining the budget and expenditure 2014-2018, including a proposed revised budget for the 2016-2017 biennium. BELGIUM, FRANCE, the UK, SWEDEN, JAPAN, NORWAY and SWITZERLAND pledged financial support for the 2016-2018 biennium. ETHIOPIA said they would be willing to host assessment meetings in Addis Ababa. Several countries also called for increased efficiency and prioritization of activities, with some supporting a timely delivery of the global assessment.

URUGUAY, ARGENTINA, MEXICO, BRAZIL, ECUADOR and GUATEMALA supported the idea of holding IPBES plenary meetings every two years. The AFRICAN GROUP said while they support e-conferences to save funds, this should be coupled with face-to-face meetings on more technical issues, such as sustainable use.

RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE OPERATION OF THE PLATFORM: Nomination and Selection of the Bureau:

Delegates considered documents IPBES/4/14, INF/17 and INF/17/Add.1-5. Norway, for the WESTERN EUROPEAN AND OTHERS GROUP (WEOG), nominated Robert Watson (the UK) and Ivar Baste (Norway). Chair Zakri called for further nomination by Friday.

Procedures for the Preparation of the Platform's Deliverables:

The Secretariat introduced the draft procedures (IPBES/4/7 and 15). SWITZERLAND requested clarification on whether experts identified by the MEP would be "obligatorily supported by his or her government or institution."

Procedure for the review of the Platform: The Secretariat introduced its note on the proposed procedure (IPBES/4/16) and summarized comments received.

BRAZIL advocated that review teams should participate in IPBES Plenary sessions, and suggested dispensing with an external review team for the midterm review. The EU IPBES MEMBERS agreed, stating that an internal midterm review could serve as input for the final external review. The US proposed a single external independent review body, which could include a member of the Platform. JAPAN suggested cancelling the midterm review.

The AFRICAN GROUP emphasized the review should focus on IPBES' policy functions. SWITZERLAND stressed that governments must be able to submit views on the review, which can be considered collectively thereafter. The INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE (ICSU) presented its background and expertise.

Policy and procedures for the admission of observers:

Observing divergent views on this item (IPBES/4/17), Chair Zakri proposed, and delegates agreed, that IPBES-4 continues using the interim procedures for the admission of observers.

COMMUNICATIONS, STAKEHOLDER

ENGAGEMENT AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS:

Delegates took note of documents IPBES/4/18 and INF/19, including a draft memorandum of cooperation with biodiversity-related conventions and processes. UNDP provided an overview of the activities that the four partner organizations UNDP,

FAO, UNEP and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have conducted, including on capacity building and ILK.

CONTACT GROUP I

POLLINATION ASSESSMENT: Contact Group Chair Bob Watson outlined the rules of engagement for negotiating the SPM on pollination, pollinators and food production calling on governments to make specific interventions based on evidence presented in the background report. He said the assessment Chair, supported by the chapter lead authors' will respond to comments and make proposals to accommodate concerns. Regarding areas in which there is little research with conflicting results, he suggested using the word "inconclusive" instead of "speculative" to avoid misinterpretations.

Delegates then engaged in line-by-line negotiations of the draft SPM. They agreed to several paragraphs summarizing background information on the role of pollinators for food production with minor changes to clarify the meanings. Diverging views emerged on text referring to the linkage between pollination services and human health. Negotiations continued into the night.

CONTACT GROUP II

GLOBAL ASSESSMENT: Co-Chair Ivar Baste (Norway) summarized general comments presented during plenary and discussions followed, paragraph by paragraph. On the scope of the assessment, some participants said that while the fifth Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO5) would benefit from the global assessment, being less prescriptive in assessing progress in achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets could avoid duplication of work. Others underscored the need to ensure a full glossary. Some participants suggested streamlining and "de-jargonizing" the text to make the document more accessible. One participant cautioned against the scope becoming too policy prescriptive. Participants also called for including reference to: diverse knowledge systems; demographic projections that are drivers of ecosystem change; health; development planning; happiness; and harmonious relationships between society and nature.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates arrived at IPBES-4 on Tuesday morning, following the previous evening's reception, lauding their Malaysian hosts for their impeccable hospitality. Many of them, however, were hoping that the previous night's celebrations would help "loosen delegates up" so that discussions could move from plenary to the contact groups to start negotiating the all-important summaries for policy makers. First, however, delegates had to consider the issue of budgets.

Having been tasked with homework by IPBES vice-Chair Oteng-Yoboah, many came prepared with their pledges. All the same, despite the pledges of money and in-kind support, one delegate was heard saying that "more rigorous fund raising mechanisms are needed to reduce IPBES' reliance on pledges. Others opined that pledges, if met, were a sure and stable basis for budgeting.

Plenary discussions continued swiftly providing only a glimpse of the issues expected to arise in contact groups. When contact groups did convene, a similar tempo was not appreciated by some delegates in the contact groups. "There is no need to be rushed through the line-by-line negotiations" one observer said. Others commented that "some obvious textual instances for deletion from this document should not be resisted when more details are better placed in the assessment."

Leaving the venue in the shadow of dazzling Petronas towers, heading into the dark night, one group of experts exchanged their appreciation that negotiations did not begin contentiously." One expert involved in the assessment contemplating the scrutiny of the document said "I have not felt such nervous anticipation in a long time, not even during external review of the drafts."