

SUMMARY OF THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE PLENARY OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL SCIENCE-POLICY PLATFORM ON BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES: 17-24 MARCH 2018

The sixth session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES-6) was held from 18-23 March 2018 in Medellín, Colombia. It was preceded by the IPBES-6 Stakeholder Day on 17 March 2018. More than 700 participants attended the meeting, representing IPBES member and non-member governments, UN agencies and convention secretariats, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs), and stakeholder groups.

Highlights of the meeting included:

- approval of the summaries for policy makers (SPMs) and the report chapters of four regional assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem services in Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia;
- approval of the SPM and report chapters of a thematic assessment on land degradation and restoration;
- a decision on implementation of the first work programme, including the initiation of work on two new assessments in 2018 on the sustainable use of wild species, and on tools and methodologies regarding multiple values of biodiversity to human societies; and the initiation of an assessment on invasive alien species in 2019; and
- a decision on development of a strategic framework up to 2030 and elements of a rolling work programme.

Delegates celebrated the meeting as a major milestone in the history of IPBES, noting the approval of these assessments will enhance the Platform's impact and assist policy makers around the world in developing actions to protect biodiversity and conserve or enhance nature's contributions to people. Delegates also noted that the decision to initiate work on three pending assessments in 2018 and 2019, and the beginning of discussions on a strategic framework and a rolling plan of action have set the stage for the continued development and growth of the Platform.

The five IPBES assessments are expected to inform several international events, including the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2018, which will review, among others, progress on Sustainable Development Goal 15 (Life on land), and the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP14) to be held in November 2018. The regional assessments will also inform

the global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services to be approved at IPBES-7 in May 2019. The global assessment, in turn, will be an important source of information for the fifth edition of the CBD Global Biodiversity Outlook and for the review of implementation of the CBD Strategic Plan 2011-2020 and the development of a Strategic Plan beyond 2020.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF IPBES

The Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services is an independent, intergovernmental body, established in 2012, to provide evidence-based, objective, and policy-relevant information to decision makers regarding the planet's biodiversity, ecosystems, and the benefits they provide to people. The Platform's work is divided into four functions:

- developing assessments on specific themes or methodological issues at the global and regional scales;
- providing policy support through the development of tools and methodologies, and facilitating their use;
- building the capacity and knowledge of member states; and
- ensuring impact through an effective communication and outreach strategy.

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The Platform's main governing body is the IPBES Plenary composed of representatives of member states. Non-member states, UN organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other organizations can attend as observers. The work of the Plenary is supported by the Bureau overseeing the Platform's administrative functions and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP), overseeing the Platform's scientific and technical functions.

As of March 2018, the Platform had 129 member states.

IPBES was established in 2012 as a result of a consultative process initiated in response to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA). Conducted from 2001 to 2005, the MA provided the first state-of-the-art scientific appraisal of the conditions and trends in the world's ecosystems and the services they provide, as well as the scientific basis for action to conserve and use them sustainably. Among other conclusions, the MA showed that biodiversity and ecosystem services are declining at an unprecedented rate.

Recognizing the need for strengthening the dialogue between the scientific community, governments, and other stakeholders on biodiversity and ecosystem services, the Paris Conference on Biodiversity, Science and Governance (January 2005) proposed to initiate consultations to assess the need, scope, and possible form of an international mechanism of scientific expertise on biodiversity as part of the MA follow-up process.

IMOSEB PROCESS: Supported by the Government of France, the consultative process on an International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB) was conducted through an International Steering Committee and a series of regional consultations from 2005 to 2007. At its final meeting in November 2007, the Steering Committee invited donors and governments to provide support for the further consideration of the establishment of a science-policy interface. It also invited the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and others to convene a meeting to consider establishing such an interface.

Following this invitation, stakeholders also agreed that the follow-up to the IMoSEB process and the MA follow-up process initiated under UNEP in 2007 should merge. A joint meeting took place in March 2008 to develop a common approach. In the same year, the ninth Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) considered IMoSEB outcome and the IPBES concept note. The COP welcomed the decision of the UNEP Executive Director to convene an *Ad hoc* Intergovernmental and Multi-Stakeholder Meeting on an IPBES and requested the CBD *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Review of Implementation to consider the meeting's outcomes.

AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PROCESS: From 2008 to 2010, the establishment of a science-policy interface was further discussed in a series of *Ad hoc* Intergovernmental Multi-Stakeholder Meetings. The first meeting (November 2008, Putrajaya, Malaysia) recommended that UNEP undertake a preliminary gap analysis on existing interfaces on biodiversity and ecosystem services to facilitate the discussions. The second meeting (October 2009, Nairobi, Kenya) considered the findings of the gap analysis and developed options to strengthen the science-policy interface, and functions and possible governance structures of an IPBES.

At the third meeting (June 2010, Busan, Republic of Korea), delegates agreed to establish an IPBES. They adopted the Busan Outcome, which recommended inviting the UN General Assembly (UNGA) to consider the conclusions of the meeting and take appropriate action for establishing an IPBES. The sixty-fifth session of the UNGA (December 2010) requested UNEP to fully operationalize the platform and convene a plenary meeting to determine the modalities and institutional arrangements for the platform at the earliest opportunity. The 26th session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (February 2011, Nairobi, Kenya) also called for convening a plenary session for an IPBES.

PLENARY FOR AN IPBES: The modalities and institutional arrangements for IPBES were negotiated at two sessions of an intergovernmental "Plenary for an IPBES," established as an interim body. At the first session (October 2011, Nairobi, Kenya), delegates considered the platform's functions and operating principles, work programme, legal issues relating to its establishment and operationalization, and the criteria for selecting host institutions and the physical location of the Secretariat. At the second session (April 2012, Panama City, Panama), delegates considered functions and structures of bodies that might be established under the platform, rules of procedure, and the platform's work programme. Delegates selected Bonn, Germany, as the physical location of the IPBES Secretariat and adopted a resolution establishing IPBES.

STAKEHOLDER DAYS: To continue to provide a forum for stakeholder engagement after the establishment of IPBES as an intergovernmental forum, Stakeholder Days have been organized prior to every session of the IPBES Plenary. Stakeholder Days bring together stakeholders from scientific communities, indigenous and local communities and civil society organizations to receive updates about the work and intersessional activities of IPBES, exchange views regarding the issues on the IPBES agenda, and coordinate general statements and positions on specific issues.

Previous Stakeholder Days have addressed, among other issues: IPBES' stakeholder engagement strategy and its initial implementation plan; lessons learned from stakeholder involvement at previous IPBES Plenary sessions; coordination of stakeholder activities during intersessional periods; concrete proposals for stakeholder contributions to the IPBES work programme; experiences from the first assessments conducted by the Platform; documents on admission of observers and conflict of interest procedures; and the creation of an open-ended inclusive network of IPBES stakeholders.

IPBES-1: At its first session (January 2013, Bonn, Germany), the Plenary elected the IPBES Chair, the Bureau, and the MEP; and adopted an initial budget.

IPBES-2: At its second session (December 2013, Antalya, Turkey), the Plenary adopted the Antalya Consensus, which included decisions on the development of a work programme for 2014-2018, including fast-tracking thematic, regional and sub-regional assessments, and activities for capacity building. Delegates also adopted a conceptual framework considering different knowledge systems, and rules and procedures for the Platform on, *inter alia*, the preparation of the Platform's assessments and other deliverables. Delegates also approved the undertaking of a thematic assessment on pollinators, pollination, and food production, and a methodological assessment on scenarios and models of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

IPBES-3: At its third session (January 2015, Bonn, Germany), Plenary adopted:

- the work programme for 2014-2018;
- a stakeholder engagement strategy;
- a communications and outreach strategy; and
- rules of procedure for the Platform on, *inter alia*, the conflict of interest policy.

Delegates also approved the undertaking of four regional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia, as well as a thematic assessment on land degradation and restoration.

IPBES-4: At its fourth session (22-28 February 2016, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), the Plenary approved the Platform's first assessments and SPMs: a Thematic Assessment on Pollinators, Pollination, and Food Production; and a Methodological Assessment on Scenarios and Models of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. The meeting launched the global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services and considered scoping reports for: a methodological assessment on diverse conceptualization of multiple values of nature and its benefits; and thematic assessments on invasive alien species and sustainable use of wild species. Delegates also adopted decisions on, *inter alia*:

- financial and budgetary arrangements;
- communication, stakeholder engagement, and strategic partnerships;
- a draft set of procedures for working with indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) systems;
- draft additional procedures to fill gaps in experts; and
- terms of reference for the further development of tools and methodologies regarding scenarios and models.

IPBES-5: The fifth session of the IPBES Plenary (6-10 March 2017, Bonn, Germany) adopted decisions on, *inter alia*: capacity building; policy support tools and methodologies; development of a second work programme; ILK; the scoping report for a thematic assessment on the sustainable use of wild species; review of the Platform; and the budget. The meeting was dominated by discussions around the budget and related concerns on whether three pending assessments in the Platform's first work programme could be initiated and in what order, and whether funds would be sufficient to initiate all three. Delegates decided to prioritize the completion of ongoing assessments and to postpone initiation of new assessments to IPBES-6.

IPBES-6 REPORT

The opening ceremony of IPBES-6 was held on Saturday evening, 17 March 2018, with welcoming remarks by Federico Gutiérrez Zuluaga, Mayor of Medellín, Colombia, IPBES Executive Secretary Anne Larigauderie, and IPBES Chair Robert Watson. UN Environment Executive Director Erik Solheim addressed the event via video message.

In a keynote address, President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, Colombia, highlighted several ongoing efforts to restore and preserve biodiversity throughout Colombia, a mega-biodiverse nation, *inter alia*: increasing the number of terrestrial protected areas by 14% and marine protected areas by 13%; and regional efforts to protect marine corridors of the Andes, the Amazon and the Atlantic.

Earlier in the day, the IPBES Stakeholder Day convened, providing an opportunity for non-governmental stakeholders to discuss their engagement in the Plenary session.

Highlights of the event included discussions on:

- enhancing the impact of IPBES assessments, including through capacity building for uptake and a new online tool to track assessment impact;
- the role of the participatory mechanism in incorporating ILK in assessments, and the need to address barriers to full participation of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs);
- challenges in ensuring the policy relevance of assessments, and interpreting and communicating their findings; and
- next steps in implementing the IPBES Capacity-building Rolling Plan and how to prioritize requests for capacity building.

A more detailed summary of these discussions is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/download/pdf/enb3135e.pdf>

OPENING PLENARY

On Sunday morning, 18 March, IPBES Chair Robert Watson (UK) opened the session. In their opening statements, regional representatives acknowledged achievements of IPBES despite financial, data, and human resource constraints. They also highlighted specific areas in the four regional assessments and the assessment on land degradation and restoration that would need to be refined, such as references to trade and climate change.

Other statements addressed the need to:

- improve methodological guidance;
- increase the participation of IPLCs and the incorporation of ILK;
- initiate work on the pending assessments on invasive alien species, the sustainable use of wild species, and diverse conceptualizations of multiple values of nature; and
- begin developing the Platform's second work programme.

Members then adopted the meeting's agenda and organization of work (IPBES/6/1), adding an item on the election of the Bureau including discussions on the sequence of the next three regions to nominate the Platform's Chair.

The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), also on behalf of UNEP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), introduced a progress report on the UN collaborative partnership arrangement (IPBES/5/INF/24), and reiterated their commitment to support IPBES and countries in their implementation of actions to address the findings of IPBES' assessments. The Plenary took note of the information presented.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIRST WORK PROGRAMME

In her report on progress in implementing the work programme (IPBES/6/2 and IPBES/6/INF/12-22), Executive Secretary Anne Larigauderie highlighted: progress in strengthening national and regional capacities; implementation of the ILK approach in the context of the global assessment and development of relevant methodological guidance; indicators for IPBES assessments; and improvements in stakeholder engagement and outreach.

Global Assessment Co-Chair Sandra Díaz (Argentina) reported on progress (IPBES/6/INF/11), noting the global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services will build on the regional assessments, the land degradation and restoration assessment, and the pollinators assessment.

On Friday, a contact group co-chaired by Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (Ghana) and Robert Watson (UK) discussed a draft decision on the implementation of the IPBES Work Programme

(IPBES/6/1/Add.2). Delegates decided to, among other issues: include references to improving the integration, transparency, accountability, and coherence of the work programme; and hold consultations with IPLCs on the application of the participatory mechanism.

Delegates also agreed that lessons learned from previous assessments by IPBES and other bodies should inform the global assessment, including regarding the concept of nature's contributions to people, which they described as an evolving concept. Other issues discussed by the group included:

- the need to ensure that results and lessons learned from completed assessments inform the global assessment;
- conducting an additional review of the SPM of the global assessment; and
- hiring scientific communicators to support the drafting of the SPM.

On Saturday, in plenary, delegates considered draft decision IPBES/6/L.10. They adopted Sections I (Implementation of the first work programme of the Platform); III (Knowledge foundations); VII (Catalogue of policy tools and methodologies); and IX (Technical support for the work programme), without amendments.

On Section II (Capacity building), delegates agreed to organize a capacity-building workshop for IPBES National Focal Points to facilitate greater engagement of governments in the review of the second order draft of the global assessment.

Final Outcome: In the decision on the implementation of the first work programme of the Platform (IPBES/6/L.10), the Plenary agrees to proceed with its implementation in accordance with relevant decisions adopted at previous sessions and requests the MEP and the Bureau to consider how to improve the integration and coherence of the work programme.

On capacity building, the Plenary requests the Task Force on Capacity Building to continue the capacity-building rolling plan and to hold a third meeting of its forum in late 2018; and invites other organizations to offer technical and financial support that match identified needs.

On knowledge foundations and the approach to recognize and work with ILK, the Plenary welcomes the progress made by the MEP and the Task Force on Knowledge and Data, and efforts of IPLCs in implementing the approach. Plenary also requests the Executive Secretary to continue implementing the approach and report progress at IPBES-7; and, using transparent processes, to mobilize and generate such knowledge and data.

On the catalogue of policy tools and methodologies, Plenary *inter alia*:

- requests the Executive Secretary, Bureau, and the MEP to refine the structure and functionality of the catalogue, and ensure relevant elements of land degradation and restoration assessments are included; and
- encourages authors of global and other assessments to include elements of the catalogue in their methodological approaches.

The Plenary also requests the Secretariat to establish the institutional arrangements necessary to operationalize the technical support required for the work programme.

REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

On Sunday, in plenary, the Secretariat outlined the production process for the regional assessments (IPBES/6/INF/7). The Co-Chairs of the regional assessments provided brief overviews on the content of each assessment and key messages highlighted in the draft SPMs.

Negotiations on the SPMs continued in four regional contact groups that met on Sunday evening and throughout the day and evening on Monday and Tuesday. The contact group on the regional assessment for the Americas reconvened briefly during lunch on Wednesday to resolve outstanding issues. On Thursday evening, plenary approved the SPMs and accepted the chapters of the four regional assessment reports. The SPMs were publicly released on Friday, 23 March 2018.

Cross-cutting issues that were discussed across all regions included:

- the use of the concept of “nature’s contributions to people” and how to use it alongside the more established concept of “ecosystem services”;
- references to IPLCs, including the need to use the terminology in a way that is consistent with other processes and agreed definitions; and
- ensuring messages are factual and supported by scientific evidence.

The following sections summarize highlights of the negotiations in the contact groups as well as the key messages contained in the respective SPMs of the assessments.

Each SPM has a section with key messages and a section summarizing the background material that support these messages. The SPMs also have two appendices that are identical across the four regions: Appendix 1 contains communication of the degree of confidence and information on evidence. Appendix 2 describes the concept of nature’s contributions to people and its relevance to IPBES assessments.

AFRICA: This contact group was co-chaired by Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (Ghana) and Fundisile Goodman Mketeni (South Africa).

Participants noted imbalances in sub-regional representation in the assessment and discussed whether to include a general statement on the context regarding published studies on nature’s contributions to people on the continent. Some highlighted the dearth of investment towards publishing studies in certain sub-regions, with the group opting to reflect that the majority of the published studies were conducted in Southern Africa (22%), East Africa and adjacent islands (37%), as well as in marine and coastal ecosystems, inland waters and forests (20%). The issue of representation underpinned the discussions, as those whose regions are not well represented in published research were not always able to include their views into the SPM.

Another matter the group addressed was aligning the SPM with “bigger picture” issues to facilitate greater policy integration at the regional, sub-regional and national levels. They spent time addressing how to make the SPM relevant to the African Union’s Agenda 2063, which is the 50-year strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and the Paris Agreement on climate change. They agreed to include biodiversity-related policy responses pertaining to specific Agenda 2063 Aspirations, and stressed that to achieve these multiple goals, the continent needs to prioritize environmental caution, social equity, and human welfare in policy making.

A further issue that generated debate was on means of implementation to ensure the uptake of the assessment, where they discussed, among other issues, ways to operationalize “polycentric governance,” which refers to a balance between multi-stakeholder and multi-level adaptive governance, along with integration of ILK. They also considered how to link policy to external and national resources, with many encouraging countries to take advantage of opportunities presented by regional economic communities, technical agencies, as well as national, bilateral, and international funding sources to support for the implementation of biodiversity-related policies.

During the adoption of the SPM in plenary on Thursday evening, Morocco noted gaps and inconsistencies in the regional report, which had not been reflected and said that his country could only “take note of” the SPM and the chapters. Chair Watson stated that this would be reflected in the meeting report.

Final Outcome: The African Regional Assessment SPM is annexed to decision IPBES/6/L.4 and the assessment chapters are contained in IPBES/6/INF/3. The SPM contains key messages in five sections.

The section titled “Africa’s natural assets are unique” contains, *inter alia*, the following key messages:

- Africa’s biodiversity, ecosystem services, and ILK are a strategic asset for sustainable development in the region.
- ILK underpins the way nature benefits people and deserves more attention from governments and society.
- Africa has opportunities to fully realize the benefits of having such rich biodiversity and to use it sustainably to contribute to economic and technological development.
- The true value of biodiversity’s contributions to human well-being is under-appreciated in decision-making processes.

The section titled “Africa under pressure” includes the following key messages:

- The decline and loss of biodiversity is reducing nature’s contributions to people, affecting daily lives and hampering sustainable social and economic development.
- Africa’s current population of 1.25 billion is likely to double by 2050, putting severe pressure on the continent’s biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people.
- Africa is extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

The section titled “Strengthening African transformation frameworks” includes, *inter alia*, the following key messages:

- The alignment of the Agenda 2063 aspirations, the SDGs, and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, linked to biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people that enhance human well-being, facilitates the development of interventions that can achieve multiple positive outcomes.
- The effective conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people will contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change and strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change.
- African countries are implementing their respective national biodiversity strategies and action plans and are making some progress in meeting commitments in the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, but progress remains insufficient.

The section titled “Africa has options” includes the following key messages:

- The selection of appropriate options is critical to delivering benefits through the conservation and sustainable use of

biodiversity, and the promotion of access and benefit sharing of genetic resources.

- Existing policies, strategies, plans, and programmes at all governance levels are progressively addressing direct and indirect underlying threats to biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people.
- Measures taken by African governments to protect biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people have contributed to some degree of recovery of threatened species.
- The plausible futures characterized by heightened environmental caution, social equity, and human welfare provide the most likely options for achieving the African Union’s vision of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa by 2063, and the associated SDGs and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

The section titled “The future we want – making it happen together” includes the following key messages:

- Polycentric governance can assist Africa to achieve its development aspirations, while improving the conservation of its natural assets and meeting its biodiversity commitments and targets.
- Governance options that harness synergies and deliver multiple benefits can help to balance patterns of access and allocation of ecosystem services.

AMERICAS: Co-chaired by Brigitte Baptiste (Colombia) and Robert Watson (UK), the contact group on the Americas regional assessment engaged in lengthy deliberations on the SPM, addressing both key messages and their analytical presentation. The discussions, despite the different positions expressed, were, according to the Co-Chairs “fruitful” and took place in a “cordial atmosphere.”

Regarding nature’s contributions to people and quality of life, the group stressed the need for consistent definitions across the board for all the assessments. Participants addressed in detail the intensification of agriculture and negative consequences linked with relevant unsustainable practices, as well as ways to deal with underlying data uncertainty in the different trends presented.

Participants also focused on various points of divergence in the region, deliberating upon: whether there is a uniform increase of crop production or whether it is differentiated by area; whether individual countries should be highlighted regarding their performance on different environmental indicators; and reflections on economic growth being experienced differently across regions and within sub-regions.

On biodiversity and health, the group discussed relevant terminology, the commercial development of medicinal products, and ways to refer to international agreements, including the CBD and its protocols.

Participants also exchanged ideas over the definition of the term “cultural continuity,” finally agreeing that, for the purposes of this assessment, it refers to the contribution of nature to the maintenance of cultures, livelihoods, economies, and identities. While different approaches surfaced during the discussion, the group agreed that “the decoupling of lifestyles from local habitats and direct degradation of the environment can erode sense of place, language and local ecological knowledge, compromising cultural continuity.” Different interpretations were also debated in the discussions on the relationship between biofuel production and commodity prices, as well as on effects on biodiversity of unregulated markets and land conversion.

Regarding direct and indirect drivers of trends in biodiversity, the group debated, *inter alia*: references to international trade and finance; whether to add reference to potential benefits of agricultural intensification; and the interactions among different drivers. On governance, participants addressed governance arrangements, including their coordination and disentangling the roles of governance institutions and processes; and examples of tools available for political decision making and governance schemes, like payments for ecosystem services or voluntary certification systems.

On future trends in biodiversity and nature's contributions to people, the group highlighted three different pathways to move away from a business as usual future. Participants discussed: creating a pull-out box explaining the scenarios; clearly identifying sources of data; the level of certainty of the utilized model for drawing safe future projections; ways to better portray biodiversity gains, following different scenarios; and whether additional future pathways could be included in the analysis.

During all sessions of the contact group, participants stressed the need for non-prescriptive language and delegates emphasized the importance of producing "short, clear, and punchy messages."

Final Outcome: The Americas Regional Assessment SPM is annexed to decision IPBES/6/L.5 and the assessment chapters are contained in IPBES/6/INF/4.

In the SPM, the section titled "Nature's contributions to people and quality of life" contains the following key messages:

- The Americas are endowed with much greater capacity regarding nature's contributions than the global average.
- The economic value of terrestrial nature's contributions to people in the Americas is estimated to be equivalent to the region's gross domestic product.
- The cultural diversity of IPLCs in the region provides a plethora of knowledge and worldviews for managing biodiversity.
- Most countries in the region are using nature more intensively than the global average.
- Agricultural production, fisheries, and aquaculture continue to increase regional and global food production, but, in some cases, at the expenses of nature's other contributions.
- Despite the region's richness in freshwater resources, water supply varies widely across sub-regions and is declining per capita, while there is widespread unsustainable use of surface water and groundwater.
- Energy from nature-based sources has increased in all the sub-regions of the Americas, but, at the local level, it may compete with food production and natural vegetation.
- Many challenges for health improvement remain, despite the benefits that peoples of the Americas derive from the availability of food, water, pharmacological products, and interaction with nature for their physical and mental health.
- IPLCs have created a range of biodiversity-based systems that increased biodiversity and shaped landscapes, noting that the decoupling of lifestyles from local habitats and direct environmental degradation can compromise "cultural continuity."

The section titled "Trends in biodiversity and nature's contributions to people affecting quality of life" contains the following key messages:

- Biodiversity and ecosystem conditions in many parts of the Americas are declining.

- Close to a quarter of the 14,000 species in taxonomic groups comprehensively assessed in the Americas by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) are classified as being at high risk of extinction.

- Biodiversity has increased in some areas through effective management or natural processes in abandoned agricultural areas.

The section titled "Drivers of trends in biodiversity and nature's contributions to people" contains the following key messages:

- The most important indirect anthropogenic drivers of change include population and demographic trends, patterns of economic growth, weaknesses in governance systems, and inequity.
- A variety of governance arrangements exists in the region, which makes the disentanglement of their respective roles in driving past trends complex.
- Habitat conversion, fragmentation, and overexploitation/overharvesting are the greatest direct drivers of loss of biodiversity and ecosystem functions, while wetland drainage and conversion, urbanization, and resource extraction are the largest direct threats to nature's contributions to people in the region.
- Human-induced climate change is becoming an increasingly important direct driver of biodiversity loss, amplifying the impacts of other drivers.
- Many human activities, including the production and combustion of fossil fuels, are a major source of the pollution that adversely impacts most terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

The section titled "Future trends in biodiversity and nature's contributions to people and the global goals, targets, and aspirations" contains the following key messages:

- Key drivers of trends in biodiversity are expected to intensify into the future.
- Pressure on nature is projected to increase more slowly, or even be reduced in some sub-regions, under the transition pathways to sustainability scenarios by 2050, while it is projected to increase under the business-as-usual scenario.
- For most countries, global environmental goals, targets, and aspirations are uncoupled from national policies.

The section titled "Management and policy options" contains the following key messages:

- While there are options and initiatives that can slow down and reverse ecosystem degradation in the Americas, most ecosystems continue to be degraded.
- Policy intervention can be more effective when they take into account causal interactions, leakage, and spillover effects at many levels and scales.
- Maintaining conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in productive sectors is extremely important for the enhancement of nature's contributions to people.
- Implementation of effective governance processes and policy instruments can address biodiversity conservation.
- Knowledge gaps were identified in all chapters.

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC: This contact group was co-chaired by Youngbae Suh (Republic of Korea) and Asghar Fazel (Iran). Discussions focused on: alignment with other multilateral processes; references to potential risks and benefits of genetically modified crops; illegal trade in wildlife causing

species decline; the environmental impacts of economic growth; and differences in the use of, and data gaps in, diverse value systems.

On how to use the evolving concept of nature's contributions to people in relation to the ecosystem services concept, delegates debated whether they should refer to both concepts in tandem or only refer to ecosystem services as the more established concept. They also considered that using both concepts in combination could suggest an artificial separation between them. One delegate suggested that, where economic values are concerned, a reference to ecosystem services is appropriate, and, where non-material values are addressed, reference to nature's contribution to people is preferable.

Acknowledging that this region has the greatest marine diversity globally, with the longest and most diverse coral reef systems in the world among others, the group decided to highlight the important role of coral reefs both in a key message and in the background section of the summary.

Final Outcome: The Asia and the Pacific regional assessment SPM is annexed to decision IPBES/6/L.2, and the assessment chapters are contained in IPBES/6/INF/5.

The section titled "Importance of nature's contributions to human well-being and good quality of life" contains the following key messages:

- The Asia-Pacific region's rich biodiversity and valuable ecosystem services provide vital support for human well-being and sustainable development.
- The region achieved rapid economic growth and is undergoing one of the highest rates of urbanization and agricultural expansion in the world, which has come at a high environmental cost, causing degradation and loss of biodiversity.
- Sustaining the viability of and access to ecosystem services will contribute to poverty alleviation.
- The diverse values and value systems across the region shape interactions between people and nature, and there are some significant valuation data gaps so caution needs to be applied during interpretation.

The section titled "Varying trends of biodiversity and ecosystem services and the role of underlying drivers" contains the following key messages:

- While biodiversity and ecosystem conditions are declining across the region, they are well maintained in some areas.
- The population of large wild mammals and birds has declined across the region.
- Invasive alien species have increased in number and abundance, and constitute one of the most serious drivers of biodiversity loss across the Asia-Pacific region.
- Protected area coverage in the region has increased substantially but does not effectively target areas of important biodiversity, and progress is needed towards better overall management effectiveness.
- Traditional agrobiodiversity is in decline, along with its associated ILK, due to a shift towards intensification of agriculture with a small number of improved crop species and varieties.
- People in the region depend heavily on fisheries for food, with aquaculture growing but the capture fisheries sector threatened.
- Coral reefs, which are of critical ecological, cultural, and economic importance, supporting the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people in the region and beyond through vital

and valuable ecosystem services such as food security or coastal protection, are under serious threat.

- Climate change and associated extreme events are impacting species distribution, population sizes and the timing of reproduction or migration, and increased frequency of pest and disease outbreaks resulting from these changes may have additional adverse effects on agricultural production and human well-being.
- The increase of waste and pollution in the region is impacting ecosystems and threatening the current and future health of nature and people.

The section titled "Implications of biodiversity decline and opportunities for sustaining nature's contributions to people" contains the following key messages:

- Direct and indirect drivers acting synergistically are accelerating the loss of biodiversity and posing an increasing risk to the sustained flow of nature's contributions to people in the region, but there are opportunities to counter them.
- Continuing economic growth and infrastructure development, in some sub-regions, are required for achieving the SDGs of eradicating poverty and hunger, and ensuring energy, health, and water security, but need to be pursued in harmony with nature if they are to be sustainable.
- The progress in forest and protected area management, although not enough to halt biodiversity loss, increases the probability of meeting the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the SDGs.
- Policy makers will benefit from using scenarios adapted to unique local and national characteristics for planning the future of biodiversity and human well-being in the region.

The section titled "Policies, institutional frameworks, and governance options for achieving global goals and targets" contains the following key messages:

- Local communities and higher-level stakeholders collaborating in decision-making processes that involve the conservation of nature are best positioned to ensure the sustainable use of biodiversity and nature's contributions to people.
- The mainstreaming of biodiversity into development policies, plans, and programmes can improve efforts to achieve both the Aichi Targets and the SDGs.
- The Paris Agreement on climate change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recommend the use of ecosystem-based approaches.
- Regional cooperation in devising and implementing the transboundary conservation of threatened landscapes and seascapes is expanding and showing positive results.
- Partnerships with the private sector, individuals, and NGOs, can help countries meet the growing gaps in funding to finance conservation efforts.
- Sustainable production and consumption and waste management policies can help to reduce biodiversity loss, including by promoting low-carbon and renewable solutions that are less polluting and more sustainable.

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA: This contact group was co-chaired by Ivar Andreas Baste (Norway) and Senka Barudanovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Discussions leaned towards recognizing the existence of a mix of useful policies and programmes in the region on biodiversity conservation and sustainability; and the need for more concerted effort for implementation, participatory methods and cross-sectoral

collaboration. In this regard, the reference to the European Union's Habitat Directive regarding information on species decline and habitat loss was added in the messages describing biodiversity trends and attribution to direct drivers. The group relayed the need for effective application of these policies and to build on, rather than replicate, what other processes, such as the CBD, are doing. For this reason, the group stressed the need for balance in information on the SDGs and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in scenario archetypes, but also exercised caution to ensure that the tracking of progress in achieving these should take cognizance of ongoing efforts in the fifth Global Biodiversity Outlook.

The use of several novel terms from recent or contemporary work was a major focus for the assessment, with debates on how to reconcile the use of new terms and definitions introduced, with those that have already gained momentum and recognition in the policy arena. In this regard, participants urged for smart use of the term "nature's contributions to people," without neglecting the evolution and acceptance of "ecosystem services." Assessment Co-Chair Markus Fischer (Switzerland) presented a proposal to resolve the debates on nature's contributions to people and ecosystem services by introducing these concepts upfront and describing their interlinkages. The SPM therefore, as the group agreed, set the scene on the definition, use, and interaction of both concepts. Other concepts discussed included "biocapacity" and "ecological footprint," for which there was a need to ensure proper use of either term, rather than interchangeably. Issues of recognizing indigenous rights also resulted in debates regarding the use of IPLC terminology. The group reached consensus on using the accepted UN terminology.

In the key messages, the group urged for punchy, short statements and simplicity in infographics to attract the attention of decision makers. The group also emphasized ensuring that all messages are factual and backed by indisputable evidence.

Final Outcome: The Europe and Central Asia Regional Assessment SPM is annexed to decision IPBES/6/L.3 and the assessment chapters are contained in IPBES/6/INF/6.

The section titled "A precious asset: nature and its contributions to people's quality of life in Europe and Central Asia" contains the following key messages:

- Biodiversity loss is a threat to nature's contributions.
- Nature's contributions are not evenly distributed across Europe and Asia, and the region relies partially on imports of renewable resources such as food and feed.

The section titled "The biodiversity of Europe and Central Asia is unique but threatened" explains that despite conservation policies and actions that have contributed to reversing some negative biodiversity trends in the region, the overall progress towards healthy ecosystems is still insufficient.

The section titled "Drivers of change in biodiversity and nature's contributions to people in Europe and Central Asia" communicates that the impact of climate change is increasing rapidly and is likely to be the most important driver in the future, and that transformational policies are required to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation.

The section titled "Futures for Europe and Central Asia" explains that continuation of business as usual scenarios of past and present trends, and beyond 2030, will inhibit widespread achievement of the SDGs. It also communicates that long-term

societal transformation through education, knowledge sharing, and participatory decision-making as the most effective pathways towards sustainable futures.

The section contains the following key messages on promising governance options:

- The need for effective implementation of available governance options, policies, and management practices to address drivers of change and safeguard biodiversity.
- More proactive, focused, and goal-oriented approaches to environmental actions can achieve mainstreaming conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
- Improved coordination and integration of biodiversity governance would avoid negative outcomes for nature and people.
- Increasing participation and stakeholder involvement will help integrate various forms of knowledge into policymaking and decision-making.

THEMATIC ASSESSMENT OF LAND DEGRADATION AND RESTORATION

On Sunday, in plenary, Executive Secretary Anne Larigauderie introduced the process followed to produce the assessment report and the draft SPM. Assessment Co-Chair Luca Montanarella (Italy) presented the assessment's highlights, emphasizing that the efforts made to include different world views resulted in "a first ever comprehensive assessment on this important cross-cutting topic."

Further negotiations of the SPM were conducted in a contact group co-chaired by Ivar Baste (Norway) and Fundisile Goodman Mketeni (South Africa) on Wednesday afternoon and throughout the day and into the night on Thursday and Friday.

Delegates approved the SPM and accepted the assessment chapters during the closing plenary on Saturday.

Discussions focused on, *inter alia*: clarity of definitions and coherence, in particular with the regional assessments; negative effects and impacts of land degradation; factors contributing to, and drivers of, land degradation; benefits of halting land degradation and investing in restoration; and institutional, policy, and governance responses.

On the definitions, delegates discussed the use of several terms, including: "managed" forests and "urban" encroachment; "shared socio-economic pathways"; "mean species abundance"; "functional diversity"; and "biodiversity footprinting". To integrate ethics in governance, participants discussed whether, and in what form, to include references to "ecological solidarity," as enshrined in French law, as well as references to the rights of Mother Earth, and the notion of Buen Vivir, as described in the constitutional frameworks of Bolivia and Ecuador, respectively.

On coherence with the regional assessments, delegates addressed the definition of "water security," as well as the terms "ecosystem services" and "nature's benefits to people: to ensure these terms are used consistently with the regional assessments. Delegates also noted that the use of the term IPLCs should be consistent with agreed use in the regional assessments.

On the negative effects and impacts of land degradation, delegates discussed the negative effects on cultural identity and emphasized the need to be specific on how biodiversity loss and land degradation affect IPLCs. The group also highlighted human health impacts of land degradation, including that land degradation increases the number of people exposed to pollution in developing countries. Delegates emphasized that

land degradation is a major contributor to climate change, and that climate change can also exacerbate the impacts of land degradation.

On factors contributing to and drivers of land degradation, the group elaborated on the status and trends of drivers of land degradation. Considering the role of agriculture as a driver of land degradation, they elaborated on how to relate agriculture to ecosystem transformation. Assessment Co-Chair Robert Scholes (South Africa) clarified that the distinction between “natural” and “transformed” ecosystems implies the use of different biodiversity baselines. Discussions on human-oriented production ecosystems resulting in losses of biodiversity and non-prioritized ecosystem services led to clarification on the meaning of “non-prioritized” ecosystem services. Scholes explained that societies transform ecosystems for specific ecosystem services, such as food production, which may lead to a loss of other services, such as water storage.

Views diverged on additions proposed to highlight the main drivers of biodiversity loss. Delegates suggested drivers, such as: unsustainable agriculture and forestry; infrastructure; mining and extraction; urban encroachment; and climate change. Many preferred not to include specific references to agriculture, including crop, meat, and dairy production.

Views also differed on recognizing global consumption patterns as the dominant factor driving land degradation, and the need for a systemic approach to deal with consumption and production patterns. Some preferred a clear differentiation between developed and developing countries’ leadership roles and responsibilities. Others preferred a “de-politicized” reference to “high consumption lifestyles” without development status attributions. Delegates also considered a growing lack of consumer awareness about the implications of their consumption choices due to increasing separation and spatial disconnection between consumers and the ecosystems that produce their food and other commodities.

They also elaborated on per capita consumption as a factor underpinning increasing degradation. Views diverged on including voluntary family planning as a measure to regulate population growth. Many commented on a figure illustrating the global trade flows of ten countries against the biodiversity footprint of those flows in terms of numbers of threatened species.

On the benefits of halting land degradation and investing in restoration, delegates refined a list of positive contributions of timely action taken to avoid, reduce, and reverse land degradation, including: increasing food and water security; contributing to the adaptation and mitigation of climate change; and, in concert with other socio-economic stresses, reducing the chance of conflict and migration. In discussions of several sustainable practices to restore degraded lands, some proposed to include a table representing “goalposts” for a land-degradation neutral world, and possible actions and pathways to achieve them. Delegates also deliberated on: “passive and active” restoration measures; adding rehabilitation measures to restoration actions; and distinguishing between invasive alien species and invasive species that are not alien. They further discussed: initiatives under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); anthropogenic dimensions that may negatively impact fire management; and the need for a holistic approach to balance migration and restoration issues.

On institutional, policy, and governance responses to address land degradation, delegates discussed the need for better coordination among ministries, and public and private stakeholders associated with different sectors.

On Saturday afternoon, Contact Group Co-Chair Baste reported of the successful conclusion of the contact group’s work and, with IPBES Chair Watson, thanked all delegates, authors, and experts for their hard work. Noting the changes that were made based on the contact group discussions, Chair Watson presented, and IPBES members then approved, the SPM and accepted the assessments chapters.

Final Outcome: The SPM of the IPBES thematic assessment report on land degradation and restoration is annexed to document IPBES/6/L.9/Rev.1 and the assessment chapters are contained in IPBES/6/INF/1.

The SPM contains a section on key messages, a corresponding background to the key messages, and an appendix on communication of the degree of confidence. The key messages section, which contains three parts, is divided into headline messages and more detailed key messages.

The first headline message is: Land degradation is a pervasive, systemic phenomenon: it occurs in all parts of the terrestrial world and can take many forms. Combating land degradation and restoring degraded land is an urgent priority to protect the biodiversity and ecosystem services vital to all life on Earth and to ensure human well-being.

This segment contains the following key messages:

- Currently, degradation of the Earth’s land surface through human activities is negatively impacting the well-being of at least 3.2 billion people, pushing the planet towards a sixth mass species extinction, and costing more than 10% of the annual global gross domestic product in loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- Investing in avoiding land degradation and the restoration of degraded land makes sound economic sense as the benefits generally by far exceed the cost.
- Timely action to avoid, reduce, and reverse land degradation can increase food and water security, can contribute substantially to the adaptation and mitigation of climate change, and could contribute to the avoidance of conflict and migration.
- Avoiding, reducing, and reversing land degradation is essential for meeting the SDGs.

The second headline message is: Unless urgent and concerted action is taken, land degradation will worsen in the face of population growth, unprecedented consumption, an increasingly globalized economy, and climate change.

This section contains the following key messages:

- Widespread lack of awareness of land degradation is a major barrier to action.
- High consumption lifestyles in more developed economies, combined with rising consumption in developing and emerging economies, are the dominant factors driving land degradation globally.
- The full impact of consumption choices on land degradation worldwide is not often visible due to the distances that can separate many consumers and producers.
- Institutional, policy, and governance responses to address land degradation are often reactive and fragmented and fail to address the ultimate causes of degradation.

- Land degradation is a major contributor to climate change, while climate change can exacerbate the impacts of land degradation and reduce the viability of some options for avoiding, reducing, and reversing land degradation.
- Rapid expansion and unsustainable management of croplands and grazing lands is the most extensive global direct driver of land degradation.

The third headline message is: The implementation of known, proven actions to combat land degradation and thereby transform the lives of millions of people across the planet will become more difficult and costly over time. An urgent step change in effort is needed to prevent irreversible land degradation and accelerate the implementation of restoration measures.

This section contains the following key messages:

- Existing multilateral environmental agreements provide a platform of unprecedented scope and ambition for action to avoid and reduce land degradation and promote restoration.
- More relevant, credible, and accessible information is needed to allow decision makers, land managers, and purchasers of goods to improve the long-term stewardship of land and sustainability of natural resource use.
- Coordinated policy agendas that simultaneously encourage more sustainable production and consumption practices of land-based commodities are required to avoid, reduce, and reverse land degradation.
- Eliminating perverse incentives that promote degradation and devising positive incentives that reward the adoption of sustainable land management practices are required to avoid, reduce, and reverse land degradation.
- Landscape-wide approaches that integrate the development of agricultural, forest, energy, water, and infrastructure agendas, all informed by the best available knowledge and experience, are required to avoid, reduce, and reverse land degradation.
- Responses to reduce environmental impacts of urbanization not only address the problems associated with urban land degradation but can also significantly improve quality of life, while simultaneously contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

PENDING ASSESSMENTS

On Sunday in plenary, IPBES Executive Secretary Anne Larigauderie introduced documentation on the pending assessments, including the respective scoping documents for thematic assessments of the sustainable use of wild species and invasive alien species, and a methodological assessment regarding the diverse conceptualization of multiple values of nature and its benefits (IPBES/6/8 and INF 8-10).

The item was further discussed in the contact group on budget and pending assessments, co-chaired by Spencer Thomas (Grenada) and Rashad Allahverdiyev (Iran) on Wednesday morning. Co-Chair Thomas explained that the budget group had suggested increasing the number of lead authors per assessment, from six to a maximum of eight, and had agreed on a maximum cost of initiating two assessments in 2018 of US\$375,000.

Delegates agreed not to reopen the discussion on the assessments' scope. Regarding the sequence in which to conduct the assessments, delegates agreed to initiate the assessments on the sustainable use of wild species and the assessment on diverse conceptualizations of multiple values of nature in 2018, and to initiate the assessment on invasive alien species in 2019. They also agreed that all three assessments should be submitted for approval no later than at IPBES-10.

The group also agreed to convene a workshop on sustainable use, consulting with appropriate multilateral environmental agreements and IPBES UN partners, to provide inputs to the assessment process.

On Saturday, during closing the Plenary, Chair Watson clarified that due to the complexity of the thematic assessment on sustainable use of wild species, a fourth year has been added as a precautionary measure for the completion of the assessment, which will be considered no later than IPBES-10.

France, Japan, and Mexico offered to host the Technical Support Units of the assessments on sustainable use of wild species, on invasive alien species, the methodological assessment on values, respectively. South Africa also expressed interest in hosting, with Chair Watson noting that the Secretariat will send a formal letter, inviting such offers.

Final Outcome: Sections V and VI of the decision on the implementation of the first IPBES work programme (IPBES/6/L.10) address the pending thematic and methodological assessments, respectively.

Regarding the thematic assessments, the Plenary:

- approves the undertaking of the assessment of the sustainable use of wild species following IPBES-6, as well as the assessment of invasive alien species following IPBES-7, for consideration by no later than IPBES-10;
- requests the MEP to appoint no more than eight lead authors per chapter, considering their ability to fully contribute, and taking into account the policy on unresponsive authors;
- recognizes the valuable contribution of other multilateral environmental agreements associated with IPBES; and
- requests the Secretariat to initiate the assessment of the sustainable use of wild species by convening a workshop to consult with the appropriate multilateral environmental agreements and UN partners; invite a wide range of participants to the workshop; and prepare workshop proceedings, which with the workshop's outcomes will serve as inputs to the assessment process.

On the methodological assessment, the Plenary:

- welcomes the progress made by the expert groups on scenarios and models, and values;
- approves the undertaking of the assessment regarding the diverse conceptualization of multiple views of nature and its benefits, including biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, following IPBES-6 for consideration by IPBES-9; and
- requests the MEP to appoint no more than eight lead authors per chapter, considering their ability to fully contribute, and taking into account the policy on unresponsive authors.

FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PLATFORM

On Sunday, in plenary, Executive Secretary Larigauderie reported on financial and budgetary arrangements for the Platform (IPBES/6/9), highlighting three proposed budget scenarios for the 2018 budget as had been requested at IPBES-5: a five million option, a below-five million option, and an optimal option above five million that would allow full implementation of the first work programme. Several members highlighted their current and upcoming contributions, with some stressing the need for a sustainable funding strategy.

The budget was further considered by the contact group on the budget and pending assessments throughout the week.

On Saturday in plenary, contact group Co-Chair Spencer Thomas (Grenada) reported that the group had successfully completed its mandate, achieving full consensus on both financial and budgetary arrangements, and also on pending assessments. The group agreed to use the optimal budget option for 2018. In discussions on the draft decision on financial and budgetary arrangements (IPBES/6/L.8), France and Morocco noted the need for interpretation services in all contact groups at IPBES-7, with France requesting that this be noted in the report of the meeting. With this understanding, the Plenary adopted the decision.

Final Outcome: In the draft decision on financial and budgetary arrangements (IPBES/6/L.8), the Plenary, *inter alia*:

- adopts the revised budget for 2018, amounting to US\$8,554,853, and the further revised provisional budget for 2019 amounting to US\$6,074,910, noting that it will require further revision prior to its possible adoption at IPBES-7;
- invites pledges and contributions to the trust fund of the Platform, as well as in kind contributions from governments, UN bodies, the Global Environment Facility, regional economic integration organizations, the private sector and foundations, and others to support the work of the Platform; and
- requests the Executive Secretary to report to IPBES-7 on expenditures for the biennium 2017-2018 and on activities related to fundraising.

The annex of the decision contains tables on: the status of cash contributions received, and pledges made, since the establishment of the Platform in April 2012; and earmarked contributions received in cash in 2017, and pledges made for 2017-2021. It also contains expenditures for 2016 and 2017, and proposed revised budgets for 2018 and 2019.

REVIEW OF THE PLATFORM

On Sunday, in plenary, the Secretariat introduced the review of the effectiveness of the administrative and scientific functions of the Platform (IPBES/6/10), the report of the internal review team (IPBES/6/INF/32), and information on the selection of the review panel and an external professional organization (IPBES/6/INF/33).

The item was further considered in the contact group on the review of the Platform and development of a second work programme, co-chaired by Robert Watson and Alfred Oteng-Yeboah, on Wednesday.

On the recommendations and lessons learned from the internal review, delegates stressed, among other issues: the need for increased integration and a better balance between the four IPBES functions; more timely contact between the experts and the focal points during the development of SPMs, with many supporting a “co-creation process”; and developing concise SPMs, with short, simple, accessible, clear, relatable, informative, and punchy key messages.

On the external review, delegates, *inter alia*: underscored it should build on the internal review; noted its importance for the development of the second work programme; and suggested it focus on all four IPBES functions.

Delegates further decided to request the Secretariat, the Bureau, and the MEP to consider which issues and lessons learned can be addressed within the ongoing work programme.

On Saturday, during closing plenary, Chair Watson noted that the Bureau, the MEP, and the Secretariat had selected a review panel to perform the review and an external professional organization to coordinate the review. Executive Secretary

Larigauderie announced the members of the review panel: Nicholas King (South Africa), Albert van Jaarsveld (South Africa), Kalemami Jo Mulongoy (Democratic Republic of Congo), Ryo Kohsaka (Japan), Kalpana Chaudhari (India), Karen Jenderedijan (Armenia), Marina Rosales (Peru), Selim Louafi (France), Doug Beard (US), and Peter Bridgewater (Australia). Chair Watson announced that the International Council for Science has been selected as the external organization that will coordinate the review.

Final Outcome: Section VIII of the decision on the implementation of the first IPBES work programme (IPBES/6/L.10) addresses IPBES review. The Plenary takes note of the internal review team report, the selection of the review panel, and the selection of the external organization to coordinate the review.

It requests the Bureau, the MEP, and the Secretariat to consider which of the issues identified in the internal review and lessons learned could be addressed in the current work programme. The Plenary further requests the Secretariat to initiate the external review at the earliest opportunity after IPBES-6, and urges IPBES members and other stakeholders to promptly respond to the review team when invited to contribute.

DEVELOPMENT OF A SECOND WORK PROGRAMME

This item was considered in a contact group co-chaired by Robert Watson and Alfred Oteng-Yeboah on Thursday and Friday. Delegates based their discussion on a draft decision outlining a potential process for the development of a second work programme and suggested draft elements for future work (IPBES/6/11).

Delegates discussed the nature and periodicity of future work programmes and decided to develop a strategic framework until 2030 and a rolling work programme, rather than a time-bound one. They further agreed to hold informal consultations in 2018 to exchange ideas on: the elements of a framework for the next work programme; the structure of expert groups and task forces; and cost estimates and the importance of sustainable financing.

Some participants considered it premature to discuss specific assessments, while others suggested topics, such as sub-regional assessments on ecosystem types of high importance for human well-being, or an assessment on the nexus between biodiversity and other global challenges.

They further addressed: how to actively involve youth in the process; the need to adjust the frequency of IPBES Plenary meetings; how to balance the four IPBES functions; and how to consider suggestions derived from the internal and external review processes.

In plenary on Saturday, Chair Watson introduced the draft decision on the development of a draft strategic framework up to 2030 and elements of the rolling work programme of the Platform (IPBES/6/L.7), and reviewed it word-by-word. On a request to the MEP to encourage governments and others to provide written comments on the draft strategic framework and future elements of the work programme, he noted previous low response rates, and appealed for more comments to guide the development of the work programme.

The US, noting the need to ensure transparency in the process, proposed including intergovernmental organizations, international and regional scientific organizations, environment-related trust funds, NGOs, IPLCs, and the private sector as part of those allowed access to all the work programme requests, inputs and suggestions.

Delegates adopted the decision, with this amendment.

Final Outcome: In decision IPBES/6/L.7, the Plenary requests the MEP and the Bureau, supported by the Secretariat to, *inter alia*:

- develop a draft strategic framework up to 2030 and elements of the rolling work programme of the Platform;
- hold consultations, including using electronic media, to seek additional input from, *inter alia*: governments, UN partners, multilateral environmental agreements related to biodiversity and ecosystem services, intergovernmental organizations, and stakeholders on the draft strategic framework and elements of the work programme;
- encourage governments and other stakeholders, to provide written comments on the draft framework and future elements of the programme;
- launch a formal call for requests, input, and suggestions, both on short-term priorities and longer-term strategic needs, with a deadline of 30 September 2018, and, among others, invite UN bodies related to biodiversity and ecosystem services and relevant stakeholders, such as other intergovernmental organizations, international and regional scientific organizations, environment-related trust funds, NGOs, IPLCs, and the private sector to submit inputs and suggestions; and
- finalize a draft strategic framework up to 2030 and elements of the work programme for consideration and approval by IPBES-7.

CLOSING PLENARY

The closing plenary convened at 10:00 am on Saturday morning.

Delegates elected the following members to the MEP:

- Eric Bertrand Fokam (Cameroon), Voahangy Raharimalala (Madagascar), Mohammed Sghir Taleb (Morocco), Luthando Dziba (South Africa), and Mariteuw Chimere Diaw (Senegal), for Africa;
- Ning Wu (China), Shizuka Hashimoto (Japan), Leng Guan Saw (Malaysia), Madhav Karki (Nepal), and Rizwan Irshad (Pakistan), for Asia and the Pacific;
- Katalin Török (Hungary), Mersudin Avdibegovic (Bosnia Herzegovina), Ruslan Novitsky (Belarus), Rovshan Abbasov (Azerbaijan), and Özden Görücü (Turkey), for Eastern Europe;
- Carmen Roldan (Costa Rica), Porfirio Alvarez-Torres (Mexico), Juana Venecia Álvarez De Vanderhorst (Dominican Republic), Bibiana Vila (Argentina), and Germán Ignacio Andrade Pérez (Colombia), for Latin America and the Caribbean; and
- Judith Fisher (Australia), Sandra Lavorel (France), Isabel Sousa Pinto (Portugal), and Markus Fischer (Switzerland), for Western Europe and Others. Marie Stenseke (Sweden) was re-elected for a second term.

IPBES Chair Watson noted that these nominations consist of, among others, six social scientists and nine natural scientists, noting many of the natural scientists have an interdisciplinary background. IPBES members then approved the nominations.

On the sequence of the rotation of IPBES Chair among regions, Watson reported that regions confirmed their understanding that IPBES Rule 15 paragraph 3 applies, for the Chair to be rotated among the five UN regions every three years without the possibility of re-election. Regarding the sequence of regions, delegates agreed to reflect in the meeting's report that no agreement was reached at IPBES-6.

Delegates accepted France's offer to host IPBES-7 in Paris, France from 20-25 May 2019.

Ghana, speaking for the African Group, thanked all involved in the Africa regional assessment, including the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, for supporting the technical support unit. He urged the knowledge and data, and the capacity-building task forces to support filling the gaps of knowledge and assessments identified for the region. He invited delegates to CBD COP14, to be held in Egypt in November 2018, noting that African policy-makers at the high-level ministerial segment of the COP will consider the Africa regional assessment.

Colombia, speaking for the Latin American and Caribbean Group, said the five reports from IPBES-6 respond to the needs of governments and other stakeholders. She recognized experts and all involved in the Americas regional assessment, urging for concerted effort to communicate and disseminate the SPMs.

Cambodia, for the Asia-Pacific Region, congratulated the IPBES family on the approval of the regional assessments and the thematic assessment on land degradation and restoration, welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the first work programme, and supported regional dialogues to provide input into the future work of the Platform.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, for the Eastern European Region, underscored the success of IPBES-6 with the approval of five assessments, expressed gratitude to the Platform's donors for their contributions towards the initiation of two assessments in 2018, and highlighted the establishment of a regional roster of experts that can be drawn upon for future assessments.

The European Union stressed, *inter alia*, that: delegates have successfully tackled the most ambitious IPBES agenda so far; the approval of the four regional assessments and the assessment on land degradation and restoration will provide policymakers with the scientific basis necessary to inform decision making; the Coalition of the Willing on Pollinators portrays the significance of IPBES' work; the importance of the review of the platform; and the importance of financial pledges to ensure IPBES' long-term viability.

The CBD Secretariat recognized the IPBES assessments as an important source of knowledge helping countries to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and inputs for CBD's work, including for the fifth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, and for the African ministerial summit with focus on land degradation and restoration to take place on the margins of CBD COP14. Reiterating their commitment to IPBES, the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services welcomed the recognition of the role of IPLCs in the IPBES' assessments and noted remaining challenges, including securing human rights and customary tenure rights, and inclusion of ILK in all IPBES work.

The Open-ended Network of IPBES Stakeholders urged for ways of better recognizing all experts and for more inclusiveness of stakeholders pointing to the Pan-European Stakeholder Consultation as a good example of stakeholder engagement.

Sebsebe Demissew Woodmatas (Ethiopia), on behalf of outgoing members of the MEP, thanked all regional experts for their tireless work in delivering five assessments to IPBES-6. He thanked the Secretariat and member states for the trust and support to the MEP's work to ensure scientific merit of all deliverables and wished the incoming MEP success in the pending and future assessments.

Jack Rice (Canada), speaking on behalf of IPBES experts, reported on a donation to the IPBES Trust Fund from the experts, offered in recognition of Chair Watson's leadership of the session. He challenged all IPBES members to make contributions.

Robert Scholes (South Africa), Co-Chair of the Assessment on Land Degradation and Restoration, referred to the land degradation and restoration assessment as ground breaking and thanked all involved in its successful delivery and adoption.

IPBES Executive Secretary Anne Larigauderie attributed the success of IPBES-6 to the entire IPBES community, acknowledging the experts involved as the "treasures of IPBES." She urged the outgoing MEP to form an alumni organization to continue supporting the platform, and reported on successful media outreach and uptake of the regional assessments.

Chair Watson said the adoption of the pollinators and scenarios and modeling assessments, as well as the five assessments adopted at IPBES-6 within the first five years of the Platform's existence has brought IPBES up to par with the 30-year-old Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. He added that the next stage for both is a platform to work collaboratively to raise awareness on the two main threats to our planet. He thanked the Secretariat for the support of his work in chairing the Platform and gaveled the meeting to a close at 3:00 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF IPBES-6

Delegates and stakeholders arriving in Medellín were nervous about the daunting task they faced, particularly the five assessments awaiting their approval. Many still remembered the tensions from a year ago at the fifth Plenary meeting of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) when difficult discussions on the budget had raised the specter that IPBES could run out of funding even before completing its first work programme. Participants, therefore, knew that IPBES-6 would be a pivotal meeting that could very well "make or break" the Platform.

Sustained applause at the approval of the summaries for policy makers for the regional assessments and the land degradation and restoration assessment was evidence of the hard work that had gone into the assessments, and of the delicate balance some contact groups had to strike to "get to yes," as it were. IPBES-6 not only approved a record five assessments, but it did so with unprecedented media uptake.

The Plenary also agreed on the completion of the pending assessments, supported by a substantially improved financial situation, and began developing a strategic framework and the Platform's next work programme. For many participants, IPBES-6 was a sign that the platform has finally "come of age" and is assuming its intended role.

This brief analysis reviews the maturing process of IPBES-6 focusing on internal processes, the Platform's standing with policy makers, and progress in communicating its messages.

COMING OF AGE

Like most new organization, IPBES has had to learn how to go about its trade. While past sessions have often been slowed down by tensions resulting from uncertainty about process and the implications of decisions, such as the process for prioritizing pending assessments under budget constraints, IPBES-6 seemed to have left these growing pains behind, as exemplified by the negotiations on assessments, the budget, and Stakeholder Day.

Despite the sense of wariness that marked the opening session, delegates quickly settled into a routine of switching back and forth between the scientific discussions on the assessment findings and procedural items, such as the Platform's future work programme. Unlike IPBES-4, the first session that approved an assessment, where delegates appeared sometimes overwhelmed, IPBES-6 deliberations ran smoothly. One reason was, among other lessons learned, an organization of work that included buffer time allowing the contact group discussions on assessments to go over time without derailing the meeting.

Another example of a more mature IPBES is the improved funding situation, which allowed discussions on the budget to switch from "survival mode" to a debate on sustaining funding streams at the level necessary to ensure IPBES can conduct high quality assessments. Discussions in Medellín were marked by frank discussions about funding needs and ideas to ensure they can be covered. Examples included strategies to encourage all members to contribute, such as the Swiss proposal of an indicative scale of voluntary contributions, which some dubbed as "voluntary-mandatory" scheme, or the German proposal to "crowdfund" among IPBES members, recognizing small or irregular contributions. In retrospect, some explained that what looked like a "budget crisis" at IPBES-5 was a symptom of a transition from generous "start-up" funding by a few members, to a normal budget that needs to be borne by more shoulders. Looking at the adopted budget, one member said: "I think we have managed that transition well."

The positive discussions in the budget group also facilitated the decision on pending assessments. Members' priorities varied regarding assessment topics and at IPBES-5 members were reluctant to accept a delay of the assessments they prioritized for fear that they could be pushed further back by budget constraints. Once funding was secured, and the Co-Chairs clarified that all pending assessments will be submitted for approval at IPBES-10 at the latest, most delegates were at ease with a staggered approach to initiating the pending assessments.

Stakeholder Day provided another example of the Platform's development. Past meetings have been dominated by discussions on how to further improve stakeholder engagement and include diverse knowledge systems and uncertainty over their mode of participation in the Plenary. At IPBES-6 Stakeholder Day, those concerns appeared to dissipate in large part due to the success of the nascent participatory mechanism agreed at IPBES-5, allowing participants to focus on substance. The panel discussions provided an opportunity for stakeholders to engage with assessment authors and to address key issues on improving the Platform's impact such as lessons learned from capacity-building initiatives. Participants also highlighted that the day's agenda was developed in close consultation with stakeholders, with one commenting that "this was the first time that I felt ownership of the process."

FINDING ITS PLACE

Another indication for IPBES' coming of age is that it is gaining traction with decision makers within international organizations and national governments.

To understand this trend, it is useful to unpack who these decision makers are. During the negotiation of the assessments' findings, delegates appeared to struggle with the task of creating messages that are useful for both multilateral and national decision making, often raising concerns about aligning key messages with existing frameworks used by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), UN Convention to Combat

Desertification (UNCCD) and others. However, in conversations between representatives from governments, international and non-governmental organizations, research institutions, and IPLCs, many described IPBES as an important bridge between all forms of knowledge and policy. Yet, many also recognized that the IPBES assessments represent only the first step across that bridge. Additional work by governments, organizations, and stakeholders along the knowledge-policy interface and partnerships are required to carry the knowledge synthesized by IPBES to the other side to support effective policy planning, design, and implementation. New agreements signed at the sidelines of IPBES-6, including memoranda of understanding with the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) and the Interamerican Institute for Global Change Research, and five governments joining the Coalition of the Willing on Pollinators, show that building these partnerships is well underway.

Representatives from intergovernmental organizations look forward to the forthcoming global assessment as a much-anticipated update on the state of the world's biodiversity. At the same time, they recognize the value of the assessment on land degradation and restoration and the regional assessments. For example, all five assessments will inform the next edition of the CBD's Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-5) and the African Ministerial Summit to take place on the margins of the CBD's fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP14) in November 2018. Furthermore, the assessments will provide useful information for countries when setting and monitoring their voluntary national land degradation neutrality targets under the UNCCD, in the development of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and when setting priorities for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). "Recognizing interlinkages between IPBES and MEAs is important," one representative said, noting that translating IPBES' findings into policy recommendations is easier when concepts used in other processes, such as "land degradation neutrality" or "ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation" are included in the assessment.

The assessments are already having an impact on capacity building, awareness raising, and knowledge sharing at the national level. Experts contributing to the regional assessments noted that they had learned a lot about the knowledge existing in their regions, as well as where gaps exist. Identification of gaps could stimulate targeted national or sub-regional assessments building on the regional assessments. Nordic countries, in this regard, have already presented their own regional assessment titled "Biodiversity and Ecosystem in Nordic Coastal Ecosystems" also dubbed the "Nordic SPM." Reflecting on the experience, one of the presenters said that it was very useful to see where the Nordic assessment aligns with IPBES' assessments and where it can offer more detailed findings for action. Several Latin American and African countries announced plans for their own national assessments to build on the momentum generated by their respective regional assessments.

One group that is still pondering about the value of IPBES assessments to them are IPLCs. Reflecting on the usefulness of key findings on land degradation, one representative noted that convoluted messages in the SPM failed to differentiate between individual and customary tenure rights issues, for example. IPLCs attributed these problems to shortcomings in IPBES' participatory mechanism. While many recognized the establishment of that mechanism as an important step, they said it should be improved

following the Platform's external review process, noting that identifying and overcoming barriers to the contributions of ILK experts will be key.

Another group to be reached are practitioners and decision makers at the community level. In this regard, IPBES-6 provided the time and place for participants to learn from each other's capacity-building and awareness raising activities. There was a buzz about the "Dialogues" facilitated through one of the UN Development Programme's (UNDP) global policy centers, which enable multi-stakeholder dialogues among the three communities of policy, science, and local practitioners of various livelihood systems. One representative of the UNCCD said such capacity-building activities have great potential. "Involving stakeholders in the assessment process can improve forward-looking policy planning and design."

GETTING THE MESSAGES RIGHT

Now that IPBES is recognized by policy makers, crafting the right messages is paramount to keep the ball rolling.

Concerns about how to communicate assessment findings to policy makers were ubiquitous in the negotiations of the SPMs. Many delegates suggested that the summaries are still far too long, not focused enough, and filled with too much scientific jargon. Others were nonetheless concerned about losing essential parts of the messages by trying to condense the information into bite-size pieces.

In this regard, IPBES assessments can be compared to a funnel. The process is designed to capture the widest possible input of all forms of knowledge and then condense it into a set of key messages representing essential pieces of actionable knowledge. This is no easy task and any assessment process is bound to encounter numerous challenges. At IPBES-6, participants highlighted three challenges in particular: selecting the right messages, communicating these messages effectively, and keeping diverse audiences in mind while doing so.

Assessments synthesize a vast amount of knowledge from which a wide range of key messages can be drawn, so selection is important. This is particularly true for general assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services, such as the regional assessments, which have a wider scope than thematic assessments, such as on land degradation. Some are concerned about the upcoming global assessment where the key messages could be too general. They hoped that conducting regional assessments before the global assessments could mitigate this problem by developing messages that address specific trends and challenges in each region. Asked whether they thought this strategy was successful, many delegates had mixed opinions. On the one hand, some still felt that many messages were too broad to stimulate concrete action. On the other hand, when comparing messages across the regions, many also agreed that the messages responded to the regions' priorities. The African regional assessment, for example, highlights the need to build on the Africa Agenda 2063 for a sustainable future, whereas parts of the assessment for Europe and Central Asia focus on enhancing existing European Union actions on biodiversity.

The second challenge is finding the right terms and concepts to communicate messages to policy makers. Experts love to create new words to describe specific phenomena. This is good practice for the generation of new knowledge, but it risks overwhelming anyone who is not a member of the community of practice that coined the term. Policy makers face the opposite problem. They must deal with a vast number of categories and concepts

that are presented to them by diverse expert communities. They not only need to find the time to understand these terms themselves, but they must also bear in mind that every change of terms requires careful communication. The discussions on the concept of “nature’s contributions to people” are a case in point. Developed by the members of IPBES’ Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, the concept aims to tackle several shortcomings of established concepts, such as the need to capture a wide diversity of knowledge sources, including indigenous and local knowledge, and the need to include both positive and negative contributions of nature to human wellbeing. As one expert explained, established concepts such as ecosystem services struggle to address malaria or human-wildlife conflicts on the same footing as the clean water and food generated for people, even though they may originate from the same ecosystem. Most delegates felt, however, that such shortcomings should not be a reason to toss out concepts that policy makers have already become acquainted with and that are generally understood by informed audiences. Furthermore, “there is always room for improvement,” as one expert argued, noting that he would prefer to fix the shortcomings of the “ecosystem services” concept, rather than forcing policy makers to adjust to a new one. Delegates, therefore, decided to qualify “nature’s contributions to people” as an evolving concept. This means that its viability becomes a matter of “empirical study” as one social scientist suggested.

Another challenge is that policy makers themselves are a diverse group of people with different levels of expertise, worldviews, and theories for change. While some political cultures prefer rational arguments focusing on costs of inaction and the benefits of investing in land restoration, other cultures prefer more holistic messaging that places action for biodiversity into the context of broader value systems, such as the Bolivian notion of the rights of “Mother Earth,” the Ecuadorian objective of “Buen Vivir,” or the French notion of “Environmental Solidarity.” These divergences were particularly apparent in the contact group on the Americas assessment where delegates repeatedly clashed over different perceptions of the relationship between nature and people, accusing each other of attempting to craft biased messages. The solution was to recognize that “assessments can’t change worldviews,” as one contact group member explained. By showing flexibility and diligently working to remove any prescriptive elements, the group was able to find consensus. Some, however, believed that the result was a menu of messages reflecting different national priorities that members can now choose from, with one noting that “we should avoid SPMs that invite cherry picking.”

Despite these challenges, many delegates said they were pleasantly surprised by the constructive and cordial atmosphere that dominated most of the contact group discussions. Several commented that finding the necessary compromises to deal with these issues is part of IPBES’ learning curve.

A LOOK INTO THE CRYSTAL BALL

Ironically IPBES’ future is looking brighter as the prospect for life on earth is getting gloomier. The one common message across all five assessments is that humanity must act fast to stop the ongoing sixth great extinction. IPBES-6 may have succeeded in opening a window of opportunity for enhanced action. The messages adopted at IPBES-6 and the upcoming global assessment will inform several key events in the coming years, including the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2018, which will review implementation of SDG 15 (Life on

Earth), the African Ministerial Summit scheduled to take place in the sidelines of this year’s CBD COP14, the review of the Aichi Targets on Biodiversity, and the development of the CBD’s next Strategic Plan beyond 2020. With the apparent links to climate change made in all five assessments adopted in Medellín, Bob Watson’s call for IPBES to collaborate with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is not as remote an idea as some may have thought a few years ago. The impacts of a collaboration such as this would indeed be far reaching, and it remains to be seen whether these two players in the environmental science-policy arena will succeed in building a bridge between them.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

World Symposium on Climate Change and Biodiversity:

This meeting aims to address the need to better understand the impacts of climate change on biodiversity, and to identify, test, and implement measures aimed at managing the many risks climate change poses to fauna, flora, and microorganisms. It will also address how to better restore and protect ecosystems from the impacts of climate change and aims to contribute to the achievement of SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 14 (life below water), and SDG 15 (life on land). **dates:** 3-5 April 2018 **location:** Manchester, UK **contact:** Dr. Jelena Barbir, International Climate Change Information Programme **email:** jelena@barbir.com.es **www:** <https://www.haw-hamburg.de/en/ftz-nk/events/biodiversity.html>

World Conference on Marine Biodiversity: The fourth World Conference on Marine Biodiversity will bring together scientists, practitioners, and policy-makers to discuss and advance understanding of the importance and current state of marine biodiversity. **dates:** 13-16 May 2018 **location:** Montreal, Canada **contact:** WCMB 2018 Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-287-9898 ext. 334 **fax:** +1-514-287-1248 **email:** wcmb2018secretariat@jpd.com **www:** <http://www.wcmb2018.org>

Organizational Session of the Intergovernmental Conference on an International Legally Binding Instrument under UNCLOS on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction:

Following the conclusion of the Preparatory Committee on the elements of a draft text of an international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) under UNCLOS, this session will discuss the process for the preparation of the zero draft of the instrument. **dates:** 16-18 April 2018 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UNDOALOS) **phone:** +1-212-963-3962 **fax:** +1-212-963-5847 **email:** doalos@un.org **www:** <https://www.un.org/bbnj/>

International Day for Biological Diversity 2018: The 2018 International Day for Biological Diversity will mark the 25th anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and highlight progress made in the achievement of its objectives at the national and global levels. **date:** 22 May 2018 **location:** worldwide **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/idb/2018/>

26th Meeting of the COP to the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research: The IAI is a regional intergovernmental institution that promotes scientific research and capacity building to inform decision makers on the continent and beyond. IAI has 19 parties in the Americas, who meet annually to

monitor and direct the IAI's activities. **dates:** 20-21 June 2018 **location:** Antigua, Guatemala **contact:** Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research **phone:** +59-8-2606-0126 **email:** <http://www.iai.int/contact-us/> **www:** <http://www.iai.int/>

6th GEF Assembly and Associated Meetings: The 6th GEF Assembly, which meets every four years, will be held in conjunction with the 54th meeting of the GEF Council and other associated meetings. **dates:** 23-29 June 2018 **location:** Da Nang, Viet Nam **contact:** GEF Secretariat **phone:** +1-202-473-0508 **fax:** +1-202-522-3240/3245 **email:** secretariat@thegef.org **www:** <http://assembly.thegef.org/>

CBD SBSTTA-22: The twenty-second meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) will address, *inter alia*: protected areas, marine and coastal biodiversity, biodiversity and climate change, and digital sequence information on genetic resources. **dates:** 2-7 July 2018 **location:** Montreal, Canada **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/SBSTTA-22>

CBD SBI-2: The CBD Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) will address, *inter alia*: review of progress in the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan; biodiversity mainstreaming; resource mobilization; cooperation with other conventions; and mechanisms for review of implementation; national reporting, and assessment and review, under the Convention and its Protocols; enhancing integration of Article 8(j) under the Convention and its Protocols; review of effectiveness of the processes under the CBD and its Protocols; and preparation for the follow up to the Strategic Plan. **dates:** 9-13 July 2018 **location:** Montreal, Canada **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/SBI-02>

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2018: The theme of HLPF 2018 will be "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies." The set of SDGs to be reviewed in depth are SDG 6 (water and sanitation), 7 (energy), 11 (sustainable cities), 12 (sustainable consumption and production patterns), 15 (life on land) and 17 (partnerships). **dates:** 9-18 July 2018 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development **email:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/contact/> **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2018>

First Session of the Intergovernmental Conference on BBNJ: The first session of the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) will begin formal discussion on an international legally binding instrument (ILBI) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine BBNJ under UNCLOS. **dates:** 4-17 September 2018 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNDOALOS **phone:** +1-212-963-3962 **fax:** +1-212-963-5847 **email:** doalos@un.org **www:** <https://www.un.org/bbnj/>

48th Session of the IPCC: The IPCC's 48th session will meet to approve the Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C (SR15). **dates:** 1-5 October 2018 (TBC) **location:** Incheon,

Republic of Korea **contact:** IPCC Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-730-8208/54/84 **fax:** +41-22-730-8025/13 **email:** IPCC-Sec@wmo.int **www:** <http://www.ipcc.ch>

2nd Arctic Biodiversity Congress: This Congress will build on the success of the first Congress, held in Trondheim, Norway, in 2014, and will bring together scientists, policy-makers, government officials, indigenous representatives, traditional knowledge holders, industry, non-governmental organizations, and others to promote the conservation and sustainable use of Arctic biodiversity. **dates:** 9-11 October 2018 **location:** Rovaniemi, Finland **contact:** Arctic Council Secretariat **phone:** +47-77-75-01-40 **email:** acs@arctic-council.org **www:** <https://www.arcticbiodiversity.is/congress>

Ramsar COP 13: The 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands will convene under the theme "Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future." **dates:** 21-29 October 2018 **location:** Dubai, United Arab Emirates **contact:** Ramsar Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-999-01-70 **fax:** +41-22-999-01-69 **email:** ramsar@ramsar.org **www:** <http://www.ramsar.org/>

CBD COP 14: The fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity is anticipated to be held in November 2018 in Egypt. **dates:** 7-22 November 2018 (TBC) **location:** Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt (TBC) **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** www.cbd.int/meetings/

IPBES-7: The seventh session of the Plenary of IPBES is expected to consider the findings of the Global Assessment of Biodiversity and develop the second work programme for the Platform. **dates:** 20-25 May 2019 (TBC) **location:** Paris, France **contact:** IPBES Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-0570 **email:** secretariat@ipbes.net **www:** <https://www.ipbes.net/>

For additional meetings, see: <http://sdg.iisd.org/>

GLOSSARY

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
ILK	Indigenous and local knowledge
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPLCs	Indigenous peoples and local communities
MEP	Multidisciplinary Expert Panel
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPM	Summary for Policy Makers
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme