



IPBES III HIGHLIGHTS TUESDAY, 8 JUNE 2010

The third *ad hoc* intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on an IPBES continued discussions on Tuesday. Delegates nominated Dusan Ognjanovic (Serbia) as fourth vice-chair and during the day reviewed options for: the function, or work programme, of a new platform; its legal basis, governance and implementation structure; funding; and need for, location and host of a secretariat. They also engaged in a second reading of the processes that a new platform should support. A drafting group on an outcomes document and a contact group on options for the processes convened in the evening.

CONSIDERATION OF WHETHER TO ESTABLISH AN IPBES

FUNCTION OR WORK PROGRAMME OF THE NEW PLATFORM, IF THE LATTER IS ESTABLISHED:

Supporting policy formulation and implementation:

Delegates discussed three options, wherein an IPBES would: support policy formulation and implementation by identifying policy-relevant tools and methodologies; support policy formulation and implementation by identifying and developing policy-relevant tools and methodologies; or have no active role in supporting the application of policy-relevant tools and methodologies.

ISRAEL, CHINA and IRAN favored option two, but called for removal of bracketed text requiring an IPBES to develop policy-relevant tools and methodologies, which they described as policy prescriptive. Endorsing this option, BRAZIL added that there should be support for developing countries in developing such tools. IHDP, ICSU and DIVERSITAS preferred option one, noting that an IPBES should undertake scenario work to help decision makers identify consequences of alternative policy options. INDONESIA, MEXICO, the EU, REPUBLIC of KOREA and YEMEN also supported option one. The AFRICAN GROUP, supported by UGANDA, favored option one as well, underscoring the need to enhance the capacity of countries to develop policy-relevant tools.

Noting the similarity between the first two options, the US said specific tools, such as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, should not be mentioned explicitly, and sought clarification on the meaning of “apply” in this context, noting that this implied a policy-prescriptive role for an IPBES.

Building capacity: Delegates reviewed four options, wherein an IPBES would: prioritize the key capacity-building needs and provide financial support for the highest priority needs; prioritize key capacity-building needs and then provide financial support for the highest priority needs and catalyse financing for capacity-building by hosting a forum with conventional funders; prioritize key capacity-building needs and catalyse financing by hosting a forum with conventional

funders, in addition to broader capacity-building activities that are better funded by existing bilateral and multilateral organizations; or have no active role in capacity-building.

SOUTH AFRICA, the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the Global Environment Facility (STAP-GEF), BRAZIL, YEMEN, GRENADA, ETHIOPIA, ALGERIA, IHDP, ICSU and DIVERSITAS, and UNESCO preferred option two. UNESCO noted that the scope of capacity-building activities of an IPBES will be a function of the scope of its other three main functions. IRAN noted option one is good but two includes more valuable elements. Highlighting the need for a balance of objectives, assessments and financial support, MEXICO, supported by the US, preferred option one. The US added that he also saw merits in option three, which the EU considered a good starting point. Highlighting the importance of meeting the demands of developing countries, CHINA, supported by ETHIOPIA, said that options one and two have both merits and weak points and it would be ideal to combine them. Emphasizing her support for prioritizing key capacity-building needs, AUSTRALIA expressed preference for elements in options one, two and three.

LEGAL BASIS, GOVERNANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE OF THE NEW PLATFORM:

Legal status of a new platform: Delegates reviewed three options, wherein an IPBES would be established as: an intergovernmental body whose status would be distinct from the existing intergovernmental organizations but institutionally linked to one or more existing intergovernmental organizations; a body in which intergovernmental and non-governmental entities would be combined and would be distinct from the existing international organizations but institutionally linked to one or more existing international organizations; or an intergovernmental body, which would be a subsidiary body of an existing intergovernmental organization.

MEXICO, NORWAY, REPUBLIC of KOREA, CANADA, CROATIA, JAPAN, ANTIGUA and BARBUDA, the EU, and IHDP, ICSU and DIVERSITAS voiced support for option one. NORWAY, IUCN, IHDP, ICSU and DIVERSITAS, SOUTH AFRICA, REPUBLIC OF KOREA, UGANDA, the EU, KENYA, JAPAN, SWITZERLAND, ANTIGUA and BARBUDA, and COLOMBIA said that an IPBES should be established through the UN General Assembly. IUCN preferred a combination of options one and two. IRAN favored option three, and BRAZIL preferred option three as well but was willing to consider option one. CHINA, echoed by ANTIGUA and BARBUDA, said that, regarding option three, it was unclear whether or not the decision-making power of an IPBES established as a subsidiary body under an existing intergovernmental organization would replace the prior authority of that organization.

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Governance and implementation: Delegates discussed options for: the plenary body and chair of such a plenary; and the executive and/or advisory bodies, including their composition. On options for the modality of the plenary body, BRAZIL, INDIA, IRAN, MEXICO, COLOMBIA, REPUBLIC of KOREA, NORWAY, ARGENTINA, JAPAN, BANGLADESH, SOUTH AFRICA, the EU, CHINA and SAUDI ARABIA supported the option of opening an IPBES to participation by all states, in addition to intergovernmental organizations and relevant stakeholders invited by the plenary, but restricted voting rights to states.

Though most countries supported decisions by consensus, several expressed concern that it would be insufficient for issues of high scientific uncertainty.

On options for either a single chair or co-chairs for an IPBES, vice-chair Watson proposed considering an additional criteria for developing/developed country balance. Most countries, including the AFRICAN GROUP, SAUDI ARABIA and ANTIGUA and BARBUDA, supported the option of co-chairs as amended. BRAZIL called for due consideration to the principle of geographical representation, while IRAN added geographical rotation. CHINA, COLOMBIA, supported by ALGERIA, the EU, NORWAY, URUGUAY, UGANDA and others stressed that selection should be based on professional competence and credibility. IHDP, ICSU and DIVERSITAS supported by NEW ZEALAND added science-policy balance as an additional criterion.

On the implementation functions, vice-chair Watson asked delegates to consider whether or not there should be a single body (bureau) or two separate entities (executive board and scientific panel). BRAZIL, MEXICO and GEORGIA favored two separate bodies given the complexity of biodiversity and the need to draw on a broad range of expertise. INDIA, UGANDA and IRAN also supported this option, citing the broad range of functions specified for an IPBES. ICSU, DIVERSITAS and IHDP supported a bureau-only structure for efficiency reasons, but underlined that its members should be selected on rigorous technical criteria. INDONESIA and NORWAY added that such criteria should be discussed at the first IPBES plenary. JAPAN concurred, noting the single-bureau IPCC provides a good model.

On the options for the implementation authority, opinions were split, with vice-chair Watson suggesting deferring discussions to a future IPBES plenary, as proposed by the US, CHINA and others. A number of delegates emphasized guaranteeing the scientific credibility of the decision-making authority. The US, ISRAEL, the EU, URUGUAY and IUCN supported option one, while ANTIGUA and BARBUDA and REPUBLIC of KOREA supported option two.

On the composition of an executive board, MEXICO, the AFRICAN GROUP and UGANDA favored option two, while BRAZIL and REPUBLIC of KOREA supported option one. BRAZIL and the AFRICAN GROUP added that an executive board should reflect regional balance. There was unanimous agreement that a scientific advisory panel should be regionally balanced. IRAN, while not opposed to gender balance, questioned its appearance in the text.

NEED FOR, LOCATION AND HOST OF A SECRETARIAT: Delegates reviewed four options, wherein the secretariat would be hosted by: one or more existing intergovernmental organizations within the UN; one or more existing intergovernmental organizations outside the UN; an

existing intergovernmental organization whose secretariat is hosted by another organization; or one or more international non-governmental organizations.

Highlighting the ability to take advantage of existing infrastructure, some countries, including BRAZIL, CROATIA, ALGERIA, IRAN, ETHIOPIA and NORWAY, expressed preference for option one, with KENYA, supported by GAMBIA expressing preference for UNEP as host secretariat. IHDP, ICSU and DIVERSITAS noted that option four does not preclude the choice of a science-based organization. IUCN proposed having a secretariat “distributed” across several countries.

FUNDING: Delegates reviewed two options: establishing a trust fund with voluntary contributions from governments, UN agencies, the GEF and others; or establishing a trust fund with prescribed contributions, plus voluntary contributions from UN agencies, the GEF and others, such as the private sector and foundations. There was a spectrum of views with several countries, including BRAZIL, INDIA, SOUTH AFRICA, BANGLADESH and UGANDA preferring option two, viewed as a more predictable source of funding, and NORWAY, the US and REPUBLIC of KOREA favoring option one.

PROCESSES THAT A NEW PLATFORM, IF ESTABLISHED, SHOULD SUPPORT: Delegates engaged in a second reading of the four options for the processes in light of new input on possible IPBES functions. AUSTRALIA said he was now open to a discussion on option four on requests from governments conveyed through MEAs, in addition to requests from all relevant stakeholders. UGANDA suggested including regional scientific organizations in the list of relevant stakeholders. COLOMBIA, BRAZIL, MEXICO and others, stressed that while it is important to listen to a broad range of stakeholders, governments should determine policy priorities. JAPAN added that this would help address the heavy workload of the platform, while COLOMBIA called for an IPBES to draw on the resources and expertise of all CBD-related MEAs. MEXICO called for a common-sense approach to translate the broad agenda into more manageable actions. CANADA clarified that a step-wise approach should be applied to the approval process rather than the work plan for an IPBES.

RAMSAR CONVENTION noted that the six CBD-related conventions are already working together and called for the consolidation and expansion of this collaboration to strengthen the science-policy interface.

CHINA, supported by IRAN and BRAZIL, reiterated the need for a gradual approach and suggested that the four options might represent successive steps in IPBES’ evolution. GHANA, supported by ALGERIA, stressed the urgency of the task ahead, urging a bold and decisive, albeit systematic process.

IUCN noted that option four provides an opportunity for regional institutions to be involved, with UNESCO suggesting that it could best address the reality of current multidimensional issues.

In the evening, a drafting group chaired by Alfred Oteng Yeboah (Ghana) convened at the end of plenary to work on the outcomes document. Linus Spencer Thomas (Grenada) was appointed rapporteur. After that, an informal contact group, co-chaired by Australia, Mexico and Brazil, met to find a common understanding to options on processes.