

IPBES-2 HIGHLIGHTS MONDAY, 9 DECEMBER 2013

The second session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES-2) opened on Monday, 9 December 2013, in Antalya, Turkey. Delegates heard opening statements, adopted the agenda and organization of work, and discussed: the initial work programme of the Platform, including the draft work programme for 2014-2018 and the conceptual framework; and the financial and budgetary arrangements for 2014-2018.

OPENING SESSION

Basak Koç, GS TV ANA Haber, Turkey, Master of Ceremonies of the opening session read the messages from Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister, Turkey, and Veysel Eroğlu, Minister of Forest and Water Affairs, Turkey, urging that decisions be made to operationalize the Platform. Participants saw a video on Turkish biodiversity, which underscored IPBES' important role in preserving biodiversity.

A minute of silence was held to mark the passing of former South African President Nelson Mandela.

Ibrahim Thiaw, UNEP Deputy Executive Director, said that "nature is the wealth of the poor" and noted that ecosystems provide the resources that underpin development. He also called for the Plenary to approve the proposed budget and work programme.

Nurettin Akman, Deputy Minister of Forest and Water Affairs, Turkey, emphasized that IPBES will help to halt biodiversity loss and stressed the need for a multidisciplinary approach to operationalize the Platform. He hoped that the Anatolian land would provide a positive atmosphere for IPBES to adopt the "Antalya consensus."

IPBES Chair Zakri Abdul Hamid (Malaysia) invited participants to lay the foundation for IPBES to be a credible, permanent, IPCC-like body that turns knowledge into policy and goes beyond the IPCC by embedding capacity building into all of its activities. He said the proposed conceptual framework recognizes different knowledge systems without compromising scientific rigor, while the ambitious draft work programme incorporates indigenous and local knowledge. He invited financial and in-kind contributions to support IPBES' work.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: EASTERN EUROPE proposed, and the Plenary agreed, to elect Ioseb Kartsivadze (Georgia) as alternate member for the first half of the term and Adem Bilgin (Turkey) as alternate Bureau member for the second half.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK: The Plenary adopted the session's draft agenda (IPBES/2/1 and IPBES/2/1/Add.1) and organization of work (IPBES/2/2) without amendment.

STATUS OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE PLATFORM:

Chair Hamid reported that the number of IPBES members now totals 115.

ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS TO THE CURRENT SESSION: Chair Hamid recalled that at the first session of the Plenary, member states had agreed to an interim procedure for new observers (IPBES/2/12). Delegates agreed to accept the proposed list of observers for the current session (IPBES/2/11).

CREDENTIALS

Chair Hamid said the Bureau will examine credentials and report back to Plenary.

OPENING STATEMENTS: Mexico, for the LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN GROUP (GRULAC), stated that IPBES must contribute to slowing down biodiversity loss, while at the same time promoting the sustainable use of biodiversity, including through supporting indigenous and local communities (ILCs).

Ethiopia, for the AFRICAN GROUP, welcomed the inclusion of different knowledge systems in the IPBES draft work programme. He urged: progress on technology and knowledge transfer; regional balance; and continued contributions to capacity building.

Malaysia, for ASIA-PACIFIC, supported the proposed programme of work and called for forging synergies between indigenous and other knowledge systems.

Azerbaijan, for EASTERN EUROPE, highlighted capacity building and effective participation of all countries within IPBES and the Platform's role in providing policy advice to decision makers. SWITZERLAND highlighted quality as an essential attribute of IPBES, supporting: a single set of procedures for all assessments; transparency; openness; and inclusiveness. IUCN said participants at the Stakeholders' Days, held on 7-8 December 2013, had agreed to, *inter alia*: urge IPBES to adopt the proposed stakeholder engagement strategy to support implementation of the IPBES work programme; call for a mechanism to facilitate stakeholders' interaction with the Platform, such as a forum; and state that stakeholders' participation should be financed through the IPBES budget.

INITIAL WORK PROGRAMME OF THE PLATFORM

WORK PROGRAMME 2014-2018: In the morning, Robert Watson, Bureau Member for Western Europe and Other States, presented the draft programme of work for the period 2014-2018 (IPBES/2/2 and Add.1) and its budgetary implications. He stressed that the programme of work addresses all four objectives in an integrated manner and incorporates requests from governments, stakeholders and relevant multilateral environmental agreements. He said a substantial increase in financial and in-kind contributions will be necessary to implement the draft work programme.



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: Carlos Alfredo Joly (Brazil), Co-Chair of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP), presented the proposed conceptual framework for IPBES (IPBES/2/4; IPBES/2/INF/2 and IPBES/2/INF/2/Add.1), noting that the framework aims to support IPBES' analytical work and guide the development and implementation of the IPBES work programme. He said it: was prepared with extensive stakeholder consultations; embraces different knowledge systems and approaches; and puts mankind at the center of the causes and solutions to the biodiversity crisis. He emphasized the two-way flow of information between scientific reports and other knowledge systems, and policy and decision making processes.

DISCUSSIONS: In the afternoon discussions on the initial work programme, LITHUANIA expressed support for the proposed work programme, but suggested a step-wise approach to focus first on issues where progress could be demonstrated, stressing that regional and sub-regional assessments could be very expensive to carry out. The US called for high quality assessments and realistic expectations, and said the current draft programme is overambitious for a newly established entity. He stressed that fast-track assessments are important but the timeframe should not be rushed, while suggesting prioritizing the global assessment. BOLIVIA expressed concern on the work programme's tendency to consider biodiversity within the concept of green economy and stressed that a diversity of approaches is needed. He also proposed a new institutional mechanism to ensure the early involvement of ILCs. The UK supported a bottom-up approach to global assessments that builds on work at the regional and subregional levels. Turkey, for EASTERN EUROPE, said that the draft work programme presents challenging timelines.

FRANCE, with LITHUANIA, MONACO and PORTUGAL, urged increased consideration of the marine environment within the work programme. THAILAND highlighted the importance of considering socio-economic drivers of biodiversity changes. Mexico, for GRULAC, said that the programme should not be limited to assessments but also include tools and recommendations of use to IPBES members.

On the proposed deliverables, many states supported the proposed assessment on pollination and food production. LITHUANIA, the AFRICAN GROUP and others supported assessments on invasive species, and land degradation and restoration. COSTA RICA supported assessing invasive species in marine ecosystems. GRULAC called for an evaluation of the sustainable use of biodiversity.

GRULAC, NORWAY, BELGIUM, NEW ZEALAND and others, supported the proposed assessment on tools and methodologies regarding value, valuation and accounting of biodiversity and ecosystem services. LITHUANIA said other organizations are conducting work on this issue.

MALAYSIA emphasized the need to further define capacity building needs and to match them with financial resources, as well as to take into account ILCs' knowledge systems. GRULAC and the AFRICAN GROUP highlighted the role of existing centres of excellence. The AFRICAN GROUP queried whether mechanisms and tools to evaluate capacity building activities are needed.

The REPUBLIC OF KOREA offered to host a regional technical unit to support implementation and asked for developing standard terms of reference for establishing regional hubs and technical support units. SWITZERLAND proposed that a single set of procedures be used for all assessments and that organizations working as technical support units address specific deliverables under the guidance of the MEP and the Secretariat.

On the communications deliverable, LITHUANIA said it should explain the work of IPBES to secure the interest of policy makers and donors, and clarify the difference with the stakeholder engagement strategy. NORWAY emphasized the need for transparency to build IPBES' legitimacy.

MEP and Bureau members addressed comments by delegations on both the draft work programme and the conceptual framework. Bureau Member Watson said that: the valuation of biodiversity is not only focused on economic valuation but also includes cultural and other values; the cost of the global assessment is highly dependent on having regional and sub-regional assessments; and that ILCs' knowledge will be integrated into all fast-track assessments. MEP Member Paul Leadley noted that regional and global assessments also include a strong marine component, as well as socio-economic aspects. Bureau Member Ivar Andreas Baste said regional and subregional assessments will play a key role in building capacities. Noting widespread support for the conceptual framework, MEP Co-Chair Joly said the framework is a living document that will be updated as IPBES matures.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES urged that IPBES engage with them as partners rather than as stakeholders for successful implementation. UNESCO urged IPBES to engage with other initiatives such as Future Earth and the World Ocean Assessment. THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (CBD) noted its synergistic relationship with IPBES, suggesting the need for alignment between the two organizations when addressing activities such as the mid-term review of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) expressed readiness to provide technical support on data and knowledge gathering.

FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY ARRANGEMENTS

BUDGET 2014- 2018: Neville Ash, UNEP, introduced the budget for 2014-2018 (IPBES/2/5). He recalled Decision IPBES/1/5 requesting the Secretariat to report back on expenditure for 2013 and develop a budget for 2014, noting that current contributions, including 2013 pledges, total US\$8 million and expenditure to date is US\$2.5 million. Suggesting that the Plenary consider a budget for 2014 and 2015, he noted that total budgeted expenditure equals US\$7,599 million and US\$9,089 million, respectively. He said programme support costs are not included as these will be determined by the decision on trust fund arrangements.

Chair Hamid opened the floor for pledges for 2014. Contributions were announced, including: EUR500,000 from The Netherlands; NOK50 million from Norway; EUR300,000 for 2014 and 2015 from Germany; and EUR200,000 from France.

IN THE CORRIDORS

On the opening day of IPBES-2, there was a sense of optimism among delegates that they could finally get started on the "meat" of IPBES. "It has taken us too long to get here, and now, we can't wait to see how IPBES stands up and starts walking," said one delegate. This widespread interest was evident by the lengthy discussions that took place following the presentation of the Platform's programme of work, 2014-2018, the conceptual framework and the associated budget. However, some delegates cautioned on an overly ambitious work programme and stressed the need to prioritize quality over early results, with some emphasizing that IPBES must be allowed to "walk before it runs." Others were concerned that the priorities of developing countries were not adequately reflected in the work programme.

In the afternoon, spirits were high when numerous pledges to support IPBES' work were announced. While welcoming the pledges, one delegate explained that "financial limitations still remain so there may be difficulty in ensuring that all specific suggestions are considered in the work programme," saying that there could be long discussions to strike the right balance between quick results, credible analysis, quality science and meeting members' requests.