



IPBES-4 STAKEHOLDER DAYS HIGHLIGHTS: 21 FEBRUARY 2016

On Sunday, 21 February 2016, participants gathered for the second and final day of the IPBES-4 Stakeholder Days. In the morning, they heard a presentation on arrangements for stakeholder participation during the IPBES Plenary and discussed the creation of an open-ended inclusive network of IPBES stakeholders, the experience of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network (BES-Net), and challenges in bridging existing networks.

In the afternoon, participants discussed in breakout groups: how to enhance the engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs); the procedure for the review of the Platform; linking existing networks to the IPBES Stakeholder Network; and the stakeholder statement for the opening plenary of IPBES-4. Participants then gathered to hear report backs from the breakout groups and discuss the stakeholder statement followed by closing statements from dignitaries.

PLENARY

Simoné Maynard, Australian National University, welcomed participants to the second day of the stakeholder meeting and introduced the agenda. Elikana Kamalunga, University of Dar es Salaam, summarized the key messages from the first day. Anne-Hélène Prieur-Richard, Future Earth, reminded participants to provide points to be included in the stakeholder statement.

GETTING READY FOR THE IPBES PLENARY:

Presenting guidelines for new observers, Cornelia Krug, Fondation pour la Recherche sur la Biodiversité, France, described the policy and procedures for the admission of observers. She outlined guidelines for stakeholder coordination during IPBES noting that besides the opportunity for a stakeholder joint statement, the IPBES Secretariat has provided a stakeholders' coordination room for continued coordination. On communication and information, she highlighted the meeting website, meeting documents and daily coverage by the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*. She encouraged observers to communicate from the meeting, but warned against tweeting on ongoing negotiations in contact groups.

BUILDING AN OPEN-ENDED INCLUSIVE NETWORK OF IPBES STAKEHOLDERS: IPBES Stakeholder Network:

Two representatives of the interim network committee, reported on activities thus far towards building the IPBES Stakeholder Network. They listed the objectives of the network, including: fostering two-way communication with IPBES; supporting mobilization of stakeholders and diverse experts; performing

outreach to potential users and providers of information; disseminating information; supporting capacity building; and mobilizing in-kind contributions. They clarified that membership to the network is independent from IPBES observer status, and that the function of a stakeholder support unit is to facilitate the network's activities and liaise with IPBES is currently fulfilled by IUCN. They said it is envisaged to establish an elected, diverse committee, serving a two-year term and be composed of two representatives per UN region and two representatives of IPLCs. They outlined an election process to be completed by July 2016, and options on a legal entity.

During the ensuing discussion, participants: shared lessons learned from the GEF civil society network, including its rules of procedure; discussed options for achieving regional balance; and called for an "absolute space for IPLC representation;" a diverse network in itself providing "a very different level of understanding to IPBES issues."

BES-Net: Solène LeDoze, UNDP, provided an overview of BES-Net, saying that it is a UNDP-managed capacity-building network of networks to promote dialogue between science, policy and practice. She highlighted BES-Net's network approach, noting three pillars: "IPBES Dialogues" – face-to-face meetings to address policy questions; a web portal for capacity building and information dissemination; and a matchmaking facility to match capacity with funding and technical support. She also noted the creation of a private IPBES stakeholder network webpage.

In the ensuing discussion, participants sought clarity on BES-Net's role in supporting IPBES communication and stakeholder engagement efforts, and the extent of funding and support for BES-Net. They also queried the nature of the relationship between BES-Net and the IPBES Secretariat, with LeDoze noting that a cooperation agreement had been established with the Secretariat.

BRIDGING EXISTING NETWORKS: Jasper Montana, University of Cambridge, outlined activities of the Biodiversity Science-Policy-Interfaces Network (BSPIN). He highlighted opportunities for youth involvement through internships, fellowships and review of assessments, noting constraints in participation in IPBES Plenary meetings due to challenges in achieving observer status and obtaining funding.

Teuta Skorin, IPBES Engagement Network, said this network, created at IPBES-3, aims to reach and bring together persons and groups interested in the IPBES process, noting the need for strategies for information sharing.



Eva Spehn, Swiss Biodiversity Forum, reported on her organization's work in relation to IPBES through supporting biodiversity research and cooperation between scientists and policy makers. She reported on collaboration with the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment to nominate experts for assessments and increase public awareness of IPBES.

Romano De Vivo, Syngenta Head of Environmental Policy and Sustainable Productivity, reported that his company has created 4 million ha of ecological infrastructure by implementing pragmatic actions with farmers for biodiversity conservation on marginal lands. He said business stakeholder involvement is not well defined in the IPBES rules of procedure.

Joji Cariño, Forest Peoples Programme (FPP), drew attention to the ILK networks of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IIFBES) around the world, which among others, aim at improving IPBES capacity in engaging with IPLCs. She noted the need for clarity in mechanisms for full and effective participation of IPLCs as ILK holders in IPBES.

In discussions, participants addressed: the possible consequences of interpretation of the impacts of pesticides on biodiversity; strategic mechanisms for partnerships with IPLCs; and the need to consider conflicts of interest within the stakeholder group, while maintaining a free and inclusive space for interaction.

BREAKOUT GROUPS

ENHANCING IPLC ENGAGEMENT: Aroha Mead, IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic & Social Policy (CEESP), facilitated this breakout group. Participants noted that IPBES nomination procedures are inadequate for full participation of IPLCs as knowledge holders since such capacity is collective rather than based on individual experts. The ILK Task Force shared the contributions of the IIFBES for outreach, information flow and capacity building through seven existing centers that are proposed as "ILK centers of distinction." Participants also said that mechanisms of engaging ILK holders differ from citizen scientist engagement, due to confidentiality requirements to prevent misuse of information. They proposed that the IPBES Secretariat engage an ILK officer to catalyze the Platform's work in this area.

PROCEDURE FOR REVIEW OF THE PLATFORM: The breakout group facilitated by Christine von Weizsäcker, ECOROPA, considered the proposed procedure for the review of the effectiveness of the administrative and scientific functions of the Platform, including a midterm and a final review at IPBES-5 and IPBES-7, respectively. In particular, participants highlighted the critical scientific and technical function of the Platform to "ensure the highest levels of scientific quality, independence and credibility," and noted the importance of fully implementing the conflict of interest policy in this regard.

The group discussed challenges in ensuring that the external reviewers cover a wide range of expertise, can communicate effectively with each other and work constructively together.

Participants supported requesting the International Council for Science (ICSU) to also consult with ILK holders when appointing the independent review body with advice from the International Social Science Council (ISSC). Participants further proposed requiring ICSU to select "evaluators" in an open, transparent and participatory manner.

LINKING EXISTING NETWORKS WITH THE IPBES STAKEHOLDER NETWORK: Participants discussed, among other issues: criteria for membership, noting that members

should be networks and organizations, rather than individuals or companies; criteria and qualifications for committee candidates, noting that their function is to disseminate information and contribute to the identification of experts to participate in assessments; and challenges in communication and outreach.

On regional representation, most participants preferred using the four regions and 18 sub-regions used in IPBES assessments, rather than the five UN regions. Participants also discussed whether committee seats for which no candidate could be found should be left open or be filled with a member from a different region or sub-region, with most preferring to leave such seats open. Several suggested interim arrangements in such cases.

CLOSING SESSION

Following the breakout group reports, participants discussed the proposed statement for the IPBES-4 opening plenary session. After some discussion, participants agreed to send their comments electronically.

During the closing statements, Anne-Hélène Prieur-Richard, underscored the goodwill for engaging in and embracing different perspectives and visions with regard to the implementation of the work programme. She also called for guidance from IPBES on implementing the stakeholder engagement strategy. Laurence Perianin, IUCN, thanked those present for their diversity of views and the quality of discussions over the course of the two days.

Abdul Hamid Zakri, IPBES Chair, stated that stakeholders are a permanent and integral feature of IPBES. He lauded participants for their inspiring, practical views that are "from the heart." He emphasized that, as IPBES prepares to release its first assessment reports, stakeholders are critical to having these reports viewed in high esteem.

The meeting was closed at 5.22 pm.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Participants at the second and final day of the IPBES-4 Stakeholder Days began engaging in frank exchanges, drawing attention to a number of crucial issues, including discussions on ILK and the IPBES mid-term review. Throughout the day, multiple appeals were made for IPBES to recognize seven existing ILK Centers as ILK Centers of Distinction, with many saying that they are a common good. "Without them," one participant alerted, "the existing gap in ILK expertise within IPBES could not be filled."

Others echoed this, adding that the experiences of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IIFBES) with other processes would enable sharing of experiences rather than "reinventing the wheel" on IPLC participation in IPBES.

Questions around financing stakeholder and IPLC participation were also no longer held back. "Whether a government supports stakeholder participation at IPBES is not just a question of whether it financially can, but also whether it chooses to do so," one of the many "fortunate" German NGO representatives clarified. Business representatives were also heard. Rather than engaging in "a battle" one observer reflected, "an honest dialogue and a right vision could lead to a positive way forward." Leaving the Convention center in the early evening with a pat on their backs from IPBES Chair Zakri, many stakeholders commented on the usefulness of the two days. "This was time well spent to coordinate, draft and reach consensus on our statement and strategy for the upcoming week."