



IMoSEB European Regional Consultation Bulletin

A Summary Report of the European Regional Consultation of the Consultative Process Towards an International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB)

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SUMMARY OF THE IMOSEB EUROPEAN REGIONAL CONSULTATION: 26-28 APRIL 2007

The European Regional Consultation of the Consultative Process Towards an International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB) was held from 26-28 April 2007, in Geneva, Switzerland. The third in a series of regional meetings planned for the IMoSEB process, the Geneva event was attended by 54 experts and officials from 16 European countries and international and non-governmental organizations, including scientific research institutions.

Participants heard presentations, exchanged views and discussed various options on a possible IMoSEB in plenary sessions and in three working groups. The results of their discussions were reflected in the report of the meeting with the aim of contributing to future consultations on a possible IMoSEB. The final report identifies: ten needs for an IMoSEB; a possible structure for an IMoSEB to meet these needs; and goals and guiding principles for a strategy to communicate scientific information on biodiversity.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE IMOSEB PROCESS

The proposal for a Consultative Process Towards an IMoSEB was initiated at the Paris Conference on Biodiversity, Science and Governance, held in January 2005 (see IISD Reporting Services' report: <http://www.iisd.ca/sd/icb/>). The proposal focused on a consultation to assess the need, scope and possible form of an international mechanism of scientific expertise on biodiversity. The proposal received political support from French President Jacques Chirac and the French Government.

A consultative process was launched, with an International Steering Committee, an Executive Committee and an Executive Secretariat entrusted to the Institut Français de la Biodiversité, established to support and facilitate discussions. The International Steering Committee is an open group composed of around 90 members, including scientists, government representatives, intergovernmental, international and non-governmental organizations and indigenous and local community representatives. The International Steering Committee met for the first time in Paris, France, from 21-22 February 2006. Participants agreed that the current system for bridging the gap between science and policy in the area of biodiversity needs further improvement, and that a consultation should identify gaps and needs at the science-policy interface, if any, in the existing processes and formulate appropriate steps forward.

It tasked the Executive Committee to propose a plan of action for the consultation phase. It was decided that the consultation should begin with the development of relevant

case studies and feedback, and be followed by a broader consultation. A number of case studies were developed in 2006, while the idea for an IMoSEB was also discussed at a number of events, including the eighth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP-8) in March 2006, and a workshop on "International Science-Policy Interfaces for Biodiversity Governance," held in Leipzig, Germany, from 2-4 October 2006 (Leipzig workshop).

At its second meeting in December 2006, the Executive Committee discussed the results of the case studies, and paved the way for wider consultations on any IMoSEB that might be considered by identifying a series of "needs and options."

These needs and options were circulated to members of the International Steering Committee for their input, and a document outlining the ideas, entitled "International Steering Committee Members' Responses: 'Needs and Options' Document," was prepared by the IMoSEB Consultative Process Executive Secretariat and distributed in January 2007. The document was designed to assist participants during a series of regional consultations in 2007.

REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS

The IMoSEB North American Regional Consultation was held from 30-31 January 2007, in Montreal, Canada. Participants heard presentations, exchanged views and discussed various options for a possible IMoSEB in plenary sessions and in three working groups. The meeting did not result in consensus on a new mechanism. However, a number of views and proposals were generated that will likely feed into future discussions.

The African Regional Consultation was held from 1-3 March 2007, in Yaoundé, Cameroon. In addition to discussing options for a possible IMoSEB, participants considered: expertise for Africa and potential users of an IMoSEB;

IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History of the IMoSEB Process	1
Report of the Consultation	2
Presentations and Round Table Discussions	2
Substantive Aspects of an IMoSEB	4
Closing Plenary	8
Upcoming Meetings	8
Glossary	9

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institutional and financial aspects of an IMoSEB. There was general consensus on the need for an IMoSEB, with a range of views and proposals expressed as to how to make progress. Specific recommendations contained in the meeting report included: making the assessment of past or ongoing activities a usable knowledge tool; exploring the possibility of establishing a pilot project in Africa; and including traditional knowledge and socioeconomic aspects to ensure sustainable development of biodiversity while complying with local and national legislative structures.

Additional consultations are being considered for Asia, South America and possibly Oceania. The outcomes of the consultations will be taken up by the International Steering Committee in late 2007, when it is expected to produce recommendations for consideration at the thirteenth meeting of the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), to be held in Rome, Italy, from 11-22 February 2008, and CBD COP-9, to be held in Bonn, Germany, from 19-30 May 2008.

IISD Reporting Services Reports from these consultations can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/ymb/imoseb/> and <http://www.iisd.ca/ymb/imoseb2/>. Additional information is also available at <http://www.imoseb.net>

REPORT OF THE CONSULTATION

Danielle Decrouez, Director of the Geneva Natural History Museum, welcomed participants to the Museum and outlined

its various activities, including those related to biodiversity. Meeting Chair Horst Korn, IMoSEB Executive Committee, said participants would benefit from the outcomes of the previous regional consultations. He encouraged participants to seek to reach some convergence in their opinions so as to move forward in developing concrete recommendations for an IMoSEB.



Meeting Chair Horst Korn, IMoSEB Executive Committee

During the meeting, a series of invited speakers and roundtable discussions addressed scientific expertise on biodiversity, the history of the IMoSEB process and the outcomes of previous consultations, integrating biodiversity into business strategies, and knowledge for effective biodiversity policy. Participants then split into three working groups, which addressed needs for an IMoSEB, options for a possible IMoSEB and goals and principles for communicating scientific information on biodiversity. The outcomes of the working group discussions were examined in a final plenary session and included in the report of the meeting. The following summarizes the main discussions and issues analyzed during the consultation.

PRESENTATIONS AND ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

On Thursday, 26 April, introductory presentations on biodiversity and sustainability and the science-policy interface in Europe were followed by round-table discussions on

scientific expertise in biodiversity, integrating biodiversity into business strategies, decision-making processes affecting biodiversity and the outcomes of previous regional consultations and related processes.

INTRODUCTORY PRESENTATIONS: Sophie Condé, European Topic Centre on Biodiversity and European Environment Agency, presented forecasts on biodiversity and sustainability in Europe. She discussed efforts to address biodiversity at the EU and pan-European levels, noting the importance of coordinating activities across various institutions. Noting good progress on knowledge and information tools, she highlighted, however, that Europe lacks a bridge between scientific results and political assessment, including for the consideration of topical issues such as: the potential utility of a biodiversity index; biodiversity and climate change; and the sustainable use of biodiversity. She suggested the first option for an IMoSEB proposed in the Needs and Options Document (forming partnerships with existing mechanisms) might be the most appropriate and proposed defining such a mechanism as “a coherent framework to interface between scientific expertise and policy decisions through advice and prospective analysis.”

Sybille van den Hove, Autonomous University of Barcelona, explained that science-policy interfaces for biodiversity in Europe are co-evolving and should allow for critical assessment of scientific output in light of end-user needs. She highlighted the need for science-policy interfaces to enhance communication and to debate assumptions, limits and choices, by facilitating the articulation of different types of scientific knowledge in a transparent manner. She discussed various European interfaces, including a proposed EU Advisory Mechanism aimed at influencing high-level policy decision making with a view to reversing biodiversity loss in Europe.

Discussion: Participants discussed progress on the proposed EU Advisory Mechanism, and an intergovernmental participant called for a “new creature” and research translators to communicate scientific findings to the policy level and to overcome the “dialogue of the deaf.”

ROUNDTABLE ON THE USE OF SCIENTIFIC EXPERTISE IN BIODIVERSITY: Michel Loreau, Co-Chair of the IMoSEB Executive Committee, provided background on scientific expertise on biodiversity and the Consultative Process Towards an IMoSEB. He noted that an IMoSEB could be developed in several ways, and emphasized the importance of such a mechanism given continuing biodiversity loss in spite of many initiatives to address this problem. Noting biodiversity is a low priority on the global political agenda, he said an IMoSEB should be used to develop consensus and global awareness through assessments, similar to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), though he underscored the possible constraints of such an approach given the local nature of biodiversity issues and the lack of universal biodiversity indicators.

Discussion: A participant from a non-governmental organization asked whether such assessments would look at socioeconomic drivers or at levels of biodiversity. Michel Loreau responded that broad assessments would allow for both sets of issues to be addressed, but that the inclusion of rapid response or local assessments would complement a continuous, broader assessment. Some participants queried whether global assessments could adequately address local level issues and where the impetus for creating such a mechanism would originate. Michel Loreau observed that these topics

were discussed at the previous regional consultations and that the issue of regional differences in both expertise and in biodiversity had been highlighted. He said, in general, African participants had considerable enthusiasm for such a process, while there appeared to be less impetus among North American participants.

Integrating Biodiversity into Business Strategies:

François Laurans, VEOLIA Environnement (France), discussed integrating biodiversity into business processes.

He explained that VEOLIA Environnement is involved in the French Orée group, which is comprised of many organisations and hopes to produce a methodological guide on how to incorporate biodiversity into business strategies. He proposed steps for building an effective IMoSEB, including:



François Laurans, VEOLIA Environnement

developing tools and indicators for socioeconomic assessment; involving political and scientific actors; avoiding the creation of another research organisation; ensuring the transparency and cost effectiveness of assessment processes; and synthesizing information for business and civil society into an understandable format.

Discussion: Participants posed a range of questions in response to the presentation, including: how approaches to biodiversity differ across various business sectors; whether multinational corporations should seek to address biodiversity concerns at a local or global level; and how to ensure appropriate science and technology exist for addressing local biodiversity concerns. There was some discussion of the need to identify the drivers that would prompt a rethinking of business processes, and one government participant queried how businesses take account of the differing time horizons of the social, economic and ecological components of sustainable development. Participants also discussed how the private sector would respond to a biodiversity equivalent of the Stern Review Report on the Economics of Climate Change, and what issues would result most interesting to industry within such an assessment.

Needs and Options: Martha Chouchena-Rojas, IMoSEB Executive Committee, provided an overview of the needs for an IMoSEB as identified by the Executive Committee. She emphasized the necessity of linkages with existing processes and for predictable, proactive, independent scientific information, which can be communicated to stakeholders in a timely fashion.

Georgina Mace, IMoSEB Executive Committee, discussed options for an IMoSEB as formulated by the Executive Committee and as set out in the Needs and Options Document, namely: partnerships between existing mechanisms (option one); a new, highly organized and well resourced entity similar to the IPCC, but with government and non-government

components (option two); inviting the IPCC to incorporate a biodiversity component into its activities (option three); or reinforcing existing networks of independent scientists (option four).

Discussion: Participants reflected on the nature of science feeding into intergovernmental processes, especially where scientific bodies, such as SBSTTA, are not fully independent. One participant mentioned the “overkill of guidance” for biodiversity practitioners and questioned how the needs were determined by the Executive Committee.

Outcomes from Other Consultations: Michel Loreau discussed the North American Regional Consultation, which he said focused mostly on whether an IMoSEB should exist or not. He attributed general skepticism among US participants to political concerns, while Mexican participants, he said, were interested in clarifying why an international mechanism would be more worthwhile than strengthening national level expertise.

Jean Claude Lefeuvre, Chair of the Institut Français de la Biodiversité, presented on the African Regional Consultation, observing that general enthusiasm for an IMoSEB was expressed, in addition to requests for a pilot project in the region. He noted that the meeting also created a set of recommendations. He then highlighted constraints and challenges regarding integrated management of biodiversity and the need to ensure an environment conducive to fostering the science-policy interface.

Michel Loreau as chair of the Scientific Committee of DIVERSITAS also mentioned the outcomes of a meeting on “Recommendations from the Science-Policy Dialogue on Biodiversity: a contribution to discussions concerning an IMoSEB,” convened by the South African National Biodiversity Institute and DIVERSITAS in Cape Town, South Africa, from 29-30 March 2007. He mentioned that the meeting focused on specific needs and options for an IMoSEB, with general consensus on the need for a new mechanism, perhaps loosely modeled on the IPCC.

Discussion: Participants focused on defining the subjects of the “needs” that would be addressed by an IMoSEB and the various options for structuring an IMoSEB. They also discussed whether these needs and options have been adequately conveyed to all stakeholders and how best to disseminate them. A participant expressed concern with the focus on conducting biodiversity assessments, stating that an IMoSEB could fulfill other important functions. An IMoSEB Executive Committee member commented that while the Needs and Options Document considered those who have need for an IMoSEB at the international level, more work could be done to address local and regional level needs. She also noted that the International Steering Committee will decide how best to proceed at the end of the consultative process, while the Executive Secretariat highlighted that representatives from a variety of international bodies are involved in the IMoSEB consultative process and are members of the International Steering Committee.

ROUNDTABLE ON DECISION MAKING

PROCESSES AFFECTING BIODIVERSITY: Knowledge for Effective Biodiversity Policy: Brian Wynne, Lancaster University (UK), presented on knowledge for effective biodiversity policy. He noted amateur naturalists may be an untapped resource for informing biodiversity planning processes and emphasized the need to think about the different

ways of “organizing” scientific knowledge and how it may trigger action including that beyond the “official world of policy.” Referring to the Leipzig workshop recommendations, he underscored the need to consider socioeconomic drivers and pressures on biodiversity and change. Highlighting the importance of two-way communication, he said effective policy knowledge must include consideration of the views of policy actors themselves. He also discussed components of effective biodiversity knowledge, such as the precision, comprehensiveness, accuracy, scope, consistency, temporality, “revise-ability,” and “use-ability” of information.

Discussion: An IMoSEB Executive Committee member clarified that it is not envisaged that an IMoSEB would be a decision-making entity, rather, it would provide a means



Brian Wynne, Lancaster University

for increasing the quality of scientific information and advice feeding into decision-making processes. She said case studies conducted during the first stage of the consultative process demonstrate that policy decisions relating to biodiversity are sometimes taken without the

required scientific input. Brian Wynne called for more direct interactions between scientists and civil society without circumventing policy makers, and for devising creative ways to connect science with policy. The issue of whether an IMoSEB should focus on science at a global or local level was also highlighted, with an IMoSEB Executive Committee member noting that the two are compatible. A government participant cautioned against ignoring existing processes and overburdening an international mechanism given that needs and demands are diverse and range from the local to the global level.

Leipzig Workshop Recommendations: Peter Bridgewater, Executive Secretary, Ramsar Convention, presented the Leipzig workshop recommendations for an IMoSEB, including: developing tools and methodologies for assessments, analyses and other means of connecting knowledge and policy; maintaining a comprehensive outreach and communications strategy; and ensuring the mechanism is ongoing, dynamic, independent, engaging and innovative. He emphasized that an IMoSEB should catalyze networks and connect existing knowledge and said that to be successful, an IMoSEB needs institutional support and must be subject to appropriate internal and external evaluation.

Discussion: While several participants, including participants from non-government organizations, queried how a new mechanism would build on, or be different to, existing mechanisms, the discussion yielded general consensus on the need for an improved means of linking science and decision making on biodiversity. Various reasons for this “need” were presented: a SBSTTA bureau representative said an IMoSEB would seek to adapt highly scientific information to decision makers through a strong science-policy interface; while a government participant suggested an IMoSEB would build a bridge with the policy-making community for identifying

priority areas for action. Several government participants focused on how an IMoSEB could improve the scientific basis of SBSTTA activities, though one or two questioned whether an IMoSEB could fulfill this need. Another government participant said an IMoSEB would aim to raise the profile of biodiversity in international decision making, improve the quality of information on the basis of which decisions are taken, and ensure appropriate scientific findings feed into decision-making processes, though he also questioned whether a new mechanism would be needed for this. Many participants emphasized the importance of appropriately communicating scientific information to policy makers and the wider public.

On options for an IMoSEB, one government participant noted that an International Panel on Sustainable Use of Natural Resources is being developed by UNEP through an initiative supported by the EC, and suggested a future IMoSEB could explore partnerships with this body. A participant said an IMoSEB must be truly intergovernmental in order to ensure political buy-in, while several others, including Peter Bridgewater, suggested a “meta-network,” which would draw on expertise in existing bodies and allow existing networks to access knowledge globally. Participants from several intergovernmental and non-government organizations asked whether governments are prepared to fund a new process and one government participant said the key issue is whether governments really wish to have an IMoSEB. Many participants seemed to support the idea of a mechanism having global coverage, and conducting or coordinating regular assessments that could feed into the SBSTTA process and respond quickly to emerging issues.

SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS OF AN IMOSEB

On Friday, 27 April, three working groups convened in parallel sessions to separately address: scientific expertise on biodiversity needs, options for an IMoSEB, and the communication of scientific information. The working groups met throughout the morning and again in the afternoon after a brief progress report to plenary. The final outcomes from each working group were presented to the plenary on Saturday, 28 April. Participants agreed to include the outcomes in the meeting’s report with some minor amendments.

NEEDS FOR SCIENTIFIC EXPERTISE ON BIODIVERSITY: Working Group One, chaired by Andrew Stott, Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (UK), met on Friday to address the needs of the European region for an IMoSEB. Discussion centered on issues identified in the Needs and Options Document and at previous consultations. Considering some of the needs in the document to be too vague, the group spent time clarifying the text.

The group agreed that while the text should be prescriptive, it should not appear “threatening” to a country’s sovereignty. Several participants noted the importance of improving communication to achieve desired outcomes, for example by ensuring that expertise reaches the relevant bodies through scientific information that is accessible and adequately disseminated. Many participants expressed support for the recommendation from the African Regional Consultation that traditional knowledge be considered alongside scientific expertise. A government participant emphasized that scientific information provided to bodies such as SBSTTA should be independent and peer-reviewed. Several participants

suggested that an IMoSEB should synthesise information from existing bodies such as IUCN, in order to avoid information duplication.

Reporting to plenary, Lars Berg, National Scientific Council on Biodiversity (Sweden), highlighted the group's desire to synthesize the needs contained within the Needs and Options Document, along with those identified during other consultations. He also explained that the group considered more work would be necessary to prioritize and identify the subjects of those needs. He said participants also felt it would be beneficial to cross-check the identified needs with the option for an IMoSEB being developed by Working Group Two.

In the ensuing discussion, working-group members clarified aspects of the needs identified in response to questions from others in plenary. A participant highlighted the necessity of scenario analysis when reporting and analyzing scientific information. One government participant also queried whether the group had sufficiently addressed the importance of quality information.

After reconvening in the afternoon, Working Group One spent further time assessing who would make use of the needs. The group identified five groups of users: the public, the scientific community, policy facilitators, the private sector, and high level government actors. In general, the group found that the majority of needs served the private sector, policy facilitators and the scientific community. Some participants raised concerns about the involvement of the public and government in gathering and disseminating traditional knowledge. The group concluded that as traditional knowledge and structures differ between countries, each situation could be dealt with differently.

Working Groups One and Two combined to share their findings and further discussion ensued, during which Working Group One's text on the "needs" was refined. One participant raised concerns about the proactive nature of an IMoSEB and, in response, another participant suggested that an IMoSEB should be both proactive and reactive, taking into consideration emerging issues of concern to SBSTTA and other bodies. A participant cautioned that the needs identified could limit information flows, rendering IMoSEB a one-way network for policy makers and conventions.

On Saturday, Lars Berg reported to the plenary on the outcomes of Working Group One's discussions, presenting a table that indicated how ten identified needs related to five categories of end-users, and explaining that, in developing this table, the group had considered needs identified at preceding consultations and in the Needs and Options Document. He explained that working group participants had emphasized that there is a continuous need to improve understanding, development and evaluation of the knowledge-policy interface and feedback loop. He said participants also stressed that when science is referred to, it should be authoritative and legitimized, and that natural, social and economic sciences all play an important role.

In the ensuing discussion, participants suggested several, minor amendments to the text. One government participant suggested to include "managers" as a sixth category of end-users in the table. An intergovernmental participant proposed to include a footnote referring to the Leipzig workshops' recommendation to incorporate "all forms of knowledge."



Participants during the discussion

Final Report: The Report of the Meeting includes the following list of needs for scientific expertise on biodiversity:

- independent, synthesized and comprehensive scientific information and advice from all relevant sources to support the work of international conventions and institutions, with particular emphasis on the CBD;
- improved communication to aid the understanding and application of scientific results on biodiversity by all relevant audiences;
- proactive scientific advice on emerging threats and issues associated with biodiversity loss identified by the scientific community, or expressed by stakeholders, including economic and social dimensions;
- improved access and timeliness of peer-reviewed scientific studies and data on biodiversity, so that they can be more readily and effectively used in decision making;
- promotion of dialogue among diverse knowledge systems and understandings, perspectives and values regarding biodiversity to make policy decisions more effective and appropriate;
- increased ability, at national, regional and global levels, to predict the consequences of current actions affecting biodiversity, ecosystems services and human well being;
- improved, better coordinated, more effective, more operational and timely monitoring and assessments of drivers, pressures, impacts and responses relating to biodiversity and ecosystem services, in particular, through the provision of scientific support to relevant initiatives;
- bringing insights from the relevant sciences and other forms of knowledge to bear on local and national decisions on topical issues that affect biodiversity, where those decisions have international consequences and where the knowledge basis is particularly weak or unconsolidated;
- identification of biodiversity research priorities and gaps that are relevant to policy making and diffusion of these to the scientific community and the science funding agencies; and
- mobilization of scientific expertise for national and regional level capacity building.

OPTIONS FOR AN IMOSEB: Working Group Two, chaired by Peter Bridgewater, met on Friday and addressed options for an IMoSEB. Most participants agreed that an IMoSEB should initially operate at a global level, while leaving open the possibility for focusing on local level issues in the future. On targeting IMoSEB activities, participants were undecided as to whether they should only be aimed at policy makers, or should also aim at the wider public.

After lengthy discussions of whether an IMoSEB should undertake assessments or seek to feed scientific information and expertise into policy processes, the group reached general agreement that both were important and that both need to

be “authoritative and legitimized” in order to be useful. Participants then focused on the nature of any assessment process, particularly given existing biodiversity related assessments. The group agreed on the need for some form of broad assessment, perhaps building on the Global Biodiversity Outlook. Most agreed such an assessment should focus on CBD related issues, but also be relevant to other biodiversity-related conventions. Most also considered the need for workable indicators on baselines and trends to allow for measuring progress over time.

Participants were initially less certain of the optimal structure for an IMoSEB. They generally agreed that a governing board and a secretariat would be necessary, then considered many ideas for the membership of the governing board, including combinations of *inter alia*: the Chairs of the biodiversity convention subsidiary bodies; the heads of key scientific bodies, such as the International Council for Science (ICSU); eminent scientists; and government representatives. After considerable discussion, the group reached agreement on the benefits of a two-tiered structure, with a smaller governing board and a larger “advisory panel” or “group” that might be multi-stakeholder. Regarding a secretariat, participants discussed whether this should be fully independent, or could be created within an existing entity.

Reporting to the plenary, Peter Bridgewater said the group agreed an IMoSEB should: initially operate at the global level; build on existing networks and processes; and provide for assessments, including full assessments, targeted reports and reports on the status

of trends, but he said the group also noted the need for scientific expertise at the global level. On a possible structure for an IMoSEB, he said the group thought an IMoSEB could consist of: a small governing board, which could build on the existing UN Biodiversity Liaison Group, with key representatives from science; an

advisory group, which could be the first stage of a “network of networks”; and a secretariat.

In the ensuing discussion, an IMoSEB Executive Committee member queried whether the proposed structure should include an intergovernmental dimension and Peter Bridgewater responded that one advantage of the proposed structure was that it would not be too “politically-laden.” Participants also raised questions about whether the body would coordinate assessments itself or work with other bodies and how individuals would be elected to the governing board. A working group participant highlighted that the benefit of including convention subsidiary body representatives on the governing board would be to ensure that the assessments conducted relate to issues that are actually relevant to policy makers. Another working group participant also noted that the



Working Group 2 Chair Peter Bridgewater, Executive Secretary, Ramsar Convention



Participants during the discussions

working group had discussed an amended option three that would see the IPCC converted into an “IPEC” to address all areas of environmental change.

Reconvening in the afternoon, the working group decided to create a brief list of the advantages and disadvantages of each of the options for an IMoSEB outlined in the Needs and Options Document so that they could indicate to other participants how they had drawn on the most practical features from each option in developing their proposed structure for an IMoSEB. They also finalized aspects of the proposed structure, before joining with Working Group One to consider whether the proposed structure addressed the needs identified.

On Saturday, Peter Bridgewater presented to the plenary the group’s outcomes on a possible option for an IMoSEB, including its primary structure and function. He explained that as the proposed governance structure would be drawn from intergovernmental processes, and thus ultimately from national governments, it would enable the mechanism to reflect not only international, but also regional, national and local needs.

A participant expressed concern about a reference to “IMoSEB,” suggesting a more general term, such as “potential, favored option,” to indicate that the structure proposed by Working Group Two has not yet been created. There was some debate about whether the proposed mechanism should initially operate at the “global” or “international” level, with participants deciding to refer to the “global” level. Participants also agreed to note in the meeting report that Working Groups One and Two met to consider whether the identified needs could be addressed by the proposed option.

Peter Bridgewater clarified that the group thought that the Chair of the governing board should be elected by the board members. Participants discussed, but decided against, listing examples of networks from which the “five additional members” of the governing board might be drawn, but they amended the text to say that these members would be elected “depending on their expertise and associated networks in relation to the work programme.”

Final Report: The Report of the Meeting proposes a possible structure for an IMoSEB as “some form of networks of networks.” The primary structure for this option would be a governing board, supported by an advisory group drawn widely from the natural and social sciences, and from holders of other types of biodiversity-related knowledge.

The governing board would not exceed 15 members, comprising: the five Chairs of the subsidiary scientific bodies of the biodiversity related conventions; five key representatives from the scientific community proposed by ICSU and the International Social Science Council (ISSC); and five additional “at large” members. The five additional members

would be elected for fixed terms by the first ten members on the basis of their expertise and associated networks in the context of the work programme of the proposed mechanism.

The governing board would be supported by a small secretariat. To give the proposed mechanism full legitimacy and authority, it should be mandated as early as possible, and its development should proceed expeditiously.

The mechanism should react to requests from the subsidiary scientific bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions, also be able to proactively address emerging biodiversity issues. The work of the mechanism should broadly comprehend the work programmes of the biodiversity related conventions and the need for assessments or advice suggested by their programmes.

COMMUNICATION OF SCIENTIFIC

INFORMATION: Working Group Three, chaired by Sylvia Martínez, Swiss Biodiversity Forum of the Swiss Academy of Sciences, met on Friday and addressed the communication of scientific information. It discussed whether communication presupposes one-way information dissemination or whether it suggests a two-way dialogue. Many participants placed emphasis on linking biodiversity loss to climate change in order to benefit from the widespread publicity the latter receives. Participants also elaborated on several sub-themes, such as: communication objectives; message content; guidance on outputs; target audiences; concrete communication initiatives; types of communication; and appropriate language for effective communication.

The group developed a flow chart consisting of three aspects for enhancing communication: complexity, translation and simplicity. Participants considered the “complexity” component to be two-directional, concerning both the need to reduce complicated scientific information to a format understandable for policy makers and also to transform topical policy questions into a format relevant for scientific research and outputs. They regarded the “translating” function to concern how an independent, transparent IMoSEB could: transform topical policy questions, facilitate collaboration and disseminate key messages and the “Simplicity” aspect to refer to the appropriateness of information, the understandability of key messages and the provision of concise information. The flow chart also referred to the provision of background information on complex issues and to consideration of: risk analysis, alternatives, scenarios, options, consequences, scientific uncertainty versus evidence, the relevance of information, and the benefits of taking action.

Reporting to plenary, Sylvia Martínez explained that the group discussed communication goals, including: making use of best available science; enhancing decision making and ensuring the appropriate scale for taking action. She explained the group also discussed the need to highlight



Working Group 3 Chair Sylvia Martínez, Swiss Biodiversity Forum of the Swiss Academy of Sciences



Working Group 3 reflected ideas in a flow chart

the consequences of biodiversity loss and the implications of inaction, along with the need for communication to be succinct, timely and precise. She said the group agreed on the relevance of one-way communication from scientists to other actors, as well as on two-way dialogue, adding that language should be tailored to the particular target audience. She reported on a range of possible concrete actions, including a media strategy to bring biodiversity loss to the public's attention and drawing on synergies with the IPCC. She also highlighted modalities for translating the complexity of scientific outputs into understandable formats, as depicted in the group's flow chart.

In the ensuing discussion, several group members added clarifications, noting the importance of: avoiding doomsday scenarios by transmitting positive messages on biodiversity conservation; speaking with “one voice”; and using different mechanisms, such as a “Davos-type” process for biodiversity.

In the afternoon, the working group continued to refine and clarify various aspects of the communication theme. Regarding the flow chart, the group elaborated on a “dialogue strategy,” involving collaboration between those who require information or who have biodiversity “questions” and those who may have answers but who need to understand what the key policy questions are. The group also discussed the challenge of communicating to the scientific community the type of information required by policy makers. The group proposed that dialogue could occur on two levels: first, for policy makers or an audience who require more complex answers; and second, for the general public who may make use of more simplified information. Regarding European specificities, the importance of considering regional variations in any communication strategy was noted. The group also briefly discussed a proposed EC action plan to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010, which includes an European advisory mechanism.

On Saturday, Gordana Beltram, Ministry of the Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy (Slovenia), presented to the plenary the communication goals and guiding principles resulting from Working Group Three discussions. In the ensuing discussion, several participants commented on the scientific community speaking with “one voice,” which was listed as one of the guiding principles. A participant expressed concern about the ambiguity of the term “one voice.” Another participant suggested that rather than speaking with “one



Participants during the plenary session

voice,” the scientific community should strive to channel information to one mechanism such as an IMoSEB, and to connect more effectively to the policy community.

A participant suggested targeting biodiversity managers as well as policy makers. An IMoSEB Executive Committee member proposed changes to the text to reflect that a “new mechanism should enable the identification of key facts and messages that could be communicated in a more effective way.” Another participant suggested inserting “links to climate change as one way to improve communication,” in order to overcome concerns some participants had with the reference to “linking up with climate change and biodiversity processes.” Regarding concrete communication strategies, such as devising a media strategy or face-to-face meetings with policy makers, one government participant suggested appending a non-exhaustive list of examples, possibly in an annex, while another government participant noted the importance of the communication strategy being guided and conducted by experts.

Final Report: The Report of the Meeting identifies the following communication goals: to make use of the best knowledge available, including from the natural and social sciences to improve decision making; to strengthen the implementation of biodiversity objectives; and to view communication as a two-way process and a dialogue.

It also enunciates guiding principles that acknowledge the complexity of biodiversity and the need for effective and coherent communication. The guiding principles state that:

- a new mechanism should: enable the identification of key facts and messages that could be communicated in a more effective way; conduct independent assessments, synthesize the available knowledge on biodiversity, and translate it into the “language” of the target audience; and connect to networks in order to build on different types of experts and expertise;
- findings should use scenarios and offer options for action, and assess the possible consequences of different actions;
- scientific analysis and assessments should follow the commonly accepted scientific code and be characterized by transparency and accountability;
- communication should: be pro-active, timely, relevant, authoritative and concise; consider appropriate scales; emanate from a collaborative and interdisciplinary process; and consider regional specificities whenever appropriate;
- communication strategies should be developed by communication experts; and
- links to climate change should be considered as one way to improve communication on biodiversity.

CLOSING PLENARY

On Saturday, Chair Korn emphasized that whilst it was not necessary for the group to reach consensus, the meeting report would be likely to have a larger impact if it did not include too many diverging views. Further to the discussions on the content of the report reflected in the relevant sections of this summary, participants discussed opportunities to feed the workshop outcomes into relevant European meetings and further regional consultations, and the IMoSEB Executive Secretariat signalled its intention to organize a side event during SBSTTA-12. The CBD Secretariat suggested sending the report officially to the CBD Secretariat so it could be included as an information document for consideration during SBSTTA and possibly linking it with the Global Biodiversity Outlook 3.

Chair Korn noted that over the course of the three days, a convergence of views had emerged and the strength of the meeting report will be that it indicates that participants evaluated existing options for an IMoSEB and developed a hybrid model based on specified needs and based on the unique nature of biodiversity issues. He noted the proposed model builds on existing structures and appears flexible enough to respond to demands, light enough not to over stretch budgets and weighty enough to make a difference. He also highlighted that the meeting report will reach a wide audience.

Michel Loreau highlighted differences between the three regional consultations conducted to date. He said the North American Regional Consultation highlighted concern about forming a new intergovernmental body that might disrupt the current policy landscape, while the African Regional Consultation evidenced enthusiasm for an IMoSEB and resulted in proposals that are quite ambitious. He



Michel Loreau, Co-Chair of the IMoSEB Executive Committee

said that while the European Regional Consultation was less ambitious, the discussion was more focused and participants had strived to create a consistent text that could become a concrete and workable proposal. He also highlighted the meeting’s strong emphasis on communication. In closing, he stressed the importance of consensus within the biodiversity community to ensure the presentation of a strong, unified message to the public. He thanked the participants for their enthusiasm and attendance, and Chair Korn closed the meeting at 12:20 pm.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

IMOSEB REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS: A series of further regional consultations on a Consultative Process Towards an IMoSEB are planned for Asia, Oceania-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. For more information, contact: the IMoSEB Executive Secretariat; e-mail: executive-secretariat@imoseb.net; internet: <http://www.imoseb.net>

2007 INTERNATIONAL BIODIVERSITY DAY: The worldwide International Day for Biological Diversity will take place on 22 May 2007. This year’s Day will focus on

biodiversity and climate change. For more information, contact: the CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/outreach/awareness/biodiv-day-2007.shtml>

ECO SUMMIT 2007: This meeting will address the issue of "Ecological Complexity and Sustainability: Challenges and Opportunities for 21st Century's Ecology." The event will be held in Beijing, China, from 22-27 May 2007. For more information, contact Yan Zhuang, Dong Li or Aiyun Song of the Conference Secretariat in Beijing; tel: +86-10-6284-9113; e-mail: ecosummit2007@rcees.ac.cn; internet: <http://www.ecosummit2007.elsevier.com/>

FOURTEENTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO CITES: The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) COP 14 will be held from 3-15 June 2007, in The Hague, the Netherlands. For more information, contact: the CITES Secretariat; tel: +41-22-917-8139/40; fax: +41-22-797-3417; e-mail: info@cites.org; internet: <http://www.cites.org/eng/news/calendar.shtml>

ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE: CGRFA-11 will take place at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, from 11-15 June 2007. For more information, contact: José Esquinas, CGRFA Secretariat; tel: +39-6-570-54986; fax: +39-6-570-53248; e-mail: jose.esquinas@fao.org; internet: <http://www.fao.org/ag/cgrfa>

GREEN WEEK 2007: This event will take place in Brussels, Belgium, from 12-15 June 2007 and is linked to the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. It will look at the development of European environmental policy, and what lessons are needed to meet future challenges. For more information, contact: the European Commission; tel: +32-23-44-62-32; fax: +32-23-44-75-64; e-mail: env-gw2007@ec.europa.eu; internet: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/greenweek/conference.html>

TWELFTH MEETING OF SBSTTA: CBD SBSTTA-12 will take place in Paris, France, from 2-6 July 2007. For more information, contact: the CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/meetings/default.shtml>

SECOND MEETING OF THE CBD OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION: The second meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention is scheduled for 9-13 July 2007, in Paris, France. For more information, contact: the CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/meetings/default.shtml>

FIRST INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL CONFERENCE ON ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES: This conference, to be held in Interlaken, Switzerland, from 1-7 September 2007, will seek to address priorities for the sustainable use, development and conservation of animal genetic resources. For more information, contact: Irene Hoffmann, Chief, FAO Animal Production Services; tel: +39-6-570-52796; e-mail: irene.hoffmann@fao.org; internet: <http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/en/genetics/angrvent2007.html>

IMOSEB INTERNATIONAL STEERING

COMMITTEE: The IMoSEB International Steering Committee will meet in late 2007 (dates and location to be confirmed), and will seek to finalize recommendations and proposals based on input from the consultations held, with a view to submitting them for consideration by CBD COP-9 in May 2008. For more information, contact: the IMoSEB Executive Secretariat; e-mail: executive-secretariat@imoseb.net; internet: <http://www.imoseb.net>

FIFTH TRONDHEIM CONFERENCE ON BIODIVERSITY: The Conference is scheduled for 29 October to 2 November 2007, in Trondheim, Norway. Hosted by the Norwegian Government in cooperation with UNEP, this conference will aim to provide input into the CBD and its preparations for COP-9 in 2008. For more information, contact: Norway's Directorate for Nature Management; tel: +47-73-58-05-00; fax: +47-73-58-05-01; e-mail: postmottak@dirnat.no; internet: <http://www.dirnat.no/content.ap?thisId=500025295>

THIRTEENTH MEETING OF SBSTTA: CBD SBSTTA-13 is to be held from 18-22 February 2008, in Rome, Italy. For more information, contact: the CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/meetings/default.shtml>

FOURTH BIOSAFETY PROTOCOL COP/MOP: The fourth Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety will meet in Bonn, Germany from 12-16 May 2008. For more information, contact: the CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/meetings/default.shtml>

NINTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY: CBD COP-9 will take place in Bonn, Germany, from 19-30 May 2008. For more information, contact: the CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/meetings/default.shtml>

GLOSSARY

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
ICSU	International Council for Science
IMoSEB	International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
SBSTTA	Convention on Biodiversity's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice



IMoSEB European Regional Consultation participants