



# IMoSEB International Steering Committee Bulletin

## A Summary Report of the Final Meeting of the International Steering Committee of the Consultative Process Towards an IMoSEB

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in collaboration with the IMoSEB Secretariat

ONLINE AT [HTTP://WWW.IISD.CA/YIMB/SDIMS/](http://www.iisd.ca/yimb/sd/ims/)  
VOLUME 132, No. 6, TUESDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2007



### SUMMARY OF THE FINAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS TOWARDS AN IMOSEB: 15-17 NOVEMBER 2007

The Final Meeting of the International Steering Committee of the Consultative Process Towards an International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB) was held from 15-17 November 2007, in Montpellier, France. The meeting, which addressed outcomes from six regional consultations that have taken place in North American, African, European, Asian, South American, and the Pacific regions since January 2007, was attended by 57 participants, including: 12 government representatives from Europe, two from North America, two from Africa, one from Asia and one from the Pacific; six representatives from three biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements; representatives from international organizations; and representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), scientific research institutions, and universities operating at various scales and in a variety of regions.

Discussions were held in plenary, two roundtable sessions, and two working groups. Participants focused on the needs and options for an IMoSEB, as well as on how to improve the science-policy interface for biodiversity at all levels. In their final Statement, the International Steering Committee, while not recommending the formation of a new institution, agrees to invite donors and governments to provide support for the further and urgent consideration of the establishment of a science-policy interface. It further invites the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and others to convene a meeting to consider establishing such an interface.

#### 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 former 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 (IFB), established to support and facilitate discussions. The International Steering Committee is 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 concurred that the current system for linking science and policy in the area of biodiversity needed further improvement. They agreed that a consultation should identify gaps and needs at the science-policy interface and gaps, if any, in existing processes, and that it should formulate appropriate steps forward. The International Steering Committee 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 discussed at a number of events, including the eighth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP-8) held in Curitiba, Brazil, in March 2006, and a workshop on "International Science-Policy Interfaces for Biodiversity Governance," held in Leipzig, Germany, in October 2006.

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

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**REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS:** The IMoSEB North American Regional Consultation was held in Montreal, Canada, from 30-31 January 2007. 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 formed the basis of subsequent discussions.

The African Regional Consultation was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 1-3 March 2007. In addition to discussing options for a possible IMoSEB, participants considered expertise needed in Africa and potential users of an IMoSEB, as well as 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 included: developing the assessment of past or ongoing activities into 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.

The European Regional Consultation was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 26-28 April 2007. Participants identified ten needs for an IMoSEB, a possible "network of networks" structure that could enable an IMoSEB to meet these needs, and goals and guiding principles for a strategy to communicate scientific information on biodiversity.

The Asian Regional Consultation was held from 24-25 September 2007, in Beijing, China. Participants discussed various options for a possible IMoSEB, its structure and governance, and issues relevant to the Asian region, in the context of the science-policy interface. Participants agreed on an IMoSEB in the form of an independent intergovernmental panel serving the five biodiversity-related conventions, including a multi-stakeholder component affiliated with a UN body.

The South American Regional Consultation was held from 2-3 October 2007 in Bariloche, Argentina. Participants reached broad agreement on the needs for an IMoSEB, and put forward two options for such a mechanism: an international panel of scientists, political figures and other biodiversity actors, supported by a "network of networks" for exchanging and building scientific information; and a strengthening of existing scientific information networks and mechanisms, with a focus on enhancing national and regional level decision-making on biodiversity issues. They also reached agreement on the relationship of an IMoSEB to the CBD and other biodiversity-related conventions, and the role of the private sector and indigenous communities.

The Pacific Regional Consultation was held from 19-20 October 2007 in Alotau, Papua New Guinea. Participants supported the establishment of a civil society-driven IMoSEB that would synthesize and communicate a knowledge base on biodiversity, and provide scientific advice to support decision-making at all levels. They designed a structure and governance system for such a mechanism that would include representatives from local and indigenous communities and the business sector.

It is expected that recommendations from the final meeting of the International Steering Committee be considered at the thirteenth meeting of the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific,

Technical and Technological Advice, to be held in Rome, Italy, from 18-22 February 2008, and at CBD COP-9, to be held in Bonn, Germany, from 19-30 May 2008.

IISD Reporting Services Reports from the consultations held to date can be found at: [http://www.iisd.ca/process/biodiv\\_wildlife.htm#imoseb](http://www.iisd.ca/process/biodiv_wildlife.htm#imoseb). Additional information is also available at <http://www.imoseb.net>

## REPORT OF THE CONSULTATION

On Thursday, 15 November 2007, participants met in plenary and participated in two roundtable sessions on options and needs, followed by a general discussion. The discussion concluded on Friday morning, after which participants broke into two working groups on the objectives for an International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB) and on the science-policy interface. The working groups reported back to plenary on Friday afternoon. On Saturday morning, participants convened in closing plenary to hear from French Secretary of State for Ecology, Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet. They then discussed and adopted the Statement from the IMoSEB International Steering Committee. The following report summarizes the major discussions and issues addressed during the meeting.

## OPENING SEGMENT AND ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

On Thursday, introductory presentations were followed by two roundtable discussions on the needs and on options for an IMoSEB.

Alfred Oteng-Yeboah and Michel Loreau, Co-Chairs of the IMoSEB Executive Committee, chaired the opening plenary. Co-Chair Oteng-Yeboah welcomed participants to the final meeting of the International Steering Committee of the Consultative Process towards an IMoSEB and urged them to reflect on the outcomes of the six regional consultations to determine how an IMoSEB could proceed.

**INTRODUCTORY PRESENTATIONS:** André Menez, President of the French National Museum of Natural History, on behalf of Valérie Pécresse, French Minister for Higher Education and Research, recalled the 2005 Paris Conference on Biodiversity, Science and Governance, during which former French President Jacques Chirac called for the creation of a network of expertise, including intergovernmental and non-governmental components, that would build on existing entities and institutions to raise global awareness on biodiversity. Menez highlighted the Convention on Biological Diversity



L-R: André Menez, President of the French National Museum of Natural History; Anne-Yvonne Le Dain, Languedoc-Roussillon Regional Council representative; Alfred Oteng-Yeboah, Co-Chair of the IMoSEB Executive Committee; and Michel Loreau, Co-Chair of the IMoSEB Executive Committee



(CBD), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the IUCN – The World Conservation Union and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) as “privileged partners” in the process.

While noting differences between the climate change and biodiversity arenas, Menez pointed to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC) success in helping governments take actions to address climate change, as reflected by its recent receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize. He said that France is willing to convey all ideas coming out of the Consultative Process to the EU.

Anne-Yvonne Le Dain, Languedoc-Roussillon Regional Council representative, on behalf of Georges Frêche, Chair of the Languedoc-Roussillon Regional Council and Montpellier Agglomeration, highlighted that France, and in particular Montpellier, are sensitive to climate change issues and biodiversity loss. Emphasizing the biodiversity-related research occurring in Montpellier, she tasked the meeting with developing the legal means to translate societal goals into “rules for the future.”

Michel Loreau, Co-Chair of the IMoSEB Executive Committee, provided a history of the Consultative Process, and



Michel Loreau, Co-Chair of the IMoSEB Executive Committee

described a number of areas of agreement and divergence that had emerged from the regional consultations. He highlighted the Executive Committee’s position on how to address three key areas of difference, namely scale, links to governments and possible relationships with the biodiversity conventions.

On the issue of scale, Co-Chair Loreau explained that the Committee recommends a global process, with a nested set of sub-global assessments. On links to governments, he said the Committee is in favor of governmental involvement in order to facilitate uptake into negotiations and conventions, but that it warned against a purely intergovernmental process modeled on the IPCC because of the importance of involving other non-governmental actors. On the relationship with the biodiversity conventions, he stated that the Committee suggested that an IMoSEB should address the needs of both the CBD and the other biodiversity-related conventions. He added that the Committee also recommends that an IMoSEB be closely linked to the CBD, without being a part of it, so as to maintain its independence.

Loreau underlined that an IMoSEB should not compete, but be merged, with the MA. He outlined options for an IMoSEB structure, namely building a network of existing networks or creating a new intergovernmental process. He listed the objectives an IMoSEB should achieve, including to: provide an independent scientific voice on biodiversity; oversee regular assessments on biodiversity; undertake major reports on biodiversity; proactively raise the profile of biodiversity issues; and encourage the creation of a new generation of biodiversity scientists.

#### ROUNDTABLE AND DISCUSSION ON NEEDS:

Executive Committee Co-Chairs Oteng-Yeboah and Loreau co-chaired the roundtable and discussion on the needs

identified at the biodiversity knowledge and decision-making processes interface and the need for an IMoSEB. Co-Chair Oteng-Yeboah outlined the needs that had been identified during the regional consultations, namely: independent scientific expertise; capacity development; and improved communication.



Alfred Oteng-Yeboah, Co-Chair of the IMoSEB Executive Committee

On the need for independent scientific expertise, participants discussed who the target audience should be. They debated what kind of science should be taken into account and stressed the need to define “independent” scientific expertise. One participant underscored that politicians are not interested in “what the problems are” but “what the possible solutions may be.”

While most participants agreed on the need for an IMoSEB in order to streamline existing processes, several highlighted that there are already too many voices at the global level. One participant emphasized disagreement among scientists on what constitutes independent science and argued that any future mechanism should take this into account. Co-Chair Loreau said that while it is not possible to speak about biodiversity with a single voice, a mechanism is needed to help policy makers distinguish between what is certain and what is uncertain.

One participant suggested that the needs for an IMoSEB should emerge from an understanding of why the “plethora” of existing activities is not addressing biodiversity-related problems adequately. Several participants highlighted the need for greater coordination, and a representative from UNEP noted the challenge of promoting coherence while encouraging diversity and new thinking. He stated that UNEP’s Executive Director is concerned with institutional proliferation, and suggested that “sunset” mechanisms might help resolve this issue.

Several participants stressed that specific needs identified during the regional consultations differ, and discussed how the process could address these diverging local needs. One delegate argued that a mechanism is needed at the local, not global, level to inform local decision makers of alternative options. Another participant noted that local decisions are often dependent on decisions made at other levels and that a working science-policy interface must exist on all levels. Others agreed with the suggestion that an IMoSEB needs to be sufficiently global to understand transnational trends, but have the capacity to recognize when national interests should take precedence.

Noting the importance of traditional knowledge, another participant underscored that the International Steering Committee should determine if an IMoSEB should connect with the local level, and if so how.

Delegates highlighted a range of other needs, including to: undertake and oversee regular assessments and reports on biodiversity, such as the MA and IPCC reports; better develop monitoring, observation systems and indicators to underpin such assessments; mainstream biodiversity in sectoral assessments; improve communication to decision makers and the public; and identify gaps in knowledge and emerging issues.

One participant urged others to shed their “climate envy,” noting that biodiversity gets more media attention than climate change and that concrete actions to meet biodiversity targets have been achieved.

Ahmed Djoghlaif, CBD Executive Secretary, highlighted the importance of putting biodiversity on the political agenda. He said the CBD Secretariat would be in favor of the creation of an IMoSEB and stressed that the scientific community must be mobilized to support the goals of the biodiversity-related conventions. To this end, Djoghlaif argued that an IMoSEB should be housed within the CBD, so that it would be linked to the authority needed to bring about implementation.



Ahmed Djoghlaif, CBD Executive Secretary

**ROUNDTABLE AND DISCUSSION ON OPTIONS:** Executive Committee Co-Chairs Alfred Oteng-Yeboah and Michel Loreau co-chaired the roundtable and discussion on options for an IMoSEB. Co-Chair Loreau encouraged participants to focus on the options for an IMoSEB that were formulated by the regional and other consultations on the objectives an IMoSEB and on general guiding principles.

Following a comment on the objective of providing an independent scientific voice on biodiversity, Co-Chair Loreau explained that “independent” was referring to the political arena.

On raising the profile of biodiversity issues, one participant underlined that communication is not one-way and called on scientists to be more responsive to policy makers. Another noted that facilitating multilateral communication could be a niche for an IMoSEB.

Participants discussed the potential role of UNEP, with some noting that it could provide a formal framework for interaction between the CBD and other institutions. A representative from UNEP emphasized that UNEP would require the collaboration of other institutions to develop a regular process that could respond to multiple challenges and needs. A consensus emerged on the need to identify existing relevant processes and determine how they could be strengthened and coordinated. One participant highlighted that geographic approaches, rather than ones that focus purely on biology, ecology and economics, could yield useful syntheses and analyses for decision makers.

General consensus on the importance of sub-global assessments was reached, however there was some debate on whether and how these sub-global assessments would be combined into a global assessment, and the possible role of an IMoSEB in this process. One participant noted that sub-global assessments can help link national and local interests to global assessments. Another questioned whether an IMoSEB should be involved in global assessment, noting that it would duplicate the work of the MA follow-up. Others pointed to the benefit of merging the MA and an IMoSEB.

On the relationship between long-term assessments and special reports on emerging issues, most participants agreed that it would be more “powerful” to have a single entity perform both tasks.

There was some discussion on the importance of observation systems in assessments, with several participants stressing that these systems require additional funding.

There was disagreement about whether enhancing the “esteem” of scientists working in biodiversity was an appropriate objective. One participant stressed that scientists require financial support to ensure the credibility and authenticity of science.

Some participants suggested that the focus of an IMoSEB should not be science itself, but improving the impact of science on policy-making.

On improved communication, a participant from the media questioned the role that an IMoSEB might play in ensuring that biodiversity enters the “core” of the news agenda, as climate change has.

Several participants reiterated the need to decide whether a mechanism should build on what already exists or create something new, but no consensus was reached.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION:** This discussion was held on Thursday afternoon and Friday morning and was co-chaired by Oteng-Yeboah and Loreau.

Participants first heard from Harold Mooney, Department of Biological Sciences, Stanford University, US, who reported on the MA advisory group meeting, which took place in Stockholm, Sweden, in October 2007. Noting that the MA lacked a follow-up, he argued that implementation activities should include: identifying key knowledge and data gaps; developing an analytical tool to respond to the MA’s findings, such as an ecosystem assessment manual; building a knowledge base on ecosystem services through sub-global assessments; and laying the foundation for a second MA. He listed recommendations to the IMoSEB process stemming from the meeting, including: incorporating sub-global processes; adopting a human well-being perspective; and interacting with all stakeholders and relevant existing processes. He added that the meeting in Stockholm suggested that an IMoSEB be an intergovernmental process.

In the ensuing discussion, participants addressed the implementation of the MA in the context of an IMoSEB and the relationship between the two. Some expressed concern about the exclusive use of an ecosystem services lens within an IMoSEB, fearing that this might alienate some ecologists.

Following Mooney’s presentation, Co-Chair Loreau directed the discussion to the structure of an IMoSEB. He noted that when the consultative process was initiated, it was with the idea of including an intergovernmental component, and that having undergone a period of skepticism, this idea is now being re-emphasized. He urged participants to discuss this point further, saying that it could not be avoided indefinitely.

A number of participants agreed that an IMoSEB should not be placed within the CBD, with one stating that an IMoSEB could have a stronger influence on the CBD if it were not part of it. Another argued that because the mechanism would not only be focused on the CBD, it must be linked to another organization. Several participants suggested that UNEP would be the “natural” home for such a mechanism.

A US representative stated that the US does not support the creation of a new mechanism.

Several participants argued that neither the first Global Biodiversity Assessment, nor the MA, were entirely non-governmental. One participant pointed to the Global Environment Outlook-4 (GEO-4) and the International



Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development as examples of successful assessments that involve governments and that did not require the creation of a standing intergovernmental body, an option which would have had substantial financial implications.

One participant stressed the importance of an innovative approach. Arguing for moving beyond the “summary for policy makers” framework, he proposed that a new mechanism be more reactive and closer to decision makers.

The general discussion continued on Friday morning, when Co-Chair Loreau invited participants to further clarify the difference between using an ecosystem services lens versus other lenses. A broad consensus emerged that the links between biodiversity and human well-being should be a key focus, with several participants cautioning against a purely conservation-based ideology. One participant stressed that this approach should not be dropped altogether. Another argued that an ecosystem services and human well-being framework, merged with a Drivers-Pressures-State-Impact-Responses approach, as performed in the GEO-4 report, is effective.

Co-Chair Loreau then explained that several participants were concerned that discussions on the science-policy interface on Thursday had focused only on assessments, and encouraged



Didier Babin, Executive Secretary of the IMoSEB Consultative Process

attendees to discuss other options. Didier Babin, Executive Secretary of the IMoSEB Consultative Process, summarized the outcomes from the regional consultations. He said the consultations had produced a strong consensus on the need to improve the interface between the state of knowledge and decision-making. He highlighted the demand for access to information via the internet,

even in those countries where a digital gap exists, particularly in Africa.

Participants discussed a range of options for improving the science-policy interface, including: an annual briefing or review of the main scientific results on specific topics; an internet-based “wiki” approach to transmit practical information to the regional and local levels; a Davos-like Biodiversity Forum; and a demand-driven network of metadata or a meta-network bringing together existing initiatives at the national and local levels. One participant mentioned the International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management as a possible model for addressing the science-policy interface.

A representative from the Pacific region argued that a lot of decision-making occurs at the sub-national and local scales and that an IMoSEB can advocate for a structure to ensure that information reaches these levels. He highlighted that the digital gap is a significant challenge in his region.

Co-Chair Loreau noted the diversity of needs from local to global levels and urged participants to discuss how these needs could be turned into concrete objectives for an international structure.

One participant suggested creating a global structure that would have sub-regional components. Noting the diverging needs identified during the regional consultations, another

underscored that there is no “one size fits all” solution. On the relationship between an IMoSEB and the MA, one participant advocated establishing a partnership between the two processes.

### WORKING GROUPS

Upon completion of the general discussion on Friday morning, Co-Chair Loreau suggested creating two working groups on the objectives for an IMoSEB, and on improving the science-policy interface at all levels. After some discussion, it was decided not to create a third working group on the general principles of an IMoSEB, and that the Secretariat would draft a document on that topic. Once established, the working group on the science-policy interface decided to address general principles as well and no such document was drafted by the Secretariat. Co-Chair Loreau appointed the chairs of the two working groups and participants were free to join either one.

**WORKING GROUP ON THE OBJECTIVES FOR AN IMoSEB:** This working group was chaired by Charles Perrings, Arizona State University, and used a document

circulated by the co-chairs of the Executive Committee as a basis for discussion. Loreau reminded participants of the changes called for during Thursday’s discussions on this topic. He said participants had agreed to delete two



L-R: Michel Loreau, Co-Chair of the IMoSEB Executive Committee; and Charles Perrings, Arizona State University

objectives, namely, creating an international formal framework for interactions between a range of stakeholders, and actively increasing the profile and esteem of the scientific community. He also stated that participants had suggested adding language on the need for capacity building and communication.

The working group concentrated on possible preliminary language explaining the rationale behind a new mechanism. While some noted the existing proliferation of international institutions in environmental governance, positions polarized on whether to create a new institution or to build on existing mechanisms and institutions and establish new partnerships. In light of this disagreement, participants decided not to refer to “an IMoSEB” or to the “objectives of an IMoSEB” and instead agreed on the more general language of “needs that require novel partnerships or arrangements.” It was further decided to separate these needs into general and specific ones. After some discussion, participants agreed to use text on general needs from the IPCC mandate.

On the need for regular global assessments, participants added a reference in the operative part of the draft to sub-global assessments, and further decided not to specify how the assessments should be carried out, deleting a reference to the MA, which they agreed was too limiting.

On studies on emerging needs, a number of participants underscored that the scientific community should be responsive to policy makers’ requests and debated the permeability of the CBD to scientific issues.

Participants drafted new language on the promotion of capacity building to generate and use information, methodologies and techniques. New text was also drafted on the need to promote effective communication.



Participants during the working group on the objectives for an IMoSEB



Dais for the working group on the science-policy interface. L-R: Chad Monfreda, IMoSEB Executive Secretariat; Didier Babin, Executive Secretary of the IMoSEB Consultative Process; and Philippe Le Prestre, Laval University, working group Chair.

a structure with a focus on making it sufficiently intergovernmental to gain government legitimization.

Babin asked if the structure proposed by the European regional consultation was sufficiently flexible and legitimate. Participants responded that it was flexible, but should be modified to

include more intergovernmental participation.

Participants decided to delete the reference to increasing the profile of the biodiversity issue through active engagement, as they noted that this need is captured by the rest of the text.

One participant raised the question of whether reference to implementation and resources should be made in the objectives. The working group agreed that this reference was essential but that it should be made in the report of the meeting.

**WORKING GROUP ON THE SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACE:** The working group on the science-policy interface was chaired by Philippe Le Prestre, Laval University, and took place in two parts: a broad discussion of guiding principles for an IMoSEB; and a discussion on generating concrete recommendations about the structure and institutional home of such a mechanism.

Beginning with the guiding principles proposed in the Executive Secretariat document “The Main Results of the Regional Consultations in Addition to ‘Needs and Options’ Discussions,” namely scientific credibility, political legitimacy and relevance, participants suggested adding a principle that IMoSEB efforts be “non-duplicative” and “complementary and supportive” to existing bodies. Other participants suggested that “independence” be formally defined and added as a principle, and that fostering dialogue between different governmental and non-governmental decision makers also be included. It was generally agreed that the principle of scientific credibility be understood to include all forms of legitimate knowledge.

Discussion then centered around defining users of a mechanism, with some debate surrounding whether an IMoSEB should only target political decision makers, or attempt to move down to smaller scales. One participant argued that an IMoSEB cannot realistically give specific national and sub-national recommendations, and that it should instead be a network to help direct requests for expertise to appropriate specialists. Another suggested that an IMoSEB could focus on collecting and sharing best practices from different localities.

One participant stressed the need to define whether an IMoSEB would perform knowledge creation or knowledge integration. Participants responded that the focus of an IMoSEB should be on knowledge integration and communication.

Participants then shifted to the second part of their discussion on generating concrete recommendations about the structure and institutional home of an IMoSEB. General consensus developed that an IMoSEB’s structure should be light and flexible. The group then worked to describe such

include more intergovernmental participation.

General consensus emerged that an IMoSEB under the umbrella of UNEP might help to link the process to governments. There was also some discussion on whether an IMoSEB should be within, or closely tied to, the CBD. One participant observed that an IMoSEB could both be under UNEP and also tied closely to the CBD. Linking to the UNEP Scientific Initiative was also suggested. Various participants proposed approaching the UNEP Executive Director about how the integration of the global demand for better scientific input within UNEP processes could be improved, including in the revised MA.

One participant insisted that users’ needs be determined, and questioned the relevance of a new mechanism. Chair le Prestre responded that the working group was based on the idea that such a mechanism will be created.

There was general agreement that a relationship with the MA should be developed, without creating a large and cumbersome structure. Many suggested that an IMoSEB be closely linked or merged with the MA, but that it must go beyond the MA by generating rapid responses to emerging issues and involve an intergovernmental component to increase policy relevance.

Participants addressed whether building an IMoSEB that is subordinate to several structures instead of just one would increase its independence. They also suggested that a body under UNEP might nonetheless seek funding from other non-UN sources, so as not to divert resources from existing UN biodiversity work.

**WORKING GROUP REPORTS TO PLENARY:** On Friday afternoon, following summaries from the chairs of the two working groups on key elements of the discussions in their respective groups, Co-Chair Loreau opened the floor for general discussion.

A debate arose on the possible institutional homes for an IMoSEB. One participant stressed the need to differentiate between achieving a high status for an IMoSEB and choosing its institutional setting. He argued that if the mechanism is to successfully place biodiversity on the global agenda, it should report to the UN General Assembly, while its institutional home could be within UNEP or another body. While some participants agreed, others argued that this was not possible, favorable or necessary. Several participants suggested alternative institutional homes, including: the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; and the UN Development Programme.



One participant argued that administration of an IMoSEB should be devolved to multiple UN bodies because many of them are involved in the different aspects of biodiversity.

Most participants agreed that language on the need for “new and additional” funding for whatever mechanism emerges from the meeting was necessary.

#### **DISCUSSION OF THE STATEMENT FROM THE IMOSEB INTERNATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE**

A draft statement from the IMoSEB International Steering Committee was prepared by the Committee on Friday night based on the outcome of the working groups’ discussions. The draft was circulated to participants on Saturday morning, and was discussed paragraph by paragraph, and then approved by the closing plenary.

The Statement contains preambular language and operative text on the needs identified during the process, general principles and recommendations.

**TITLE AND PREAMBLE:** On the title and preamble, some participants expressed concern that a “statement” was too weak a title for the document, proposing “declaration” and “recommendations” as alternatives. Others argued that this language was too strong and would convey a degree of consensus that did not exist. The title “Statement” was maintained. Participants also highlighted a need for stronger language motivating the work of an IMoSEB and expressing the urgency of biodiversity loss and the importance of biodiversity for human well-being. One participant proposed language recommending that action on biological diversity be taken at the highest possible levels of the UN system. Others opposed, stating that this language was too strong; the language was not included.

**Final Outcome:** In the preamble, the IMoSEB International Steering Committee:

- recognizes the undisputed importance of biodiversity to human well-being;
- recalls the Paris Declaration;
- welcomes the support of the governments of France, Germany and other governments that hosted regional consultations;
- understands and welcomes the work undertaken for an MA follow-up; and
- considers the range of views expressed in the regional consultations.

**GENERAL NEEDS TO IMPROVE THE SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACE:** On the needs to improve the science-policy interface, language referring to “advising” the CBD was deleted due to concerns about infringing on the mandate of the SBSTTA. Many participants argued that language on “biodiversity change” did not convey urgency. This language was replaced with “biodiversity change, especially biodiversity loss.”

**Final Outcome:** In its Statement, the IMoSEB International Steering Committee recognizes the need for:

- an improved science-policy interface at global and sub-global levels;
- independent scientific expertise, specifically: proactive analysis of emerging threats; improving predictive capacity; and incorporation of all relevant sciences and other forms of knowledge;
- production of scientific information to support the work of international conventions, particularly the CBD;

- mobilization of scientific expertise for national and regional level capacity building;
- improved monitoring and assessments;
- decision-maker-informed identification of research priorities; and
- improved communication with all relevant audiences and knowledge systems.

**ADDITIONAL NEEDS:** Regarding the paragraph on additional needs and on the need for information to support biodiversity governance, discussions focused on how to refer to supporting the work of the CBD and other biodiversity-related conventions. Some participants argued, and others disagreed, that the CBD does no “work” but is only being “implemented.” As a compromise, participants agreed to the suggestion by Co-Chair Oteng-Yeboah to delete the specific mention of the CBD and keep this point focused on general biodiversity governance.

One participant proposed adding a reference to the need to promote the linkages between biodiversity, climate change and environmental pollution in order to signal to other conventions the biodiversity community’s willingness to collaborate. Participants discussed whether to single out environmental pollution or use broader language. Following informal discussion, general language was approved.

**Final Outcome:** In its Statement, the IMoSEB International Steering Committee recognizes the additional need to:

- support biodiversity governance with credible, timely and accessible information where it is not currently available;
- build the capacity to identify and respond rapidly to biodiversity-related emergencies;
- strengthen scientific activities at global and sub-global scales;
- enhance linkages between relevant information-using organizations; and
- promote linkages between the science policy interfaces on biodiversity, climate change and other environment and development processes which impact or depend on biodiversity.

#### **STRENGTHENING THE SCIENCE-POLICY**

**INTERFACE:** Participants agreed on a paragraph on strengthening the science-policy interface without amendments.

**Final Outcome:** In its Statement, the IMoSEB International Steering Committee recommends that measures be taken to strengthen the science-policy interface in ways that respect a number of principles, including the principles of:

- scientific independence, credibility, and inclusiveness;
- subjectivity, where appropriate, to critical peer review;
- policy legitimacy through intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder involvement at all stages;
- policy relevancy;
- responsiveness to policy needs as identified by decision-making organs at multiple scales;
- support by a network of scientific and national capacities; and
- promotion of dialogue between international agencies and decision makers.

**ESTABLISHING A MEANS TO PROVIDE AN OBJECTIVE SOURCE OF INFORMATION:** The debate focused on recommending the establishment of a means to provide an objective source of information about biodiversity change and its impact on ecosystem services and human well-being. While most agreed with the need to include language

on enhancing existing institutions, a representative from the Pacific region emphasized that existing institutions in his region are not working, and that the word “enhance” should be defined. Participants debated how to reflect a lack of consensus on whether or not to establish a new mechanism. While several participants at the meeting argued that they could not accept establishing a new mechanism, others pointed out that regions not properly represented at the meeting strongly support establishing a new mechanism and that their voices should be considered. Compromise text “recommending the further and urgent consideration of a means” to provide an objective source of information rather than “establishing” such a means was eventually approved.

Participants also agreed to build upon, and promote “periodic” rather than “regular” global and sub-global assessments of the state and trends in biodiversity and ecosystem services, as “regular” was deemed too strong.

**Final Outcome:** In its Statement, the IMoSEB International Steering Committee recommends further and urgent consideration of the establishment of a means, and enhancement of existing institutions, to provide an objective source of information about biodiversity change and its impacts on ecosystem services and human well-being, via a range of activities, including:

- building on and promoting periodic global and sub-global assessments of the state of, and trends in, biodiversity and ecosystem services, and their effects on human well-being at multiple spatial scales;
- undertaking or promoting special studies on emerging issues of importance to biodiversity, particularly those which are transnational and/or cross-cultural in nature;
- contributing to rapid and authoritative scientific information on biodiversity-related emergencies at short time scales; and
- promoting the development of the capacity to generate and use the information, methodology and techniques required to accomplish the above objectives.

**MEETING TO CONSIDER ESTABLISHING A SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACE:** On the convening of a meeting to consider establishing a science-policy interface, participants discussed at length the wording of the chapeau. One participant suggested using the verb “requesting” rather than “inviting” the Executive Director of UNEP to convene such a meeting. Many disagreed, noting that the International Steering Committee does not have the mandate to do so. One participant suggested, and it was agreed, to specify that both the proposed meeting and the interface should be intergovernmental. On the operative language of the paragraph, some discussion took place on the need to mention sunset clauses or other language ensuring the monitoring of the effectiveness of the interface. Noting the concern expressed during the meeting about the current proliferation of institutions in environmental governance, most agreed on the need for such language.

**Final Outcome:** In its Statement, the IMoSEB International Steering Committee invites the Executive Director of UNEP, in collaboration with France, other governments and relevant partners, to convene an intergovernmental meeting to consider establishing an effective science-policy interface to address the outlined objectives. The interface should:

- be flexible, intergovernmental, involve non-governmental stakeholders and build upon existing networks of scientists and knowledge holders;

- be in collaboration with the follow-up of the MA;
- ensure interaction with other relevant assessment processes; and
- have monitoring procedures for its effectiveness, used from its outset for programme evaluation, development and continuation.

**CONCLUDING PARAGRAPHS:** At the insistence of a number of participants, original text calling for donors and governments to support the establishment of the described science-policy interface was altered in order not to imply consensus that this new interface should necessarily be established.

**Final Outcome:** In its Statement, the IMoSEB International Steering Committee:

- welcomes the support of the Government of France to prepare the above-mentioned meeting; and
- invites donors and governments to support the further and urgent consideration of the establishment of the discussed science-policy interface, and invites multilateral environmental agreements and other relevant multilateral bodies to contribute to its development.

### CLOSING PLENARY

On Friday morning, Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, French Secretary of State for Ecology, highlighted France’s firm and ongoing support for the International Steering Committee’s work. After describing recent biodiversity initiatives in France, she urged participants to consider her presence to reflect a strong expectation on behalf of her government that the Committee should reach ambitious conclusions. She noted the importance of doing so in a timely manner, in order for these conclusions to be incorporated into France’s work programme when it takes the EU Presidency in the second half of 2008. She called 2008 a “year of change” for biodiversity, highlighting the upcoming CBD COP in Bonn and the G8 meeting in Japan. Kosciusko-Morizet stated that in spite of significant obstacles, the Committee’s progress was encouraging, and closed by suggesting that one day the Nobel Peace Prize might be awarded to an IMoSEB or an IMoSEB successor.



Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, French Secretary of State for Ecology



L-R: Michel Loreau, Co-Chair of the IMoSEB Executive Committee; Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, French Secretary of State for Ecology; and Co-Chair Alfred Oteng-Yeboah, Co-Chair of the IMoSEB Executive Committee



Co-Chair Oteng-Yeboah reiterated that 2008 will be a significant year for biodiversity, emphasizing that this process is expected to bear fruit. He thanked France for its continued support to the process and noted that participants had made good progress.

Closing the meeting, Co-Chair Loreau thanked the



Alfred Oteng-Yeboah and Michel Loreau, Co-Chairs of the IMoSEB Executive Committee

Executive Secretariat and all the participants in the consultative process. He expressed hope that a significant step had been taken, noting agreement on the principles and needs necessary to improve the current science-policy interface in biodiversity. He closed the meeting at 1:45pm.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### **CBD INFORMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS:**

The CBD Informal Advisory Committee on Communication, Education and Public Awareness will meet from 17-18 December 2007, in Montreal, Canada. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int); Internet: <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/default.shtml>

### **SIXTH MEETING OF THE CBD WORKING GROUP ON ABS:**

The sixth meeting of the CBD *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) will be held from 21-25 January 2008, in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int); internet: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=ABSWG-06>

### **SECOND MEETING OF THE CBD WORKING GROUP ON PROTECTED AREAS:**

The second meeting of the CBD *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Protected Areas will take place from 11-15 February 2008, in Rome, Italy. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int); internet: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=WGPA-02>

### **THIRTEENTH MEETING OF THE CBD SBSTTA:**

The 13th meeting of the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) will take place from 18-22 February 2008, in Rome, Italy. This meeting will review progress in the CBD's implementation and address scientific and technical issues in relation to the Convention. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int); internet: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=SBSTTA-13>

### **17TH MEETING OF THE CITES PLANTS COMMITTEE:**

The 17th meeting of the Plants Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) will take place 15-18 April 2008, in Geneva, Switzerland. It will be followed by a joint meeting of the Animals and Plants Committees, to be held on 19 April 2008. For more information contact: CITES

Secretariat; tel: +41-(0)22-917-8139/40; fax: +41-(0)22-797-3417; e-mail: [info@cites.org](mailto:info@cites.org); Internet: <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/PC/17/index.shtml>

### **23RD MEETING OF THE CITES ANIMALS COMMITTEE:**

The 23rd meeting of the CITES Animals Committee will take place from 21-24 April 2008, in Geneva, Switzerland. It will be preceded by a joint meeting of the Animals and Plants Committees, to be held on 19 April. For more information contact: CITES Secretariat; tel: +41-(0)22-917-8139/40; fax: +41-(0)22-797-3417; e-mail: [info@cites.org](mailto:info@cites.org); Internet: <http://www.cites.org/eng/news/calendar.shtml>

**BIOSAFETY PROTOCOL COP/MOP 4:** The fourth meeting of the CBD Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP/MOP-4) will take place from 12-16 May 2008, in Bonn, Germany. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int); internet: <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/default.shtml>

### **PLANET DIVERSITY: LOCAL, DIVERSE AND GMO-FREE – WORLD CONGRESS ON THE FUTURE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE:**

The World Congress on the Future of Food and Agriculture will meet 12-16 May 2008, in Bonn, Germany. Organized by a number of NGOs in parallel with Biosafety Protocol COP/MOP-4, this meeting will consist of an international conference, as well as celebrations, exhibitions and events. For more information contact: tel: +49-30-275-90-309; fax: +49-30-275-90-312; e-mail: [info@planet-diversity.org](mailto:info@planet-diversity.org); Internet: <http://www.gmo-free-regions.org/planetdiversity.html>

### **BIODIVERSITY RESEARCH – SAFEGUARDING THE FUTURE:**

The Biodiversity Research – Safeguarding the Future meeting will take place from 12-16 May 2008, in Bonn, Germany. This scientific meeting, held immediately prior CBD COP-9, aims to channel results and needs of biodiversity research into the political discussion at the COP. It will consist of three symposia on: acceleration of biodiversity assessment and inventorying; functions and uses of biodiversity; and biodiversity change – the 2010 target and beyond. For more information contact: tel: +49-228-9122-277; fax: +49-228-9122-212; e-mail: [precop9@uni-bonn.de](mailto:precop9@uni-bonn.de); Internet: <http://www.precop9.org>

**CBD COP-9:** The ninth Conference of the Parties to the CBD will take place from 19-30 May 2008, in Bonn, Germany, including a high-level segment from 28-30 May. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int); internet: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=COP-09>

## GLOSSARY

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
GEO-4	Global Environment Outlook-4
IMoSEB	International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
MA	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme