

IPBES-1 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2011

The first session of the plenary meeting on the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) opened today in Nairobi, Kenya. In the morning, delegates heard opening statements and began discussions on the meeting's rules of procedure and the adoption of the agenda. In the afternoon, delegates convened to consider: adoption of the agenda; the functions and operating principles of the platform; and functions and structures of bodies that might be established under IPBES.

OPENING SESSION

Opening the first session of the plenary meeting on IPBES, Fatoumata Keita, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), called for delegates to observe a minute of silence for Wangari Maathai, Nobel Peace Prize laureate. Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UNEP, described IPBES as an effort to bridge the distance between where science "speaks" and policy is enacted. He also noted that the international community increasingly relies on science for policy-making and cooperation in addressing environmental change.

Welcoming delegates to Nairobi, Stephene Kalonzo Musyoka, Vice President, Kenya, said that the continued unsustainable and inequitable use of biodiversity and ecosystem resources highlights the need for effective governance and better science-policy cooperation, and called on delegates to make IPBES fully operational at this meeting.

BRAZIL for the G-77/China emphasized biodiversity as a matter of global concern and, with ARGENTINA, called for creating a strong arm for capacity building within developing countries as emphasized in the Busan outcome. GHANA for the African Group supported operationalizing and establishing IPBES through capacity building and technology development and transfer, particularly in Africa.

POLAND for the EU remarked on the importance of multidisciplinary approaches, inclusiveness and incentives to attract scientists' contributions. She argued that procedural, institutional and administrative arrangements should allow fulfillment of IPBES' role and functions by engaging all countries.

NORWAY stated that IPBES will improve the use of science in policy making. INDONESIA highlighted maintaining scientific independence and cooperation with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs).

JAPAN called for the platform to focus on enhancing synergy between relevant organizations and, with RUSSIA, ensuring that efforts do not duplicate existing initiatives.

MEXICO called for IPBES to be small with a simple bureaucracy and asked that the full operationalization of IPBES not lose sight of biodiversity considerations. SWITZERLAND urged delegates to reach a common understanding for the

platform to be established and said that IPBES should be embedded in UNEP for its administrative functions. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA said the meeting will provide a solid foundation for establishing IPBES.

CHILE suggested that information on scientific needs be brought to the attention of relevant ministries, including those responsible for finance, environment and agriculture. FIJI suggested that the functions of IPBES be established first followed by the institutional structure. Describing the science-policy gap as a critical constraint for biodiversity conservation, SOUTH AFRICA, with the ASEAN Center for Biodiversity, highlighted capacity building for the effective participation of developing countries in the IPBES process. PERU called for quick agreement on the institutional arrangements of IPBES. SOUTH SUDAN requested support in capacity building efforts for environmental conservation.

The Society for Conservation Biology urged that IPBES respond to requests from regional, scientific and civil society organizations (CSOs) and said important principles for success of the IPBES are independence, credibility and legitimacy.

IUCN urged governments to provide the platform with clear operational modalities and a strong programme of work, and suggested that IPBES respond to requests from scientific organizations and CSOs.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reiterated its offer to be one of the co-hosts of IPBES. United Nations University expressed its willingness to support education of young scientists in developing countries. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recommended that IPBES clearly distinguish knowledge generation and assessment.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) suggested that the CBD's Strategic Plan for 2011-2020 provides a useful framework for the IPBES work programme and that IPBES can play an important role in implementing the Strategic Plan. The CBD Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) emphasized that IPBES should be responsive to CBD needs.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) described science-policy interfaces within CITES' processes for consideration for IPBES. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) offered to co-host the platform and highlighted FAO experiences in bridging science and policy. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) stressed the need for development organizations to engage in biodiversity protection.

The International Council for Science (ICSU), on behalf of scientific and civil society organizations, affirmed the interest of these organizations in establishing IPBES as both provider and end user of knowledge, and urged that the output of IPBES

be policy relevant but not policy prescriptive. She said key principles in the design of the platform should be saliency, independence and scientific credibility.

Chair Watson called for the modalities of IPBES to be put in place as a matter of urgency while "getting them correct." He highlighted that governments, the scientific community and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) showed willingness to support the process and endorse all four elements of the work programme.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

RULES OF PROCEDURE: Introducing the rules of procedure, Achim Steiner noted that the rules of procedure for the UNEP Governing Council (UNEP GC) will apply to IPBES with one amendment concerning the participation of countries. The US objected, suggesting that the plenary can determine appropriate modifications to these rules as required and should not be limited by previous decisions of the UNEP GC. Supported by the EU, G-77/China, MEXICO and BOLIVIA, the US said that decisions should be taken only on the basis of consensus. The EU suggested building on procedures of previous IPBES meetings, and Brazil highlighted the need to adopt rules of procedures for all upcoming IPBES plenary meetings.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Delegates elected Robert Watson (UK) as chair. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias (Brazil), Ali Mohamed (Kenya), and Senka Barudanovich (Bosnia and Herzegovina) were elected as vice-chairs.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA: Neville Ash, UNEP Secretariat, presented an overview of the steps taken to reach the first session of the plenary meeting on an IPBES. He recalled wide-ranging consultations undertaken by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) and the International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB), leading to the request for UNEP to convene a meeting to discuss methods to strengthen science-policy interfaces. He also noted the UNEP GC decision to convene the plenary meeting.

The US stressed that the nature of the platform's work needs to be considered before addressing legal issues relating to the establishment and operationalization of IPBES and said that decisions on such issues will depend on a clearer articulation of the work programme of the platform. He requested that the legal advice from the UN Office of Legal Affairs be made available.

ARGENTINA, with BRAZIL, the EU, KENYA, MEXICO, CHILE and BARBADOS, suggested postponing consideration of legal issues until after discussions on the functions, structure and procedures of the platform. On the understanding that some decisions taken may depend on decisions that will be adopted at a later stage, the agenda was adopted with minor amendment.

MODALITIES AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR AN IPBES

FUNCTIONS AND OPERATING PRINCIPLES OF THE PLATFORM: The Secretariat introduced document UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/3, which sets out the platform's functions and principles as identified in the Busan outcome. MEXICO and the African Group stressed the need for and importance of financial support for capacity building, with THAILAND expressing concern that the platform may not have enough financial resources for such support.

BOLIVIA noted that not all countries participated in the process leading to the Busan outcome and reserved the right to re-open discussions on particular items. COLOMBIA emphasized the non-legally binding nature of this document and expressed concerns on how to operationalize the IPBES functions.

The EU stressed that: the work programme shall respond to the functions of the platform; coordination between functions is important; IPBES should not be involved in implementation *per se*; the core functions go beyond performing assessments; considering a full spectrum of activities; and emphasis be given to how closely the functions could be linked. AUSTRALIA said the overarching objectives of this session should be to ensure that the platform achieve practical action and called for agreement on operating details.

ARGENTINA noted remaining questions on, *inter alia*, how the platform incorporates NGOs' input, and how the plenary decides on priorities. CHINA said the platform has limited human and financial resources at the moment and should focus on global and regional levels. COOK ISLANDS emphasized the need for the platform to respond to requests from Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the CBD.

SWITZERLAND suggested in-depth consideration of the platform's functions when discussing its work programme, and highlighted that the priority for capacity building should be on access to information and broad participation of stakeholders. BOLIVIA called for clarifying that funding organizations are responsible solely for funding and not, together with scientific and other organizations, for priority setting. In response, Chair Watson suggested taking this into consideration in operationalizing the platform, and highlighted the necessity for dialogue between funding and other organizations. MOROCCO underscored the importance of assessing the knowledge available to individual countries.

Chair Watson, welcoming the broad support for the Busan outcome, identified the operationalization of the platform as the key challenge and highlighted the need for clarifying the process of prioritization of functions and the emphasis given to capacity building.

FUNCTIONS AND STRUCTURES OF BODIES TO BE ESTABLISHED: The UNEP Secretariat introduced document UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/4, which outlines possible institutional arrangements, their functions and structures of bodies that might be established under the platform. EGYPT asked whether regional economic integration organizations will have full membership in the plenary, including the right to vote. The US noted that this raises issues of additionality and competence. The EU said it will not accept having an observer status. Chair Watson noted current understanding is that such organizations will have full membership but participation will be governed by the rules of procedure of IPBES. He suggested clarifying the exact role of regional economic integration organizations, other UN organizations and IGOs when establishing these rules. Delegates agreed to add a note calling for clarification at a later stage.

On considering membership of countries in IPBES, BRAZIL suggested broad participation to include countries that are members of UN specialized agencies. The US, originally calling for membership to be limited to UN member states, said it could support language that includes reference to the agencies and programmes sponsoring IPBES, namely UNDP, UNESCO, FAO and UNEP. THAILAND, CHILE, MEXICO and COLOMBIA called for including all states. Opposed by the US, MEXICO and others suggested including member states to the IAEA to address biodiversity issues in the area of nuclear energy. Chair Watson postponed this issue and the question raised by delegates on whether states will automatically be members of IPBES or only those who signify their intent to be a member.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The IPBES plenary opened in a positive spirit and discussions advanced throughout the day boosted by Bob Watson's "punchy" chairmanship. Progress appeared to be slow; but given expectations that a group of developing countries could have opposed in principle the establishment of the platform and a remarkably active US delegation, many participants were ready to admit that the risks involved were high. The flexibility showed by the US meant lengthy discussions on the work programme that could have paralyzed deliberations for the whole week were postponed. Most delegates welcomed the widest possible participation, but others feared that reopening the text of the Busan outcome may set a potentially dangerous precedent for the work of the plenary. Chair Watson left the question of membership pending over night, expressing his hope that the evening reception might bring delegates closer together on this issue.

IPBES-1 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 4 OCTOBER 2011

The first session of the plenary meeting on the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) reconvened today in Nairobi, Kenya. Delegates resumed discussions on the possible functions and structures of bodies that might be established under the platform, with the morning session being focused on issues of membership, the tasks of the chair and vice-chairs of IPBES and criteria for their selection. The afternoon's discussion considered the creation of subsidiary bodies of the plenary and their possible functions, structure and composition. Delegates also initiated discussions on the rules of procedure.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Yeon-chul Yoo (Republic of Korea) was elected as a vice-chair for Asia and the Pacific region.

MODALITIES AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR AN IPBES

FUNCTIONS AND STRUCTURES OF BODIES TO BE ESTABLISHED: Opening the second day of the plenary meeting on an IPBES, Chair Robert Watson reconvened plenary to resume the previous day's discussions.

Membership of the platform: The US and the EU questioned what the membership status of regional economic integration organizations will be. BRAZIL cautioned that the opportunity for open participation raises uncertainty as to whether parties will be bound by decisions taken in plenary or under other bodies. MEXICO and BOLIVIA for Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela, suggested that parties should indicate their membership, but that the process should be as simple as possible and, together with BRAZIL, raised the issue of whether membership to UN agencies should be the basis for membership to the platform. MEXICO suggested distinguishing between membership of nation states and participation of other organizations. EGYPT asked for clarification on the differences between membership of the plenary and that of the platform. Noting that there is still a need for further clarification, Chair Watson established a Friends of the Chair group chaired by vice-chair Bráulio Ferreira de Souza Dias to reach consensus on text regarding membership.

In the afternoon, Dias reported back to plenary that the Friends of the Chair group had deliberated on the issue of membership to the platform over lunch but not on the issues of participation in the plenary. He noted that: there was an agreement that membership to IPBES will not be compulsory; there was a consensus for states are to signal their willingness to become members; that differing views on the rules determining

states' membership to the platform still remain and further consultations are needed. The group will resume deliberations on Wednesday during lunch.

Functions of the platform: Chair Watson explained that some functions presented in document UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/4 were agreed to in Busan, while others are new. The US, supported by BRAZIL, proposed that priorities for action should be set only in response to the requests from governments. The US further suggested that plenary should only approve executive summaries. The Society on Conservation Biology, opposed by BRAZIL and International Council for Science (ICSU), noted that line-by-line approval of major reports may deter scientists' participation. The EU emphasized, *inter alia*, flexibility in designing the scope of assessments and that the plenary should define a broad scope for possible working groups' activities. CUBA stressed defining financial arrangements for undertaking the relevant activities. MEXICO asked for priority to be given to developing countries' needs and requests. INDONESIA, with SOUTH AFRICA, emphasized capacity building and transfer of technology. CHINA said the type of outputs and actions that plenary will take need to be clarified. BRAZIL and ARGENTINA argued that there should be a procedure for the acceptance of membership. The Secretariat will redraft the discussed paragraphs based on the comments received.

Officers of the plenary: GHANA, for the African Group, opposed by BRAZIL, felt that the platform could be better served by having two co-chairs, with a developed and developing country representative respectively, and three vice-chairs. MEXICO, supported by SWITZERLAND, called for the term length of officers to be clearly defined. COLOMBIA stressed the need for a high level of technical and scientific expertise. NORWAY, with the African Group and BRAZIL, favored appointing the chair and vice-chairs on a rotational basis.

Chair Watson introduced the functions of the key officers of the platform, noting that these would have to be specified in the rules of procedure to avoid ambiguity. SWITZERLAND noted that the tasks set out should be divided among the chair and vice-chairs and, with GHANA, that the task of presiding over subsidiary bodies should be assigned to the vice-chairs. The US requested that the text on the functions of the chair, which include presiding over subsidiary bodies; acting as representative at international meetings; and carrying outreach activities remain bracketed until the work programme has been determined. CHINA questioned these roles for the chair and suggested that the secretariat implement these functions. JAPAN noted that a chair with suitable scientific qualifications should represent the platform. BRAZIL cautioned against duplication of roles and tasks in the bureau and the secretariat.

On the criteria for selecting chairs and vice-chairs, delegates suggested several amendments and deletions to the text. Supported by many parties, BRAZIL urged that IPBES, as an intergovernmental body, should guide governments in nominating candidates rather than devising selection criteria. INDONESIA and many others highlighted the importance of the chair understanding the dynamics, leading and gaining consensus. The US suggested including reference to experience with assessments along with the criterion on scientific experience. BOLIVIA urged referencing ecosystem functions, resilience and adaptation, and to understanding the role and knowledge of indigenous groups. Chair Watson asked the Secretariat to restructure the text for revision in plenary.

Functions of subsidiary bodies: COLOMBIA, supported by the EU and EGYPT, suggested including only a short list of functions that are characterized by the type of function. The EU noted that the governance structure should be able to address, *inter alia*, intersessional issues and the bureau's terms of reference should include both administrative and scientific requirements. MEXICO supported establishing two subsidiary bodies, one with administrative functions and the other with technical and scientific functions. EGYPT said that the functions of subsidiary bodies should be determined before defining the governance structure.

CHILE supported separating administrative, technical and scientific functions, and proposed establishing a communication body. ARGENTINA proposed minimizing the level of bureaucracy and establishing an executive body with full participation from developing countries. The African Group, SWITZERLAND and NORWAY supported establishing a bureau and an executive committee. THAILAND preferred establishing three subsidiary bodies with a science panel as an *ad-hoc* open-ended forum.

BRAZIL said that the bureau is not a subsidiary body of the plenary and added that the plenary will decide which subsidiary bodies will be necessary to undertake its duties. The US noted that much of these determinations will depend on the programme of work. Chair Watson and the IPCC representative explained the institutional structure of IPCC and its evolution highlighting, *inter alia*, that the executive committee has been established as a subset of the IPCC Bureau to undertake intersessional activities.

CUBA for the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA), supported the creation of only one subsidiary body and, with JAPAN and BRAZIL, stressed the need for flexibility when establishing subsidiary bodies. JAPAN cautioned against having a bureau and a plenary with overlapping tasks. COLOMBIA called for a scientific body as a subsidiary body. The EU favored creating one subsidiary body with scientific involvement.

BRAZIL stressed that IPBES is not only concerned with assessments. He highlighted that the platform could benefit from a regional structure as biodiversity is specific to each region.

With MEXICO and INDONESIA, he further noted that considerations on capacity building and technology transfer should be included. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION, on behalf of the Central and Eastern European Group, said that the subsidiary body should have administrative and technical functions and that scientific issues could be dealt with by working groups. IUCN asked delegates to consider the role of relevant NGOs. ICSU, with the United Nations University, suggested creating three subsidiary bodies: a bureau; a scientific panel; and a review panel. REPUBLIC OF KOREA, supported Japan and Brazil, highlighted the importance of a science panel along either one or two subsidiary bodies. Chair Watson asked the Secretariat to redraft text linking possible functions, structures and individual bodies.

Secretariat: The EU, the US, with others emphasized that the secretariat should not be an implementing body but carry out administrative functions for plenary and other bodies. NORWAY and SWITZERLAND called for a "lean" secretariat. BRAZIL proposed distributing the secretariat's functions to various international organizations, opposed by COLOMBIA and AUSTRALIA. NORWAY, INDONESIA and the US emphasized

the need to ensure the secretariat's independence. Chair Watson asked the secretariat to redraft text, noting a tendency towards supporting one central hub and a lean secretariat.

Trust fund: Chair Watson noted the need to define "a whole series of rules" for its operation. COLOMBIA, MEXICO, ARGENTINA and CHILE said it is important that the plenary can decide on the use of resources and, with NORWAY, welcomed contributions from the private sector and other stakeholders as long as these resources are not earmarked. NORWAY also highlighted the role of in-kind contributions. The African Group supported the Busan outcome, recommending the need to ensure large financial support to IPBES. VENEZUELA urged that contributions to the fund be voluntary and rejected private sector contributions. BOLIVIA, for ALBA, asked to postpone the decision on the role of the private sector.

On the evaluation of the operation of the platform, MEXICO asked for a more specific understanding of the evaluation process and INDONESIA noted the relation with legal issues. Chair Watson suggested broadening the scope and modalities of evaluation when considering the rules of procedures.

RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE PLATFORM'S PLENARY:

The UNEP Secretariat introduced document UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/5 on the rules of procedure for the platform's plenary. ARGENTINA, supported by the US, BRAZIL and several others, highlighted that the platform needs to adopt its own rules of procedure. The EU stressed having rules on: representation; expertise; adoption of decisions; and intersessional activities. The US said that the programme of work should be considered first. MEXICO stated that the draft rules of procedure are a useful starting point and suggested taking inspiration from CITES' rules of procedure.

BRAZIL suggested refraining from taking rules of procedure adopted in other processes as the starting point, and only to use these as examples. AUSTRALIA noted that the work programme will have some bearing on the rules of procedure. CHILE and COLOMBIA emphasized ensuring scientific excellence.

Chair Watson proposed forming a Friends of the Chair group to undertake a first reading of the draft rules. BRAZIL noted having back-to-back meeting with the Friends of the Chair group on membership may not be useful. Chair Watson proposed avoiding discussion on issues related to membership, participation and observers, which are already addressed in the Friends of the Chair group on membership. The US suggested proceeding in a structured debate, line by line, in the Friends of the Chair discussions. COLOMBIA argued that decisions need to be taken by consensus and not by voting and that the rules of procedure should envisage the participation of observers. Chair Watson noted that once IPBES is established, it may not always be possible to take decisions by consensus and invited considering as a backstop what a voting system may look like in the rules of procedure.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The mood was positive when Chair Watson welcomed delegates for the second day of the IPBES plenary meeting with discussions remaining focused on advancing the structures and modalities of the platform. Many delegates welcomed the constructive contributions, with one delegate supposing that nobody wants to risk putting progress on IPBES in danger, having engaged in a lengthy preparatory process. Others, however, cautioned that everybody is sticking to the Busan outcomes to avoid reopening a Pandora's Box and that the most important and potentially controversial questions are yet to be discussed. One developing country representative expressed, to the contrary, surprise regarding the different substantive issues raised during the discussion on institutional arrangements, admitting that these issues are highly relevant and still need to be considered fully as they will have a bearing on the direction IPBES will take. Nevertheless, he seemed convinced that it is possible to make advancements in operationalizing the platform in the remaining days of the first session of the plenary. "If we can achieve this", he added, "We would have been quicker than many other processes."

IPBES-1 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2011

The first session of the plenary meeting on the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) reconvened for the third day of deliberations in Nairobi, Kenya. Delegates began reviewing the process and criteria for selecting the host institution or institutions and the physical location of the secretariat. The Friends of the Chair groups on membership to the platform and the rules of procedure met over lunch to resume their efforts to reach consensus.

During the afternoon, the Secretariat introduced the documents on legal issues relating to the establishment of the platform. Delegates also deliberated on the possible work programme for the platform. The evening's session resumed discussions on the functions and structures of bodies that might be established under the platform, focusing on the role of the plenary.

MODALITIES AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR AN IPBES

PROCESS AND CRITERIA FOR SELECTING THE HOST INSTITUTION AND LOCATION: The Secretariat introduced document UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/6 on the process and criteria for selecting the host institution and the location of the secretariat.

Criteria for selecting the host institution: The US noted many countries' support for a proposal from the four sponsor organizations, UNESCO, UNEP, FAO and UNDP and, welcoming the possible submission from these organizations, queried if it was necessary to open this issue. Chair Watson said that IPBES would still benefit from discussions on the elements to be expected in proposals.

GHANA, for the African Group, called for referencing experience on biodiversity and ecosystem services in the selection criteria. The EU and its member states cautioned against prejudging the location to be decided on. SWITZERLAND, KENYA, BARBADOS and others called for the administrative functions of the secretariat to be hosted in one institution. MEXICO noted that the proposed criteria still have gaps which need to be addressed. JAPAN noted that the possible hosts should provide stable financial support. BRAZIL, opposed by CHILE and EGYPT, proposed a secretariat that would work "virtually."

Process for inviting organizations to signify their interest in hosting the secretariat: REPUBLIC OF KOREA, with CÔTE D'IVOIRE, underscored that the process for selecting a host institution is separate from selecting the physical location of the secretariat.

Process for reviewing proposals and selecting the host: The US, opposed by MEXICO, BARBADOS, SWITZERLAND and GHANA, said the Bureau should not undertake a first review of proposals and that governments should have the opportunity to review and discuss all proposals. AUSTRALIA questioned when bids are to be received and circulated. Chair Watson suggested 15 December 2011 as the deadline for bids and proposals, requesting the Secretariat to circulate them shortly thereafter.

Criteria for selecting the physical location of the secretariat: The African Group rejected criteria that would exclude developing countries. The EU and its member states emphasized that the location needs to ensure safety, good governance and efficient resource use. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA, opposed by THAILAND, rejected the presence of international organizations as a criterion for selection, and the PHILIPPINES said only international organizations relevant to biodiversity should be a criterion. THAILAND supported joint country proposals. ETHIOPIA called for considering the specific situation of developing countries citing capacity gaps, natural resource abundance, lack of scientific assessments and the relationship between biodiversity and poverty reduction as possible gauges.

COLOMBIA and many others called for a single location for the secretariat but welcomed considering the establishment of regional hubs. JAPAN, with FIJI, said the use of regional hubs depends on the work programme and the role of subsidiary bodies and, supported by the PHILIPPINES, urged to separate discussions on the secretariat head quarter and regional hubs. AUSTRALIA, with NEW ZEALAND, PERU and others, expressed concern that regional hubs increase bureaucracy and reduce efficiency.

On submitting proposals for the secretariat's physical location, reviewing proposals and selecting the location, the US, supported by AUSTRALIA and others, proposed allowing governments to submit their proposals to the bureau eight weeks prior to the second sessions of the plenary and that these be sent unreviewed to governments after two weeks. CHILE stressed the importance of providing translations. The US, JAPAN, MEXICO, CANADA, EGYPT and THAILAND supported the sole compilation and translation of the bids. AUSTRALIA, supported by NORWAY and BARBADOS, suggested providing an executive summary of submissions. The PHILIPPINES, supported by THAILAND, proposed uniform formats for the bids. Chair Watson proposed that the Bureau with the Secretariat elaborate a draft suggested format for the bids.

LEGAL ISSUES RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PLATFORM: The UNEP Secretariat introduced three documents UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/2, UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF./9, UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/CRP.2,

discussing the legal issues relating to the establishment of the platform. He highlighted the three questions addressed to the legal counsel: is there any legal impediment in the options presented for establishing IPBES?; Did the General Assembly (GA) resolution 65/162 establish IPBES!; and is it possible to operationalize IPBES without establishing it?

He noted that the GA resolution did not establish IPBES, that no UN body currently has a mandate to establish IPBES or transform itself into IPBES and that no legal impediment exists for the governments present to establish the body once the scope of the mandate has been defined.

WORK PROGRAMME OF THE PLATFORM: The Secretariat introduced document UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/7 considering the possible work programme of the platform. ARGENTINA said the platform should focus on compiling scientific data. SOUTH AFRICA called for considering: the importance of regional hubs as a mechanism to attract stakeholders; the need for relevant assessments; and capacity building. The US welcomed the possibility of intersessional work for further elaboration on the work programme.

JAPAN highlighted the importance of a regional coordination mechanism and thematic assessments. NEW ZEALAND suggested facilitating a review of status and trends methodologies at the national level and establishing a standing committee on tools and methodologies. BRAZIL emphasized, *inter alia*: hosting data sets; rules to conduct, coordinate and review assessments; and provide standardized guidelines.

TURKMENISTAN, for the Central and Eastern European Group, emphasized using ecosystem approaches in assessing knowledge on ecosystem services. The EU and its member states, JAPAN and the US, emphasized that the work programme should respond to all four IPBES functions. MEXICO highlighted defining what relevant policy information is for decision making and using, *inter alia*, the targets and indicators of the CBD Strategic Plan. CHILE, supported by NORWAY, emphasized: communication; public awareness; networking; and funding. NORWAY also called for activities in the start phase of the platform that will generate media attention.

COLOMBIA asked for strengthening the role of the platform in bridging the science-policy gap through encouraging researchers to submit proposals and enhance the management of science. SWITZERLAND said the work programme's relation to the CBD Strategic Plan needs to be clarified. KENYA suggested that using traditional knowledge (TK) could enhance capacity building and technology transfer. INDONESIA emphasized the role of local researchers and scientists. UGANDA asked for user friendly tools that are accessible to local communities. PERU pointed to the role of intellectual property in knowledge generation for biodiversity protection. EGYPT asked for clarification on the role of intellectual property in knowledge and technology sharing. The US called for a cautious formulation regarding the use of TK, and with ARGENTINA, stated that access to TK should be based on the principle of prior informed consent. The Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education (TEBTEBBA) said it is crucial to coordinate scientists and TK holders.

FIJI supported a bottom-up approach and suggested informal expert meetings as an important source of information. BRAZIL said a broad approach to evaluation of biodiversity and ecosystem services is needed and, opposed by EGYPT and BOLIVIA, highlighted the need for the economic valuation of ecosystems.

The Convention on Migratory Species highlighted existing activities and called for strong links between capacity building, assessment and policy making.

MEXICO emphasized including work on the causes of biodiversity loss, conservation and its sustainable use. The US called for assessment of assessments, supported by NORWAY, and efforts towards developing a common geographically-based

platform in which environmental information may be placed and shared as a public good. The Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) jointly stressed the importance of IPBES for the implementation of biodiversity-related conventions.

FUNCTIONS AND STRUCTURES OF BODIES TO BE ESTABLISHED: Delegates resumed discussions on revised draft text on the functions and structures of bodies that might be established under the platform (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/CRP.3). Chair Watson invited discussion on the functions of the plenary stating that the Friends of the Chair were yet to reach a consensus on membership.

Initial discussions focused on the language regarding inputs from governments, UN bodies and other stakeholders. The US and BRAZIL opposed merging text on this issue as the rules of procedures differentiating governments from UN bodies would be lost.

BOLIVIA emphasized the need to include indigenous peoples as stakeholders and called for establishing a mechanism to ensure participation of civil society. The US proposed referencing "indigenous and local communities" as internationally accepted language. BOLIVIA called for referencing "indigenous peoples and local communities." Following further deliberation, this was supported by BRAZIL and MEXICO. Responding to a suggestion from the US, the term "peoples" remained in brackets.

Regarding establishing a process of prioritization of requests, delegates agreed with text proposed by Argentina and amended by others referencing not only "requests from governments" but also "inputs and suggestions from other stakeholders."

On the election of the chair and vice-chairs, GHANA suggested adding the notion of vice-chairs being appointed on a rotational basis, with BRAZIL and EGYPT noting that this should be on a regional basis. The US, supported by NORWAY, proposed including a reference on selecting the officers of the plenary who will be members of an expanded bureau, if any. The reference was retained in an additional bracketed paragraph pending decision on the IPBES structure, while the original provision was adopted with minor amendments. The PHILIPPINES, supported by MEXICO, remarked that the details on elections be left for the paragraph on officers of the plenary rather than functions.

On overseeing the allocation of the core trust fund, BRAZIL suggested deleting the word "core," NORWAY proposed referencing more "trust funds," the US supported the first and opposed the second amendment, which remained in brackets. Other paragraphs on independently reviewing the platform on a periodic basis, a process for the adoption of reports, rules of procedure and financial rules were adopted with minor amendments.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As the day's discussions started considering the process and criteria for selecting the host institution and the physical location of the IPBES secretariat, some participants were caught comparing the receptions that Kenya and Germany had offered on Monday and Tuesday respectively. Some delegates noted that UNEP has high interests at stake in hosting the secretariat, since this would strengthen its possible role in the broader debate on the International Environmental Governance framework. On the other hand, Germany has given clear signals of its willingness to host IPBES with a concrete proposal and a budget. In essence, the key issue remains how not to disadvantage many developing countries in the bidding process, including *vis-à-vis* safety requirements and additional contributions by the host government as selection criteria.

IPBES-1 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2011

The first session of the plenary meeting on the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) reconvened for the fourth day of deliberations in Nairobi, Kenya. The morning's discussions focused on legal issues relating to the establishment of the platform as well as the functions and structure of possible bodies to be created. The Friends of the Chair groups on membership to the platform and the rules of procedure resumed their work during lunchtime.

In the afternoon and evening sessions, delegates resumed discussions on the functions and structure of bodies that might be created under an IPBES, as well as on the process and elements for selecting the hosting institution and the physical location of the secretariat.

MODALITIES AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR AN IPBES

LEGAL ISSUES RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PLATFORM: BRAZIL, supported by CHILE, COLOMBIA, MEXICO and others stressed that the IPBES is already established and that sovereign states should not be held back by the legal opinions of the UN legal counsel. EGYPT, for the African Group, supported by BOLIVIA and others, looked forward to having IPBES established in accordance with appropriate procedures, such as under a UN General Assembly (GA) resolution. They noted appropriate steps to resolve this matter at the second plenary meeting and establishing IPBES within the UN system.

NORWAY, supported by SWITZERLAND, the US, BARBADOS, FIJI, the EU and its Member States, THAILAND and ARGENTINA supported establishing IPBES as soon as possible by a resolution of the IPBES plenary declaring that the platform is established and that the current plenary is transformed into the first plenary meeting of the platform. Other countries, however, favored establishing IPBES as an independent intergovernmental body with a possible, but not compulsory, endorsement by the UNGA. The US considered the only limitation as UNEP having convened this plenary, saying that this should not prejudice decisions on the final structure and its independence from the institutions that will provide secretariat services. The PHILIPPINES emphasized that this plenary, as a plenipotentiary meeting, has the power to establish IPBES under international law and it should do so as soon as possible. BRAZIL and the EU and its member states said governments had the sovereign right to interpret the documents and decide on the way forward.

JAPAN and INDIA supported early establishment of IPBES with executive heads of selected organizations to establish the platform. The US emphasized that the different points of view reflected policy divergences rather than legal issues. The UNEP legal counsel said that transformation of intergovernmental organizations outside the UN into UN bodies was possible. The PHILIPPINES suggested that delegates consider the immediate establishment of IPBES with possible consideration for transforming it into a UN body in the future. MEXICO concurred by giving the example of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which now has agreements with the UN for joint staff pension schemes among others. GHANA cautioned delegates not to rush into establishing IPBES without consideration of the time and process it would require to transform it into a UN body.

FUNCTIONS AND STRUCTURES OF BODIES TO BE ESTABLISHED:

Officers of the plenary: On nomination and selection of officers, delegates agreed, following a request from the US that was supported by BRAZIL, to take gender balance into account in the selection of officers. The US also noted the importance of balance between scientific disciplines.

Functions of the chair and the vice-chair: On the function of the chair, delegates agreed, following deliberations, that these functions be defined as set out in the rules of procedure and be directed by the plenary. Delegates also decided to: retain the function of "representing the platform;" reject a proposal by the EU and its member states to include outreach and communication activities; and delete reference to other functions that depend on the establishment of the subsidiary bodies.

On the functions of the vice-chairs, the US said, and delegates agreed, that these should be defined in the same way as the functions of the chair. Delegates also agreed: that the vice-chairs should participate in the work of the bureau; that presiding over meetings of subsidiary bodies is not a function of vice-chairs; to highlight in the rules of procedure that the vice-chairs act on behalf of the chair, "where necessary"; and to delete reference to carrying out outreach and communication activities and other functions depending on the subsidiary bodies.

On guidelines on the nomination and selection of chairs and vice-chairs delegates agreed to delete reference to experience with assessments and the ability to represent the platform at all levels.

Subsidiary bodies of the plenary: CHINA asked for clarification on the relationship between subsidiary bodies and the plenary, and highlighted that the primary functions of the subsidiary bodies is to support the smooth operation of the platform. AUSTRALIA suggested, and the US objected, to remove referencing administrative and scientific oversight.

SOUTH AFRICA highlighted that subsidiary bodies should facilitate the operations of the platform; KIRIBATI emphasized the “timely” operation of the platform; and CHINA added that subsidiary bodies provide oversight “as decided by the plenary.” IUCN for CSOs, supported by GHANA, asked governments to consider a mechanism for receiving the input of non-governmental stakeholders when considering the functions of subsidiary bodies.

In the evening, parties reviewed text on the functions and structures of bodies that might be established under an IPBES. After deliberations, delegates decided to rename the section on the form and functions of subsidiary bodies “administrative and scientific functions to facilitate the work of the platform,” and to postpone the decision on whether subsidiary bodies, the Bureau, or the Secretariat would carry out these functions.

Delegates discussed these functions and agreed to: bracket the approval of requests by observer organizations until membership issues are clarified; assign the monitoring of the secretariat’s performance to the plenary; and describe the function regarding financial resources as review of the management of resources and observance of financial rules, and to likewise keep this formulation in brackets.

Regarding the scientific and technical functions of the subsidiary bodies, the US opposed by CHILE called for removal of providing advice on communication as a function of a subsidiary body. The Chair suggested instead a stand-alone bullet on this emphasizing its importance. AUSTRALIA said developing a list of contributors to the work programme would discourage contributions from new researchers. The EU and its member states suggested including other types of knowledge, other stakeholders besides scientists and consideration of a diversity of disciplines and delegates decided to replace these in brackets.

BRAZIL, with others, and opposed by the US and the EU and its member states, suggested an additional paragraph on facilitating technology transfer according to the work programme of the platform. The paragraph was retained in brackets. NORWAY, supported by PERU and MEXICO, introduced an additional paragraph on providing guidance on how to use indigenous and local knowledge in the science-policy interface. The US proposed exploring methodologies to incorporate different knowledge systems. JAPAN suggested including this item in the work programme on knowledge generation. Delegates agreed that subsidiary bodies should explore ways and means to take different knowledge systems into account in the science-policy interface.

The secretariat: BRAZIL proposed it should service also subsidiary bodies. The US proposed deleting substantive support functions. BRAZIL proposed deleting references to undertaking secretariat’s functions under the direction of the plenary, which was eventually retained in the chapeau. The section was adopted with other minor amendments.

PROCESS AND CRITERIA FOR SELECTING THE HOST INSTITUTION AND LOCATION: In the afternoon, delegates reconvened to resume discussions on the process and criteria for selecting the host institution and location

Proposed process for inviting organizations to signify their interest: The EU and its member states with UGANDA and opposed by the US and BRAZIL cautioned against limiting the invitation to the four sponsor organizations of IPBES, namely UNESCO, UNDP, FAO and UNEP.

Proposed process for reviewing proposals: BRAZIL proposed text reflecting that the bureau would “forward” rather than “disseminate” offers from interested organizations to all governments. SOUTH AFRICA said that the offers should be forwarded to governments with a view to making “decisions” rather than “recommendations” on host institutions of the secretariat.

Elements for consideration in selecting the physical location of the secretariat: AUSTRALIA, supported by THAILAND and opposed by SOUTH AFRICA and REPUBLIC OF KOREA, requested that diplomatic representation be on a country rather than city basis. REPUBLIC OF KOREA and BRAZIL said that the presence of international organization related to biodiversity and ecosystem has no consequence on the secretariat’s functions. SWITZERLAND, SOUTH AFRICA, KENYA and MEXICO opposed its deletion.

KENYA, with EGYPT, objected the element on security with GHANA saying danger occurs everywhere. BRAZIL said that if this relates to “the comfort” of the secretariat, then other elements such as extreme weather and frequent strikes would also apply. Delegates agreed to delete this element.

KENYA said that the element regarding country’s experience with, and commitment to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services is subjective and would have no influence on the secretariat’s functions.

Proposed process for inviting submission of proposals for the secretariat’s physical location: THE EU and AUSTRALIA proposed increasing the length of applications from 10 to 20 pages. MEXICO suggested, and delegates agreed, to 15 pages. MEXICO, opposed by SOUTH AFRICA, asked the bureau to provide a template. THAILAND asked for inserting text indicating the possibility for governments to submit joint or individual offers.

Delegates agreed, that only the executive summaries of applications be translated into UN languages. CHILE said that governments should consider these offers with the view to making “a decision” rather than “recommendations” of the secretariats’ physical location.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Chair Watson asked delegates to consider having intersessional work and possible topics. JAPAN supported intersessional work and said expertise from academic institutions is also needed. BRAZIL asked how the results of the meeting will be reflected and whether delegates will adopt a report. The Secretariat noted the possibility of producing a procedural report with an annex that could contain the agreements reached and reflections on the discussion held during the plenary session. Chair Watson said that delegates will be asked to adopt a report that will be made available in the official UN languages.

IN THE CORRIDORS

In the morning’s plenary session, many delegates seemed to enjoy the discussion on legal issues related to the establishment of IPBES, with eloquent speeches debating the value of legal opinions and the primacy of state sovereignty in creating international law. In the corridors, some participants complained that not all the presented options were legally sound or politically viable, state sovereignty does not replace the need for a strong buy-in of the institutional host organizations in the establishment process, and that key issues boil down to the absence of consensus on IPBES being already established and the need to move forward. On a different note, the decision by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to back Palestine’s bid for full membership to the Organization contributed to political tensions in the discussion on opening membership of the platform to members of UN specialized agencies.

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The Earth Negotiations Bulletin summary and analysis of IPBES-1 will be available on Monday, 10 October 2011 online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/ipbes/sop1/>

SUMMARY OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE PLENARY MEETING ON THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL SCIENCE-POLICY PLATFORM ON BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES: 3-7 OCTOBER 2011

The first session of the plenary meeting on the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) met from 3-7 October 2011 at the UN Environment Programme's (UNEP) headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting was attended by 366 delegates representing 112 countries, two observers, five intergovernmental organizations, 33 non-governmental organizations, three conventions and ten UN bodies and specialized agencies. Over the five-day meeting, delegates considered the modalities and institutional arrangements for an IPBES, including: the functions and operating principles of the platform; the legal issues relating to the establishment and operationalization of the platform; the work programme of the platform; and the criteria for selecting host institutions and the physical location of the secretariat.

Delegates adopted the report of the meeting and its annexes, which detail the week's proceedings and contain draft text on the: functions and operating principles of the platform; functions and structures of bodies that may be established under the platform; rules of procedure for meetings under the platform; process and criteria for selecting the host institution and physical location of the secretariat; and the work programme of the platform. Discussions on these texts will resume at the second session of the plenary meeting, tentatively scheduled for April 2012.

There was general agreement among delegates on the need to operationalize the platform as soon as possible. There was, however, some confusion as to the legal status of the platform and whether the UN General Assembly (UNGA) had established the body or not. That being said, the key achievements of the week were reaching agreement on the process and criteria for selecting host institutions and the physical location of the secretariat for the platform and intersessional work on, *inter alia*, the platform's bidding process, rules of procedure and work programme.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF IPBES AND RELATED PROCESSES

The initiative to hold consultations regarding the establishment of an IPBES emerged from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) follow-up process, and the outcomes of the International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB) process.

MILLENNIUM ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT: From 2001 to 2005 the MA assessed the consequences of ecosystem change for human well-being, involving the work of more than 1,360 experts worldwide. Published in 2005, the MA outcomes provide the first state-of-the-art scientific appraisal of the condition and trends in the world's ecosystems and the services they provide, as well as the scientific basis for action to conserve and use them sustainably. In 2006, the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP) (March 2006, Curitiba, Brazil) adopted a decision on the MA's implications for the work of the CBD, in which it encourages parties, *inter alia*, to use the MA framework for sub-global and national assessments. In 2007, UNEP conducted an evaluation of the MA and initiated the MA follow-up process.

IMOSEB PROCESS: The proposal for a Consultative Process Towards an IMoSEB was initiated at the Paris

IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History of IPBES and Related Processes	1
Report of the Meeting	2
Organizational Matters	3
Consideration of Modalities and Institutional Arrangements for an IPBES	3
Closing Session	8
A Brief Analysis of the Meeting	8
Upcoming Meetings	9
Glossary	11

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Conference on Biodiversity, Science and Governance, held in January 2005 (see <http://www.iisd.ca/sd/icb/>). The proposal received political support from Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic at the time, 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, which was established to support and facilitate discussions.

The International Steering Committee met for the first time in Paris, France, in February 2006. Participants concurred that the current system for linking science and policy in the area of biodiversity needed further improvement. A number of case studies were developed in 2006, while the idea for an IMoSEB was discussed at a number of events, including at CBD COP 8, and a workshop on “International Science-Policy Interfaces for Biodiversity Governance” (October 2006, Leipzig, Germany).

At its second meeting, in December 2006, the Executive Committee discussed the results of the case studies and identified a series of “needs and options.” A document outlining key 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. Six regional consultations were held between January 2007 and May 2008.

The final meeting of the IMoSEB International Steering Committee was held from 15-17 November 2007, in Montpellier, France. The meeting reviewed the outcomes of the regional consultations and further discussed the needs and options for an IMoSEB, as well as how to improve the science-policy interface for biodiversity at all levels. In its final statement, while not recommending the formation of a new institution, the International Steering Committee agreed to invite donors and governments to provide support for the further and urgent consideration of the establishment of a science-policy interface. It further invited the Executive Director of UNEP and others to convene a meeting to consider establishing such an interface.

IPBES CONCEPT: In response to the IMoSEB outcome, UNEP decided to convene the *Ad Hoc* Intergovernmental and Multi-Stakeholder Meeting on an IPBES. The Government of France, in close consultation with experts in their personal capacity, drafted a concept note on the rationale, core mandate, expected outcomes, focus areas and operational modalities of a possible IPBES, which was made available for peer review and was subsequently revised.

The IMoSEB outcome and the IPBES concept note were also considered by CBD COP 9 (May 2008, Bonn, Germany). In Decision IX/15 (follow-up to the MA), the COP welcomed the decision of the UNEP Executive Director to convene the *Ad Hoc* Intergovernmental and Multi-Stakeholder Meeting on an IPBES, and requested the CBD *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention to consider the outcomes at its third meeting to be held in May 2010.

IPBES-I: The first *Ad Hoc* Intergovernmental and Multi-Stakeholder Meeting on an IPBES was held from 10-12 November 2008 in Putrajaya, Malaysia. Participants adopted a Chair’s summary, which recommended that the UNEP Executive Director report the meeting’s outcomes to the UNEP Governing Council (GC-25) and to convene a second meeting. The Summary contained two additional recommendations: to continue exploring mechanisms to improve the science-policy

interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services for human well-being and sustainable development; and that UNEP undertake a preliminary gap analysis to facilitate the discussions, to be made available to the UNEP GC.

UNEP GC-25/GMEF: The 25th meeting of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC-25/GMEF), which met from 16-20 February 2009, in Nairobi, Kenya, adopted Decision 25/10 calling for UNEP to undertake a further process to explore ways and means to strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity. In response to the decision, UNEP invited governments and organizations to participate in an open peer review of the preliminary gap analysis on existing interfaces on biodiversity and ecosystem services. These comments were incorporated in the final gap analysis.

IPBES-II: At this meeting, held from 5-9 October 2009, in Nairobi, Kenya, participants exchanged views on the major findings of the gap analysis, options to strengthen the science-policy interface, functions of an IPBES and possible governance structures. Participants adopted a Chair’s Summary of Outcomes and Discussions, which highlighted areas of agreement and reflected the differing views expressed during the meeting. Most delegates expressed support for a new mechanism that carries out assessments and to generate and disseminate policy-relevant advice, and emphasized the importance of capacity building and equitable participation from developing countries.

UNEP GCSS-11/GMEF: The 11th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council/GMEF at its meeting held from 22-24 February 2010 in Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia, adopted a decision calling on UNEP to organize a final IPBES meeting.

IPBES-III: At this meeting, held from 7-11 June 2010, in Busan, Republic of Korea, delegates discussed whether to establish an IPBES and negotiated text on considerations for the platform’s functions, guiding principles and recommendations. They adopted the Busan Outcome, agreeing that an IPBES should be established, calling for collaboration with existing initiatives on biodiversity and ecosystem services, and be scientifically independent. It was also agreed that the UN General Assembly (UNGA) be invited to consider the conclusions of the meeting and take appropriate action for establishing an IPBES.

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY: The UNGA in Resolution 65/162 requested UNEP to fully operationalize the platform and convene a plenary meeting to determine the modalities and institutional arrangements for the platform at the earliest opportunity.

UNEP GC-26/GMEF: This meeting, held from 21-24 February 2011, in Nairobi, Kenya, adopted Decision 26/4, which endorsed the outcome of IPBES-III and called for convening a plenary session for IPBES to determine the modalities and institutional arrangements of the platform.

REPORT OF THE MEETING

Opening the first session of the plenary meeting on an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) on Monday morning, Fatoumata Keita, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), called for delegates to observe a minute of silence for Wangari Maathai, Nobel Peace Prize laureate. Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UNEP, described IPBES as an effort to bridge the distance between where science “speaks” and policy is enacted. Welcoming delegates to Nairobi, Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka,

Vice President, Kenya, called on delegates to make IPBES fully operational at this meeting, highlighting the need for effective governance and better science-policy cooperation for biodiversity protection.

During their opening statements, delegates generally supported the swift operationalization and establishment of IPBES. Some delegates, however, urged that IPBES be first established before decisions on the institutional structure are taken. They recognized that the meeting provides a solid foundation for establishing IPBES, with some delegates highlighting the need for IPBES to focus on capacity building, technology development and technology. Others noted that IPBES can improve the use of science in policy making. Some delegates noted that the procedural, institutional and administrative arrangements should allow fulfillment of IPBES' role and functions by engaging all countries. They noted that a common understanding and a quick agreement on modalities is necessary for the platform to be established.

Delegates emphasized that IPBES must: maintain scientific independence and cooperate with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs); focus on enhancing synergies between relevant organizations; ensure that efforts do not duplicate existing initiatives; and clearly distinguish between knowledge generation and assessment. They further called for IPBES to be small with a simple bureaucracy.

One non-governmental organization (NGO) proposed that IPBES respond to requests from regional, scientific and civil society organizations (CSOs). Others asked that governments provide the platform with clear operational modalities and a strong programme of work and urged that the output of IPBES be policy-relevant but not policy-prescriptive. They said key principles in the design of the platform should be saliency, independence and scientific credibility.

The UN agencies and MEA representatives present said: IPBES should be responsive to CBD needs; that CBD's Strategic Plan for 2011-2020 provides a useful reference framework for the IPBES work programme; and that there is a need for development organizations to engage in biodiversity protection. They also described the science-policy interfaces within Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora's (CITES) processes for consideration by IPBES. The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) offered to co-host the secretariat.

Delegates then elected Robert Watson, UK, as chair of the session by acclamation. Chair Watson called for the modalities of IPBES to be established as a matter of urgency while "getting them correct." He highlighted that governments, the scientific community and NGOs showed willingness to support the process and endorse all four functions of the platform, namely: identifying and prioritizing key scientific information for policy makers; performing regular and timely assessments of knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services; supporting policy formulation and implementation; and prioritizing key capacity-building needs.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: On Monday, in addition to Robert Watson (UK) as Chair, delegates elected Bráulio Ferreira de Souza Dias (Brazil), Ali Mohamed (Kenya), and Senka

Barudanovich (Bosnia and Herzegovina) as Vice-Chairs. On Tuesday, Yeon-chul Yoo (Republic of Korea) was also elected as vice-chair.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA: On Monday, Neville Ash, UNEP Secretariat, presented an overview of the steps taken to reach the first session of the plenary meeting on an IPBES, including the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) and the International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB), leading to the request for UNEP to convene a meeting to discuss methods to strengthen science-policy interfaces. He also noted the UNEP Governing Council (GC) decision to convene the plenary meeting.

Many delegates called for postponing discussion on legal issues relating to the establishment and operationalization of the platform until the legal advice from the UN Office of Legal Affairs was made available. Delegates agreed to this amendment and adopted the agenda.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK: Delegates agreed to hold the sessions in plenary throughout the duration of the meeting with the possible formation of Friends of the Chair groups.

CONSIDERATION OF MODALITIES AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR AN IPBES

LEGAL ISSUES RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PLATFORM: On Wednesday, the UNEP Secretariat introduced three documents (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/2, UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF./9, UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/CRP.2), discussing the legal issues relating to the establishment of the platform. He highlighted the three questions addressed to the legal counsel: is there any legal impediment in the options presented for establishing IPBES; did UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 65/162 establish IPBES; and is it possible to operationalize IPBES without establishing it?

He noted that the legal advice of the UN Office of Legal Affairs considered that the UNGA Resolution did not establish IPBES, that no UN body currently has a mandate to establish IPBES or transform itself into IPBES and that no legal impediment exists for governments to establish the body once the scope of the mandate has been defined.

Delegates addressed the legal issues on Thursday in plenary. Some delegates said that the IPBES has already been established and that sovereign states should not be held back by the legal opinions of the UN legal counsel. They thus looked forward to having IPBES established in accordance with appropriate procedures, such as under a UNGA resolution and noted appropriate steps to resolve this matter at the second session of the plenary meeting and establishing IPBES within the UN system.

Other delegates supported establishing IPBES as soon as possible by a resolution of the IPBES plenary declaring that the platform is established and that the current plenary is transformed into the first plenary meeting of the platform. Other countries, however, favored establishing IPBES as an independent intergovernmental body with a possible, but not compulsory, endorsement by the UNGA.

Delegates noted that UNEP convening the plenary might prejudice decisions on the final structure and its independence from the institution or institutions that will provide secretariat services; and that governments had the sovereign right to interpret the legal documents and decide on the way forward.

The UNEP legal counsel said that transformation of intergovernmental organizations outside the UN into UN bodies was possible.

Final Outcome: The draft report of the first session of the plenary meeting (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/L.1) describes the deliberations on legal issues, including the circulation of legal advice from the UN Office of Legal Affairs (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/14, UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/CRP.2), and a supplementary legal opinion of the UNEP Secretariat (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/9). It states that delegates highlighted the urgency of operationalizing the platform but notes divergence on the platform's status, describing delegates' different perspectives and opinions. This issue will be considered again at the second session of the plenary in 2012.

FUNCTIONS AND OPERATING PRINCIPLES OF THE PLATFORM: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced document UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/3, which sets out the platform's functions and principles as identified in the Busan Outcome. Some delegates stressed the need for and importance of financial support for capacity building. Others highlighted the possible work programme of the platform, noting that it should respond to the functions of the platform. Delegates noted: the core functions of the platform should go beyond assessments; mechanisms for incorporating the input of NGOs are required; IPBES should not focus only on implementation; the need for a procedure for prioritization of tasks by the plenary; and the need to conduct country assessments of available knowledge.

Delegates stressed the importance of operationalizing the platform, with Chair Watson noting that this was a key challenge of the plenary session.

Final Outcome: The draft report of the first session of the plenary meeting (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/L.1) states that the deliberations of delegates are reflected in the annex to the report.

FUNCTIONS AND STRUCTURES OF BODIES THAT MIGHT BE ESTABLISHED UNDER THE PLATFORM: Delegates met throughout the week to consider the proposed functions and structures of bodies that might be established under the platform (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/4) based on the Busan Outcome. The document outlines the institutional arrangements as well as the possible functions and structures that may be established under the platform.

Membership to the platform and the plenary: Delegates took up this item on Monday. Delegates queried the membership status of regional economic integration organizations, with some noting issues of additionality and competence. On this, the EU and its member states said they would not accept having an observer status. Chair Watson noted current understanding is that such organizations have full membership but participation is to be governed by the rules of procedure of IPBES. He suggested clarifying the exact role of regional economic integration organizations, other UN organizations and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) when establishing these rules.

Some delegates suggested broad participation that includes member countries of UN specialized agencies while others said membership should be limited to UN member states. Additionally, others favored having universal membership. Delegates also raised the question of whether states will automatically be members of IPBES or only those who signify their intent to be a member.

On Tuesday, discussions on membership to the platform were resumed, with some delegates cautioning that the opportunity for open participation raises uncertainty as to whether parties will be bound by decisions taken in plenary or under other bodies. Delegates suggested parties indicate their intent to be members and that the membership process be as simple as possible. Delegates requested clarity on the difference between membership of the plenary and that of the platform. Noting that there is still a need for further clarification, Chair Watson established a Friends of the Chair group chaired by Vice-Chair Bráulio Ferreira de Souza Dias to reach consensus on text regarding membership.

In the afternoon, Dias reported back to plenary that the Friends of the Chair group had deliberated on the issue of membership to the platform over lunch but not on the issues of participation in the plenary. He noted that: there was an agreement that membership to IPBES will not be compulsory; there was a consensus for states to signal their willingness to become members; that differing views on the rules determining states' membership to the platform still remain and further consultations are needed. The group resumed deliberations on Wednesday and Thursday.

On Wednesday, the Friends of the Chair group reported that they were yet to reach a consensus on membership to the plenary. He noted that initial discussions in the group focused on the language regarding inputs from governments, UN bodies and other stakeholders. Some delegates opposed merging text on this issue as the rules of procedure differentiating governments from UN bodies would be lost. Others emphasized the need to include indigenous peoples as stakeholders and called for establishing a mechanism to ensure participation of civil society. One delegate proposed referencing "indigenous and local communities" as internationally accepted language. Another called for referencing "indigenous peoples and local communities." The term "peoples" remained in brackets for further deliberation. Regarding establishing a process of prioritization of requests, delegates agreed with proposed text with the amendment referencing not only "requests from governments" but also "inputs and suggestions from other stakeholders."

On Friday, delegates discussed the revised document (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/CRP.6). Some delegates re-emphasized the inclusion of "indigenous peoples" in text citing the contribution of "indigenous and local knowledge." Other delegates requested that references to "ecosystem services" be replaced with "functions of ecosystems," which could then be taken up for decision at the second plenary session.

Functions of the Plenary: Introducing this issue on Tuesday, Chair Watson explained that some functions presented in document UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/4 were agreed to in Busan, while others are new. Delegates discussed priority setting, with some favoring priorities for action being set only in response to the requests from governments. Others called for the plenary to approve only executive summaries, noting that line-by-line approval of major reports may deter scientists' participation.

Delegates called for flexibility in designing the scope of assessments saying that the plenary should define a broad scope for possible working groups' activities. Others also discussed: defining financial arrangements for undertaking the relevant activities; emphasizing capacity building and transfer of technology; and the need for a procedure for the acceptance of membership.

Officers of the Plenary: Delegates addressed the issue of officers of the plenary for the first time on Tuesday. Delegates debated between having a single chair with four vice-chairs and having a platform served by two co-chairs one each from a developed country and a developing country, and three vice-chairs. Delegates stressed the need for the officers of the plenary to: have a high level of technical and scientific expertise; be appointed with a clearly defined term limit; and be appointed on a rotational basis.

Chair Watson then introduced the proposed functions of the key officers of the platform, noting that these would have to be specified in the rules of procedure to avoid ambiguity. Delegates debated the tasks of the officers, with some countries saying that the tasks should be divided among the chair and vice-chairs and that the task of presiding over subsidiary bodies should be assigned to the vice-chairs. Uncertainty remained on the functions of the chair as the work programme for the platform had not yet been determined, with delegates opting to keep the text in brackets until the work programme had been defined.

On the criteria for selecting the chair and vice-chairs, delegates said that IPBES, as an intergovernmental body, should guide governments in nominating candidates rather than devising selection criteria. Others noted the importance of the chair understanding the dynamics, having leadership capabilities and gaining consensus. Delegates included references to: experience with assessments along with the criterion on scientific experience; ecosystem functions, resilience and adaptation; and understanding the role and knowledge of indigenous groups. Chair Watson asked the Secretariat to restructure the text for consideration by plenary.

Addressing the revised text on the election of the chair and vice-chairs on Wednesday, some delegates again called for vice-chairs to be appointed on a rotational basis; with others saying that this should be on a regional basis. Some delegates proposed including a reference on selecting the officers of the plenary as members of an expanded bureau. The reference was retained in an additional bracketed paragraph pending decision on the IPBES structure, while the original provision was adopted with minor amendments.

Delegates addressed the issue again on Thursday and agreed to take gender balance into account in the selection of officers. The importance of balance between scientific disciplines was also emphasized.

On the functions of the chair, delegates agreed, following deliberations, that these functions be defined as set out in the rules of procedure and be directed by the plenary. Delegates also decided to: retain the function of “representing the platform”; reject a proposal by the EU and its member states to include outreach and communication activities; and delete reference to other functions that depend on the establishment of the subsidiary bodies.

On the functions of the vice-chairs, delegates agreed that these should be defined in the same way as the functions of the chair. Delegates also agreed: that the vice-chairs should participate in the work of the bureau; that presiding over meetings of subsidiary bodies is not a function of vice-chairs; to highlight in the rules of procedure that the vice-chairs act on behalf of the chair, “where necessary”; and to delete reference to carrying out outreach and communication activities.

On guidelines on the nomination and selection of both the chair and the vice-chairs, delegates agreed to delete reference to previous experience with assessments and the ability to represent the platform at all levels.

Subsidiary Bodies: On Tuesday, Chair Watson introduced the issue of the possible functions of subsidiary bodies and potential options for the structure and composition of subsidiary bodies of the plenary (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/4).

Delegates suggested including only a short list of functions characterized by the type of function. Some delegates said the governance structure should be able to address, *inter alia*, intersessional issues and that the bureau’s terms of reference should include both administrative and scientific requirements. Others supported establishing two subsidiary bodies, one with administrative functions and the other with technical and scientific functions, with one delegate saying that the functions of subsidiary bodies be determined before defining the governance structure.

Minimum levels of bureaucracy were favored, with some proposing the establishment of various subsidiary bodies, including a science panel and an administrative panel. Others cautioned that the determinations would depend on the programme of work, with some suggesting that the subsidiary bodies deal only with administration and working groups be established to consider scientific issues. Chair Watson and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) representative explained the institutional structure of IPCC and its evolution highlighting, *inter alia*, that the executive committee has been established as a subset of the IPCC Bureau to undertake intersessional activities.

Delegates stressed the need for flexibility when establishing subsidiary bodies and cautioned against overlapping tasks between subsidiary bodies and the bureau. Delegates were also reminded that IPBES is not only concerned with assessments, with some delegates saying that the platform could benefit from a regional structure and incorporate capacity building and technology transfer. Delegates also emphasized the role of NGOs.

Deliberations continued on Thursday morning, with delegates asking for clarity on the relationship between the subsidiary bodies and the plenary, with some noting that subsidiary bodies should facilitate the operations of the platform and provide oversight as decided by the plenary.

In the evening session on Thursday, delegates decided, after deliberations, to rename the section on the form and functions of subsidiary bodies as “administrative and scientific functions to facilitate the work of the platform,” and to postpone the decision on whether subsidiary bodies, the bureau, or the secretariat would carry out these functions.

Delegates discussed these functions and agreed to: bracket the approval of requests by observer organizations until membership issues were clarified; assign the monitoring of the secretariat’s performance to the plenary; and describe the function regarding financial resources as review of the management of resources and observance of financial rules, and likewise keep this formulation in brackets.

On the scientific and technical functions of the subsidiary bodies, some delegates said developing a list of contributors to the work programme would discourage contributions from

new researchers. Others suggested including other types of knowledge, such as traditional knowledge, and other stakeholders besides scientists, and consideration of a diversity of disciplines.

Some delegates also called for an additional paragraph on facilitating technology transfer according to the work programme of the platform. The paragraph was included in brackets. Others introduced an additional paragraph on providing guidance on how to use indigenous and local knowledge in the science-policy interface. They proposed exploring methodologies to incorporate different knowledge systems, with a delegate proposing to include this item in the work programme on knowledge generation. Delegates agreed that subsidiary bodies should explore ways and means to take different knowledge systems into account in the science-policy interface.

Resuming the issue on Friday, Chair Watson introduced the text prepared by the Secretariat with two options for the structure and composition of subsidiary bodies, and asked delegates for comments.

Many delegates favored establishment of one subsidiary body in the form of an extended bureau of the plenary. Some proposed a small bureau to oversee procedural and administrative functions, and a larger bureau with substantive functions composed of representatives from working groups, regional hubs, science and policy bodies, and members from MEAs, IGOs and UN agencies. One delegate highlighted that assigning additional functions to the bureau does not prevent it from being a part of the plenary and another emphasized distinguishing governance and scientific work. It was proposed that the expanded bureau also undertake functions for intersessional work and asked to select additional members on the basis of their scientific and technical expertise. Delegates also proposed that a member of the expanded bureau could have different duties, including administrative and technical, and different groups should therefore be determined. Others suggested that the extended bureau should ensure scientific credibility.

Others preferred establishing two subsidiary bodies. One delegate suggested an expanded version of the bureau taking administrative functions and a science panel to address substantive issues of the platform's work programme, with the capacity to create working groups. Delegates questioned the roles of the different members of an expanded bureau and suggested one executive committee and one expanded bureau instead. Some supported a bureau and a subsidiary body with the option of developing regional, technical and scientific hubs. Others favored two bodies but said an expanded bureau could be sufficient if it were to fulfill administrative functions and have scientific capacities.

Secretariat: This issue was taken up for the first time on Tuesday. Delegates emphasized that the secretariat should only carry out administrative functions for the plenary and other bodies and that it should be a "lean" secretariat. Some delegates suggested distributing the secretariat's functions to various international organizations, while others emphasized the need to ensure the secretariat's independence. Chair Watson asked the Secretariat to redraft text, noting a tendency towards supporting one central hub and a lean secretariat.

Addressing the role of the secretariat again on Thursday, delegates proposed that the secretariat should also service subsidiary bodies.

Trust Fund: Introducing this issue on Tuesday, Chair Watson noted the need to define "a whole series of rules" for the operation of the trust fund. Delegates highlighted the importance of a plenary that can decide on the use of available resources and some welcomed contributions from the private sector and other stakeholders as long as these resources are not to be earmarked. Other delegates called attention to the role of in-kind contributions.

Some delegates urged that contributions to the fund be voluntary, while others rejected the notion of private sector contributions. Delegates agreed to postpone the decision on the role of the private sector.

Delegates addressed the trust fund again on Wednesday and debated whether there would be one or more trust funds, with some favoring a single trust fund without reference to it being a "core" trust fund. Other paragraphs on independently reviewing the platform on a periodic basis, a process for the adoption of reports, rules of procedure and financial rules, were adopted with minor amendments.

On Friday, delegates decided, after deliberations, to change the title of the section on the trust fund to "Financial and other contributions to the platform," and to address under this title the trust fund, additional financial contributions and in-kind contributions. Some expressed concern with private sector contributions and suggested language that such funding come without conditionalities, should not orientate the work of the platform, and could not be earmarked to specific activities. Delegates agreed to some changes and deleted references that the trust's funds should not be earmarked and should be a "blind" trust fund.

Delegates decided to address contributions that are additional to the trust fund in a separate paragraph, highlighting that these should be exceptional and be subject to the approval of the plenary. Some delegates asked what the role of these additional contributions could be and Chair Watson referenced experience with the IPCC where governments financed workshops or activities without channeling resources through the trust fund. Delegates similarly decided to address in-kind contributions in a separate paragraph and to encourage contributions from the scientific community and other knowledge holders and stakeholders, with the latter two retained in brackets.

Evaluation of the operation of the platform: This topic was considered on Tuesday. Delegates asked for clarification on the evaluation process, with some noting the relationship with legal issues. Chair Watson suggested broadening the scope and modalities of evaluation when considering the rules of procedure.

The issue was considered again on Friday. Delegates agreed to bracket the paragraph saying the report of the meeting is a fundamental issue and needs further deliberation.

Final Outcome: The outcome document, which includes the reflection of delegates' deliberations on the functions and structures of bodies that might be established under the platform was annexed to the draft report of the first session of the plenary meeting (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/L.1, Annex III). Discussions will be resumed during the second session of plenary in 2012.

RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR MEETINGS OF THE PLATFORM: On Tuesday, the UNEP Secretariat introduced document UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/5 on the rules of procedure for the platform's plenary. Delegates stressed that the platform needs to adopt its own rules of procedure. They stressed rules on: representation, expertise, adoption of decisions, and

intersessional activities. Some delegates suggested drawing on rules of procedure from other processes, with others cautioning against. Some delegates called for addressing the work programme first, noting that this will have a bearing on the rules of procedure.

Chair Watson proposed forming a Friends of the Chair group to undertake a first reading of the draft rules and proposed avoiding discussion on issues related to membership, participation and observers, which were already addressed by the Friends of the Chair group on membership.

One delegate argued that decisions need to be taken by consensus and not by voting and that the rules of procedure should envisage the participation of observers. Chair Watson noted that once IPBES is established, it may not always be possible to take decisions by consensus and invited considering as a backstop what a voting system might look like in the rules of procedure.

Final Outcome: The draft report of the first session of the plenary meeting (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/L.1) notes that delegates exchanged initial views on the rules of procedure for the meetings of the platform, and that several delegates noted the need for adopting the rules of procedure to support the function of the platform. It was decided to undertake intersessional work to make progress on the matter.

PROCESS AND CRITERIA FOR SELECTING THE HOST INSTITUTION OR INSTITUTIONS AND THE PHYSICAL LOCATION OF THE PLATFORM'S SECRETARIAT: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced document UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/6 on the process and criteria for selecting the host institution and the location of the secretariat. Delegates met on Wednesday and Thursday to discuss the document.

Criteria for selecting the host institution: On Wednesday, delegates began deliberations with some supporting the invitation that was made to the four sponsor organizations, UNESCO, UNEP, FAO and UNDP to submit a proposal for co-hosting the platform and queried if it was thus necessary to open this issue. Chair Watson said that IPBES would still benefit from discussions on the elements to be expected in proposals. Some delegates cautioned against limiting submissions to the four sponsor organizations.

Delegates noted the need for referencing experience on biodiversity and ecosystem services in the selection criteria. They proposed that the administrative functions of the secretariat be hosted in one institution, with one delegate saying that hosts should be able to provide stable financial support. Delegates noted that there were still gaps in the selection criteria that should be addressed.

Process for inviting organizations to signify their interest in hosting the secretariat: During Wednesday's deliberations delegates underscored that the process for selecting a host institution is separate from selecting the physical location of the secretariat.

Some delegates proposed increasing the length of applications from 10 to 20 pages, with a 15-page length being agreed to. Other proposed that joint or individual offers were possible. Delegates agreed that only the executive summaries of applications be translated into UN languages. Delegates said that governments should consider these offers with the view to making "a decision" rather than "recommendations" on the secretariat's physical location.

Process for reviewing proposals and selecting the host institution: On Wednesday, delegates noted that the bureau should not undertake a first review of proposals and that governments should have the opportunity to review and discuss all proposals. Chair Watson suggested 15 December 2011 as the deadline for bids and proposals, requesting the UNEP Secretariat to circulate them shortly thereafter.

When the topic was taken up on Thursday, delegates proposed text reflecting that the bureau would "forward" rather than "disseminate" offers from interested organizations to all governments. Others said that the offers should be forwarded to governments with a view to making "decisions" on the host institutions of the secretariat.

Criteria for selecting the physical location of the secretariat: Delegates began deliberations on the criteria for selecting the physical location of the secretariat on Thursday, with some rejecting criteria that would exclude developing countries, and others noting that the location needs to ensure safety, good governance and efficient resource use. Delegates discussed whether the presence of an international organization should be a criterion for selection, with some saying that only international organizations relevant to biodiversity should be a criterion. Others noted that the presence of international organizations related to biodiversity and ecosystems has no consequence on the secretariat's functions. One delegate called for considering the specific situation of developing countries, citing capacity gaps, natural resource abundance, lack of scientific assessments and the relationship between biodiversity and poverty reduction as possible gauges.

Some delegates favored a single location for the secretariat but welcomed considering the establishment of regional hubs. Delegates cautioned that the regional hubs could increase on the work programme and the role of subsidiary bodies, and urged separating discussions on the secretariat headquarters and regional hubs. Some expressed concern that regional hubs increase bureaucracy and reduce efficiency.

Some delegates requested that diplomatic representation be on a country rather than city basis. Delegates opposed to proposals having a safety and security element, which was deleted after deliberations.

Proposed process for inviting submissions of proposals: During Friday's adoption of the draft meeting report, some delegates queried how proposals could be received by the UNEP Secretariat if there had been no agreement on the type of secretariat to be formed under the platform, with others noting that proposals based on which option of secretariat structure they prefer is possible. Chair Watson noted that proposals for the physical location of the secretariat must be submitted by 15 January 2012, after which they will be compiled and distributed to governments.

Process for reviewing proposals and selecting the secretariat's physical location: Delegates discussed this issue on Wednesday and Friday, proposing allowing governments to submit their proposals to the Bureau eight weeks prior to the second session of the plenary and that these be sent without review to governments after two weeks. Delegates called for compilation and translation of bids, as well as some urging for the provision of an executive summary of submissions. Others proposed uniform formats for the bids. Chair Watson proposed that the Bureau work with the Secretariat to elaborate a draft suggested format for the bids.

Final Outcome: The draft report of the first session of the plenary meeting (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/L.1) states that the delegates took up the considerations contained in the secretariat note. Governments and Institutions are invited to submit their proposals based on the guidance set out in the annex to the report of the first session of the plenary meeting.

WORK PROGRAMME OF THE PLATFORM: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced document UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/7 considering the possible work programme of the platform. Delegates, in their general comments, suggested that the platform should focus on compiling scientific data and urged consideration of: the importance of regional hubs as a mechanism to attract stakeholders; the need for relevant assessments; and capacity building. It was suggested that intersessional work should take place on the work programme.

Delegates highlighted the importance of regional coordination mechanisms and thematic assessments. Others suggested that a review of status and trends methodologies at the national level is needed and called for establishing a standing committee on tools and methodologies. Some delegates noted the need for: hosting data sets; rules to conduct, coordinate and review assessments; and the provision of standardized guidelines. One delegate emphasized the use of ecosystem approaches in assessing the knowledge on ecosystem services.

Delegates urged that the work programme respond to all four functions of the IPBES. Others suggested defining what relevant policy information for decision-making is and using, *inter alia*, the targets and indicators of the CBD Strategic Plan. They emphasized: communication, public awareness, networking, and funding.

Delegates suggested that using traditional knowledge could enhance capacity building and technology transfer, while others pointed to the role of intellectual property in knowledge generation for biodiversity protection. Delegates also called for: bottom-up approaches; broad approaches for evaluating biodiversity and ecosystem services; and the need for the economic valuation of ecosystems.

Final Outcome: The draft report of the first session of the plenary meeting (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/L.1) outlines the preliminary sharing of ideas and highlights general recognition for delivering the four functions of the platform in an integrated manner. Delegates agreed to continue their work intersessionally, with country submissions on the work programme to be received no later than 15 December 2011.

CLOSING SESSION

On Friday afternoon, Chair Watson led delegates through the draft report of the first session of the plenary meeting (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/L.1) and its annexes. Delegates adopted the report with amendments (as referred to in detail in the relevant subsections of this report).

Chair Watson introduced a draft resolution of the first session of the plenary meeting (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/CRP.7). Several delegates said they were unwilling to accept the plenipotentiaries' conference planned for the last day of the second session of the plenary meeting. Delegates agreed to set aside the resolution.

UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner gave a vote of thanks to the Chair and the Vice-Chairs for their work during the session and thanked delegates for their participation.

Chair Watson closed the meeting at 6:30 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE MEETING

In the face of its continuous and alarming erosion and unsustainable use, biodiversity and ecosystem services are gaining increasing attention in the international arena, including in the context of climate change, global food security, development and poverty reduction, and the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD also known as Rio+20) dialogue on the green economy.

Over the past decade there has been growing international agreement that the system for linking science and policy in the area of biodiversity and ecosystem services needed further improvement, resulting ultimately in the process for creating an Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). The first session of the IPBES plenary meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, has made important steps forward in establishing and operationalizing the platform, which aims at strengthening the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development.

This analysis provides an assessment of the main achievements in Nairobi, the degree of cooperation and conflict, and the obstacles that appeared in the negotiations. It begins by examining the most important achievements of this meeting in further elaborating the IPBES functions, structures and work programme. Then, it presents the key legal, political and technical obstacles to establishing and operationalizing the platform, with a focus on their interlinked dimensions. Finally, it concludes by considering the key necessary steps for operationalizing the platform at the second session of plenary in April 2012.

THE CHICKEN AND EGG ISSUE: DOES FORM FOLLOW FUNCTION OR VICE VERSA?

In his opening remarks to the IPBES plenary, UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Executive Director, Achim Steiner, emphasized that many issues concerning the establishment and operationalization of IPBES were agreed at the Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Meeting on IPBES held in Busan, Republic of Korea, in June 2010, and therefore contained in the outcome document of that meeting ("the Busan Outcome"). During the week's discussions, many delegates urged making the platform fully operational in accordance with the Busan Outcome, which was widely endorsed by delegates in Nairobi, and seen as a solid foundation for the platform.

Deliberations to establish the institutional and operational structure of the platform considered important political, institutional and technical issues. The elaboration of the IPBES functions, structures and work programme, in particular, were shown to be intrinsically linked. The Busan Outcome outlines four functions for IPBES, namely: knowledge generation, assessment, policy support and capacity building. This meeting clarified the parties' different understandings of the relationship between these functions, and was of particular importance for further defining its structure and work programme...and vice versa. Whereas it was widely agreed that IPBES must fulfill all functions, preferences varied as to which should be the focus of the activities to be undertaken under each function of the work programme and there were divergent views on the need to adopt

a centralized versus decentralized structure to support capacity building, for example through regional and thematic hubs, and bottom-up approaches to assessments at different levels.

Deliberations on institutional matters, including the form of the bodies under IPBES, thus brought to the table more fundamental questions on the primary functions and objective of the platform. When delegates discussed the capabilities that the IPBES chair should have, for example, some highlighted credibility in the scientific community and the ability to organize scientific assessments, while others emphasized that the chair should be able to “effectively deliver scientific indications into the policy process” and make sure that the platform “shores up decision making.” The platform, many delegates agreed in informal talks, will have to make its way forward step-by-step and define its priorities in this process.

THE POLITICAL, LEGAL AND TECHNICAL DIMENSIONS: A COMPLICATED BIRTH

The legal basis and process for the formal establishment of IPBES was a contentious issue that was not resolved at this meeting. While all countries agreed on the urgency of operationalizing the platform, a wide divergence of views emerged from the debate on whether or not the platform had already been established by the UNGA Resolution that requested UNEP to convene this plenary (UNGA Resolution 65/162). Delegates also debated the need for further actions, such as convening a conference of plenipotentiaries during the second plenary meeting or involving the UN General Assembly.

For instance, in relation to the option of providing for a single secretariat with distributed functions between the host institutions, some delegates argued that further action would be required by the relevant UN bodies and agencies to legally establish the platform. In particular, even though UNEP, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have already received the mandate to co-host the platform, and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) will consider this shortly, one expert noted that the early establishment of an agreement between these organizations would be required to clarify their respective roles in administering the platform.

Delegates also considered the various options having implications for the platform status, which ranged from IPBES being established under the UN system to it being established as an independent intergovernmental body administered by one of more UN agencies, as well as its possible subsequent transformation into a UN entity.

As a possible way forward, Chair Watson suggested parties consider one another’s position with the view to coming to an agreement at the second session of plenary. In terms of both process and substance, a draft resolution prepared by the UNEP Secretariat suggested including a paragraph on convening a conference of plenipotentiaries at the second session of the plenary with the view to fully operationalizing the platform, during the second session of plenary “including through its possible establishment.” In another paragraph, the draft resolution also provided for inviting the four prospective UN host institutions jointly to convene such a conference. While the plenary set aside the draft resolution because agreement could not be reached on these important paragraphs, it was agreed that the legal status of IPBES requires further clarification. At the

same time, the other most important operative elements of the draft resolution were promptly incorporated into the report of the meeting and adopted with various amendments.

CONCLUSIONS: SETTING A NEW PRECEDENT FOR IMPROVING BIODIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

Overall, the majority of delegates considered this meeting to have fulfilled its mandate, in particular, the elaboration of modalities and institutional arrangements by agreeing on, *inter alia*: the process and elements for selecting the host institution or institutions; the physical location of the platform’s secretariat; and the decision to establish an intersessional process to undertake further work on the rules of procedure and consider bids for the secretariat’s location and host institutions.

While the meeting also agreed on important aspects concerning the structure of the plenary, the bureau and the secretariat, and received useful comments on articulating their functions and the work programme, outstanding issues include the structure, role, and functions of subsidiary bodies, including the potential establishment of a science panel, an expanded bureau, and the issue of a central secretariat *vis-à-vis* regional hubs.

Civil society organizations expressed satisfaction with the openness of the delegates at the first session of the plenary, particularly, among others: recognizing different knowledge systems, including indigenous and local knowledge; and encouraging and taking into account inputs and suggestions made by all relevant stakeholders. They also hoped that the further elaboration of the functions and operating principles of the platform will be conducive to exploring new mechanisms for the active participation of civil society organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities, along with the scientific community, to biodiversity conservation and its governance.

Notwithstanding the complexity of the legal, political and technical issues discussed at this meeting, and the sometimes divergent views, most participants left the final plenary in a positive mood, noting that delegates had worked productively with a cooperative attitude throughout the week “as if the platform was already established.” At the same time, they recognized that the formal outcomes of this meeting have left a remarkable degree of “suspense and uncertainty” about the status of IPBES and about the process by which it will be possible to clarify this key outstanding issue.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

UNCCD COP 10: The tenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) will consider agenda items related to, *inter alia*: the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018); the programme and budget; the evaluation of existing and potential reporting, accountability and institutional arrangements for the Global Mechanism; mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination of the implementation of the Convention; progress in the implementation of the comprehensive communication Strategy; procedures for the participation of civil society organizations (CSOs) in meetings and processes of the UNCCD; and maintenance of the roster of experts and creation, as necessary, of *ad hoc* panels of experts. **dates:** 10-21 October 2011 **location:** Changwon City, Republic of Korea **contact:**

UNCCD Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-2800 **fax:** +49-228-815-2898 **email:** secretariat@unccd.int **www:** <http://www.unccd.int/cop/cop10/menu.php>

Third Expert Workshop on the City Biodiversity Index (Singapore Index) and Meeting on CBO 1: This expert workshop, organized by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Government of Singapore, will allow participants to report on their experiences in using the index and to work together on the finalization of the tool. The City Biodiversity Outlook 1 (CBO 1) meeting will focus on the production plan and content development, key messages and on how to integrate the Singapore Index in the CBO 1 – synthesis. **dates:** 11-13 October 2011 **location:** Singapore **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <http://www.cbd.int/authorities/importantevents/>

UNCSD Regional Preparatory Meeting in the Arab Region: The UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and partners will convene an Arab regional preparatory meeting for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD). **dates:** 16-17 October 2011 **location:** Cairo, Egypt **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.escwa.un.org/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNUM=1545E>

UNCSD Regional Preparatory Meeting for Asia and the Pacific Region: The UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific and partners will convene a regional meeting in preparation for the UNCSD. **dates:** 17-20 October 2011 **location:** Seoul, Republic of Korea **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.unescap.org/esd/environment/Rio20/pages/RPM.html>

Expert Meeting on Impacts of Ocean Acidification on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity: This CBD Expert Meeting aims to: identify gaps and barriers in existing monitoring and scientific assessment of those impacts; develop options for addressing identified gaps and barriers; and identify necessary collaboration activities to implement identified options. **dates:** 19-20 October 2011 **location:** Montreal, Canada **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EMIOAMCB-01>

UNCSD Regional Preparatory Meeting for Africa: The UN Economic Commission for Africa and partners will convene an African regional preparatory meeting for the UNCSD. **dates:** 20-25 October 2011 **location:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/sdd/events/Rio20/preparatory.asp

Seventh Meeting of the CBD Working Group on Article 8(j): This meeting will discuss, among others, an in-depth dialogue on ecosystem management, ecosystem services and protected areas; and several tasks of the multi-year programme of work on the implementation of Article 8(j), including a strategy to integrate Article 10 with a focus on Article 10(c) (customary sustainable use) as a cross-cutting issue into the programmes of work and thematic areas of the Convention. **dates:** 31 October - 4 November 2011 **location:** Montreal, Canada **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=WG8J-07>

CBD SBSTTA 15: The 15th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 15) of the CBD will discuss, *inter alia*, scientific and technical issues relevant to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020; invasive alien species; inland water biodiversity; sustainable use of biodiversity; and Arctic biodiversity. **dates:** 7-11 November 2011 **location:** Montreal, Canada **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=SBSTTA-15>

Tenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species: The 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) will be convened in Bergen, Norway. **dates:** 20-25 November 2011 **location:** Bergen, Norway **contact:** UNEP/CMS Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-2426 **fax:** +49-228-815-2449 **email:** secretariat@cms.int **www:** http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop10/documents_overview.htm

UNCSD Regional Preparatory Meeting for the ECE Region: The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and partners will convene a regional meeting in preparation for the UNCSD. **dates:** 1-2 December 2011 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.unece.org/env/SustainableDevelopment/RPM2011/RPM2011.html>

Twenty-fifth International Congress on Conservation Biology: Organized by the Society for Conservation Biology, and convened under the theme “Engaging Society in Conservation,” the Congress is a forum for participants to address the many conservation challenges. **dates:** 5-9 December 2011 **location:** Auckland, New Zealand **contact:** Kerry O’Connell **email:** 2011@conbio.org **www:** <http://www.conbio.org/Activities/Meetings/2011/?CFID=27405269&CFTOKEN=39589021>

Eye on Earth Summit: The Eye on Earth Summit: Pursuing a Vision is being organized under the theme “Dynamic system to keep the world environmental situation under review.” This event will launch the global environmental information network (EIN) strengthening initiative and address major policy and technical issues. The expected outcome is a clear statement on ways and means to strengthen existing initiatives and fill gaps towards informed policy making in support of a sustainable future. **dates:** 12-15 December 2011 **location:** Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates **contact:** Marije Heurter, Eye on Earth Event Coordinator **tel:** +971 2 693 4516 **email:** Marije.heurter@ead.ae or Eoecommunity@ead.ae **www:** <http://www.eyeonearthsummit.org/>

Second Intersessional Meeting for UNCSD: The second intersessional meeting for the UNCSD will be convened in late 2011. **dates:** 15-16 December 2011 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

UNCSD Informal Consultations: The UNCSD Preparatory Committee will hold a series of information consultations on the zero draft of the outcome document in January, February, March and April 2012. **dates:** 16-18 January 2012; 13-17 February 2012; 19-23 March 2012 and 30 April - 4 May 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/>

12th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum: The Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) will hold its 12th special session to focus on the UNCSD themes of green economy and international environmental governance and emerging issues. **dates:** 20-22 February 2012 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** Jamil Ahmad, Secretary, Governing Bodies, UNEP **phone:** +254-20-762-3411 **fax:** +254-20 762-3929 **email:** sgc.sgb@unep.org **www:** <http://www.unep.org/resources/gov/#>

26th Meeting of the CITES Animals Committee: The 26th meeting of the Animals Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) will address a number of agenda items, including sharks, snakes, sturgeons, corals, and listing criteria for commercially exploited aquatic species. It will convene immediately prior to the joint meeting of the CITES Animals and Plants Committees. **dates:** 15-20 March 2012 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** CITES Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8139/40 **fax:** +41-22-797-3417 **email:** info@cites.org **www:** <http://www.cites.org>

Joint meeting of the CITES Animals and Plants Committees: The joint meeting of the CITES Animals and Plants Committees will address a number of agenda items common to the two scientific committees, including: cooperation with other conventions; guidelines on non-detriment findings and transport of live specimens. **dates:** 22-24 March 2012 **location:** Dublin, Ireland **contact:** CITES Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8139/40 **fax:** +41-22-797-3417 **email:** info@cites.org **www:** <http://www.cites.org>

20th Meeting of the CITES Plants Committee: The 20th meeting of the CITES Plants Committee will address a number of agenda items, including: bigleaf mahogany, African cherry, and other timber issues; annotations in CITES appendices; and cooperation with other initiatives. **dates:** 26-30 March 2012 **location:** Dublin, Ireland **contact:** CITES Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8139/40 **fax:** +41-22-797-3417 **email:** info@cites.org **www:** <http://www.cites.org>

Planet Under Pressure: New Knowledge toward Solutions: This conference will focus on solutions to the global sustainability challenge. It will provide a comprehensive update of the pressure planet Earth is now under and discuss solutions at all scales to move societies on to a sustainable pathway and provide scientific leadership towards the UNCSD. **dates:** 26-29 March 2012 **location:** London, United Kingdom **contact:** Jenny Wang **phone:** +86-10-8520-8796 **email:** Jen.wang@elsevier.com **www:** <http://www.planetunderpressure2012.net>

Third Intersessional Meeting for UNCSD: The final intersessional meeting for the UNCSD will be convened in March 2012. **dates:** 26-27 March 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/>

2nd Meeting of the Open-Ended Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Committee for the Nagoya Protocol on ABS (ICNP-2): **dates:** 9-13 April 2012 **location:** Delhi, India **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

2nd Session of the Plenary Meeting on an Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services: The second session of the plenary meeting will

continue with the deliberations on the institutional arrangements and modalities of the IPBES, with a view to operationalizing the body at the meeting. **dates:** April 2012 **location:** TBA **contact:** UNEP Secretariat **phone:** + 254-20-762-5135 **email:** ipbes.unep@unep.org **www:** <http://ipbes.net/>

4th meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the CBD (WGRI): The meeting will review implementation of the new Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020), including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Its recommendations will be submitted to COP 11 in Hyderabad, India in 2012, for its consideration and adoption. **dates:** 7-11 May 2012 **location:** Montreal, Canada

Third PrepCom for UNCSD: The third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the UNCSD will take place in Brazil just prior to the conference. **dates:** 28-30 May 2012 **location:** Rio De Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

UN Conference on Sustainable Development: The UNCSD will mark the 20th anniversary of the UN Conference on Environment and Development, which convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. **dates:** 4-6 June 2012 **location:** Rio De Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

GLOSSARY

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
COP	Conference of the Parties
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GC	Governing Council
GMEF	Global Ministerial Environmental Forum
IMoSEB	International Mechanism on Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPBES	Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
MA	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment
MEAs	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
SBSTTA	Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly



Biodiversity Policy & Practice

A Knowledgebase of UN and Intergovernmental Activities Addressing International Biodiversity Policy



The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) is pleased to announce the launch of

Biodiversity Policy & Practice:

A Knowledgebase on UN and Intergovernmental Activities Addressing International Biodiversity Policy

Biodiversity-L.iisd.org

Biodiversity Policy & Practice is a knowledge management project that will track UN and intergovernmental activities related to international biodiversity policy. It is managed by the [International Institute for Sustainable Development \(IISD\) Reporting Services](#).

The launch of **Biodiversity Policy & Practice** coincides with the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which is convening in Nagoya, Japan, on 18-29 October 2010.

Information on United Nations activities is provided in cooperation with the UN system agencies, funds and programmes through the [United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination](#) (CEB) Secretariat.

All news articles on **Biodiversity Policy & Practice** are researched and produced by our [team of thematic experts](#), resulting in all original content.

Features of the website include:

- A knowledgebase of summaries of activities (publications, meetings, statements or projects) by a range of actors, with the option to search by several categories (region, actor, action, issue and implementation mechanism);
- An archive of all posts on the site, organized by date;
- A clickable world map, enabling you to view the latest biodiversity policy news by region (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America & Caribbean, Near East, North America, and South West Pacific);
- A link to subscribe to BIODIVERSITY-L, a moderated community announcement list for policy-makers and practitioners involved with biodiversity policy;
- A link to the most recent "Biodiversity Update," a periodic feed of recent posts to the Biodiversity Policy & Practice knowledgebase;
- A Calendar of upcoming intergovernmental events related to international biodiversity policy;
- A link to our Biodiversity iCalendar, which automatically updates your own calendar program with upcoming biodiversity events; and
- A link to our RSS feed.

Start-up funding for Phase I of Biodiversity Policy & Practice has been provided by the [Global Environment Facility](#).

For further information on this initiative or to provide us with information about your biodiversity-related activity, please contact Faye Leone, Content Editor, at faye@iisd.org.



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