

**SUMMARY OF THE SECOND SESSION
OF THE PLENARY MEETING ON THE
INTERGOVERNMENTAL SCIENCE-POLICY
PLATFORM ON BIODIVERSITY AND
ECOSYSTEM SERVICES:
16-21 APRIL 2012**

The second session of the plenary meeting on the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) met from 16-21 April 2012 in Panama City, Panama. The meeting was attended by 270 delegates representing 103 countries, one observer, three intergovernmental organizations, 21 non-governmental organizations, five conventions and five UN bodies and specialized agencies. Over the course of the week, delegates considered the modalities and institutional arrangements for an IPBES, including: functions and structures of bodies that might be established under the platform; rules of procedure; the work programme of the platform; and the physical location of the IPBES secretariat. At the end of the week, delegates adopted a resolution establishing the IPBES. Delegates also adopted the report of the meeting and its annexes describing the week's proceedings. Discussions on a few outstanding issues that were considered non-essential to IPBES' establishment will resume at the first session of the IPBES.

The key achievement of the week was clearly the official establishment of the IPBES, following seven years of discussions. During the closing session on Saturday night, the establishment of IPBES was met with a standing ovation, whistles and a great deal of goodwill expressed for the way forward.

The selection of Bonn, Germany as the physical location of the secretariat was another highlight, following a very close vote. Significant outstanding issues to be discussed at the first session of IPBES include certain rules of procedure, particularly on decision making, the possibility of IPBES becoming a UN body, and the host institution. In addition, IPBES will have to address issues not considered at this meeting, including the budget, and legal issues relating to IPBES' establishment and operationalization. The existing bureau of officers will work

during the intersessional period, and establish the dates and venue for the first IPBES meeting, with UNEP acting as the interim secretariat.

**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

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Diversity (CBD COP) in 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 Conference on Biodiversity, Science and Governance, held in January 2005. The proposal received political support from then French President Jacques Chirac and the French Government. A consultative process was launched, with an International Steering Committee, an Executive Committee and an Executive Secretariat entrusted to the Institut Français de la Biodiversité, 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 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" in Leipzig, Germany, in October 2006.

At the second meeting of the International Steering Committee, in December 2006, the Executive Committee reported on 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 convened an *Ad Hoc* 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 subsequently revised.

The IMoSEB outcome and the IPBES concept note were also considered in 2008 by CBD COP 9. 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) (February 2009, 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 (February 2010, 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.

1ST SESSION OF PLENARY FOR AN IPBES: The first session of the plenary meeting on IPBES met from 3-7 October 2011 at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. Delegates considered the modalities and institutional arrangements for an IPBES, including: the functions and operating principles of the platform; 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.

REPORT OF THE MEETING

On Monday morning, Ibrahim Thiaw, UNEP, opened the meeting and highlighted the importance of science-based, credible, relevant and legitimate information for policy-making. Among issues to be agreed upon in Panama, he mentioned: elements of the platform's work programme, operationalization and budget; and geographical location and arrangements for hosting the IPBES secretariat.

Mayra Arosemena, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Panama, highlighting the relevance of the platform as a mechanism to support the results of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), urged for an agreement on key issues to enable the establishment of the platform in Panama, including on institutional, legal and budgetary matters.

Chair Robert Watson (UK) presented the officers elected during the first session of the plenary meeting on the IPBES who will serve with him as Bureau members during the second session: Vice Chairs Atsushi Suginaka (Japan), Ali Mohamed (Kenya), Senka Barudanovich (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Hesiquio Benitez (Mexico).

The agenda (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/1/Add.1) was adopted without amendment. Chair Watson noted that all meetings would be in plenary with possibility of working groups or contact groups on specific issues.

CREDENTIALS OF REPRESENTATIVES: On Thursday, the Chair reported that the Bureau had determined that of the 103 States that had attended the session, 92 were found to be in order, noting that credentials of the European Union (EU) had also been submitted. The plenary approved the Bureau's report.

CONSIDERATION OF MODALITIES AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR AN IPBES

On Monday, delegates addressed this agenda item for the first time and continued discussing it throughout the week, focusing on different elements.

Chair Watson urged delegates to: seek balance on the four elements of the work programme (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/2); decide on the options presented for the functions and structures of bodies established under the platform (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/3); and agree on the rules of procedure for the meetings of the platform's plenary (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/4). He also highlighted

documents on: the location of the platform's secretariat (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/5); the full text of bids made by five countries to host the secretariat (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/5/Add.1); budget options (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/7); and legal issues (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/8).

Many countries supported the prompt establishment of the platform and prioritizing subregional assessments. Ghana, for the African Group, reiterated that IPBES should be considered an independent body, and supported the development of a roadmap for the way forward.

The Republic of Korea, for Asia-Pacific, reported on recommendations from the Asia-Pacific regional meeting on IPBES held in March 2012, including that IPBES have a small bureau with a separate science panel and a centralized secretariat with regional hubs. Bosnia and Herzegovina, for Eastern Europe, supported drafting an integrated paper on rules of procedure. Mexico, for the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), said capacity building should be clearly defined in the work programme, and called for a related working group. Denmark, for the EU, said that IPBES should attract policy-relevant contributions from scientists on ecosystem services. South Africa, for the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China), said IPBES should maintain scientific independence, and collaborate with existing multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). Norway urged delegates to prioritize elements required to establish and operationalize IPBES. The US said that they could contribute to IPBES via the Quadrennial Ecosystem Services Trends (QuEST) assessment.

Indonesia called for finding balance between biodiversity conservation and efforts to pursue economic development. Colombia said IPBES will allow for precautionary and timely monitoring, and emphasized recognizing biodiversity as integral to cultural identity.

The Republic of Korea supported a bottom-up approach to the work programme. Switzerland stated that the objective of this plenary is to fully operationalize IPBES, and supported Norway's proposal to clarify an outcome of the meeting through the report of the Chair.

Japan supported: the establishment of rules of procedure with minimum components to operationalize IPBES during this meeting; and setting priorities for the work programme. India suggested that IPBES could use a roadmap to develop into a proper UN body, and emphasized that IPBES can assist developing countries in finding a balance between conservation and development.

Bolivia urged a holistic approach that does not commercialize nature. Guatemala highlighted the need to ensure IPBES fully considers traditional and local knowledge, as well as decision-making at different scales, in particular at the local level. Palestine highlighted the need for IPBES to support biodiversity protection, particularly in developing countries that are occupied.

IUCN reported on a stakeholders meeting on modalities and institutional arrangements of IPBES held on 15 April, underscoring the need to adopt a mechanism that ensures full and effective participation of all stakeholders, and for regional structures that can integrate the four functions of the platform.

United Nations University (UNU) highlighted the need to provide a platform for dialogue and the readiness of the scientific community to contribute to IPBES.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) said the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 is a globally recognized agenda and a possible useful framework for the IPBES work programme. Diversitas, for the International Council for Science (ICSU), supported the establishment of an independent review process, both of the platform and the outputs.

LEGAL ISSUES RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PLATFORM: Legal issues relating to the establishment of the platform (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/8) were considered in a Friends of the Chair group that met throughout the week.

Final Outcome: The discussions and outcomes were reflected in the draft resolution establishing IPBES, which was adopted on Saturday evening (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/CRP.3).

WORK PROGRAMME OF THE PLATFORM: This issue was first addressed on Monday. Main issues discussed included, *inter alia*: avoiding duplication and overlapping with existing initiatives and MEAs, identifying activities for the work programme; and establishing a work programme for the intersessional period prior to the first plenary of IPBES.

Ghana, for Africa, discouraged duplicating the work of MEAs, calling for clarification on core and additional funding sources. The US suggested establishing terms of reference and a conceptual framework including a scoping of assessments, adding that clarifying the nature of on-going guidance for the work programme and IPBES' functions should be prioritized. India said that short-, medium- and long-term goals should be based on local resource capacities and emphasized, *inter alia*, using the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as a model for selecting authors and evaluation of the impact of assessments. Norway stated this meeting should: agree on guidance for an intersessional consultative process and, with the EU, supported identifying short-, medium- and long-term goals.

On activities for the work programme, Japan supported undertaking assessment activities as first priority with the aim to address needs of end-users. Thailand drew attention to CBD Decision X/4 on Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO) 3, suggesting IPBES could provide concrete contributions for GBO 4. China supported a work programme based on the Busan Outcome and carrying out an assessment of assessments to avoid duplication of work. Ethiopia said the work programme should contribute to achieving the CBD objectives and data collection should be done through a participatory and transparent process. Uruguay said the work programme should support the achievement of MEAs, including the Aichi Targets and the Biodiversity Strategic Plan 2011-2020. Peru supported focusing on regional and subregional assessments. Chile suggested communication be an ongoing activity and Pakistan, with Uganda, suggested adopting a communications strategy.

Bolivia supported the adoption of principles to guide the work programme, including on: avoiding perverse market-mechanisms of services provided by nature; recognizing indigenous and local communities' efforts in biodiversity conservation; and respecting national sovereignty.

On capacity building, Ethiopia stated it should be demand-driven and consider national needs. Argentina underscored the need to consider developing countries' needs and avoid prescribed models. Peru supported strengthening regional and subregional centers of excellence and scientific panels. Uganda highlighted the need for a bottom-up approach to ensure ownership by local communities. IUCN urged further refinement of communication, capacity building and thematic assessment. The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) noted the relevance of a UNCCD COP 10 decision calling for the establishment of an *ad hoc* working group to provide global expertise on desertification. Fiji highlighted outcomes from a workshop on connecting diverse knowledge systems held in Kuna Yala prior to the meeting, and supported a proposed work programme element on developing effective mechanisms for integration of indigenous knowledge.

Intersessional Work: On Friday afternoon, delegates considered draft text prepared by the UNEP Secretariat on a possible intersessional work programme, which highlighted work on a review/catalogue of assessments, a conceptual framework and capacity-building activities. On the assessment of assessments, Chile, with Bolivia, Ethiopia, EU, Peru and the US, emphasized the need for identification of knowledge gaps. Bolivia called for including traditional and local knowledge in the catalogue.

On capacity building during the intersessional period, Chile, with the US, suggested preparing a catalogue of existing activities and capacity-building needs. Japan preferred the work programme be discussed in the multidisciplinary expert panel (MEP) and suggested intersessional work on the catalogue under the coordination of the interim secretariat. The EU highlighted exploring potential partnerships and that the UNEP Secretariat should compile information for the first session of the IPBES. Fiji highlighted: communication, including an information portal and developing access to those without internet; and a need to integrate IPBES work into formal education and curricula in developing countries. Peru said working with the Secretariats of the Rio Conventions needed mention in the work programme and stressed forming partnerships. The US also prioritized assessing existing capacities and future needs, and underlined integration. South Africa suggested using the document on work programme scenarios (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/INF.3) to inform intersessional work.

On Saturday, delegates reopened discussions on intersessional work. The US said that interim arrangements should be in collaboration with interested governments and Bolivia called for emphasis on the need to build capacity in order to fill knowledge gaps. On capacity building, Mexico suggested adding "within and outside the regions" to enable South-South cooperation. Bolivia provided an additional phrase reading, "Additionally, principles relating to sovereignty of States over their biodiversity

and ecosystems, approaches of non-commoditization and indigenous peoples rights will be discussed for their potential inclusion in the platform.” Guatemala supported, and other delegates opposed, the inclusion of this text. The US stressed that this was not the appropriate place in the text to address this issue.

Final Outcome: The draft report of the first session of the plenary meeting (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/L.1) describes the work programme of the platform including discussions of the agenda items contained in document UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/2 and possible scenarios for the platform work programme (UNEP/IPBES.MI/INF.3). Two activities were recognized as needing urgent attention: an assessment of assessments and the development of a conceptual framework (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/2). The report also identified other important areas including: capacity building; the need to support relevant national activities; ensuring that the platform adds value to implementation of MEAs; ensuring effective integration of local and traditional knowledge; and development of a communication strategy for the platform. Annex II of the report outlines the intersessional work to be carried out in relation to the work programme of the platform.

FUNCTIONS AND STRUCTURES OF BODIES THAT MIGHT BE ESTABLISHED: This agenda item was first addressed in plenary on Monday and further discussed throughout the week, with a focus on specific elements such as membership, observers, plenary and administrative functions, with relevant issues discussed in informal groups. Discussions mainly focused on, *inter alia*: whether regional economic integration organizations (REIOs) could be IPBES members; the involvement of UN bodies, observers and MEAs; plenary functions; selection of officers; and participation of stakeholders.

Membership: This issue was first taken up in plenary on Monday and further discussed throughout the week both in plenary and in a Friends of the Chair group. Ghana, for the African Group, India, Brazil and others, said membership should be restricted to member states of the UN, as per the Busan Outcome. The Dominican Republic urged the inclusion of UN observers. The EU, with the US, noted the ambiguity regarding membership of REIOs. Switzerland, supported by Chile, called for text enabling participation of the EU, as a REIO. Mexico noted the participation of REIOs can follow the model provided by the CBD. The US said membership in the CBD was not appropriate for IPBES and that they would provide text co-drafted with the EU regarding their eligibility.

Participation of UN bodies and other inter- and non-governmental organizations: This issue was first taken up in plenary on Monday. Brazil, the EU, the US, IUCN, and ICSU supported stakeholders having observer status. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) suggested using the IPCC’s participation model. The EU urged enabling the proportionate participation of observers to avoid singular interest groups and the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity called for classifying observers to enable organized participation. Indonesia said NGO participation must be subject to government approval.

Functions of the plenary: This issue was first taken up on Tuesday and was discussed throughout the week. On the plenary taking into account, as appropriate, inputs and suggestions made by relevant stakeholders, such as, *inter alia*, indigenous peoples and local communities and the private sector, India, supported by Canada, suggested deletion of references to specific stakeholders. The US supported retaining references to specific actors, including indigenous peoples, highlighting that some of them are not stakeholders but rights-holders. Ethiopia, Bolivia, Venezuela, Norway, Mexico, Guatemala and others supported, and delegates eventually agreed, to retain reference to indigenous “peoples” and local communities, among other stakeholders.

On establishing a mechanism to ensure the active and efficient participation of civil society in the plenary, the EU opposed a new mechanism, saying that effective use of existing arrangements should be fostered. Switzerland, supported by Norway, the EU, Mexico and Colombia, suggested, and delegates eventually agreed, to delete reference to a mechanism and keep reference to a plenary function of ensuring active and efficient participation of civil society.

On the plenary approving a budget and overseeing the allocation of the trust fund or funds, Brazil said both options are acceptable as long as it is understood that funds would not be earmarked. The US and the EU suggested focusing on a fund, rather than multiple funds. Delegates eventually agreed to refer to a single fund.

Administrative functions: This issue was first addressed in plenary on Tuesday. India and the US suggested deleting reference to reviewing the platform’s rules and procedures, noting overlap with language already agreed on reviewing progress in the implementation of the plenary decisions. Ethiopia, Mexico and the Philippines opposed, and delegates eventually agreed to retain it.

Scientific and technical functions: On Tuesday, delegates debated language regarding a section on who to engage in the work programme. Pakistan, the US, Brazil, and Australia initially expressed opposition to the section, saying further discussion on IPBES’ entities involved should precede the decision on engagement. A number of countries opined that the functions would apply to any subsidiary body decided upon. Ultimately, plenary agreed to accept an amended text engaging the “scientific community and other knowledge holders.” Australia noted the platform had a responsibility to engage both science and policy communities and emphasized addressing engagement with policy makers elsewhere in the work of the platform. On technology transfer, some delegates felt this was beyond the scope of IPBES, or otherwise duplicative of other MEAs, stating its focus is on assessment and improving understanding, while others emphasized the importance of technology transfer in capacity building. After a number of proposals and edits to language, delegates agreed on IPBES’ function to “explore approaches to facilitating technology transfer and sharing in the context of assessment, knowledge generation and capacity building according to the work programme.”

Structure and composition of subsidiary bodies of the plenary: This issue was first taken up on Tuesday and addressed throughout the week. Delegates first addressed two options for the structure of subsidiary bodies: the first would consist of a single subsidiary body with an expanded bureau which would include a chair, four vice-chairs and additional members, respecting geographical, gender and disciplinary balance and other stakeholders; and a second option that would involve two subsidiary bodies: a small bureau composed of a chair and vice-chairs to oversee administrative functions, and a larger science panel that would carry out the scientific and technical functions.

Turkey, the EU, Bosnia and Herzegovina, for Eastern Europe, Norway, Cuba, Egypt, Switzerland, Norway and others supported the first option, citing that this would allow coherence in work and be less cumbersome. Japan, Brazil, the US, China, Thailand, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Mexico, New Zealand and others supported the second option consisting of two subsidiary bodies, suggesting this would facilitate efficiency in administration and foster the independence of the scientific functions. Brazil, with the US, said the two subsidiary bodies could meet regularly as is common with other MEAs where such meetings coincide with COP meetings. Ghana, for the African Group, proposed a third “hybrid” option, with emphasis on the science-policy interface. Australia suggested the African proposal could be a way forward and urged giving greater consideration to whether the bureau chair and vice-chairs would automatically be part of the panel. Saudi Arabia said IPBES could begin with one subsidiary body and be flexible to include others over the course of its tenure.

On Wednesday, Chair Watson tabled a third option for subsidiary body functions and structures, one with an administrative bureau composed of vice-chairs and one additional participant per UN region, and a multidisciplinary expert panel for scientific and technological functions composed of participants from biogeographical regions, with MEA scientific subsidiary bodies as observers. Delegates eventually agreed to work on the basis of the existing second option that proposed establishing two subsidiary bodies. On Thursday, Chair Watson introduced a proposal defining the two bodies to be established: a “bureau” and a “multidisciplinary scientific expert panel.” The bureau would comprise of the chair, four vice-chairs and one additional participant per UN region primarily selected to perform administrative functions, with a total of 10 participants. The participants of the multidisciplinary scientific expert panel would be selected to perform scientific and technical functions, either: from each UN region, giving a total of 25-35 selected participants; or from a specified set of alternative regions, giving a total of 25-30 selected participants.

On delineating regions, he listed possible alternatives, including IUCN’s system; CITES’ system; and Brazil’s proposal on biogeographic regions. He suggested a modified CITES structure of regions could be useful.

Delegates addressed the Chair’s proposal defining the two bodies. On the title of the “multidisciplinary scientific expert panel,” China, Argentina, Bolivia and others suggested, and Chile, the EU, Colombia and others opposed, deleting the word “scientific” to provide a broader approach. Delegates eventually

agreed to “multidisciplinary expert panel” (MEP) and to define the terms in the relevant section of definitions under the rules of procedure.

On bureau composition, the US requested clarification on text on the additional participants per UN region. Norway stressed that they were unwilling to support additional participants, citing cost concerns. Egypt and Argentina proposed adopting the CBD’s bureau composition, of two persons from each geographical region. Mexico, supported by Norway, proposed five permanent representatives of the bureau with an alternate for each.

Delegates further discussed: whether the same person should chair both the plenary and the scientific panel; the roles of the vice-chairs, and the composition of the officers for the subsidiary bodies. Chile and Norway highlighted that the chair of the scientific panel should have significant scientific expertise, and be capable of giving scientific and political strength to the expert panel. Canada countered that the chair of the bureau should be chair of the expert panel as that would give credibility to IPBES. Norway opined that the officers of the working groups should also be members of the MEP, noting this would be more cost-effective. China suggested returning to the bureau composition proposed at the first session of the plenary to determine the modalities and institutional arrangements for an IPBES, held in Nairobi in October 2011. Switzerland said having the same chair for the MEP and the bureau would ensure consistency within IPBES and, supported by Pakistan, suggested rotation of chairmanship among the vice-chairs.

On MEP regional representation, countries were divided over whether to base regional elections on the UN regions or on other criteria, including biogeographical, IUCN, or CITES regions. Brazil proposed experts based on biogeographical region. Peru, Ethiopia, and Argentina emphasized keeping the option open to specify regional groupings at a later date. Brazil, supported by the US, preferred biogeographical regions, saying the MEP required independence from national interests to maintain its role, whereas the interests of countries would be preserved in the plenary where formal decision-making will take place. Switzerland and Fiji supported a modification of the CITES structure with an amendment of the region of Asia and Oceania to read Asia and Pacific. Mexico favored a non-UN regionalization, including the modified CITES structure. Ghana, for the African Group, Norway, Ethiopia, Thailand, India and others, preferred using UN regions as an interim option in order to allow the operationalization of the platform until the IPBES plenary proposes alternative arrangements. The EU and Brazil supported the biogeographical approach, but said they could go along with the UN regions on an interim basis. The US and Japan also agreed to use UN regions on an interim basis. Africa, Switzerland, Brazil, Fiji and others preferred an equal number of representatives per region, while the US, Pakistan and others called for varied numbers of representatives. China, supported by Bolivia, requested more time and intersessional work to consider regionalization and number of members. China suggested all the options be reflected in the meeting’s report so they could be considered again at the first IPBES plenary session, after

intersessional work. On Friday, delegates considered a Chair's proposal on the interim and intersessional arrangements for the MEP, which received support from many countries. Japan, for Asia Pacific, Colombia, Norway, the EU, China, and others agreed to have an interim arrangement on regional representation. Argentina preferred to keep discussion on the regional options "very broad" and called for further guidelines in the rules of procedure.

On denomination and election for the experts and members of the bureau, Switzerland suggested including a placeholder referring to conflicts of interest of experts to consider the issue in the future as a means to ensure the full credibility of the IPBES.

Mexico, supported by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Peru and Turkey, proposed prioritizing engagement with MEAs specifically related to biodiversity, while Norway, the Dominican Republic and others, suggested keeping it open to include the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), UNCCD and others. Switzerland suggested engaging the IPCC. The Ramsar Secretariat suggested referring explicitly to the mentioned MEAs, including the six biodiversity-related conventions and the two Rio conventions: UNFCCC and UNCCD.

On the proposal for intersessional work, delegates agreed that the intersessional process would: be undertaken with broad participation from the scientific and policy community and knowledge holders; emphasize balanced representation of developed and developing countries and economies in transition; and elaborate on how the MEP would be permanently structured. They further agreed that the intersessional work should be brought back to the first session of IPBES for consideration.

Function of the secretariat and institutional arrangements: This issue was first taken up in plenary on Tuesday and continued throughout the week. Countries agreed the secretariat would manage the trust "fund" rather than "funds." On the secretariat's institutional arrangements, delegates emphasized their preference for a single central secretariat for administrative functions, citing cost savings, bureaucratic simplicity, and ability for administrative support to be readily available, as practical reasons for this option. However, Japan, Indonesia, Brazil, Canada, the US, Bolivia, Mexico, China and Switzerland also underlined the need for regional structures to support the secretariat and attract collaboration from other entities. Brazil requested the concept for regional hubs to address substantive issues, such as capacity building and assessments, be reflected in the proceedings. Switzerland suggested that the secretariat have the responsibility for liaising and/or coordinating with networked hubs. Delegates agreed to structure the secretariat as a single central entity, and accepted that the secretariat would "explore networking with regional and thematic technical structures."

Financial and other contributions: Delegates agreed to text on encouraging in-kind contributions from governments, the scientific community, other knowledge-holders and stakeholders, and accepted Canada's proposal for additional language stating the contributions would come without conditionalities.

Final Outcome: The draft report of the first session of the plenary meeting (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/L.1) describes the functions and structures of bodies that might be established under the platform (UNEP/IPBES/MI/3/3). The results of the deliberations are reflected in Appendix I of Annex I to the report. On membership, issues of REIO membership/participation remain under discussion with a view to resolve this as soon as possible. REIOs are allowed to participate as observers *ad interim* based on UNEP rules of procedure. On participation of UN bodies and other inter- and non-governmental organizations, it was agreed that observers would be admitted to the first session of IPBES, according to UNEP rules of procedure. On functions of the plenary regarding budget, delegates agreed that plenary will oversee the allocation of a trust fund, as opposed to "funds." On scientific and technical functions, delegates agreed on IPBES' function to explore approaches for technology transfer and sharing in the context of assessment, knowledge generation, and capacity building. On structure and composition of subsidiary bodies of the plenary, delegates agreed on establishing two subsidiary bodies consisting of a small administrative bureau and a larger multidisciplinary expert panel.

RULES AND PROCEDURES: This issue was first addressed in plenary on Tuesday and considered throughout the week. On Friday, a Friends of the Chair group of lawyers met in parallel with the plenary to sort out key legal issues.

Main discussions included: consideration of rules of procedure for the plenary, including key definitions and the required credentials for voting.

On Tuesday, Chair Watson briefly opened the issue to introduce the Chair's draft text on the rules of procedure for the plenary of the platform (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/CRP.2), which was compiled at the request of the plenary. Chile supported prioritizing the rules necessary for the establishment of IPBES and completing them during the intersessional process. Bolivia, Argentina and Ethiopia opposed, saying rules must be defined before the platform is established. The US, supported by Norway, Canada, Australia, Switzerland, Ghana, the EU and others, mentioned a set of rules of procedure for initiating discussions, including membership, quorum, credentials and representation. Norway called for an expert group to work on these priorities.

On the definition of the platform's members, Chair Watson noted that many countries had expressed a preference for the option that defines the platform's members as "UN member states expressing their intent to be members of the platform" rather than "UN member states, its specialized agencies or the International Atomic Energy Agency that have notified the platform's secretariat of their intent to participate in the platform, or REIOs." The US suggested replacing UN "member states" with "participants." Eventually, delegates agreed to option two with the EU asking to add and bracket mention of "REIOs," pending completion of a definition of that term.

On admission of observers, delegates debated whether to have strict rules to block "inappropriate" observers, or an open system allowing all accredited observers, as with the first and present sessions of the plenary. Delegates also discussed the inclusion of REIOs as observers. Chair Watson introduced a

proposal by Australia, setting out that the UNEP Governing Council (GC) rules of procedure, which have guided previous meetings on an IPBES, be used provisionally for the first plenary of IPBES but that rules would be developed in that plenary for future meetings. Argentina, supported by China, proposed that admission of observers be governed provisionally by the IPCC rules of procedure. Norway, Canada, Japan, Mexico and South Africa supported the Australian proposal, with Canada noting the IPCC's rules could be considered for the permanent negotiations. Delegates eventually agreed to Australia's proposal as an interim measure, and thus subsequent sections specifying rules on observers' notification and attendance were removed.

On credentials, Mexico, supported by Bolivia, Pakistan, Guatemala, Bahrain, Indonesia, India and Nepal, preferred that credentials be issued by a "Head of State or Government or minister of foreign affairs." Mexico, supported by Ethiopia and Peru, suggested that "as appropriate, a competent government authority," can enable credentialing. Ghana, with South Africa, emphasized ensuring empowered credentials for future IPBES decision-making. Argentina proposed compromise text "on behalf of a Head of State/Government," which was supported by the UN Legal Advisor and Chile. Delegates addressed two options on examination of credentials: a first option stating the bureau shall examine the credentials and submit a report to the plenary; and a second option stating that the plenary will establish a credentials committee and that final decisions regarding credentials rest with the plenary. Most delegations expressed preference for the first option.

On observers, on text that includes indigenous peoples and local communities, the US, opposed by Bolivia, suggested that this refer to "organizations of indigenous peoples and local communities."

On Saturday, delegates reopened discussions on the institutional arrangements. On the involvement of indigenous peoples, Bolivia, with Guatemala, noted that not all indigenous peoples are represented by "organizations." Delegates agreed the keep this in brackets. China, with the US, suggested that observers' participation in the platform be "subject to the rules of procedure," and this was agreed.

On definitions, Mexico, for GRULAC, with Bolivia, suggested including definitions on ecosystem services and ecosystem functions. Ghana, for the African Group, requested using an elaborated definition, based on the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, adding: "the benefits people obtain from provisioning services such as food, water, timber, and fiber; regulating services, such as regulation of climate, floods, disease, wastes, and water quality; cultural services such as recreation, aesthetic enjoyment and spiritual fulfillment; and supporting services such as soil formation, photosynthesis, and nutrient cycling." Fiji, supported by India and Australia, expressed concern that the definition of "ecosystem services" was anthropocentric. Australia suggested deleting the word "people." Bolivia expressed the need to consider inclusion of both ecosystem services and functions together. The US and China preferred finding a new location for this language in the document. Delegates eventually agreed on the definition

of ecosystem services, but the language remained bracketed pending consultations to find a new location for the definition in the text.

Delegates agreed on criteria and expertise required for the chair and the vice-chairs, as well as addressed the process for written nominations on behalf of regions. Mexico questioned whether nominations should be on behalf of regions, as the region may not be able to agree on a candidate. Australia suggested replacing "on behalf of regions" by "in accordance with Rule 16" on officers of the bureau. Mexico suggested this be connected to an amendment in Rule 16, by adding that "in the event that a region cannot agree on their nomination the plenary will decide." US supported also considering nominations from the floor.

On Saturday afternoon, delegates reopened discussions on the rules of procedure. The matter of decision making under the rules of procedure received considerable attention, with delegates debating whether: there is or should be a difference between substantive and procedural decisions, and what and how to differentiate between the two; consensus should be applied to both types of decisions; voting should be undertaken in cases of "last resort" for substantive decisions; and whether voting for options should take a two-thirds or simple majority. Four options were discussed, but none were agreed. Delegates expressed concern with the difficulty and time issue with differentiating between the two types of decisions, and one suggested the plenary chair could play a role in this. Several delegates underlined that plenary plays a political role in decision-making, whereas decisions of the MEP, being of a scientific nature and should have different decision-making rules. Most delegates supported decision by consensus for substantive issues, as decided in the Busan Outcome, with a few calling for a two-thirds majority vote. On procedural issues, delegates were split between using a vote with a two-thirds majority or simple majority. Switzerland and the US requested budgetary issues be considered under substantive issues, and several delegates requested definitions for the two types of decisions. A Friends of the Chair group was convened on the issue, which produced text that was submitted to plenary. Delegates agreed to retain the text in brackets for consideration at the first session of IPBES.

On Saturday evening, text on decision-making and modification of the rules of procedures were left bracketed due to disagreement on whether to use "shall", "may", "will" or "should" in statements. Bolivia added that, "when consensus is not reached the main reasons for the objections shall be recorded in the report of the session." Egypt opposed the brackets, noting that the first plenary will be using this rule when deciding how to link IPBES with the UN. Delegates adopted the rules of procedure with these brackets.

Delegates supported the US proposal to delete rules on plenary sessions since the participation of observers has not yet been resolved. They approved rules on official languages for plenary, interpretation and official documentation but removed reference to submission of major documents in official languages. Switzerland, Brazil and Bolivia opposed deletion of the text on official translation of major documents. On

requirement of consensus to modify the rules of procedure, Mexico suggested that it be discussed by the Friends of the Chair, which will consider consensus and two-thirds majority rule on decision-making.

On Saturday evening, the plenary reviewed the text again and removed many of the remaining brackets. The US said it was unable to accept the use of the word “shall” anywhere in the text, and requested that all references be changed to “will.” Argentina suggested language that could potentially bypass this issue, but it was agreed that this would be considered at the first plenary of IPBES.

China expressed concern that not all regions may be able to produce 10 nominees, and that no process for selection of these had been established.

On nominations of members of the MEP, Bolivia requested the word “interim” be applied to the MEP. The US opposed and delegates agreed that it was the members who were interim, not the MEP itself.

On the guidelines for the nominees, China said that nominees need to have worked in, but not necessarily led, international scientific and policy processes.

Final Outcome: The draft report of the first session of the plenary meeting (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/L.1) describes the deliberations on rules of procedure for the meeting of the plenary of the platform. The results of the discussions on the rules of procedure are reflected in Appendix II of Annex I to the draft resolution. Several issues remain outstanding, to be addressed at the first session of IPBES, including rules on decision making.

PHYSICAL LOCATION OF THE PLATFORM'S

SECRETARIAT: On Monday, Chair Watson explained that due to the impasse in finding consensus on the location of the secretariat, following bids from the Republic of Korea, Kenya, Germany, India and France, a voting process was proposed. On Wednesday, Chair Watson presented the draft text on the rules of procedure for the election of the host for the IPBES secretariat (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/CRP.1), and invited presentations from the five countries bidding to provide the physical location of the IPBES secretariat.

Yeon-chul Yoo, Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea, presented their bid to host the secretariat in Seoul, saying US\$2 million would be provided annually for the secretariat's operations permanently and US\$1 million for capacity building for the next seven years. He said that hosting an international environmental organization in the Asia Pacific region would open up a new chapter for global environmental governance, and provide balance between developed and developing countries.

Ali Mohamed, Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources, Kenya, said that Kenya has several biodiversity hotspots, and highlighted national and international biodiversity-related institutions hosted in Nairobi. He said Kenya has pledged US\$1 million annually to support the secretariat, and noted that hosting IPBES would be a fitting tribute to the memory of the late Nobel Prize Winner Wangari Maathai.

Didier Hoffschir, Ministry of Higher Education and Research, France, underscored France's commitment to biodiversity protection, involvement in MEAs, and in IPBES in particular.

She highlighted that Paris is an important international hub, and that France would support IPBES' installation with a grant of US\$500,000 over the first three years, and US\$300,000 towards funding of scientific activities.

Elsa Nickel, Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Protection and Nuclear Safety, Germany, highlighted the advantages of hosting IPBES in Bonn, including the potential to achieve synergies with the 18 other UN organizations located in the city. He said Germany would provide: US\$1.3 million annually to the IPBES' trust fund; US\$850,000 for conferences, travel costs and studies; and US\$6.5 million annually for capacity-building activities.

Hem Pande, Ministry of Environment and Forests, India, highlighted India's biodiversity and underscored key characteristics that New Delhi could offer for the accomplishment of IPBES' functions, including experience in successfully hosting international events, and a central networking hub.

On Thursday, in preparation for voting, Chair Watson shared the report of the Bureau on credentials noting that out of the 103 states present, 92 states had valid credentials, five had credentials that were not in order, while six had not submitted credentials and were thus ineligible to vote. In the first round of voting, there were 88 valid votes: 32 for Republic of Korea; 24 for Germany; 20 for Kenya; seven for France; and five for India. There was no clear majority and India was removed from the ballot as the country receiving the fewest votes. In the second round of voting, there were 89 valid votes: 36 for Republic of Korea; 28 for Germany; 19 for Kenya; and six for France. There was still no majority, and France was removed from the ballot. In the third round, there were 90 valid votes: 38 for Republic of Korea; 34 Germany; and 18 for Kenya. There was no majority, and Kenya was removed from the ballot. In the final vote, Germany won with 47 votes, while Republic of Korea had 43. The plenary gave a round of applause to all five countries involved in the competition.

Final Outcome: The draft report of the first session of the plenary meeting (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/L.1) describes deliberations on the physical location of the platform including the results of the vote held on 19 April 2012 that decided that the seat of the secretariat of the platform would be located in Bonn, Germany.

HOST INSTITUTION(S): On Wednesday, Chair Watson called for discussions on the joint proposal submitted by UNEP, UNESCO, FAO and UNDP (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/6) to host the secretariat. Dan Leskien, FAO, highlighted the comparative advantages of the four UN organizations, their potential role in overseeing the administrative functions of the secretariat, and procedures for the appointment of staff.

Mexico commended the collaboration, saying this would take advantage of the strengths of the institutions in biodiversity sciences, training and capacity building. Colombia, Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya supported UNEP taking a lead role, as the functions of IPBES are aligned to its mandates. Switzerland supported joint management of the secretariat, adding that

UNEP's administrative procedure could apply. He also called for more information on accountability, governance, finance and budgeting.

Chile and Thailand mentioned the need for more information on staffing. Norway called for elaboration on the joint proposal before the next plenary meeting. China said the role of overseeing the work of the secretariat should be left to the plenary. The US proposed that intersessional work be carried out to clarify details of the institutional arrangements. She pointed out that the proposed secretariat was too large, equivalent to that of the IPCC 20 years after its operationalization, and highlighted the need for independence of the secretariat.

Brazil requested clarification regarding the management of a proposed trust fund, and on the interaction of UN bodies with the host country. Argentina asked for details on the day-to-day activities of the agencies, their expected expenditure, overheads and budget for the first year.

Nepal called for agency presentations to answer questions on the management of the work programme. Guatemala, with Fiji, asked for clarification on how the arrangement will affect national level work. The EU called for basic operational principles to be adopted in Panama, and called attention to coherence on staff rules related to administrative and financial arrangements, and asked for clarification on monitoring. Ghana, for the African Group, said identifying governance leadership among the four agencies is important for enhancing productive outcomes. Ecuador supported having a single agency as host, as opposed to four.

Chair Watson emphasized the need to separate the joint administrative work of agencies from the additional roles they can play in substantive issues in an IPBES, and suggested the plenary aim to draft an outline for intersessional work. Ibrahim Thiaw, for UNEP, UNESCO, FAO and UNDP, indicated the agencies involved would address and clarify issues raised for the first plenary of IPBES.

The US, on interim arrangements, suggested that IPBES "request the UNEP secretariat to facilitate the platform until an IPBES secretariat is established, following further work with a view to establishing the IPBES secretariat in one or more of the following UN bodies: UNEP; UNESCO; FAO; and UNDP." Ethiopia, Egypt and the EU proposed to end the sentence after "established." Bolivia preferred "in order to" instead of "with a view to."

Final Outcome: The draft report of the first session of the plenary meeting (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/L.1) describes the host institution or institutions, including a presentation made by a FAO representative on behalf of the UN organizations to explain their joint proposal (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/6).

With respect to the options contained in the report of the first session (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/8), delegates largely supported that the secretariat would operate from a single location, while exploring options of regional hubs. Some delegates expressed preference for a single UN agency taking lead in hosting the secretariat. Delegates asked the four UN organizations to further elaborate their proposal while considering the following:

- potential implications of the discussions on environmental governance at Rio+20;
- the relationship between the secretariat and the host country;
- the relationship between the proposed management group of the secretariat and the subsidiary bodies and the bureau of the platform;
- estimated costs and how the overhead costs can be minimized;
- the potential role of the regional hubs and their relationship to the secretariat;
- further clarification concerning the commitment of host institutions; and
- clarification concerning which organization's rules would be used for staffing and financing.

BUDGET: There was no discussion under this agenda item, although a note was circulated for discussion by the secretariat on "Indicative budget requirements" (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/7).

ADOPTION OF THE RESOLUTION

On Saturday, delegates discussed the draft text on a resolution on IPBES (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/CRP.3). The Philippines suggested a preambular text giving a background to the process and the elements agreed upon leading to the resolution.

On the establishment of IPBES, many countries expressed willingness to establish the platform in Panama. Bolivia and Venezuela said IPBES should be established by a higher-level body, such as the UN General Assembly. New Zealand said the mandate to establish IPBES is in the hands of the country representatives in the room.

Ghana, for the African Group, supported by Bolivia, Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua, but opposed by Colombia, the US, Brazil and Norway, said that the text on administration of the platform should specify that UNEP would take a leading role and added to the text "also decide to transform this body to a United Nations independent entity through the UNEP Governing Council and request the UNEP Governing Council to submit the decision to the 67th session of the UN General Assembly." Indonesia supported this latter inclusion. Ethiopia said that the establishment of IPBES should be based on a transformation process. Canada highlighted the lack of time for discussing a possible transformation of the IPBES into a UN body and suggested considering this issue at a later date. Thailand said it was premature to decide on the transformation into a UN entity and suggested that if the administration remains with the four UN agencies, it would eventually have to go through the governing councils of the four organizations, rather than just UNEP. Kenya, for the African Group, said the establishment of the IPBES was contingent on linking it to a process of transformation into a UN body. The Philippines said the possible transformation of IPBES into a UN body is a two-way process and will require a decision by the UNGA. The Chair introduced a suggestion to "also decide to explore the various options that may exist for future links to UN related entities," while Brazil suggested "also decides to consider at its first plenary meeting whether to transform this body into an independent UN entity." The EU and New Zealand supported the Chair's proposal, with

New Zealand amending it by adding that “should there be clear benefits to IPBES in so doing.” Many delegations highlighted the possibility of following the “IPCC model.”

On the administration of the platform, South Africa, for the African Group, with Guatemala, supported having UNEP take the lead during the interim period while working in collaboration with other UN bodies, as mentioned in the document on possible way forward for establishment of the platform (UNEP/IPBES. MI/2/INF/5). The Chair remarked that INF/5 was intended to guide intersessional work but that the resolution should consider long-term arrangements.

On the nature of IPBES’ decisions, the US proposed disclaimer text reading “This is a non legally-binding resolution and does not create an international organization under international law.” Several delegates requested elaboration of this disclaimer. The Philippines said the US should remove the reference to the resolution being non legally-binding since this is already clear. Bolivia said that legal issues needed tackling to ensure the legitimacy of IPBES, adding that the disclaimer undermined credibility of the platform. The EU suggested stating that “this instrument is voluntary and not legally-binding,” based on language from the UN Forum on Forests. Venezuela requested clarification on the US proposal, saying that IPBES will not be established as an organization or new treaty implying obligations for the states, but rather as a scientific forum that will contribute to political decision-making. Mexico, supported by Brazil, suggested text stating that: “the platform’s decisions are not legally-binding in nature.” The Chair proposed, and the EU, Japan, Mexico and Australia agreed, to language indicating that IPBES will be an independent body affiliated/ associated with the UN.

Bolivia proposed IPBES “regulatory principles,” stating: “all action on biological diversity and ecosystems are subject to national jurisdiction and sovereignty; IPBES shall not threaten to modify negatively the stability, integrity, interrelation and continuity of ecosystem functions; IPBES shall promote the respect and implementation of all human rights, including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People; and IPBES shall guarantee diverse approaches of non-commodification of ecosystem services and/or function.” Egypt supported the value of Bolivian proposal and suggested these be considered as non-regulatory principles. South Africa and Ethiopia suggested deferring consideration of this issue for the first plenary of IPBES. Ethiopia suggested IPBES should function under established national and international regulations. Brazil suggested including reference to the Rio Declaration principles that address some of Bolivia’s concerns, such as the sovereign right of countries over natural resources. Bolivia accepted to work on the Rio Principles, and include her proposal in the report of the meeting, to be considered in the first plenary of IPBES. The Chair requested Brazil to suggest text on inclusion of the Rio Principles. On Saturday, the Chair presented preambular text for the draft resolution on the background to IPBES. Brazil proposed adding text, “Recalling Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, the

Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (or the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation).”

On administrative bodies, the US, opposed by Colombia, suggested deleting a paragraph on the role of the administrative bodies in intersessional work, saying that it was premature to discuss this.

Regarding rules of procedure, delegates eventually agreed that the rules of procedure “are to be used by the platform and may be amended by plenary.” The US requested replacing “amended” with “modified.”

The US suggested that platform decisions should be of a non-legally binding nature, while Switzerland questioned the US proposal and whether this would limit IPBES’ ability to request actions from other intergovernmental organizations. Canada noted that IPBES can only invite, and not direct, the organizations to support the work of IPBES.

The Chair suggested text reading “also decide that the first plenary of IPBES will explore various options that may exist for future links to UN related entities.” Ghana, for the African Group said that the Chair’s text did not accurately reflect its position on this issue, adding that they would agree to a compromise text based on IPBES’ eventual transformation into an independent UN body, within a specific time frame. UNEP’s Legal Council said a UN entity could not be independent. Ghana, for the African Group, asked for time to reconsider within the group.

On Saturday evening, Chair Watson resumed discussion and asked for consensus on the entity of the IPBES, adding he would end the meeting if agreement on this was not forthcoming, cautioning that this could jeopardize the possibility of establishing an IPBES at this meeting or in the future. Ghana, for the African Group, proposed adding compromise text, “Also decides that the first plenary will invite one or more of the relevant UN bodies to facilitate the transformation of this body into a UN entity.” The US said they would not be able to support this, noting that it was not in the right direction, adding that their commitment to the IPBES process should not be doubted on this basis.

Bolivia asked the US to recognize discussions during the week where the independence of the MEP and the platform as a whole was emphasized. Argentina, with Australia, the Philippines and Brazil, proposed to adopt an incremental approach to allow the establishment of an IPBES. The Philippines noted that the present disagreements were based on concepts whose definitions have not as yet been clarified, reporting that establishment of a UN body is the prerogative of the UNGA.

Ghana, for the African Group, asked the US to withdraw the suggestion that the African text was headed in the wrong direction and also said that their commitment to IPBES should not be questioned. The US apologized for the misunderstanding, saying their emphasis was on their commitment to the platform.

Mexico proposed text, asking delegates to agree, for the sake of the platform: “Also decides that the first plenary of IPBES will decide on the link with the UN system.” Fiji, Australia, the EU, Japan, the US, the African Group and Bolivia agreed on this text, and delegates applauded.

Bolivia suggested that the rules of procedure “are to be used by the platform and may be amended by plenary.” The US requested “modified” instead of “amended.”

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

On Saturday evening, Chair Watson presented the draft report of the second session of the plenary meeting (UNEP/IPBES. MI/2/L.1). Bolivia, Egypt and Venezuela indicated they had no mandate to be listed as signatories to this resolution on the establishment of the IPBES at this time. Delegates adopted the report of the meeting with minor amendments and established the IPBES.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

Ibrahim Thiaw, UNEP, congratulated delegates on the work to establish the platform, which began in 2005 in Paris. He also thanked: donors who supported the five meetings culminating to the establishment of the IPBES; UNEP staff who have worked behind the scenes; international organizations; and MEAs. He reiterated UNEP’s support for IPBES. Chair Watson thanked delegates for their flexibility saying the outcome was a success for biodiversity and closed the meeting at 8:40 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE MEETING

Cheers and whistles and a bow by Chair Robert Watson marked the end of the second plenary on an Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and the beginning of a new chapter in biodiversity policy and science history. Delegates celebrated the culmination of a seven-year process and the establishment of IPBES—a global science-policy interface—which is expected to enhance global conservation policy. Armed with a clear intersessional roadmap aimed at making the established IPBES’ first session productive, delegates’ are optimistic.

But the mammoth task ahead to bridge the science and policy worlds raises some practical questions. For one, the Rio+20 meeting in June 2012, marks 20 years since the Convention on Biological Diversity was opened for signature and is a reminder that efforts to establish an IPBES have occurred within a much larger biodiversity policy landscape. Given this spectrum, a basic question that some are still asking is what is IPBES’ niche within this existing landscape? Multiple organizations have tried to work in the challenging space between science and policy. But how will IPBES uniquely and sufficiently harmonize, utilize and prioritize the plethora of biodiversity work already underway and yet to come, and justify itself to the remaining skeptics?

This brief analysis will contextualize the role of IPBES within the larger regime, examine issues encountered during the meeting in attempting to establish IPBES, and reflect on how IPBES is navigating the gap between biodiversity science and policy.

IPBES’ RAISON D’ÊTRE

IPBES has been established among a significant number of existing related efforts. Several decades of global conservation negotiations under a range of different UN multilateral environmental frameworks have already taken place. A

range of notable targets, including the Aichi Targets for reducing global biodiversity loss, notable analyses such as the Global Biodiversity Outlook and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the Millennium Development Goals, and reports by conservation groups, networks and organizations have already been produced. So why IPBES?

IPBES seeks to be an all-encompassing “clearinghouse” on biodiversity and ecosystem services information. To skeptics, this is a vague term with unclear drivers. But patterns that emerged during the negotiations in Panama gave telling signs that IPBES’ broad mandate may enable it to fill obvious gaps in the policy landscape.

Over the course of the week, numerous governments supported a “bottom-up approach” to the work programme, inferring a major gap in the current policy landscape is the inability to understand and address biodiversity at the national and local levels. In the fine tunings of the work programme, delegates stressed the inclusion of undertaking subregional and local assessments to support national capacity building and fill knowledge gaps, and emphasized including traditional knowledge, rights holders and civil society in the IPBES advisory process. Delegates’ initial aim for IPBES, as demonstrated in Panama, is to catalyze a robust exchange process whereby knowledge from the bottom can be assessed, communicated and used by a centralized global body.

From a knowledge standpoint, IPBES is also seen to fill ostensible structural gaps in the CBD and other MEA processes. At first, the parallel existence of the CBD’s Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) seems redundant. But participants noted that SBSTTA’s recent self-assessment acknowledged its own shortcomings in delivering and acting on scientific advice. A recent proceeding (SBSTTA 15 Recommendation XV/8) recommended that IPBES could enhance the effectiveness of SBSTTA’s work on biodiversity, and during the first plenary on IPBES in Nairobi, the CBD Secretariat noted the important role IPBES can play in its strategic implementation. Other comments in Panama suggested that IPBES’ broad platform would also allow specialized MEAs to “finally address cross-cutting issues in a productive way.”

The strongest undercurrent in the Panama meetings, however, was ensuring the credibility of IPBES. Although the process at times felt like a roller coaster, the credibility imperative pushed delegates to “get IPBES right.” Concern that IPBES should be objective, independent, inclusive and command international recognition was a constant, albeit necessary, preoccupation of delegates. It was a common thread throughout discussions on the makeup of the subsidiary bodies, over the links of the IPBES with the UN system, and with elements of the rules of procedure such as on voting and status of observers, and in negotiations over text on the credentials of members. Given the strong biodiversity policy landscape that currently exists, this disquiet about credibility is both telling and important. Both scientists and politicians want IPBES to make biodiversity science relevant for robust policy-making.

While it is clear that IPBES has a niche in the biodiversity policy landscape, it remains to be seen how it will fulfill expectations.

AN AGREEMENT OF “MINIMUMS”: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF IPBES

The thrust of this meeting eventually came down to prioritizing the “bare minimum” agreement needed to establish and operationalize the IPBES. The minimum requirements, as stated by several negotiators, involved elements of the rules of procedure and functions, and the adoption of a resolution, but largely hinged on agreement to create a functioning subsidiary body. The remaining outstanding issues were dealt with via a convenient but thorny interim package calling for an intersessional meeting, which will reopen complicated debates that had the luxury to be addressed “provisionally” in Panama.

In terms of deliverables, the plenary decided the “bare minimum” it needed for operationalization was to establish the general structure of two subsidiary bodies, which now includes a Bureau and a Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP). Agreement could not be reached, however, on the details related to the composition of these bodies. Thus, an “interim” MEP based on representation from the UN regions will provide scientific and technical advice and will begin its work at the first plenary where delegates will be able to review IPBES’ first product: a catalogue of assessments, including a general review of, *inter alia*, capacity building and scope, prepared by the interim secretariat, UNEP. The long-term credentialing of the bodies will be determined when delegates decide how to best define “regional representation,” be it ecologically, geographically, or based on the UN or other system. The impact of the subsidiary body will also be determined by how IPBES’ first plenary decides how the administrative Bureau and the MEP will be linked.

But it was the navigation of the legal issues concerning linkages between IPBES and the UN system that finally enabled IPBES’ establishment to move forward. Delegates had been divided on the legal interpretation and policy implication of these linkages since it was first mentioned in the Busan Outcome, the 2010 document that requested the UN General Assembly (UNGA) to consider establishment of an IPBES. An “uninterpretable” recommendation from the 65th session of the UNGA did not help matters, and led to a nearly mortal tailspin for IPBES in Panama. Debates cycled through, and countries were split on, the implications of different possible UN affiliations for the platform, particularly in terms of IPBES’ credibility and profile. Delegates also maintained different understandings of the relationship between the UN and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which many consider to be a relevant model for an independent, scientific, intergovernmental body. In the end, delegates owe progress to Mexico who diplomatically circumvented the impasse by proposing another interim task—namely, that the first session of the IPBES “will decide on the link with the UN system.” This compromise allowed the plenary to adopt its final resolution and declare IPBES established. But this type of holdup had many scientists, who think time is better spent on realizing

progress on the work programme and rules of procedure related to collaborative activities, “frustrated.” By the end of the week, what several participants were calling for were definitions for different UN affiliations and a comparative analysis of their implications in order to find a common understanding. In all practicality, IPBES, as the Chair mentioned, cannot spend time on what is ultimately “irrelevant” to its operationalization.

Many hope that by the first session of IPBES the long-standing UN-affiliation issue can finally be put to bed. It is also hoped that the political issues, particularly on the rules for decision-making and on regional representation, will not hamstring the delivery of the IPBES itself. The pace of intersessional progress will largely determine if the first session of the IPBES is able to fully activate the platform.

DIFFICULTY OF THE SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACE

The difficulty faced in adopting the final resolution in Panama may be indicative of the difficulty faced in implementing the interface itself. The pendulum-like atmosphere of the Panama negotiations portrayed both the challenges IPBES faces in achieving balance between science and policy, and the persistence of countries to follow the sovereignty mantra of “policy relevance, but not prescription.” Throughout the week, when the focus swung too far towards policy or science, delegates were careful to point it out in their interventions. When the sense of policy was lost in conversations on composition of the subsidiary body, negotiators responded, resulting in, for example, a “multidisciplinary” rather than “scientific” expert panel. Conversely, where there was a lack of scientific knowledge, delegates agreed certain discussions should be left to the MEP, or in other cases, draw upon a range of knowledge holders. Each intervention underscored the challenge of moving forward cohesively, and responsively, as an interface between science and policy.

One such challenge is defining the role of the other MEAs and stakeholders within the IPBES mechanism. The Panama resolution welcomes the chairs of the scientific subsidiary bodies of relevant MEAs and the IPCC as observers to the IPBES, and invites input from the broader scientific community and other knowledge holders, including indigenous communities. This is a welcome arrangement, but MEAs are already saying they want and can do more, especially related to agenda setting. On the other hand, while it is important that IPBES harness existing experience on regional policies, frameworks and capacity building, and in communicating the complicated “science stuff,” a clear process for doing this is needed. One insider was concerned about the “traffic” created when trying to collaborate with so many groups.

In the months following the Panama meeting, according to representatives, IPBES will already be “catalyzing” joint meetings among the other MEAs and emerging as agenda items in their formal COPs. But there is some concern that joint efforts at priority-setting may be a considerably long bureaucratic process, affecting IPBES’ utility, in an optimistic view, for at least its first years. A pessimistic view might say that IPBES

could become SBSTTA's costly twin. As some delegates inferred during the legal issues discussions, time may be better spent on these aspects of IPBES' operation.

THE WAY FORWARD

The establishment of IPBES signals a new chapter in the history of biodiversity policy. Although many issues remain to be addressed at future meetings, there was a collective sigh of relief among delegates in Panama that the issues will now be negotiated under an established IPBES. The chicken or the egg dilemma has been solved: form does indeed follow function, at least in the case of IPBES. It is an exciting and notable global achievement during this UN Decade on Biodiversity, although time will tell if the "minimum" level of agreement achieved here can provide an adequate foundation for future success.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Second round of UNCSD Informal-Informal negotiations on the zero draft of the Outcome Document: This is the second of two "informal informal" consultations to negotiate the draft outcome document for Rio+20. **dates:** 23 April - 4 May 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

Cultural and Biological Informal Diversity Liaison Group Meeting: The objective of the first meeting of the Diversity Liaison Group is to assess advances made since the launch of the UNESCO/CBD joint programme of work on biological and cultural diversity in October 2010, and to provide advice on possible steps forward, including on priority focus areas for the joint programme and possible deliverables for CBD COP 11, and the conceptual framework for and structure and content of the global knowledge platform on the links between biological and cultural diversity to be launched at CBD COP 11. **dates:** 28-29 April 2012 **location:** UNESCO Offices, New York **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2012/ntf-2012-050-tk-en.pdf>

CBD SBSTTA 16: The 16th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is organized by the CBD Secretariat. **dates:** 30 April - 5 May 2012 **location:** Montreal, Quebec, Canada **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <http://www.cbd.int/sbstta16/>

Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to Study Issues Relating to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity Beyond Areas of National Jurisdiction: The fifth meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction will take place in accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/231 of 24 December 2011, paragraph 168. **dates:** 7-11 May 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of

the Sea **phone:** +1-212-963-3962 **fax:** +1-212-963-5847 **email:** doalos@un.org **www:** <http://www.un.org/depts/los/biodiversityworkinggroup/biodiversityworkinggroup.htm>

Fourth Meeting of the CBD Working Group on Review of Implementation: The fourth meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation (WGRI 4) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is organized by the CBD Secretariat. **dates:** 7-11 May 2012 **location:** Montreal, Quebec, Canada **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <http://www.cbd.int/wgri4/>

11th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues: The 11th session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) will consider the theme "The Doctrine of Discovery: its enduring impact on indigenous peoples and the right to redress for past conquests (Articles 28 and 37 of UNPFII)". **dates:** 7-18 May 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNPFII Secretariat **email:** indigenous_un@un.org **www:** <http://social.un.org/index/IndigenousPeoples/UNPFIISessions/Eleventh.aspx>

International Conference on Agriculture and Environment: This conference will consider the theme "Agricultural Production and Economic Growth in Harmony with the Environment: A Shared Vision in the Context of Climate Change." The conference is intended to help prepare the eight member states of the Central American Integration System for negotiations on issues related to food, biomass and other agricultural production in upcoming global talks on biodiversity, biosafety and climate change, as well as the June 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development. **dates:** 9-12 May 2012 **location:** Tegucigalpa, Honduras **contact:** Raúl Artiga **phone:** +503-2248-8853 **fax:** +503-2248-8894 **email:** rantiga@sica.int **www:** <http://www.sica.int/cambioclimatico> or <http://www.scribd.com/doc/82798541/Proposal-Agriculture-and-Environment-Conference-Zamorano-May-2012-WB>

Workshop on Financing Mechanisms for Biodiversity: Examining Opportunities and Challenges: This workshop, convened by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the European Commission (EC), in association with the co-chairs from India and Sweden of the Quito informal Dialogue Seminar on Scaling up Finance for Biodiversity, aims to build on the Quito discussions and related discussions in WGRI-4 to examine in further depth issues associated with biodiversity finance mechanisms. **date:** 12 May 2012 **location:** Montreal, Quebec, Canada **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2012/ntf-2012-054-financial-en.pdf>

Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group Meeting on the Second Assessment and Review of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety: The *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group Meeting on the Second Assessment and Review of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety will take place in May. **dates:** 14-16 May 2012

location: Vienna, Austria **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

AWEA MOP 5: The fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP 5) to African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AWEA) is organized by the UNEP/AWEA Secretariat. **dates:** 14-18 May 2012 **location:** La Rochelle, France **contact:** UNEP/AWEA Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-24143 **fax:** +49-228-815-2450 **email:** secretariat@cms.int **www:** http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/mop/mop5_docs/mop5.htm

CBD Subregional Workshop on Valuation and Incentive Measures for South America: Organized by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) through its Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and its Coordinating Office on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), this workshop aims to support countries in making use of the findings of the TEEB study, as well as similar work at national or regional levels. **dates:** 15-17 May 2012 **location:** Santiago, Chile **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2012/ntf-2012-041-incentives-en.pdf>

CBD Regional Workshop on Valuation and Incentive Measures for Eastern Europe and Central Asia: Organized by the CBD Secretariat, UNEP, through its Coordinating Office on the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), this workshop seeks to: provide decision makers in Eastern Europe and Central Asia with economic arguments for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; promote synergies and enhanced cooperation among relevant policy areas and sectors by mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services; and support the revision and review of national biodiversity strategies and action plans in light of the new Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. **dates:** 29-31 May 2012 **location:** Tbilisi, Georgia **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2012/ntf-2012-048-incentives-en.pdf>

GEF 42nd Council Meeting: The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council is the main governing body of the GEF. It functions as an independent board of directors, with primary responsibility for developing, adopting, and evaluating GEF programmes. Council members representing 32 constituencies (16 from developing countries, 14 from developed countries, and two from countries with transitional economies) meet for three days, twice each year. **dates:** 4-7 June 2012 **location:** Washington, DC, US **contact:** GEF Secretariat **phone:** +1-202-473-0508 **fax:** +1-202-522-3240 **email:** secretariat@thegef.org **www:** <http://www.thegef.org/gef/node/4578>

CBD Workshop for Indigenous and Local Communities of the African Region: This regional workshop aims to increase the number of indigenous and local community (ILC) representatives, with an emphasis on women, effectively

involved in the CBD processes, as well as to build their capacity to do so. The workshop will focus on Articles 8(j) (traditional knowledge), 10(c)(customary sustainable use), and related provisions, as well as the Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit-sharing, and aims at preparing ILC representatives CBD COP 11. **dates:** 12-15 June 2012 **location:** Bujumbura. (Bujumbura), Burundi **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2012/ntf-2012-052-tk-en.pdf>

Third PrepCom for UNCS D: This meeting will take place in Brazil prior to the UNCS D. **dates:** 13-15 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UNCS D Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

Rio Conventions Pavilion at Rio+20: This event is a collaborative outreach activity of the Secretariats of the Rio Conventions (UNFCCC, UNCCD and CBD), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and 25 other international, national and local partners. It aims to promote and strengthen synergies between the Rio Conventions at implementation levels by providing a coordinated platform for awareness-raising and information-sharing about the linkages in science, policy and practice between biodiversity, climate change and combating desertification/land degradation. **dates:** 13-22 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** Rio Conventions Pavilion **phone:** +1-514-288-6588 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** info@riopavilion.org **www:** <http://www.riopavilion.org/>

ICLEI - 2012 World Congress: This triennial congress will address themes including: green urban economy; changing citizens, changing cities; greening events; and food security and how biodiversity protection can be integrated into municipal planning and decision-making. **dates:** 14-17 June 2012 **location:** Belo Horizonte, Brazil **contact:** ICLEI World Secretariat **phone:** +49 228 97 62 9900 **fax:** +49 228 97 62 9901 **email:** world.congress@iclei.org **www:** <http://worldcongress2012.iclei.org>

Oceans Day at UNCS D: The Global Ocean Forum will organize "Oceans Day" during the thematic days immediately preceding the UNCS D. **dates:** 17-19 June 2012 [tentative] **location:** Rio de Janeiro (Rio de Janeiro), Brazil **contact:** Miriam Balgos, Program Coordinator Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands **phone:** +1-302-831-8086 **fax:** +1-302-831-3668 **email:** mbalgos@udel.edu **www:** <http://www.globaloceans.org/>

UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20): The UNCS D will mark the 20th anniversary of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit), which convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. **dates:** 20-22 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UNCS D Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

Global Biodiversity Informatics Conference 2012: The Global Biodiversity Informatics Conference (GBIC) aims to discuss how informatics can best meet the challenges posed by biodiversity science and policy. It will focus on the practical steps needed to provide the information needs of global commitments such as the Aichi 2020 targets to halt biodiversity

loss. The conference will bring together experts in the fields of biodiversity informatics, genomics, Earth observation, natural history collections, and biodiversity research and policy. Attendance at GBIC is by invitation only. The outcome will be published in the form of a Global Biodiversity Informatics Outlook. **dates:** 2-4 July 2012 **location:** Copenhagen, Denmark **contact:** Conference organizers **email:** gbic2012@gbif.org **www:** www.gbic2012.org

Ramsar COP 11: The 11th meeting of the contracting parties (COP 11) to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat will be preceded by the 44th meeting of Standing Committee planned for 4 July 2012, and an additional day of regional meetings on 5-6 July 2011. The Standing Committee agreed that the broad theme for World Wetlands Day 2012 and COP 11 is “Wetlands, Tourism and Recreation.” **dates:** 6-13 July 2012 **location:** Bucharest, Romania **contact:** Ramsar Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-999-0170 **fax:** +41-22-999-0169 **email:** ramsar@ramsar.org **www:** http://www.ramsar.org

62nd Meeting of the CITES Standing Committee: The CITES Standing Committee provides policy guidance to the Secretariat concerning the implementation of the Convention and oversees the management of the Secretariat’s budget; coordinates and oversees, where required, the work of other committees and working groups; carries out tasks given to it by the Conference of the Parties; and drafts resolutions for consideration by the Conference of the Parties. **dates:** 23-27 July 2012 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **phone:** +41-22-917-81-39/40 **fax:** +41-22-797-34-17 **email:** info@cites.org **www:** http://www.cites.org/eng/com/sc/index.php

IUCN World Conservation Congress 2012: The Congress theme will be Nature+, a slogan that captures the fundamental importance of nature and its inherent link to every aspect of people’s lives, including: nature+climate, nature+livelihoods, nature+energy and nature+economics. **dates:** 6-15 September 2012 **location:** Jeju, Republic of Korea **contact:** IUCN Congress Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-999 0336 **fax:** +41-22-999-0002 **email:** congress@iucn.org **www:** http://www.iucnworldconservationcongress.org/

CBD COP 11: The agenda for the next meeting of the CBD COP includes consideration of, *inter alia:* the status of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits arising from their Utilization; implementation of the Strategic Plan 2011-2020 and progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; issues related to financial resources and the financial mechanism; and biodiversity and climate change. This meeting will be preceded by the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. **dates:** 8-19 October 2012 **location:** Hyderabad, India **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=COP-11

GLOSSARY

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
COP	Conference of the Parties
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GBO	Global Biodiversity Outlook
GC	Governing Council (UNEP)
GRULAC	Latin American and Caribbean Group
IMoSEB	International Mechanism on Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity
IPBES	Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
MA	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment
MEAs	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
MEP	Multidisciplinary Expert Panel
REIO	Regional economic integration organization
SBSTTA	CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly