



## IPBES-1 HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 24 JANUARY 2013

The fourth day of IPBES-1 in Bonn started with a morning plenary session. Delegates discussed a draft decision on the IPBES Secretariat, a draft conclusion on the link between IPBES and the UN system, as well as draft financial procedures for IPBES. In the afternoon and evening, the contact groups on rules of procedure and on the initial work programme resumed their work. An open-ended informal group on an initial budget for IPBES was established, which met in the evening.

### INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

**SECRETARIAT:** The Secretariat presented a draft decision on the IPBES Secretariat (IPBES/1/CRP.4), which builds upon the joint proposal by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) for administering the IPBES Secretariat. He noted that an additional paragraph inviting UNEP to provide administrative arrangements for the Secretariat was included to specify the leading role of UNEP among the four UN agencies.

COLOMBIA, supported by many others, called for deletion of a paragraph requesting the UN agencies to provide institutional arrangements for the Secretariat, noting this point has been taken into account by requesting UNEP to initiate recruitment in consultation with the other UN agencies. KENYA supported UNEP's leading role in the Secretariat's administrative arrangements. BOLIVIA called for text to ensure that UNEP's support for the Secretariat does not lead to interference in its work. TURKEY highlighted that UNEP's vision and mission may deviate from those of IPBES.

SOUTH AFRICA and numerous others preferred restructuring the document rather than deleting these elements, to reflect the importance of technical support from all four UN agencies. BRAZIL said UNEP's role in the Secretariat could follow the example of the Secretariat of CITES. SOUTH AFRICA suggested compromise text requesting the three other UN agencies to support institutional arrangements of IPBES and urging the UNEP Executive Director to initiate, as soon as possible, the recruitment of staff for the Secretariat.

FIJI emphasized that if the role of the other three UN agencies is undermined at this initial stage, garnering their support at a later stage would be difficult. SWITZERLAND concurred, stressing there is no need to show which of them has

overall responsibility. GRENADA, supported by ECUADOR, said there was a need to define, and differentiate between, institutional and administrative arrangements.

Session Chair Alfred Apau Oteng-Yeboah (Ghana) established a Friends of the Chair group, chaired by South Africa, and also comprising Colombia, Mexico, Argentina, Nigeria, Brazil, Ireland and Norway, to reconcile the various views. The Friends of the Chair group met during the afternoon.

**LINK BETWEEN IPBES AND THE UN SYSTEM:** The Secretariat presented to the plenary a draft conclusion on the link between the Platform and the UN system (IPBES/1/CRP.5). Delegates stated general approval of the text, noting that it is "appropriate at this meeting." Many identified a connection between this draft conclusion and the draft decision on the IPBES Secretariat; it was agreed that both issues be addressed by the Friends of the Chair group established to address the draft decision on the Secretariat.

### FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY ARRANGEMENTS

**FINANCIAL PROCEDURES:** In the morning, the plenary discussed draft financial procedures for IPBES (IPBES/1/CRP.2). The Secretariat clarified that some aspects of the document are still under development.

Ireland, for the EU's IPBES members, ARGENTINA, JAPAN and the US raised concerns about establishing a Financial Task Team (FiTT), questioning, among other things, its necessity and efficiency.

Ireland, for the EU's IPBES members, proposed that IPBES use the euro as the currency, following the practice of all UN agencies in Bonn, while the US suggested using the currency of the institution administering the trust fund. BOLIVIA proposed specifying that private contributions should not exceed public ones, with ARGENTINA suggesting reference to Rule 203.3 of the Financial Rules of the Fund of UNEP, which states that voluntary contributions from non-governmental sources in excess of US\$500,000 require prior approval of the Governing Council or subsidiary body.

The US suggested, among other things, for the Bureau instead of the plenary to approve additional voluntary contributions, and expanding the definition of IPBES resources to include contributions by organizations that are not IPBES members or observers.

Chair Oteng-Yeboah announced that the Bureau would consider the comments and provide a new version for deliberation by the plenary.



**INITIAL BUDGET:** In the morning plenary, Chair Oteng-Yeboah established an open-ended informal group on an initial budget for IPBES (IPBES/1/CRP.3), chaired by Spencer Thomas (Grenada). This group met in the evening.

### **RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE OPERATIONS OF THE PLENARY OF IPBES**

**RULES OF PROCEDURE:** The contact group on the rules of procedure (IPBES/1/3), co-chaired by Robert Watson (UK) and Leonel Sierralta Jara (Chile), continued its deliberations in the afternoon. Co-Chair Watson reintroduced the issue of pending membership of the EU to IPBES as a regional economic integration organization (REIO). Ireland, on behalf of the EU's IPBES members, highlighted that EU membership to IPBES would bring benefits and resources. CHINA, SOUTH AFRICA, EGYPT and others asked for clarification regarding voting practicalities, to which Ireland, on behalf of the EU's IPBES members, responded that the EU's votes would equal the number of EU members to IPBES, and that the EU would vote either on behalf of all of the EU's IPBES members, or that members would vote separately, eliminating concern of double voting. While acknowledging benefits of EU membership to IPBES, the US, supported by JAPAN, AUSTRALIA and the PHILIPPINES, voiced remaining concerns, including the question of proxy voting for IPBES members not present at a meeting, and possible "enhanced participation rights," considering the fact that the EU spans two UN regions, which could influence the MEP or the Bureau. BRAZIL suggested text referring to members "that are present at the time of the vote." The EU expressed its willingness to discuss such concerns in order to ensure EU membership would not provide any advantages over other IPBES members. Co-Chair Sierralta Jara reminded delegates that while this conversation centered on EU membership, any decision would have wider implications for other REIOs in the future. Co-Chair Watson suggested concerned parties express themselves in writing, providing text to be forwarded to the EU to be discussed in the intersessional period and resolved at IPBES-2.

The contact group then discussed the admission of observers (IPBES/1/4). Debate centered on text stating that applicants for observer status to IPBES plenary sessions should submit to the Secretariat "evidence of the legal status" of their organization. Many felt this would be inhibitive for many indigenous peoples and local communities. Delegates debated how to circumvent this problem while maintaining the requirement for other categories of observers, and agreed on text entrusting this issue to the discretion of the Secretariat, "as appropriate."

Delegates also worked on language to ensure that invitations extended by the Secretariat to observers to attend sessions of the plenary would not carry an implication of financial support. Delegates agreed to amend the text to read "notifications" instead of "invitations," noting that any text with financial implications would have to be addressed during discussions on the budget.

In the evening, continuing their discussion on admission of observers, participants addressed rejection procedures. Delegates agreed the Bureau should approve initial applications, but final authority rests with the plenary. ARGENTINA, supported by CHINA and BOLIVIA, but opposed by NORWAY, suggested that decisions on this issue be made by consensus. The US and Ireland, on behalf of the EU's IPBES members, noted logistical concerns for observers initially approved, but rejected at a later point. No agreement was reached. Parties with differing viewpoints were encouraged to meet informally. Discussion continued into the evening.

### **INITIAL WORK PROGRAMME**

The contact group on the initial work programme, co-chaired by Zakri Abdul Hamid (Malaysia) and Ivar Andreas Baste (Norway), continued its work in the afternoon. The contact group agreed to refer to the work on knowledge systems in the text on the conceptual framework, in order to ensure that those issues are considered in developing the framework.

The group agreed that the MEP should develop a draft conceptual framework and recommend possible procedures and approaches for working with different knowledge systems by IPBES-2. These activities should be based, among other things, on the outcomes of two workshops to be convened: one to gather input for the draft conceptual framework, and another on different knowledge systems.

On the stakeholder engagement strategy, IUCN, also speaking for ICSU, offered to work with relevant stakeholders in preparing a draft strategy. Debate focused on which stakeholders to specify in the text, with BOLIVIA, supported by TURKEY, BRAZIL, FIJI and the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, insisting on including reference to "indigenous and community organizations." This was agreed, although no decision was taken on the exact wording, pending the outcome of the discussions on the rules of procedure. The US suggested also referencing the private sector. The group agreed to invite IUCN and ICSU to work with, among others, relevant stakeholders to prepare a draft stakeholder engagement strategy, and to request the Secretariat to present a revised version for adoption by IPBES-2.

On possible strategic partnerships, Ireland for the EU's IPBES members noted, and delegates agreed, that the Bureau rather than the Secretariat should, in consultation with the MEP, provide guidance for strategic partnerships with academic scientific institutions, MEAs and UN organizations.

In the evening, discussing the potential future regional structure and composition of the MEP, delegates agreed that the Secretariat would compile all views and comments received to redraft the document on the regional structure and composition of the MEP (IPBES/1/INF/7). They also agreed that the MEP would work with the Bureau to review the document and make recommendations to plenary at IPBES-2.

The contact group also started reviewing the procedure for receiving and prioritizing requests put to the Platform (IPBES/1/5). Discussions continued into the evening.

### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

The fourth day of IPBES-1 was characterized by a strong spirit of compromise and willingness to achieve progress. Indeed, some delegates expressed a renewed sense of optimism with regards to the meeting's progress, acknowledging the co-chairs' creative methods to move their contact groups forward. However, Co-Chair Watson remarked more than once that "there is still a huge amount of work to be done."

An interesting observation surfaced in the corridors – and remained surprisingly absent in the formal discussions: that of all biodiversity-related conventions, the CBD is the most likely to have a strong and natural relationship with IPBES. After all, the CBD, too, discusses biodiversity at a generic level, while the work of the other biodiversity-related conventions is much more specific. One delegate wondered "how to strengthen the relationship with other international organizations," while another was happy for IPBES to "mainly contribute to assessments in the context of the Aichi targets" in the near future.

Several others highlighted that this natural relationship also stems from the large overlap of participants between IPBES and CBD and its SBSTTA, stating "because of their experiences with SBSTTA, participants in Bonn are eager for IPBES to be independent and science-oriented."