

SUMMARY OF THE IMOSEB NORTH AMERICAN REGIONAL CONSULTATION: 30-31 JANUARY 2007

The North American Regional Consultation of the Consultative Process Towards an International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB) was held from 30-31 January 2007, in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. The first in a series of regional meetings planned for the IMoSEB process, the Montreal event was attended by over 60 experts and officials from Canada, Mexico, the United States, and international organizations. Participants heard presentations, exchanged views and discussed various options on a possible IMoSEB, in plenary sessions and in three working groups. The two-day meeting did not result in a consensus on a new mechanism. However, a number of views and proposals were generated that are expected to contribute to future discussions on the topic.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE IMOSEB PROCESS

The proposal for an International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB) was originally presented during the Paris Conference on Biodiversity, Science and Governance, held in January 2005 (see IISD Reporting Services' report: <http://www.iisd.ca/sd/icb/>). The proposal focused on a consultation to assess the need, scope, and possible form of an international mechanism of scientific expertise on biodiversity.

The proposal received political support from French President Jacques Chirac and the French Government. It was also endorsed in November 2005 by scientists participating in the DIVERSITAS First Open Science Conference, which took place in Oaxaca, Mexico. This group called for a "properly resourced international scientific panel" on biodiversity.

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

It tasked the Executive Committee to propose a plan of action for the consultation phase. It was decided that the consultation should begin with the development of relevant case studies and feedback, and be followed by a broader consultation. A number of case studies were developed in 2006, while in addition, the idea for an IMoSEB was discussed at a number of events, including the eighth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP-8) in March 2006, and a workshop on the "Design of science-policy interfaces for global biodiversity governance," held in Leipzig, Germany, in October 2006.

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

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

The document was designed to assist participants at a series of regional consultations planned for 2007. The results of these consultations will be taken up by the International Steering Committee in late 2007, when it is expected to produce recommendations for consideration at CBD COP-9 in May 2008. The consultation in Montreal that is the subject of this report was the first of these regional consultations.

REPORT OF THE CONSULTATION

PLENARY SESSION

OPENING OF THE MEETING: John Karau, Director of Environment Canada's Biodiversity Convention Office, chaired this meeting. He thanked partners for their support and assistance in preparing for this North American Regional Consultation for IMoSEB. He emphasized that the

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consultation is adaptive and flexible, and that this first regional consultation would be somewhat experimental. He then introduced several speakers, who gave different regional and national perspectives and provided background information on the IMoSEB process.

NORTH AMERICAN COOPERATION—A CEC

PERSPECTIVE: Felipe Adrián Vázquez, Executive Director of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation of North America (CEC), provided an overview of CEC, explaining that it was established by Canada, Mexico and the US to address regional environmental concerns. He highlighted cultural, legal, and economic challenges that exist among countries for implementing the biodiversity agenda, and emphasized their common need to protect the environment. He noted that CEC's biodiversity strategy focuses on 14 of the most ecologically-threatened regions in North America, and said his organization hopes to facilitate collaboration between its programmes.

BACKGROUND ON THE IMOSEB CONSULTATIVE PROCESS: Didier Babin, Executive Secretary of the IMoSEB Consultative Process and France's National Focal Point for the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), highlighted serious and ongoing challenges in preserving biodiversity. He explained that the consultative process towards an IMoSEB seeks to address this challenge by providing a "common interface between expertise and decision making." He emphasized that IMoSEB does not currently exist, but is an idea that, if adopted, should be developed by groups such as this one. He outlined the history of the IMoSEB consultative process and explained the steps planned for 2007, including a series of regional consultations he hoped would identify needs, obstacles, opportunities, and options for an IMoSEB. He explained that, in late 2007, the International Steering Committee will meet again to finalize recommendations and proposals based on input from the consultations, with a view to submitting recommendations for consideration by CBD COP-9 in May 2008.

Anne Larigauderie, of the IMoSEB Executive Secretariat and Executive Director of DIVERSITAS, outlined the document titled, "International Steering Committee Members' Responses: 'Needs and Options'." Stressing the need to build on this foundation and welcoming additional comments, she categorized needs into three categories: incorporating scientific and other relevant expertise into the decision-making process; enhancing scientific predictive capacity; and improving communication among stakeholders. She presented the four potential options identified in the document to initiate discussion and debate: models based on developing a new

partnership between existing scientific delivery mechanisms, strengthening existing mechanisms, creating a new mechanism based loosely on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and requesting that IPCC add a biodiversity component to its activities.

Participants questioned who defines "relevant" knowledge, the anticipated role of indigenous knowledge in a possible IMoSEB, the appropriate language linking science and policy, and the conclusions of the avian flu case study. In response, Anne Larigauderie stressed that the IMoSEB does not yet exist, would be partly shaped by input provided at this meeting, and advocated increased involvement of expertise at the international policy-making level.

THE USE OF SCIENCE IN ARTICULATING NATIONAL POLICY FOR BIODIVERSITY

CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE ACROSS SECTORS IN MEXICO: Jorge Soberón, University of Kansas, presented a case study on Mexico's experience in using science to articulate national policy. In particular, he emphasized that the scale of biodiversity information affects decision making because the relevant stakeholders and perspectives vary at different scales. He indicated that large-scale studies with low resolution have the potential to assist international and national decisions, while small-scale studies with high resolution are better suited for local decisions. He cited several species studies in Mexico that illustrate the differences at local, regional, and national scales. He said an IMoSEB, unlike IPCC, cannot always use large-scale information, and finding an IMoSEB's appropriate scope will determine its success or failure.

U.S. PERSPECTIVES ON NEEDS AND OPTIONS FOR AN IMOSEB:

Leonard Hirsch, Smithsonian Institution, emphasized the need for a 21st Century model of the science-policy interface that assesses best practices and lessons learned for users and implementers of biodiversity conservation. He noted the need to involve biodiversity scientists, with programme evaluators, social scientists, governments and local users for these assessments and highlighted the Biodiversity Scientific Mechanism for Assessing Research and Management Tools (B-SMART) as a way to use scientific knowledge to conserve biodiversity at the local level effectively. He proposed that such a mechanism could use a community-based "wiki" approach that would avoid a top-down model and reduce costs.

CANADA'S FEDERAL BIODIVERSITY

INFORMATION PARTNERSHIP: Ole Hendrickson, Environment Canada, described Canada's Federal Biodiversity Information Partnership. He explained that the Partnership is a collaborative effort among seven agencies on biodiversity-related information management. He outlined the background of the Partnership and highlighted its ongoing evolution, including a recent focus on integrated or horizontal activities across departments. He discussed the "what, why and how" of the Partnership, outlined current activities at the domestic



Anne Larigauderie, of the IMoSEB Executive Secretariat and Executive Director of DIVERSITAS



L-R: Dais during the opening session with Didier Babin, Executive Secretary of the IMoSEB Consultative Process and France's National Focal Point for the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA); Chair John Karau, Director of Environment Canada's Biodiversity Convention Office; and Felipe Adrián Vázquez, Executive Director of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation of North America (CEC).



L-R: Jorge Soberón, University of Kansas; Leonard Hirsch, Smithsonian Institution; Chair John Karau, Director of Environment Canada's Biodiversity Convention Office; and Ole Hendrickson, Environment Canada

and international level, and underscored recent proposals for significant new funding in this area and work to expand activities beyond the federal level and with other stakeholders.

DISCUSSION: Participants discussed the presentations and the IMoSEB process in general. One participant stressed the importance of those working at the local level, and noted "inertia" among various groups. Hirsch suggested that there are also "turf" issues where organizations can be quite sensitive to new ideas that might impact on their specific niche. He added that many niches have already been filled, and emphasized the need for all the "right people" and groups to attend these discussions.

More than one participant questioned Hirsch's comment that there is widespread understanding of biodiversity issues. One suggested there is very little understanding beyond the expert community on such issues as invasive species, and that greater information dissemination is needed to reach a point where action is called for at all relevant levels. Another participant suggested that the current gap that an IMoSEB might address was in linking the "what and the why" with the "how" to respond, by building support and momentum so that people want to take action. Hirsch reiterated his view that there is broad understanding of the problems, and that implementation issues need to be addressed.

One participant suggested that the IMoSEB process should focus on building national capacity so work could be carried out effectively at all levels, rather than focusing on an institution that would provide information at the global level. He also noted different national circumstances and said there is no "one size fits all" approach. Soberón suggested that there was a niche for an IMoSEB similar to IPCC's, but with a difference in scope and scale and with the potential to act as an institutional advisor working with senior stakeholders such as agriculture and fisheries ministers, and with the private sector. He stressed the importance of capacity building for work at the national and local levels.

The discussion also focused on the need for valuation of biodiversity and of ecosystem services. Several participants highlighted the need for a more trans-disciplinary approach to biodiversity assessment and governance. Soberón noted that while Mexico has a preliminary system in place for payment for ecosystem services, further research into valuation techniques was needed.

Participants then turned to the role that an international mechanism could serve in guiding decision-making. While some questioned the role that such a body could serve in this capacity, others stressed that an institutionalized expert body could supply much-needed gravitas, citing domestic experiences in this regard.

While recognizing the importance of economic aspects of biodiversity governance, Hirsch emphasized that there are also moral aspects that cannot be commodified. He questioned the need for a new mechanism that may duplicate work already being conducted by existing organizations.

One participant noted the need for a mechanism to bring policy neutral advice on biodiversity issues to the "front burner" for policy makers. In response, Hirsch questioned the existence of truly policy-neutral advice, while suggesting that a community-based approach might be one approach.

INVITED SPEAKERS

During the meeting, several presentations were delivered by invited speakers. After lunch and during an evening reception on Tuesday, 30 January, representatives of the Canadian Commission for the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the City of Montreal and Province of Quebec, and the CBD Secretariat reflected on various elements of the IMoSEB process.

Following lunch on Tuesday, David Walden, Secretary-General of the Canadian

Commission for UNESCO, presented his views on the relevance of UNESCO's work for the IMoSEB process. Noting the diverse and fragmented nature of work on biodiversity and the community involved, he suggested that UNESCO could play an integrating or supportive role in this regard. He drew attention to UNESCO's national commissions, stakeholder engagement, capacity building, and range of work relevant to biodiversity issues, and drew parallels with issues of cultural and linguistic diversity.



David Walden, Secretary-General of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO

On Tuesday evening, participants were taken to visit Montreal's Biodome and Botanical Gardens, where a reception was held. During the reception, several invited speakers addressed the group.

Jo Mulgony, CBD Secretariat, observed that COP-8 in 2006 had initiated an implementation phase for the CBD, and highlighted the target of achieving a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. In this implementation phase, he said parties needed up-to-date information on trends and the economic value of biodiversity, as well as on pressures on biodiversity, policy options and good practices. He noted the CBD Secretariat's efforts to interact with stakeholders at all levels, including local and indigenous communities and research institutions, and highlighted the importance of capacity building, particularly in developing countries. He wished participants well in their deliberations, and hoped for a positive outcome.

Pierre Brunet, President of Montreal International, noted the rapid growth over the past decade in the number of international organizations based in Montreal, and the strength of the city's research community.

Patrick Beauchesne, Ministry of Sustainable Development, the Environment and Parks, Quebec, highlighted the importance of traditional knowledge, and drew attention to

Quebec's recent legislation requiring Quebec's ministries to integrate key principles of sustainable development, including biodiversity, into policy development and decision making.

Gérald Tremblay, Mayor of Montreal, noted the urgent need to address biodiversity challenges and outlined Montreal's various initiatives and efforts to address this issue and raise public awareness. He suggested that an independent evaluation mechanism on biodiversity would lend greater weight to scientific findings. He said Montreal was proud to host the CBD Secretariat, and would welcome a group or body that might emerge from the IMoSEB process.

Retired Canadian parliamentarian and former Environment Minister of Quebec, Clifford Lincoln, reflected on the IMoSEB process, suggesting that the goal should be to emulate what has been achieved in the climate change area in terms of bringing political and public understanding of the science and research.

WORKING GROUPS

On Tuesday afternoon, Chair John Karau explained in plenary that three working groups would convene in parallel sessions to consider needs and options related to an IMoSEB. He invited comments to help guide these discussions. Suggestions were made to consider such issues as: involving the private sector; making SBSTTA more useful; improving communication channels; extending social scientific participation beyond just economics; evaluating the opportunity costs associated with a new institutional mechanism; examining the interface between needs and options; and further exploring the specific niche that an IMoSEB could fill.

Discussions were guided by the "Needs and Options" document prepared by the IMoSEB Executive Secretariat setting out various issues identified by the Executive Committee in December 2006, including comments from members of the International Steering Committee (http://www.imoseb.net/regional_consultations/north_america).

Participants were divided among the working groups in a way that sought to achieve equitable distribution of nationalities and stakeholders. The groups met on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning. Participants reconvened in plenary late Wednesday morning, with the moderators and rapporteurs reporting back on key issues that emerged. While no consensus was reached on a specific option for a possible IMoSEB, a wide range of options and proposals were considered, ranging from a new high-level mechanism to instead working to improve existing bodies and groups. The following section outlines the main issues discussed in each working group.



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WORKING GROUP ONE: Hirsch moderated this group, opening the discussion by noting the clear consensus that biodiversity is not being effectively protected, and asking what knowledge and governance structures are needed to make people better stewards of biodiversity, as well as what IMoSEB's role might be. Much of the group's discussion consisted of identifying gaps and opportunities for preserving biodiversity, with a focus ranging from community to international levels. One participant noted that at the community level there is frequently knowledge, tools and the will for biodiversity protection, yet funding is lacking, while political will decreases the further up the pyramid one goes. Many participants agreed that an IMoSEB should be oriented to stakeholders that are active in the global arena. Participants also discussed the role of traditional knowledge in informing biodiversity protection, adjusting the CBD, and the need for one authoritative, trusted organization to inform policy makers about biodiversity science that can also perform public relations activities.

Participants reconvened on Wednesday morning, when a variety of views were expressed concerning options and directions for an IMoSEB. Although no consensus was reached on its role in the science-policy interface, participants highlighted a range of possibilities, with many participants agreeing that an IMoSEB would be most effective if it focused on informing policy at the global level. Participants reflected on various options, including a community-based approach, a mechanism modeled on the IPCC, and a "blue ribbon," neutral body comprising a handful of highly-respected scientists. Participants also highlighted the need to incorporate economists and other social scientists into this discussion. Finally, funding issues, and the need to assess donor interest, were also noted.



Liette Vasseur, Laurentian University, working group one rapporteur

Report to plenary: Late Wednesday morning, Liette Vasseur, Laurentian University, working group one rapporteur, reported back to plenary on the group's discussions. She highlighted the need to target the appropriate decision makers in the process, noting that the "middle of the pyramid" would likely be most effective. She also noted various concerns, including the challenge of communicating biodiversity issues to the public. Hirsch added that there was no "knock out punch for any one idea." He said that it was his feeling that, despite a useful discussion of important information, participants left the group with the same opinion with respect to an IMoSEB structure (or lack thereof) that they arrived with.

WORKING GROUP TWO: Philippe Le Prestre, Université Laval, Canada, moderated this group, highlighting questions relating to mobilizing opinion and improving the science. Several participants reflected on the importance of raising biodiversity's profile with the media, which would have a major impact at the political and scientific levels. One delegate said an IMoSEB could set standards for

incorporating local and traditional knowledge in decision making, while another stressed the importance of supporting action and building capacity at the local level. Participants also highlighted and discussed Hirsch's reference to a "wiki" type approach, including the benefits of multi-stakeholder participation and the use of the Internet and other information and communication technologies.

One speaker said building a new organization or mechanism from the ground-up would take too much time, given the urgent nature of biodiversity problems. Another said any future body would add more value if it were to help modify and change the trajectory of biodiversity loss, rather than simply to reinforce what is already known. Participants also noted the value of bridging the science-policy gap and of mapping current activities underway at all levels.

On Wednesday morning, Le Prestre asked participants to develop concrete proposals linking needs and options. While most agreed that there may not be one solution to meet all needs, participants identified some important attributes that a future IMoSEB might have. These included performing regional assessments, having an intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder orientation, making a value-added contribution, and linking scientists and policy makers. In a discussion on options, participants were not able to narrow the list of options, and instead expanded on them, pulling in components from the existing four options set out in the background paper, and adding several new ideas, including a high-level meeting inspired by the Davos World Economic Forum to draw international attention to biodiversity concerns.

Report back to plenary: Late Wednesday morning, Le Prestre reported back to plenary on the group's discussions. On needs, he indicated that participants had not identified priority needs, although they had focused on two areas: incorporating science in decision making and developing strategies to make decision makers listen; and the need to improve the science and foster inter-disciplinary approaches and multi-stakeholder involvement. He noted participants' comments that it might be useful to consider the 2010 target and what scientific knowledge is lacking to that end.

Regarding options, he relayed comments that one single mechanism cannot respond to the various needs, and that a menu of options or mechanisms might be valuable. He said any approach should address the need for assessments at multiple levels, add value, and offer "legitimacy, credibility and saliency." He said options discussed included: a Millennium Ecosystem Assessment – "plus" solution; a small body to coordinate existing networks or carry out assessments; a wiki-based solution for implementation issues; a high-level forum like the Davos World Economic Forum; and improving existing institutions. He added that these were not mutually-exclusive options, and that no consensus was reached.

WORKING GROUP THREE: Hesiquio Benitez Diaz, Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad, Mexico, moderated this group, asking



Philippe Le Prestre, Université Laval, Canada

participants to focus on needs assessment. The group did not have a final recommendation on the direction to take for an IMoSEB, noting that the problems an IMoSEB is expected to address are not yet well defined. One participant asked whether an IMoSEB might be a "predetermined solution to a problem that is not yet defined." There was some concern expressed about the role that the CBD SBSTTA plays in conveying scientific knowledge on biodiversity, and problems arising from gaps in scientific knowledge that might be addressed by an IMoSEB. Participants suggested that an IMoSEB could play a role in bringing international science to bear on the national policies of governments and corporate decisions. The group concluded that science needs to address governance issues and develop a multi-disciplinary approach to advising decision makers.

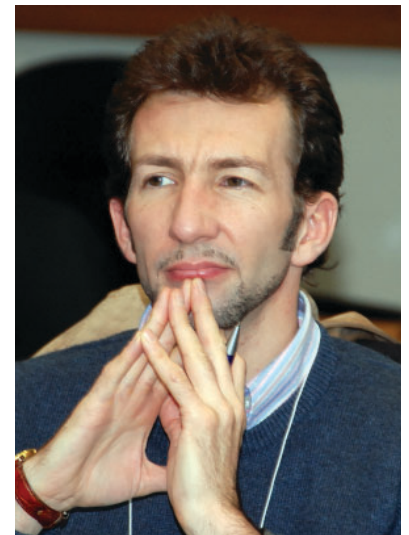
On Wednesday morning, the group reviewed the IMoSEB "Needs and Options" paper, considering: whether the needs are being met; whether existing institutions meet these need, if their capacity was enhanced; and what would it cost to create this capacity.

Participants suggested that some needs might be met by existing organizations. Regarding the need to provide advice on emerging threats, the group agreed that CBD can be slow, due to institutional inertias, to address specific emerging biodiversity issues. Participants asked whether an IMoSEB could play a role, or provide information regarding underlying structural drivers for biodiversity loss. One participant said IPCC was not a useful role model for biodiversity, since climate change affects the world equally, whereas biodiversity is region-specific.

Report to plenary: Late Wednesday morning, working group three rapporteur, Antony Challenger, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico, presented a summary of the discussions. He noted participants' questions about what has already been accomplished by other groups and that an IMoSEB was being considered because the CBD is not fulfilling its role in full, with SBSTTA too politicized and needing to refocus on science. He suggested, however, that failure to implement biodiversity science is not a failing of the CBD but of governments, and an IMoSEB may have a role in correcting this. He noted some initial confusion

and skepticism about an IMoSEB, which will not be effective unless well defined. The group concluded that the assessment of needs for an IMoSEB had so far resulted in few concrete conclusions, so it would be difficult to discuss options for its development or definition.

One participant in this group added that participants had expressed concerns that existing organizations could be hurt if resources were diverted to a new mechanism, and said it was important to consider how to improve existing mechanisms, as well as to consider how to form a new one. Challenger said any IMoSEB would require a thorough discussion of needs



Antony Challenger, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico

before it is established. Diaz said an IMoSEB could be part of an enabling environment to encourage interaction among scientists, politicians and industry.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS: Following the reports back to plenary, Chair Karau reflected on the working group discussions. He noted a focus in the groups on the "what, why and how," and a sense that the *status quo* is not enough, given that serious biodiversity loss is continuing. He also noted that it is important to address needs from the international to local levels. He said that all groups recognized that neither a comprehensive needs assessment nor complete information on the activities of existing institutions exists. He noted concerns from participants that an IMoSEB not "reinvent the wheel" and said this might merit further discussion. He also noted comments that, although some needs have been identified, there are concerns about duplicating work and over the financial implications of forming a new organization.

Responding to these comments, the moderators and rapporteurs of the group made a number of further observations. Vasseur noted concerns about adding further layers to the process. Hirsch suggested that calls for an IMoSEB had resulted from lack of funding support for multi-disciplinary, long-term comparable information—which is needed in this area. He said the roles of existing organizations should be explored. Le Prestre said the hidden agenda at this meeting is who should control the biodiversity agenda. He said it might be useful to identify "a general direction in which we want to go," meaning the Consultative Process can discuss options even if all specific needs have not been identified. Clark Miller, Arizona State University and working group two rapporteur, noted a tension between the view that biodiversity is an issue that requires global governance and the view that it should be addressed primarily on a local or national level, since this is where the biodiversity challenges are actually addressed. He noted that SBSTTA was not set up to be a purely scientific body, and urged creative thinking on how to move forward.

CLOSING PLENARY

On Wednesday afternoon, Chair Karau opened the session by requesting "responsible honesty" to capture the diversity of ideas that has emerged

from discussion over the past two days. He noted that some seemed to be saying, "if it isn't broken, don't fix it," but that at the same time, since biodiversity loss persists, the *status quo* is not satisfactory. Participants responded by debating whether existing mechanisms have gaps, and questioning if this consultative process can accurately map



Chair John Karau, Director of Environment Canada's Biodiversity Convention Office

the science-policy nexus. It was further noted that a focus on identifying problems or gaps in specific organizations carries some risks of a backlash and that the Consultative Process needs further input from the social sciences.

Michel Loreau, McGill University and co-chair of the Executive Committee of the Consultative Process towards an IMoSEB, shared his views on the IMoSEB process. He

stressed the escalating nature of the biodiversity crisis and emphasized that even in the contemporary complex landscape there is room to move forward with respect to improving the science-policy interface. He noted that changes in this regard must emanate both from policy making and the scientific community. He challenged participants to develop concrete



Michel Loreau, McGill University and co-chair of the Executive Committee of the Consultative Process towards an IMoSEB

proposals about how to improve the system without creating a new mechanism, and suggested that an IMoSEB could perhaps be linked to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. He drew attention to a comment made earlier in the meeting stressing the need for a cost-benefit analysis, but disagreed with another comment, which suggested that a new mechanism would divert resources from other organizations and work. Rather, he argued that an IMoSEB had the potential to attract political attention and new financial resources to biodiversity in much the same way the IPCC has done for climate change.

Chair Karau then opened the floor for comments. One participant agreed with the suggestion that an IMoSEB be linked to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, highlighting the current wide use of the Assessment, and the potential for its benefits to spread wider still. Another participant expressed frustration that the role of indigenous knowledge holders was not adequately addressed at the meeting. He alleged that "scientists have hijacked the process," and suggested possible mechanisms, based on the Canadian experience, for incorporating other stakeholders into the process.

Participants discussed the science-policy process in terms of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) where there are clear objectives, such as trade in endangered species, climate change and ozone. One speaker noted that while specific measurements, such as 450 parts per million of carbon dioxide, can be used as a benchmark for addressing climate change, it is difficult to quantify biodiversity goals in this same way. Another said the parallels with other MEAs may not be helpful because issues such as greenhouse gas emissions, ozone protection and sulfur dioxide use focus on sources that can be substituted, while species, spaces and resources are irreplaceable. Further, it was noted that outsiders recognize the objectives of MEAs such as climate change, but it is more difficult to make linkages between science and policy in biodiversity. There was disagreement, however, about whether decision makers such as ministers are well informed about biodiversity, or understand scientists.

Reflecting on the discussions over the past two days, Chair John Karau noted that, while the meeting had not made as much progress as some might have hoped, it did produce a valuable and honest reflection on the issue. He thanked those supporting the meeting, including the IMoSEB Executive Secretariat, City of Montreal, CEC, Environment Canada, and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. He reiterated the critical importance of biodiversity, recalling the quote that, "we should not only measure our success by our technological advances, but also by that which we do not destroy." The meeting closed at 3:20 pm.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

IMOSEB REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS: Following the first regional consultation in Montreal in late January 2007 on the Consultative Process Towards an IMoSEB, a series of further regional consultations are planned. The African regional consultation is scheduled to take place in Yaounde, Cameroon, from 28 February to 2 March 2007. Subsequent consultations are also being planned for Europe Asia, Oceania-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. For more information, contact the IMoSEB Executive Secretariat; e-mail: executive-secretariat@imoseb.net; internet: <http://www.imoseb.net>

14TH MEETING OF THE CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL: This meeting of the CMS Scientific Council will take place from 14-17 March 2007, in Bonn, Germany. For more information, contact the CMS Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2401/02; fax: +49-228-815-2449; e-mail: secretariat@cms.int; internet: http://www.cms.int/bodies/ScC_mainpage.htm

2007 INTERNATIONAL BIODIVERSITY DAY: International Biodiversity Day will occur worldwide on 22 May. In 2007, International Biodiversity Day will focus on biodiversity and climate change. For more information, contact the CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/outreach/awareness/biodiv-day-2007.shtml>

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

14TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO CITES: The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) is holding its 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties from 3-15 June 2007, in The Hague, the Netherlands. For more information, contact the CITES Secretariat; tel: +41-22-917-8139; fax: +41-22-797-3417; e-mail: cites@unep.ch; internet: <http://www.cites.org/eng/news/calendar.shtml>

ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE: CGRFA-11 is taking place at FAO headquarters in Rome from 4-8 June 2007. For more information, contact José Esquinas, CGRFA Secretariat; tel: +39-6-570-54986; fax: +39-6-570-53057; e-mail: jose.esquinas@fao.org; internet: <http://www.fao.org/ag/cgrfa>

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (CBD) SBSTTA-12: The twelfth meeting of the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice is being held in Paris, France from 2-6 July 2007. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/meetings/default.shtml>

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

FIRST INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL CONFERENCE ON ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES

This conference will seek to address priorities for the sustainable use, development and conservation of animal genetic resources. It is taking place in Interlaken, Switzerland, from 3-7 September 2007. For more information, contact Irene Hoffmann, Chief, FAO Animal Production Service; tel: +39-6-570-52796; e-mail: irene.hoffmann@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/en/genetics/angrvent2007.html>

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

FIFTH TRONDHEIM CONFERENCE ON BIODIVERSITY: The Trondheim Conference is scheduled for 29 October to 2 November 2007. Hosted by the Norwegian Government in cooperation with UNEP, this conference aims to provide input to the CBD and its preparations for COP-9 in 2008. The key objectives of the event are to: illustrate and highlight the role of biodiversity in poverty alleviation and in reaching the MDGs; consider progress on the 2010 target to significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss; and provide insights and inspiration for enhanced implementation of the CBD's Strategic Plan. For more information, contact Norway's Directorate for Nature Management; e-mail: postmottak@dirnat.no; internet: <http://english.dirnat.no/wbch3.exe?p=2392>

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

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

CBD COP-9: The ninth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity is being held in Bonn from 19-30 May 2008. This conference is organized by the CBD Secretariat. For more information, contact the CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/meetings/default.shtml>



Group photo of some consultation participants