

SUMMARY OF THE IMOSEB AFRICAN REGIONAL CONSULTATION: 1-3 MARCH 2007

The African Regional Consultation of the Consultative Process Towards an International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB) was held from 1-3 March 2007, in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The second in a series of regional meetings planned for the IMoSEB process, the Yaoundé event was held alongside the XVIII Congress of the Association for the Taxonomic Study of Flora of Tropical Africa (AETFAT), under the patronage of Madeleine Tchuenté, Cameroon Minister for Scientific Research and Innovation. It was attended by more than 90 experts and officials, including representatives from 28 African countries, France and Canada, and international, regional, sub-regional and non-governmental organizations.

Participants met in plenary sessions and in three working groups. They heard presentations, exchanged views and discussed needs identified and various options on a possible IMoSEB, formulated by the IMoSEB Executive Committee. They also considered expertise for Africa, and potential users of an IMoSEB; discussed institutional and financial aspects of an IMoSEB; and addressed the meeting report. There was general consensus on the need for an IMoSEB, with a number of views and proposals being expressed as to how to make progress on the issue, including interest in exploring a pilot project for the African region.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE IMOSEB PROCESS

The proposal for an IMoSEB was initiated during the Paris Conference on Biodiversity, Science and Governance, held in January 2005. 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 by scientists participating in the DIVERSITAS First Open Science Conference that took place in November 2005, in Oaxaca, Mexico. This group called for a "properly resourced international scientific panel" on biodiversity.

A consultative process was launched, and an International Steering Committee, an Executive Committee and an Executive Secretariat attached to the Institut Français de la Biodiversité (IFB) and based in Montpellier, France, were established to support and facilitate discussions. The International Steering Committee is an open group composed of around 90 members, including scientists and representatives of governments, international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and indigenous and local communities. The International Steering Committee met for the first time in Paris on 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.

The Executive Committee was tasked 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 broader consultation. A number of case studies were developed in 2006, while in addition, the idea for an IMoSEB was discussed at numerous events organized by the Executive Secretariat and Steering Committee members, including a side event at the eighth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP-8) in March 2006, as well as a workshop on the "Design of science-policy interfaces for global biodiversity governance," held in October 2006, in Leipzig, Germany.

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 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 autumn 2007, when it is expected to produce recommendations for consideration at CBD COP-9, to be held in May 2008, in Bonn, Germany. The Yaoundé consultation is the second of these regional consultations.

NORTH AMERICAN REGIONAL CONSULTATION:

The IMoSEB North American Regional Consultation was held on 30-31 January 2007, in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. The event was attended by over 60 experts and officials from Canada, Mexico, the US and international organizations. Participants heard presentations, exchanged views and

IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History of the IMOSEB Process	1
Report of the Meeting	2
Plenary	2
Working Groups	4
Report	6
Closing Plenary	6
Upcoming Meetings	6
Glossary	7

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.

REPORT OF THE MEETING

PLENARY

OPENING OF THE MEETING: On Thursday morning, participants convened in an opening ceremony chaired by Madeleine Tchuente, Minister for Scientific Research and Innovation, Cameroon. Jo Mulongoy, CBD Secretariat,

welcomed participants to the meeting, describing biological diversity as “one of the pillars of development” in terms of the life goods, regulatory services, and cultural and support values it provides. He drew attention to negative changes running counter to conservation, highlighting fragmentation of habitats, deforestation and pollution in addition to demographic trends, socioeconomic factors and lack of political will. Referring



Jo Mulongoy, CBD Secretariat

to biodiversity modification caused by climate change, he pointed to the frequency of extreme weather events being experienced in Africa, and discussed how biodiversity can mitigate climate change through the use of forests as carbon sinks and of mangroves in shore-line protection. He called for recognition of the intrinsic value of biological diversity and for research into the factors affecting ecosystem resilience in the region, noting the need to establish well-defined protected areas. Mulongoy reflected on how an IMoSEB could contribute towards achieving the 2010 challenge of significantly reducing biodiversity loss through the provision of appropriate information to facilitate policy formulation and decision-making.

Minister Tchuente highlighted the proposal for an IMoSEB that emerged during the January 2005 Paris Conference, noting that the Conference affirmed the complexity of biodiversity, and thus the need for capacity building as well as partnership and collaboration between all stakeholders involved, including governments and the scientific community. She urged participants to focus on how scientific knowledge is used in decision-making on biodiversity, ecosystems and human well-being. Lamenting increased biodiversity loss resulting from human activity, she called for urgent action towards sustainable use of natural resources, and highlighted the need for dialogue between policy-makers and the scientific community to generate the necessary means and actions to address this. She outlined Cameroon's efforts in addressing biodiversity issues, urged Africa's scientists to participate in the IMoSEB process, and declared the African regional consultation open.

ROUNDTABLE AND DISCUSSION: On Thursday, in a session chaired by Chimère Diaw, Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), participants heard presentations by several speakers on the background of the IMoSEB process and held preliminary discussions.

Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity: Jacques Weber, Institut Français de la Biodiversité (IFB) and Executive Committee of the IMoSEB process, discussed the importance

of biodiversity in the context of a number of factors that affect humans. He defined biodiversity as the complex interaction between living things, and identified human activities causing biodiversity loss. He demonstrated that the general decline in biodiversity is negatively impacting animal, fish and bird populations, and emphasized that protecting biodiversity is protecting one's self. Weber illustrated the dangers associated with monoculture by noting that chemicals used in agriculture also kill pollinators, further damaging biodiversity. He highlighted a recent study demonstrating that climate change is shortening fauna and flora lifecycles, and called for a mechanism to mobilize global biodiversity knowledge to address decision-makers' questions. He concluded that any mechanism must be multidisciplinary, decision-oriented, cooperative, and avoid duplication of efforts.

The Consultative Process: Organization, Outcomes and Agenda: Didier Babin, Executive Secretary of the IMoSEB process and France's National Focal Point for the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), outlined the background of the IMoSEB process highlighting that it is an exploratory process designed to include a wide range of stakeholders. Babin proposed that any IMoSEB form an interface between knowledge banks, scientific expertise, politicians, consumers and the media. He outlined the objectives of the process as: identifying the gaps between public policy and science; sharing lessons and opinions regarding any eventual mechanism; mapping out the decision-making landscapes affecting biodiversity; producing studies on the mobilization and use of expertise; and providing analysis of existing models delivering scientific expertise. He stated that the primary challenge of the 21st century is to achieve ecological sustainability, and urged participants to make meaningful recommendations for an IMoSEB.

The North American Regional Consultation: Weber delivered a presentation on behalf of Marthe Mapangou, Gabon National Biodiversity Observatory and Executive Committee of the IMoSEB process, on the needs and options identified during the North American regional consultation, held in Montreal, on 30-31 January 2007. Weber stressed the need to: provide reliable and independent scientific expertise; inform biodiversity decision-making and guide multilateral environmental processes; enhance capacity; pool



Jacques Weber, IFB and Executive Committee of the IMoSEB process

expertise and resources; better predict the impacts of biodiversity changes; provide scientific advice on emerging threats such as avian influenza; and improve the timeliness and accessibility of scientific advice. He outlined the four options formulated by the IMoSEB Executive Committee and considered by the Montreal participants as: partnership between existing mechanisms; a new mechanism consisting of intergovernmental and non-governmental components; inviting the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to consider developing a biodiversity component; and strengthening the existing network of scientists through a small coordination mechanism. He noted that consensus was not reached on any particular option and drew attention to skepticism concerning the establishment of a new mechanism, stressing the need to define a niche for IMoSEB. Weber also discussed

recommendations emanating from the Montreal meeting, including considering other models, drawing more from traditional knowledge, and learning lessons from successful initiatives.

The Decision-Making Process on Biodiversity in

Africa: Felix Dakouo, Mali Ministry for the Environment and Sanitation, stressed that biodiversity loss will be felt most dramatically in rural Africa where people depend on biological resources for their survival. He maintained that decisions on African biodiversity should be respectful of traditional knowledge and values and not be dissociated from economics and development. Dakouo emphasized participation of local actors, and the need to strengthen the rights of local and rural populations.

Jean-Claude Nguinguiri, International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), Gabon, provided an overview of African decision-making processes on biodiversity from the perspective of a

researcher working for an international organization. He noted that the 60 ITTO member countries, which include 12 African countries, agree to collective commitments on issues such as developing guidelines on sustainable forestry management. He discussed factors involved in local,



Jean-Claude Nguinguiri, ITTO, Gabon

national and global biodiversity-related decision-making, highlighting implementation of international obligations, and the increasing importance of market drivers in decision-making. He stressed that decision-making is a matter of compromise between different priorities and urged a move towards an inter-sectoral approach. On the role of science in decision-making, he emphasized, *inter alia*, providing scientific and technical advice and analyzing the state of the environment and protected areas. Referring to the results of a 2003 ITTO review of forestry research capacity in the Congo Basin, he lamented the lack of researchers, inadequacy of budgets, obsolete technical equipment and lack of collaboration. He proposed that any international mechanism on biodiversity must be interactive, draw from the local level, and be accompanied by capacity building at the regional and national level.

Discussion: In the ensuing debate, several scientists argued that state channels pose a challenge to the scientific community intent on influencing policy. In response, a number of public sector participants highlighted the complexity of biodiversity science reports. Some participants agreed with this assertion, proposing that the solution lies in appropriately framing research questions and “packaging” the findings. Others said that the problem arises from a lack of political will and from public sector disinterest. Highlighting this point, one participant claimed that he addressed an issue to 11 government departments and received no response. This was countered by the argument that the public sector lacks the capacity to act upon scientific recommendations.

Echoing earlier calls for non-duplication of efforts, one participant called for “collective intelligence,” and others called for any IMoSEB to have a regional and national focus. Others highlighted the local level, urging scientists to engage with traditional knowledge practitioners with a view

to cataloguing natural resources. One participant noticed with concern the lack of Central African representation on the Steering Committee. Babin underscored the need to avoid duplication and to pool resources, adding that scientific research is intended to give assurance to decision makers when assessing risks. He said that creating a network is vital in order to overcome the gap between domestic and international scientists, and called upon scientists to collaborate in maximizing output and application.

Mulongoy clarified issues relating to CBD SBSTTA’s mandate and activities, saying that the body has been criticized for sometimes espousing political rather than scientific views. Underlining that SBSTTA continually strives for scientific objectivity, he added that advice provided can not always be purely scientific, especially when working with local communities and considering issues such as incentives.

Summarizing the discussion, Babin highlighted *inter alia*: the need to address local realities; the benefits of pooling information and resources; using a bottom-up approach; ensuring all stakeholders have access to information; and considering economic and social factors.

In further discussion during the afternoon, one participant suggested that an IMoSEB target information as appropriate to either governments or NGOs, with a view to avoiding a conflict of interests resulting from differing priorities. Following calls for a mechanism which addresses gaps in biodiversity conservation, one participant called for a cost-effective, decentralized and practical mechanism accessible to stakeholders. Noting that biodiversity management is multidimensional and requires various entities, one participant cautioned against creating an autonomous entity, proposing that, since biodiversity is a national resource, it should be addressed at the national level. A participant from Kenya outlined activities in his country on disseminating scientific information to local communities to facilitate biodiversity conservation. The need for an IMoSEB to “add value” to other intergovernmental mechanisms was also stressed.

LEIPZIG RECOMMENDATIONS: In a presentation on Thursday afternoon, Chair Diaw reported on recommendations made by the participants of a workshop on the “Design of science-policy interfaces for global biodiversity governance,” held in Leipzig, Germany. He explained that 25 experts made a number of recommendations concerning the mandate, outputs, and process for a possible IMoSEB. On the mandate, participants recommended that an IMoSEB should: cover the interface between knowledge and policy for biodiversity governance; include all forms of knowledge relevant to public policy; bring together and acknowledge diverse perspectives and values; and focus on dialogue and exchange.

On outputs, he highlighted: providing scenarios of biodiversity change in relation to human futures; identifying knowledge gaps; analyzing causes of biodiversity loss; and delivering a comprehensive outreach and communication strategy. On process, he noted they recommended that an IMoSEB: be independent with broad stakeholder participation, and legitimate with appropriate institutional and financial support;



Chair Chimère Diaw, CIFOR

and build upon existing networks. He outlined further issues raised, including IMoSEB funding, its institutional framework and authorization.

INSTITUTIONAL AND FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF AN IMoSEB: On Friday afternoon, in a plenary session chaired by Dakouo, participants debated institutional and financial aspects of an IMoSEB. Weber opened the discussion by explaining



Felix Dakouo, Mali Ministry for the Environment and Sanitation

that the IMoSEB Secretariat carried out case studies to identify needs and consider possible options so as not to duplicate existing mechanisms, with a view to reporting to the International Steering Committee in October 2007.

Mapangou highlighted the need to ensure an IMoSEB is an improvement upon other existing scientific mechanisms. Ivar Baste, UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and IMoSEB Executive Committee, noted that the African consultation provided a clear identification of a whole range of needs and that the international community is seeking consensus on addressing these needs. He added that it is too early to identify the financial and institutional aspects of the solution.

Participants called for more time to fully consider institutional and financial aspects, with many re-emphasizing existing mechanisms and initiatives. Noting that the gap between science and decision-making has already been identified in Africa, one participant urged keeping an IMoSEB “small” and working within structures such as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), while another referred to consultations in the Central Africa Forests Commission (COMIFAC) and the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), suggesting an IMoSEB should be a hybrid mechanism bringing together states and civil society. One participant noted that working group one participants questioned the distinction between an IMoSEB and CBD SBSTTA, and agreed that an IMoSEB was envisaged to more clearly address scientific concerns. He called for a scientific study to identify the state of science in Africa, conducted by CBD focal points, reporting to the IMoSEB Steering Committee on their findings.

Following a proposal by one participant to pilot an IMoSEB in Africa, Babin explained that an African pilot project outline has been prepared, which required stakeholder input to receive legitimacy. One participant suggested that an IMoSEB follow the example provided by an environmental law organization operating on a small budget whilst successfully tapping the expertise of a group of international legal experts.

Weber reiterated the importance of the regional consultations noting that the ideas generated in the meeting had a regional focus and differed from the outcomes emanating from the North American consultation.

WORKING GROUPS

On Thursday afternoon, Babin outlined in plenary how deliberations in the three working groups would be conducted. He explained that working group one would consider needs and options for an IMoSEB, working group two, expertise for Africa, and working group three, IMoSEB potential end-users. He also clarified that all the three groups had the option

of examining needs and options. The groups met on Friday morning and participants reconvened in plenary that afternoon, with the rapporteurs and moderators reporting back on key issues that emerged. The following section outlines the main issues discussed in each working group.

WORKING GROUP ONE: Moderated by Ivar Baste, UNEP, with Jameson Seyani, National Herbarium and Botanic Gardens and AETFAT President acting as rapporteur, working group one was attended by participants from Cameroon, Kenya, Benin, Liberia, and Malawi. The group considered the needs for an IMoSEB on the basis of the “Needs and Options” document prepared by the IMoSEB Secretariat.

On needs, the group considered how the scientific community could effectively feed into various levels of decision-making, with many participants emphasizing localized decision-making, and stressing that local and indigenous groups have a right to be informed. One participant noted in some cases there is a conflict of interest between political leaders and scientists, resulting in trade-offs.

There was consensus on the urgent need to document natural resources in Africa, including scientific and traditional knowledge related to such resources, and to package such information to policy-makers and the public so as to highlight both the value of biodiversity and the potential impacts of human activities. While one participant argued that knowledge has no power without legislation, others pointed out that in several African countries relevant regulatory frameworks exist but are poorly implemented.

One participant highlighted the need to monitor and regulate importation and use of environmentally harmful commodities, emphasizing the role of an IMoSEB as an early warning system on biodiversity.

On options, there was agreement on the need for an IMoSEB, with many highlighting that such a mechanism should be independent and ensure better functioning of existing mechanisms, and support: capacity building; dissemination of existing scientific information; and new studies on biodiversity. Participants emphasized strengthening existing systems and networks to enable filtering scientific information to the relevant level of decision-making, and highlighted failures of existing mechanisms. Others warned against developing a new mechanism without proper planning. Some form of non-bureaucratic network approach was tabled, with a regional, national and local dimension, as was the proposal to spearhead an IMoSEB pilot project in Africa.

Report to Plenary: On Friday afternoon, working group moderator Baste reported to plenary on the group’s discussions, noting that the group had emphasized the need for knowledge support systems for decision-making to interact across the local, national, regional and international levels. He highlighted the call for documenting biodiversity in Africa and promoting interaction between knowledge providers and users, and emphasized the role of science in identifying the value of biodiversity.

On options, Baste reported that the group had reiterated that there is a need for a better interface between science and decision-making, and held that, while a number of existing



Working Group One Moderator Ivar Baste, UNEP

processes and mechanisms address biodiversity issues, they do not function adequately. He said there was a consensus on the need for an IMoSEB in Africa to “inject science into existing processes” and enhance existing structures through a “light” and non-bureaucratic network. He acknowledged skepticism on the appropriateness of an intergovernmental mechanism. Noting that the group had discussed potential legal frameworks and highlighted those existing institutions that could host an IMoSEB, he stressed the importance of CBD. He also said the group had considered the possibility of piloting the IMoSEB in Africa.

Following Baste’s report, one participant added that many members of the group had emphasized the need for adequate funding provision for an IMoSEB.

WORKING GROUP TWO: Moderated by Marthe Mapangou, with Jo Mulongoy acting as rapporteur, and with the participation of various countries including Kenya, Gabon, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Mali and the Republic of Congo, this group considered needs and options briefly before addressing the issue of expertise for Africa. Participants highlighted the need for a better understanding of biodiversity and the potential of available resources. They also called for the establishment of an IMoSEB taking into account existing structures with a view to enhancing ongoing initiatives. The necessity of fully incorporating traditional knowledge expertise was underscored by several participants.

Mulongoy underlined the need to work at national, regional and sub-regional levels. Referring to groups of related issues as “theme-based families,” he emphasized consolidating and improving existing systems to encourage such collaboration.

Addressing the working group, Babin reflected on a structure for an IMoSEB, suggesting combining knowledge, expertise and science, based on organized networks involving legitimate South-South cooperation in order to facilitate exchanges within the continent. Underscoring the importance of communicating scientific ideas into governance structures, he emphasized the need to better understand the decision-making process. In response, one participant called for a regional centre of excellence to collate information using national focal points and national Environmental Management Authorities, and partnering with NGOs and other institutions.

Report to Plenary: On Friday afternoon, working group two rapporteur Mulongoy presented the outcome of the group’s deliberations on mobilizing requisite expertise in Africa. Regarding actions, he said that the group had proposed building on existing experiences and networks, drawing on lessons learned and existing regional and international models. He cited the IUCN Species Survival Commission as a notable initiative from which the IMoSEB process could draw, since it operated by bringing researchers together. With a view to mobilizing expertise at the national, sub-regional and international level, he called for increased use of research tools and intelligence sharing, stressing the need to ensure the validity and ownership of scientific information.



Working Group Two Moderator Marthe Mapangou, Gabon National Biodiversity Observatory and Executive Committee of the IMoSEB process

On specific needs, he highlighted the need for expertise with respect to taxonomy and biological resources. Mulongoy observed that actions needed to be implemented taking into account the use of traditional knowledge. He explained how the concept of “theme-based families” could be used to mobilize support. On the issue of giving priority to individuals or institutions, he suggested that this be considered on a case-by-case basis. Highlighting the need to include traditional knowledge in socioeconomic structures and national legislation and the importance of South-South cooperation, he also mentioned the possibility of pooling expertise to share information and resources. He concluded by underlining the need to guarantee the sustainability of training of researchers to institutionalize this tool.

WORKING GROUP THREE: Working group three addressed issues relating to users of an IMoSEB. Moderated by Jacques Weber, with Hanta Rabetaliana, IUCN and Regional Governor, Madagascar, as rapporteur, it included participants from Gabon, Senegal and the Democratic Republic of Congo among other countries. Opening the discussion, Weber highlighted the injustice where countries richest in biodiversity are poor in economic terms, and expressed hope that an IMoSEB would play a role ameliorating this situation. Rabetaliana framed the debate by asking how an IMoSEB would help her within her role as a regional governor in Madagascar. Participants decided that an IMoSEB should obtain scientific research from academic institutions, research institutes and NGOs among other sources, and its “users” would include policy makers at all levels, the private sector, and public interest organizations. Participants added that local communities should be seen as depositories of traditional knowledge and needy recipients of an IMoSEB’s assistance.

Debating whether an IMoSEB should act as a lobby group, it was agreed that it should make scientific recommendations but remain apolitical. Participants noted the importance of information dissemination, emphasizing the internet’s vital role in facilitating a network of information and expertise. On the issue of structure, participants agreed that an IMoSEB should draw upon existing scientific networks.

Report to Plenary: On Friday afternoon working group three rapporteur Rabetaliana reported to plenary on the group’s discussions. She explained that participants addressed four main questions: the adequacy of knowledge relating to biodiversity management; the relevance of existing knowledge and problems of dissemination; accessibility of existing knowledge for decision-makers; and the most effective mechanism for information dissemination and the identification of potential beneficiaries.

She reported that participants made a number of recommendations, including: drawing users from a wide base and not being limited to private interests; valuing local communities’ knowledge; providing scientific information about the environment and urging action on biodiversity issues without acting as a pressure group; and avoiding duplicating the work of other scientific bodies at the international and national levels.



Working Group Three Rapporteur Hanta Rabetaliana, IUCN and Regional Governor, Madagascar

DISCUSSION: Following the reports back to plenary, participants further debated issues emanating from the working group discussions. One participant called for baseline studies to identify ongoing initiatives. Another noted consensus on the establishment of an IMoSEB in Africa due to the failure of existing structures to adequately address problems in Africa. He highlighted the potential role of an IMoSEB in revitalizing existing structures.

A participant from Burundi provided an example of an unknown illness that decimated an area's bird population. He argued that an IMoSEB's knowledge and information network might have led to scientists discovering the cause of the deaths. Recalling the need to strengthen the capacity of developing countries, increase regional cooperation and promote an African knowledge network, one participant commented that an IMoSEB conforms to that framework and fits well with the wider calls for UN reform.

Underscoring the gap between developed and developing countries, one participant referred to the statement by Marc Ravalomanana, President of Madagascar, during the January 2005 Paris Conference, that Africa cannot sustainably manage biodiversity if decisions are not based on scientific research. Baste outlined UNEP activities on enhancing networks, including the Poverty Environment Partnership and the UNEP Environment Watch Strategy.

Financial resources were described as being the lynchpin of an IMoSEB's establishment. Without attracting money, participants agreed, an IMoSEB would fail. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was highlighted as a possible source of funding.

REPORT

On Saturday morning, Babin presented the draft workshop report to plenary. Under needs, the draft report underlines the importance of

promoting a science and policy interface to facilitate good governance within the management of biodiversity. Under options, an IMoSEB is envisaged as adding value to existing initiatives while avoiding duplication of efforts. The role of IMoSEB is foreseen as facilitating access to relevant

information on decision-making relating to biodiversity by mobilizing local and international expertise, and establishing an early warning system on the emergence of risks. IMoSEB should consist of a knowledge network to support and inform decision-makers taking into account existing institutional expertise at the local and international level. Recommendations include the possible implementation of a pilot project in Africa to better identify obstacles and opportunities and propose concrete solutions facilitating collaboration with NEPAD, UNEP and sub-regional organizations. The mechanism is also required to include traditional knowledge and other socioeconomic aspects respecting local and national legislation, as well as creating synergies between custodians of traditional knowledge and scientific experts between the different theme-based families.



Didier Babin, Executive Secretary of the IMoSEB process and France's National Focal Point for the CBD's SBSTTA

Participants responded, suggesting additions and modifications to the text. Several participants suggested clarifying and amplifying the role of traditional knowledge within an IMoSEB structure, adding that indigenous network forums have a permanent role to play in consultations and decision-making. On the way forward, one participant said that the report must better reflect the issues emerging from the African consultation.

In ensuing discussion, participants proposed minor changes to the introductory text and other changes to the principal conclusions. On needs identified, changes included: referring to issues other than scientific knowledge that impact decision-making; and reflecting the call for an IMoSEB to contribute to the dissemination of existing knowledge, methodology and training in order to promote information about natural resources in Africa and their potential for economic and social development. On options, changes included noting that participants acknowledged that an IMoSEB should take the form of a structure that is approved and supported by governments. On IMoSEB's role, the report was revised to emphasize the independent nature of an IMoSEB and that any such mechanism should be "light, adaptable, flexible, decentralized, and non-bureaucratic." Participants also agreed to amend the report to emphasize the need in Africa to refer to traditional knowledge while underscoring the practical difficulty in attaining this knowledge, and qualified the text to refer to valid traditional knowledge.

Participants pointed out that scientists will be both providers and users of information. Participants discussed the organizations and networks with whom an IMoSEB should engage, and made a number of suggestions towards a non-exhaustive list. Babin undertook to produce an amended draft for circulation.

CLOSING PLENARY

On Saturday morning, Thomas Dongmo, Ministry of

Scientific Research and Innovation, Cameroon, on behalf of Madeleine Tchunte, recognized the effort of the participants and underscored the importance of an IMoSEB as an addition to existing mechanisms. He welcomed the prospect of a pilot project in Africa and invited participants to become ambassadors of science and biodiversity policy. The meeting closed at 12:36 pm.



Madeleine Tchunte, Cameroon Minister for Scientific Research and Innovation

UPCOMING MEETINGS

IMOSEB REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS: Following the first regional consultation on the Consultative Process Towards an IMoSEB in Montreal in late January 2007 and the second in Yaoundé in early March, a series of further regional consultations are 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 CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL: This meeting of the Convention on Migratory Species 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 will take place from 22-27 May 2007, in Beijing, China. 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 will hold 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>

CGRFA-11: The eleventh session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture will take place from 4-8 June 2007, at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy. For more information, contact José Esquinas, CGRFA Secretary; tel: +39-6-570-54986; fax: +39-6-570-53057; e-mail: jose.esquinas@fao.org; internet: <http://www.fao.org/ag/cgrfa>

CBD SBSTTA-12: The twelfth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity will be held from 2-6 July 2007, in Paris, France. 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 WORKING GROUP ON REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION:

The second meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity will be held from 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 will be held from 29 October - 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 Millennium Development Goals; 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://www.dirnat.no/content.ap?thisId=500025295&language=0>

CBD SBSTTA-13: The 13th meeting of the CBD SBSTTA will 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 will be held in meeting from 12-16 May 2008, in Bonn, Germany. 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 CBD will be held from 19-30 May 2008, in Bonn. 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>

GLOSSARY

AETFAT	Association for the Taxonomic Study of Flora of Tropical Africa
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
SBSTTA	Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice
COP	Conference of the Parties
IFB	Institut Français de la Biodiversité
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
IMoSEB	International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development



Jo Molongoy wearing traditional Cameroonian dress, donated by Musa Usman Ndamba, and presented to him by Jacques Weber. L-R: Musa Usman Ndamba; Jo Molongoy; Jacques Weber; Didier Babin, Executive Secretary of the IMoSEB process secretariat; Djamel Echirk, GEF Focal Point and Ministry for Planning and the Environment, Algeria; and Jean Claude Lefeuve.