



IPBES III HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 10 JUNE 2010

In the morning, IPBES III participants negotiated text: on building capacity and funding; and on negotiated text prepared by the Contact Group on processes that a new platform should support. At the end of the morning session, the chair convened a friends of the chair group to draft text on the chapeau and announced that the drafting group would meet to discuss the structure of the outcomes document. In the afternoon and into the evening, negotiations continued on the legal status of an IPBES, the draft Busan outcome document and its chapeau.

CONSIDERATION OF WHETHER TO ESTABLISH AN IPBES

FUNCTION OR WORK PROGRAMME OF THE NEW PLATFORM, IF THE LATTER IS ESTABLISHED:

Building capacity: Vice-chair Watson noted that Wednesday evening's contact group discussions on capacity-building made it clear that agreement on text would be contingent on the outcome of negotiations on funding. The AFRICAN GROUP offered to drop four of the six remaining brackets in the text: "within available resources," "agreed," "core" and "new and additional" but emphasized that while an IPBES is not a funding body, its role in catalysing funding for capacity-building is critical. The EU welcomed the proposal, noting it offered a way forward. Vice-chair Watson suggested amending the text to read "catalyse financing for such capacity-building activities," with "catalyse" and "such" in brackets, subject to the outcome of the discussions on funding. After discussing funding, delegates agreed to remove the brackets around "catalyse" and "such."

Funding: Vice-chair Watson indicated that an agreement on funding was needed to achieve agreement on capacity-building.

The majority of delegates, including BRAZIL, the EU, US, CHINA, AUSTRALIA, NORWAY, SWITZERLAND, and KENYA, supported option one. ALGERIA and ANTIGUA and BARBUDA favored option two, but the EU, US, and MEXICO said that they could not work with such an option.

The EU suggested new text on option one specifying that funding would be "allocated by the plenary" and include other sources "such as the private sector and foundations." CHINA, MEXICO, COLOMBIA and others agreed on the need to specify that funding be allocated by the plenary.

CHINA, backed by SOUTH AFRICA, COLOMBIA, and BRAZIL, supported the addition of new language in option one referring to a "core trust fund" to "receive all voluntary contributions."

JAPAN argued that a core trust fund should not be requested to receive all voluntary contributions because doing so would risk losing funds from such sources. JAPAN said that while reference to a "core trust fund" was acceptable, "all" should be deleted from the text. The US, MEXICO, the EU, KENYA and others strongly endorsed JAPAN's proposal to remove "all," with the US adding that the word would preclude a funding mechanism that has been successful with the IPCC. The US also suggested that the text refer to international organizations in addition to the GEF, which would encompass, *inter alia*, multilateral development banks with access to potentially greater funding than conventional sources.

KENYA and SOUTH AFRICA highlighted the challenge of securing predictable funding through voluntary funds, while the EU said the plenary could ensure predictable funds. GHANA expressed concern that biodiversity would be unable to garner the level of funding that climate has in the IPCC, to which Watson replied that the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment had achieved levels of annual financial support on par with that of the IPCC through voluntary contributions.

KENYA emphasized that an IPBES have predictable and assured funds for capacity-building. KENYA also requested clarification on the definition of core funding, asking if it pertains specifically to the secretariat and capacity-building. The vice-chair confirmed that a core trust fund would address these needs, as well as the work programme on assessments.

PROCESSES THAT A NEW PLATFORM, IF ESTABLISHED, SHOULD SUPPORT:

Australia, chair of the contact group, introduced revised text, which includes reference to: responses to requests from Governments "in ways determined by the governing bodies of MEAs; intergovernmental, international and regional scientific organizations"; and a process to receive and prioritize requests established by the plenary. COLOMBIA suggested "as determined" instead of "in ways." CHINA specified that requests should be made by a Conference of Parties and not other bodies. IRAN asked to add reference to not just government but also "capacity-building" needs. NORWAY asked to introduce reference to UN bodies next to MEAs. BRAZIL objected, saying in the context of that sentence it did not see a role for UN bodies. EU noted he was flexible on that point. The US highlighted that an IPBES is being negotiated under the auspices of a UN body and listing UN bodies in a different part of the paragraph as just another stakeholder is diminishing. The reference on UN bodies remained in brackets and the original proposal by the chair to have an informal contact group to resolve the issue was withdrawn.

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On a process to receive and prioritize requests, some countries expressed it was redundant and proposed its deletion. CHINA, supported by UGANDA, thought it was essential as an IPBES might receive many requests and should have the ability to prioritize. The US asked to delete the EU proposed language and revert to the original text, which was agreed to.

LEGAL BASIS, GOVERNANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE OF THE NEW PLATFORM: Legal status of a new platform: Vice-chair Watson proposed that delegates consider option one on an independent intergovernmental body that is institutionally linked to existing intergovernmental organizations, which was favored by most delegates during the first reading of the text.

In response to BRAZIL's query on whether this would require ratification by countries, vice-chair Watson, supported by AUSTRALIA, clarified that an association with existing intergovernmental bodies would make ratification unnecessary. Noting that "intergovernmental organization" is a broad term, BRAZIL proposed referring to "UN bodies." The US, COLOMBIA and NORWAY called for more precise language than "institutionally sponsored by" to clarify the link to the host organization. ANTIGUA and BARBUDA sought further clarification on the meaning of "sponsored by," with COLOMBIA, BRAZIL, NORWAY preferring the IPCC formulation "under the auspices of," and the US, IRAN and ALGERIA favoring the less strong and more precise term "administered by" to specify the institutional relationship. IRAN, supported by CAMEROON and UGANDA, called for mention of administrative services that will be provided by the sponsoring body. However, vice-chair Watson said that specific language might limit the platform's access to administrative resources from a broader range of organizations, as is the case in the IPCC.

NORWAY proposed to refer to UNEP, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), UN Development Programme and UNESCO, as it would provide guidance to the UN General Assembly. Representatives of UNEP, UNESCO and FAO confirmed that they have already expressed interest in supporting an IPBES. BRAZIL, IRAN and CHINA felt, however, that it was not appropriate to preempt either the endorsement of these bodies' governing councils, or a final decision by the UN General Assembly and preferred to include the list in the summary report of the meeting. After initially favoring including a list of possible sponsoring organisations, the US later expressed willingness to support this proposal, with the proviso that "bodies" is replaced by the more inclusive "organisations, agencies, funds and programmes."

The EU, supported by NORWAY, JAPAN and the AFRICAN GROUP proposed new language mentioning that a decision on the legal status of an IPBES would be made by an intergovernmental meeting, "such as the General Assembly," while Brazil proposed inviting interested UN bodies willing to host or co-host the platform. The US, supported by ANTIGUA and BARBUDA, emphasized the need to focus on the legal status of a new platform and to defer discussion on means to accomplish this goal to a working group. Vice-chair Watson suggested it would be preferable to make a decision or recommendation, with the minimum being giving guidance to UNEP's Executive Director.

In the evening, delegates discussed two separate texts advanced by a contact group on the legal status of the platform and the Friends of the Chair of the Drafting Group, and agreed to the legal status of an IPBES but remained undecided on whether to mention specific UN bodies that would administer such a platform.

Governance and implementation: In the evening, delegates agreed to text specifying that a plenary of an IPBES is a decision-making body and added reference to the participation of regional economic integration organizations. Text on whether to include language recommending that an IPBES make decisions by government consensus remained in brackets.

Delegates, then, negotiated options for the chair of the plenary, including the possibility of having either: two co-chairs, one from a developing country and one from a developed country; or one chair and four co-chairs and ensure geographic and science balance.

THE BUSAN OUTCOME DOCUMENT: Draft Principles: The Chair presented draft chapeau text from a friends of the chair group, including South Africa, Australia, Spain, China, New Zealand, and Colombia. BRAZIL, supported by JAPAN and IRAN, requested reference to a bottom-up approach. UGANDA wondered why the principles in the text emphasized "social and natural sciences" rather than other science disciplines. IRAN proposed deleting reference to "gender equity." ARGENTINA expressed concern that the text lacked reference to access and benefit sharing and, with NORWAY, requested highlighting the importance of indigenous knowledge. NORWAY also asked that principles show a prioritized order. The US questioned: the intention of including a principle on respecting the MEAs and UN bodies which it found irrelevant to the purpose of elevating science; and proposed describing capacity-building as an "integral component" of IPBES'S work rather than language mandating it should be included in "all aspects of its work."

Other matters: Late in the evening, immediately following the close of the plenary, the secretariat provided three documents to the delegates for reflection: the draft considerations thus far; the updated draft text of the proposed chapeau; and an updated draft text of the Busan Outcome document.

The vice-chair recognized that the next day's work included a number of items and highlighted that a major issue involved the language and ordering of text under the consideration on the processes that a new platform should support.