



IPBES Bulletin

A Daily Report of the Second *Ad Hoc* Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Meeting on an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Interface on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES II)
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IPBES II HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2009

The second *ad hoc* intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES) opened on Monday in Nairobi, Kenya. In the morning, delegates heard opening statements and began discussions, in plenary. In the afternoon, delegates resumed their discussions.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

Ibrahim Thiaw, Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, welcomed participants on behalf of UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner.

Angela Cropper, UNEP Deputy Executive Director, warned that the international community would likely fail to reach the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA)'s target of reducing biodiversity loss by 2010. She stressed the need to strengthen dialogue between the scientific and policy communities through a new mechanism that furthers scientific independence, improves collaboration, offers regular assessments and supports capacity building, especially in developing countries.

Jochen Flasbarth, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Conference of the Parties (COP) President, added that the establishment of a new mechanism is crucial for biodiversity policy in the coming decade. He said that establishing the IPBES should not be seen as competition to existing scientific bodies dealing with biodiversity, such as the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), but as additional value and scientific evidence for decision-makers. Flasbarth suggested that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) could serve as a blueprint for an IPBES.

Highlighting his country's rich biodiversity and ecosystems, John Michuki, Minister of Environment, Kenya, welcomed the establishment of an international body, but said that any mechanism should avoid duplication of efforts with other UN mechanisms and include the private sector.

Ahmed Djoghlaif, CBD Executive Secretary, unveiled the logo for the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, which will be the focus of a high-level segment of the UN General Assembly in September 2010. The goal of the year, he said, is to mobilize all stakeholders to protect life on earth.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Delegates elected Robert Watson (UK) as Chair of the meeting. Following nominations by regional groups, four Vice-Chairs: Enma Diaz (Guatemala), Alfred Oteng Yeboah (Ghana); Jelena Ducic (Serbia) and Abdullah Hamid Zakri (Malaysia) were also elected by acclamation.

In response to a proposal by UNEP that the rules of procedure of the Governing Council be adopted, Brazil, supported by USA, Turkey and others, called for a consensus approach rather than voting, in view of the multi-stakeholder nature of the meeting.

During discussions on the agenda, Brazil noted that Item 5 on adoption of recommendations on ways and means to implement an overarching science-policy framework, should be adjusted to reflect agreed language from the Putrajaya Declaration and the UNEP Governing Council decision on "the special need to develop and maintain the technical and scientific capacity of developing countries in biodiversity-related issues." Several delegates supported Brazil's proposal that deliberations take place in plenary sessions only, due to the interrelated nature of issues to be discussed. Chair Watson confirmed that the organization of work would be by consensus, and that no formal contact groups would be established. The agenda was adopted subject to further discussion of Brazil's proposal.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE GAP ANALYSIS ON THE EXISTING SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACE ON BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Jerry Harrison, UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Center (WCMC), presented on the key findings of the gap analysis, noting the process included discussion with key stakeholders, invited inputs on specific issues, and reviewed scientific literature and reports of science-policy processes. He noted that the review drew on 739 individual comments from governments, research institutions, intergovernmental bodies and other stakeholders. He underlined the scope for improving credibility, relevance and legitimacy of existing science-policy processes through enhanced capacity, funding, and the harmonization of agendas and approaches. He further noted the need to enhance policy-relevant messages and communication through, *inter alia*: providing clearer and more authoritative syntheses; highlighting the implications of different policy choices; improving models, scenarios and indicators to support decision-making; and providing timely advice on emerging issues. Other findings related to the need for better coordination among actors within and across the science-policy interface and capacity development through interdisciplinary work, efficient knowledge brokering and reducing geographic variation in capacity.

In the ensuing discussion, Sweden, on behalf of the European Union (EU), proposed the establishment of a mechanism to improve and strengthen the existing science-policy interface. Mexico, with Turkey, stressed the need for a mechanism that would coordinate with other mechanisms and platforms, and take into account all levels in its decision-making. Grenada, on behalf of the scientific bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions, noted that such a mechanism

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is critical for disseminating information at all levels, and, with Switzerland and Uganda, stressed that such a mechanism is not to replace the scientific bodies, as the scientific bodies are key stakeholders in this process. China requested that the existing gaps be more comprehensively explored, and cautioned against making a decision on the establishment of the mechanism. Malaysia stressed the importance of credible, legitimate and relevant scientific information. The CBD, supporting the establishment of an IPBES, emphasized the need for stakeholders' impetus.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) noted that if an IPBES is a way to address fragmentation in biodiversity science it is a matter for governments to decide. South Africa called for the development of a radical approach in resource mobilization, and expressed support for an IPBES, notwithstanding the need for clarification on the relationship between an IPBES and similar platforms under the CBD. Ghana noted the need to focus on a coordinated approach and fundamental capacities as a basis for further discussion. New Zealand underscored that IPBES's role is also to develop scientifically robust indicators. Japan noted that existing mechanisms cannot address the findings identified in the gap analysis.

The International Council for Science (ICSU) highlighted the conclusions of its online consultation process, including the need for greater awareness on the deterioration of biodiversity and communication with scientists and decision-makers. Diversitas highlighted the editorial on IPBES in the journal *Science*. The US noted that he cannot agree to a new mechanism until the IPBES' mandate, institutional arrangements and relationship to other existing mechanisms are clarified. Yemen noted that poverty, lack of resources, technology transfer and capacity are all issues that need to be addressed for making developing countries' participation possible. Brazil highlighted the need for a platform that, *inter alia*, promotes a multidisciplinary approach, inclusive of attention to traditional knowledge. He also stressed the need not to duplicate the work of the CBD.

Norway underlined the importance of involving other UN agencies, such as the United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and UN Development Programme (UNDP), in establishing a new mechanism, while many countries, including Australia, Turkmenistan and Uruguay noted the need to avoid duplication of existing subsidiary Multilateral Environmental Agencies (MEAs). Canada agreed that some qualities of the IPCC could be replicated for IPBES, particularly in regard to being a body that is intergovernmental and scientifically independent. The Russian Federation said financial requirements need to be taken into consideration. Vietnam added that developing countries, in particular, need technical and financial support for strengthening the science-policy interface.

IUCN noted that a new mechanism needs to support coordination and capacity building, and function within and beyond the biodiversity community. The representative of the Animals Committee, CITES, said a mechanism like IPBES could strengthen scientific advisory boards in many MEAs but shouldn't replace them. The Mauritius Council for Development, Environmental Studies & Conservation (MAUDESCO) stressed the inclusion of civil society and NGOs.

Summarizing the session, Chair Watson pointed out that there was general consensus on the importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services in development and poverty alleviation,

and that there is a need to strengthen science-policy interface at all levels. He added that there was strong support for the gap analysis as a basis for discussion. Capacity building came through as an important issue to be discussed as well as the equitable involvement from developing countries. Watson emphasized that a new mechanism must be policy relevant and compliment MEAs, not replace them. The key, he added, will be thinking through the scope and governance mechanism to include all stakeholders.

CONSIDERATION OF OPTIONS TO STRENGTHEN THE SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACE FOR BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Introducing the agenda item on actions identified in the gap analysis to strengthen the science-policy interface, Chair Watson invited delegates to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of actions proposed in the Secretariat's note, taking each of the five needs in turn. UNEP noted that the five needs are: better collaboration and coordination; regular, timely assessments to generate and disseminate policy-relevant advice; policy implementation; capacity building; and scientific independence.

Brazil and others underscored the need to allow delegates to revisit the governance structure at a later stage due to the interrelated nature of the five needs identified in the gap analysis. He noted that without considering the governance structure and budget implications of the proposed mechanism, it would be difficult to discuss suggestions that speak to the involvement of stakeholders and members. Canada, with, Argentina, the EU, Mali, Norway and Senegal, supported the Chair's proposal to discuss needs and actions. Indonesia noted that it is important to look at needs as functions.

NEED FOR BETTER COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION TO GENERATE KNOWLEDGE FOR A COMMON AND SHARED KNOWLEDGE BASE:

To facilitate knowledge generation and build a common and shared knowledge base, the Secretariat proposed three actions: 1) establishing an informal working group comprising representatives of science networks; 2) constituting a formalized *ad hoc* working group endorsed by the governing organs of the respective institutions; and 3) developing a shared knowledge base within the new mechanism.

New Zealand, Argentina, Senegal, Japan and others expressed preference for the third action, while Uganda called for a focus on national needs before moving to higher levels. Several delegates called for a closer examination of the links with existing science advisory bodies in other conventions. The Ramsar Convention outlined that the proposed mechanism should: be broadly focused on a shared knowledge base; address multiple ecosystems, sectors and scales; and focus on the needs of members.

Mexico noted that the platform should translate scientific information into layman's language to the extent necessary, and highlighted that the requirements for the financial resources will be monumental unless the needs are first defined. Japan noted that science should be communicated in a more coherent fashion and in a way that serves the needs of policy-makers. Cameroon said that weaknesses in generating knowledge are effectively highlighted and that the formal *ad hoc* working group described in the second action is a preferred option.

The US expressed the hope to have a more in depth discussion on functions, as generating knowledge or common and shared knowledge base is still not defined. Brazil, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean countries (GRULAC), stressed that "nothing is agreed until all is agreed."