



# 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: TUESDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2009

The second *ad hoc* intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on an IPBES continued plenary discussions on Tuesday. Opening the morning session, Chair Watson welcomed progress made on the first day, noting that consensus had been reached on, *inter alia*, the usefulness of the gap analysis as a baseline document and the need for any new mechanism to be independent, relevant, interdisciplinary and adequately funded. In both morning and afternoon sessions, delegates continued to discuss the actions needed to strengthen the science-policy interface.

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

**NEED FOR REGULAR AND TIMELY ASSESSMENTS TO GENERATE AND DISSEMINATE POLICY-RELEVANT ADVICE:** The Secretariat proposed two actions: 1) establishing a formal *ad hoc* working group with a clear mandate to produce regular scientific assessments; and 2) a clear mandate to undertake regular, comprehensive assessments and provide policy-relevant, regular and timely scientific information.

Norway, Ghana, Uganda, Japan, Brazil, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, the EU, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Switzerland and others, supported the establishment of a new mechanism and expressed support for the second action. Egypt stressed the need to communicate clearly with decision makers, while Malaysia, supported by DIVERSITAS and Republic of Korea underscored the need for a common conceptual framework. ICSU offered to contribute to the science that could be needed by a new mechanism. The Chinese Academy of Sciences highlighted the need to link ecological processes and services with policy.

Mali underscored international support to enhance local and sub-regional action. Ghana called for strengthening institutional and human capacities for all local actors. Iran called for a fair and balanced approach and underscored that many of the advantages and disadvantages identified for the second action are also true of the first.

Japan noted that a new mechanism could provide "value-added" assessments. Ethiopia stressed the importance of the proposed mechanism to assess the socio-economic value of ecosystems. Israel noted the recent UN Convention to Combat Desertification COP 9 scientific recommendations, which include establishing a mechanism for addressing the science-policy interface.

Bahrain highlighted that assessments should focus on socio-economic implications. Tour de Valat called for harmonizing terminology. Mexico, with Switzerland, stressed

the intergovernmental and independent nature of the proposed mechanism. Brazil noted that assessments should recognize traditional knowledge as a tool for conservation. Turkey called for a bottom-up approach, while Senegal noted that awareness-raising would aid in increasing public knowledge and behavioral change. The US noted the necessity of a peer-review mechanism for assessments.

Cameroon, with South Africa, said IPBES assessments should be policy-relevant. Argentina, UNDP and others emphasized the link between biodiversity and poverty alleviation in future IPBES deliberations, while Burkina Faso said assessments need to be integrated into food security policy. Argentina re-emphasized that assessments need to be multidisciplinary, independent and avoid duplication. UN Division of Ocean Affairs and Law of Sea highlighted the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment. Colombia cited CBD's SBSTTA as a body that already provides scientific advice and assessments. Australia said future assessments should take advantage of assessments already being undertaken by the existing Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA) bodies.

IUCN, with DIVERSITAS, noted that science and new information around biodiversity and ecosystem services are rapidly developing.

Summarizing the discussion, Chair Watson noted that delegates highlighted the importance of linking biodiversity ecosystem services to poverty alleviation, social cohesion and health in assessments undertaken, and the inclusion of all kinds of knowledge, including traditional knowledge.

**NEED TO SUPPORT POLICY IMPLEMENTATION:** The Secretariat proposed two actions: 1) that existing scientific advisory bodies and processes be strengthened by providing adequate financial and human resources to facilitate the translation of assessment findings for policy-making; and 2) a new mechanism to provide support in the form of decision-support toolkits for policy-makers. Israel, Malaysia, Turkey, Uganda, Mexico, Cuba, Bahrain, Republic of Korea, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Egypt, Cote d'Ivoire and others supported action two. Malaysia stressed the importance of disseminating scientific information. Mexico highlighted that action one is best served by providing concrete examples that respond to needs of users. Iran noted that action one does not add value and action two is ambitious. Japan asked to clarify the function of the need to support policy implementation.

The EU, Brazil, the US, Indonesia and the Russian Federation highlighted that uptake of assessment findings should not be policy prescriptive. Argentina highlighted the task of translating the complexity of science into policies. The US, supported by Canada, asked for more clarification as to what is envisioned by the actions. Norway stressed a focus on information sharing, while Uruguay underlined the need to

understand national dynamics. Guatemala, Ghana and others called for a hybrid approach that incorporates both actions. The Russian Federation stressed the need to present credible and scientifically-sound information to decision makers and called for more clarity on the proposed toolkits. Ramsar, on behalf of the Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel, highlighted that there is need for cross-sectoral policy support. Tour Du Valat called for both proposed actions to distinguish between the roles of scientific advisory bodies and those involved in policy implementation on the ground. IUCN noted that toolkits providing support for multi-stakeholder involvement or multi-criteria analysis are useful in this context.

Summarizing the session, Chair Watson noted delegates had articulated a strong need to translate knowledge into action and a preference for a combination of both actions, while underscoring the necessity for better analysis of these actions.

#### **NEED TO BUILD CAPACITY TO MAINSTREAM BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES FOR HUMAN WELL-BEING:**

The Secretariat proposed three actions: 1) increase capacity building with regard to cooperation, assessments and policy implementation of initiatives under various international organizations, including UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank; 2) a new mechanism that supports existing capacity-building initiatives; and 3) capacity building that is an integral component within the new mechanism. Chair Watson urged delegates to highlight specific capacities needed to help frame the role of an IPBES and its link to other mechanisms.

Ethiopia highlighted institutional capacity building and strengthening communities to negotiate for their fair share of benefits. Indonesia stressed the role of capacity building in the science-policy interface. Vietnam called for information sharing at all levels. Malaysia urged more research at the national and subnational level and called on international organizations to help narrow the knowledge deficit. Uganda emphasized skills development for knowledge generation and dissemination of scientific information. Republic of Korea and Israel highlighted the need to synthesize scientific data and enhance synergies. Iran and Ghana stressed that capacity building is essential in realizing the systemic changes needed for biodiversity protection. South Africa called for prioritization of capacity needs.

Egypt called for a broad definition of capacity building that incorporates human, technical and financial resources. Several delegates felt the focus on human well-being is too narrow, while Mali supported this approach and called for global solidarity to raise ecological awareness and enhance skills of scientists and decision makers.

Brazil, for GRULAC, supported by Uruguay, stressed that IPBES should have two main components: capacity building and assessments, and tabled a detailed agenda for the proposed mechanism. Senegal, with Turkmenistan, supported action three, but, with the EU, stressed that the new mechanism should not be tasked with operational responsibilities. The EU recognized the need for capacity building and cautioned against the duplication of efforts. Japan stressed the need to discuss the functions of the new mechanism to clarify capacity building needs.

Birdlife International, supported by ICSU, called for a combination of actions two and three, and stressed that such a platform provide clear guidance to parties for capacity building. Norway noted that capacity building for the generation and use of knowledge are key elements in the proposed mechanism's

efforts. Kenya noted that one of the functions could be to assist in repackaging scientific information into understandable language. Ramsar highlighted the need for communicating scientific information at all levels, and called for the strengthening of institutions at the national level. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) noted that the proposed platform could improve capacity, but should be linked to existing MEAs.

Chair Watson, in summary, noted that capacity building is vital and is needed across a range of assessments and levels. He recalled that delegates called for both actions two and three, in addition to a hybrid thereof. He stressed that clarification of the function and role of an IPBES was necessary, and the integration and synthesis of the proposed mechanism across the biodiversity-related conventions was also important.

**NEED FOR SCIENTIFIC INDEPENDENCE:** The Secretariat proposed three actions: 1) increasing financial and human resources; 2) revising agendas and mandates of governing organs of existing scientific advisory bodies and processes; and 3) establishing a new mechanism with a specific mandate to provide regular and timely policy-relevant scientific information.

Although the majority of delegates supported action three and stressed the importance of scientific independence, Malaysia and Brazil expressed concern about the term "scientific independence", questioning how this would be determined. Iran said that the term could have political implications and there needs to be a definition that prevents misunderstanding. Rather than using the term "scientific independence," the representative of the CITES Animals and Plant Committees suggested focusing on "relevant, legitimate and credible science," with a process to ensure that it is peer-reviewed.

Canada said that independence means having an open, transparent peer-review mechanism, and Brazil stressed that the process be legitimate with equal participation of scientists from developing countries.

The EU, supported by others, stressed the independence of the scientific process in the establishment of a new mechanism. The US, with Canada and Japan, added that a new mechanism should be intergovernmental and not formally linked to political processes. Norway said that any new mechanism should have the responsibility to work on emerging issues, while Republic of Korea noted a new mechanism should provide cross-cutting and interdisciplinary input to existing bodies. Japan highlighted the need to avoid duplication of existing scientific bodies. ICSU added that objectivity and credibility are essential to a new mechanism. Ramsar said a strong, credible and shared knowledge base could strengthen policy advice.

Switzerland said the new platform could be based on the IPCC, but independent from other bodies in design of work and agenda. Israel and others added that the IPCC is a good template to be explored.

The US noted that actions one and two are valuable, and welcomed the opportunity to explore a new mechanism provided that the merits are thoroughly discussed.

Closing the session, Chair Watson highlighted that delegates agreed on the need for relevance, clarity and legitimacy in exploring a new mechanism. He asked delegates to maintain the focus on what an IPBES should look like, including its functions, governance, use of knowledge, capacity building and its relationship to other MEA bodies.