



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: THURSDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2009

Delegates discussed, in plenary, IPBES functions and potential governance structures. They also considered the draft outcomes of discussions distributed by the Secretariat, particularly on the gap analysis and needs.

FUNCTIONS OF AN IPBES

Continuing the previous day's discussion on IPBES functions, Australia re-emphasized the need to strengthen existing mechanisms for synergy, cooperation and collaboration, particularly with biodiversity-related conventions. She added that more analysis and information is needed before a decision on establishing a new mechanism can be taken. Norway requested information on UN General Assembly documents that guided the creation of the IPCC, and stressed the importance of involving other biodiversity-related bodies to understand their existing assessments and capacity-building activities.

Chair Watson acknowledged the requests for more information and data on the assessment landscape, IPCC governance, capacity-building activities and New Zealand's proposal to develop common metrics but asked delegates what level of detail they are looking for so that the Secretariat could meet their needs.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES FOR AN IPBES

Chair Watson opened the discussion on potential governance structures and alternatives, presenting diagrams prepared by the Secretariat showing two possible governance structure options.

DIAGRAMS OF POSSIBLE GOVERNANCE

STRUCTURES: Indonesia, for the Asian Group and with Turkmenistan, for the Central and Eastern European Group, expressed a preference for the second option but noted that more detail was required. Senegal, for the African Group, noted more discussion was needed on alternative potential governance structures other than those presented. He stressed the criteria of legitimacy, credibility and relevance for the potential mechanism, and noted that the second option best fulfilled these conditions. The African Group also highlighted a number of issues needing clarification, including the relationship of the scientific advisory body to the working groups and, the enhancement of the functions of an IPBES. Brazil, for GRULAC, noted that the model of the IPCC could provide a framework for selecting the bureau and the chairman. On request from the Chair, he noted that GRULAC did not favor the second option. The EU, with Switzerland, expressed a preference for the first option. The US welcomed the discussion on the IPBES governance structure, noting it would help in reviewing its position on the proposed mechanism. Adding to Canada's contribution, Norway stressed the need to define whether the discussion should be limited to the top governance structure or extend to the regional level as well.

The US, with GRULAC, agreed that the purpose of an IPBES is to deal with science and the scientific process, but addressing the future issues needs to be done systematically. He acknowledged the importance of capacity building and assessments and cautioned against going into too much detail at these discussions. The EU noted that an IPBES should support capacity building by identifying initiatives that need support, and provide advice if necessary. He said that the mechanism could, additionally, identify gaps in knowledge and work on periodic assessment processes.

Secretariat and relationship with other MEA bodies:

Canada highlighted the importance of independence and multidisciplinary of an IPBES, and noted that if a secretariat is established, it should not be vested underneath an existing MEA body. The African Group, expressing flexibility on the matter, called for more deliberation on the relationship between an IPBES and the MEA bodies, stressing bottom-up and demand driven approaches. Mexico noted that SBSTTA chairs from biodiversity-related conventions should be involved in the IPBES. On a question from Argentina regarding what level of approval for co-sponsorship from other organizations is needed, the Chair noted that if the mechanism is a stand-alone entity then many co-sponsors would be possible. He noted that this may still be possible if the mechanism was embedded in a convention. UNEP clarified that co-sponsors do not necessarily interfere with independence and inter-governmental arrangements, merely that they lend support. He also noted that the issue of co-support and co-hosting is different from co-sponsoring. UNESCO highlighted its experience as a co-sponsor of the MA and similar panels, which entailed, *inter alia*: hosting the secretariat; identifying and mobilizing expertise; facilitating specific assessment modules; and communicating the final findings. Switzerland noted the plenary should review and endorse reports and adopt summaries for policy-makers and establish the scope of collaboration with different MEA bodies. The Russian Federation added that clarity is needed on the advantages and disadvantages of the IPCC rules of procedure and on mechanisms for enhancing coordination with MEA bodies. Chair Watson also noted that an IPBES that responds to the executive body of an MEA body rather than its plenary, may communicate its decisions more effectively and avoid the time-lags that inevitably occur when communicating decisions to an MEA plenary body.

Chair Watson echoed calls for capacity building to be a cross-cutting theme and proposed that a study be undertaken to explore hosting options for the IPBES secretariat. Mexico stressed that consultations should first be undertaken at regional level to determine the needs on the ground and suggested that UNEP take the lead in hosting the IPBES secretariat. The African Group supported the GRULAC proposal for a study on the various locations for the secretariat, and the associated

costs. The EU noted that location of the secretariat should allow independence. Norway suggested that the Secretariat be established as a consortium of most relevant agencies along the lines of the UN-Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD).

Governing body structure: The African Group noted that the governing body structure will be determined by whether it is made up of scientists or governments. Canada, supported by Norway, Switzerland, Brazil and others, called for a single credible governing body and suggested naming it the “Scientific Bureau.” He called for form to follow function in constituting working groups and proposed that this be one of the first of orders of business of a new IPBES. Noting the cross-sectoral nature of capacity building, Japan suggested that an oversight body, rather than a working group, should supervise such activities. GRULAC noted its members cannot afford to fund IPBES activities. Indonesia called for governments to nominate IPBES focal points to ensure sufficient coordination on the ground.

Advisory scientific body: Brazil said it did not favor a scientific advisory body, and that assessments should be performed at the national level and then up to the sub-regional and regional level. Malaysia called for a small separate scientific panel comprising 20-30 experts to ensure access to the best science for generating policy advice. He suggested that such a panel might focus on assessments, under the guidance of the plenary to ensure a demand-driven focus. Australia and the Russian Federation requested additional information on the procedure for selection of experts for the scientific bureau.

Representation: The Asian Group stressed an IPBES should have equitable geographic representation, with involvement of experts from all member states. The Central and Eastern European Group elaborated that the working groups should be based on regional representation and focus on knowledge generation and capacity building. She asked for clarification regarding the interaction of an IPBES with other UN Agencies and MEA bodies. GRULAC, with the Asian Group and the Central and Eastern European Group, stated a preference for regional representation and a bottom-up approach for an IPBES. He called for a plenary that has universal representation and is broadly open to all stakeholders, particularly the scientific bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions. Israel pointed out that classification of regions for specific assessments does not always overlap with the official UN groupings. Norway highlighted the importance of

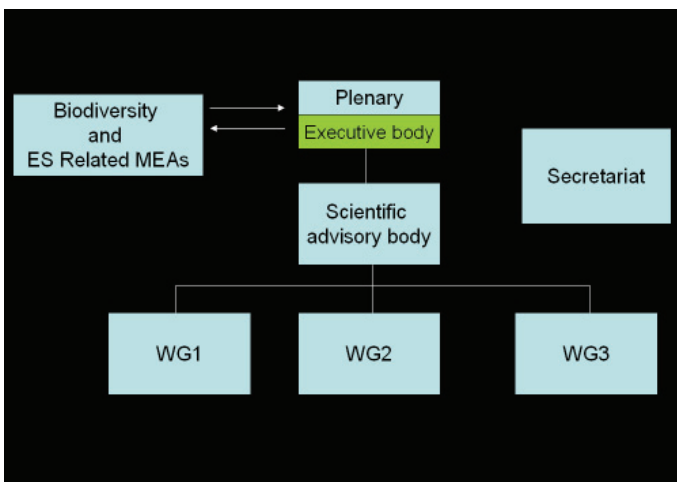
equal representation from relevant UN bodies to gain synergies and help mainstream results. The US expressed concern for including non-governmental members.

Working groups: The EU called for *ad hoc* working groups under the proposed mechanism. He highlighted possible components, including: facilitating capacity building; providing best practices at the national level; and the creation of a secretariat. GRULAC called for two working groups to be formed, on assessments and capacity building, noting that additional *ad hoc* working groups could be formed if necessary. The Asian Group, with the African Group, supported a permanent working group for capacity building. Switzerland called for flexibility in setting up *ad hoc* working groups.

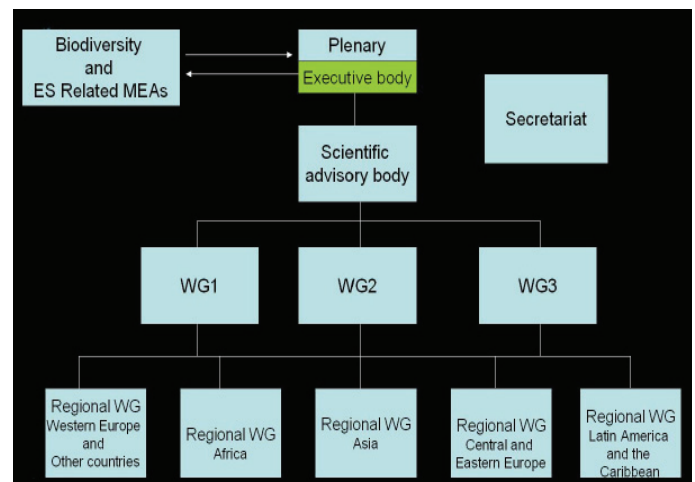
CHAIR’S CONCLUSION: Chair Watson noted that most of the proposals made on the IPBES governance structure reflect the composition of the IPCC. He clarified, however, that the IPCC does not have a scientific advisory body because most of its members have the required scientific expertise to oversee each of the three working groups. With respect to its interface with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Chair Watson explained that while there are mechanisms for dialogue, the IPCC does not report to the COP.

He noted that a number of background documents had been made available on the IPCC’s rules of procedures for an executive committee, finances, and the preparation, review and approval of reports. On governance structures, he noted general agreement on the need for: a plenary comprised of government representatives and observers from other stakeholders; some form of executive body; and appropriate geographic representation. Chair Watson said there were divergent views on how MEA bodies would interface with an IPBES, the need for an advisory scientific body within the platform, and whether there should be permanent or *ad hoc* working groups.

Discussion on the Chair’s draft outcomes document was deferred to Friday morning to allow the Bureau to distribute an updated version incorporating discussions held thus far. Notwithstanding that, the EU, Iran, Brazil and others provided some comments on sections of the Chair’s summary, including the role of science for informing policy, traditional knowledge, bottom-up approaches and access to knowledge. Australia noted that the Chair’s summary document should be used to facilitate discussion towards consensus and decision. Senegal, supported by Brazil, noted that the Chair’s summary should have a section on “the way forward”. In closing, Chair Watson emphasized that delegates should focus on areas that will allow them to make decisions about an IPBES at the next meeting.



Governance Structure Option I (Courtesy of UNEP)



Governance Structure Option II (Courtesy of UNEP)