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Second ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services
Nairobi, 5–9 October 2009

Report of the second ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services

I. Opening of the meeting

A. Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was held at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi and commenced with an opening ceremony at 10 a.m. on Monday, 5 October 2009, which was facilitated by Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Director of the UNEP Division of Environmental Policy Implementation.

B. Opening statements

2. Opening statements were delivered by Ms. Angela Cropper, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP; Mr. Jochen Flasbarth, President of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity; and Mr. John Michuki, Minister of Environment of Kenya.

3. In her statement, the Deputy Executive Director emphasized the urgency of addressing the degradation of ecosystem services and the loss of biodiversity. The current meeting was taking place amid preparations for the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010 and a number of important meetings to review the progress made in achieving biodiversity targets. The grave findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment indicated that ecosystems had deteriorated more rapidly in the preceding 50 years than at any other comparable period in human history under the growing demands of the modern, industrial world. She underlined the lack of policy implications from the scientific information generated by existing science-policy mechanisms and observed that institutions often applied differing approaches, frameworks and methodologies leading to a lack of coherence in their messages: accordingly, there was wide recognition of the need for an effective mechanism to ensure active dialogue and interaction between scientists and policymakers.

4. The gap analysis prepared by the secretariat in response to the recommendations of the first ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting in Putrajaya highlighted five main needs, namely for improvement in the scientific independence of the science-policy interface, for strengthening collaboration and coordination in generating a shared knowledge base, for regular and timely assessments, for policy implementation support and for capacity-building, particularly in developing countries. She expressed the hope that the meeting would discuss and decide on specific steps to address

those needs and clearly indicate the means whereby the science-policy interface could be strengthened, including the adoption of a decision to establish the proposed platform.

5. In his statement, Mr. Flasbarth said that a new mechanism was crucial to ensuring more success in protecting biodiversity than had been achieved over the previous decade and stressed that the current meeting should be a landmark in establishing the proposed platform. He drew attention to the detailed gap analysis, requested at the first meeting, which was now before representatives, setting out clearly the need for an improved interface between science and politics. He compared the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and said that important lessons could be learnt from the latter. The high degree of scientific consensus reached by the Panel in many cases had enabled decision makers to take appropriate action. Such a science-policy platform should not be seen as being in competition with existing scientific bodies and conventions dealing with biodiversity, in particular not with the Convention on Biological Diversity or the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, rather an additional source of valuable scientific evidence.

6. In his statement, Mr. Michuki spoke of the importance that Kenya attached to the current meeting and to the role that science needed to play in informing policy decisions on conservation and the sustainable use of ecosystem services. Those services were a source of food, energy, medicine and raw materials for a wide range of industries, and a large part of the population depended upon them. As there was a large human contribution to the loss of biodiversity, measures to reduce the trends were often met with resistance and Governments were called upon to make unpopular decisions. Such decisions needed to be based on the best scientific evidence and credible information and the idea of an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity was therefore most welcome. Careful thought should also be given to the driving force behind the process; while the proposal was for an intergovernmental body, it was also important to involve the private sector. In conclusion, he stressed that the proposed platform must be assured of a sound financial mechanism before its establishment as many of the Governments that would be called upon to provide financial support were already unable to meet their obligations to existing organizations. He urged the participants to rise to the occasion and strengthen the interface between science and policy.

7. Following those opening statements, Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, gave a short presentation on the International Year of Biodiversity and introduced the logo for the event. He recalled that the purpose of the event was to encourage people to discover the biodiversity surrounding them, realize its value and their connection to it, recognize the consequences of its loss and act to save it. 2010 would be a historic year for biodiversity, marked, among other important events, by the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010.

C. Attendance

8. Representatives of the following countries attended the meeting: Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Holy See, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Samoa, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

9. The representative of Palestine also attended the meeting.

10. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations and secretariats of conventions were also present: Association of Southeast Asian Nations Centre for Biodiversity, Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Convention on Migratory Species, European Commission, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Global Environment Facility, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of

International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Strategy for Disaster Reduction, United Nations University.

11. Representatives of the following governmental, non-governmental, private sector and business organizations attended the meeting: Birdlife International, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security, Conservation International, Council for Development, Environmental Studies and Conservation, Diversitas, Global Invasive Species Programme, International Council for Science, Pax Romana ICMICA Africa, Resource Africa, Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Society for Conservation Biology, The Crooper Foundation, Tour du Valat, University of Mexico, Wildlife Conservation Society, World Resources Institute.

II. Organizational matters

12. The Deputy Executive Director explained that the rules of procedure of the Governing Council of UNEP would be applied, mutatis mutandis, to the proceedings of the meeting. The business of the meeting would be conducted in accordance with the practice observed at the first meeting, held in Putrajaya, Malaysia, from 10 to 12 November 2008.

A. Election of officers

13. The following five officers were elected to the bureau of the meeting, one representing each of the five United Nations regions:

Chair: Mr. Robert Watson (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Western European and others group

Vice-chairs: Ms. Enma Díaz (Guatemala), Latin American and Caribbean group
Mr. Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (Ghana), African group
Mr. Abdul Hamid Zakaria (Malaysia), Asian and Pacific group
Ms. Jelena Dučić (Serbia), Central and Eastern European group

Mr. Oteng-Yeboah and Ms. Díaz agreed to serve as rapporteurs for the meeting.

B. Adoption of the agenda

14. The meeting adopted the following agenda, based on the provisional agenda contained in document UNEP/IPBES/2/1:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Election of officers;
 - (b) Adoption of the agenda;
 - (c) Organization of work.
3. Major findings of the gap analysis on the existing science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services.
4. Consideration of options to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services.
5. Adoption of recommendations.
6. Adoption of the report.
7. Closure of the meeting.

C. Organization of work

15. In response to the urging of representatives, the Chair confirmed that the meeting would endeavour to conduct all its work in plenary meeting. He also confirmed that, in view of the

multi-stakeholder nature of the meeting and the voting provisions of the rules of procedure notwithstanding, in reaching its decisions the meeting would proceed on the basis of consensus.

III. Major findings of the gap analysis on the existing science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services

16. Participants agreed that the discussions under the present agenda item should be reflected in the Chair's summary set out in the annex to the present report.

IV. Consideration of options to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services

A. Overall discussions

17. Participants agreed that the discussions under the present agenda item should be reflected in the Chair's summary set out in the annex to the present report.

B. Presentation by the Chair on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and discussion

18. The Chair, in his capacity as former chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, gave a presentation on the Panel's background, objectives, governance structure, activities and funding. The Panel benefited from an extremely open and inclusive process, stringent government and expert peer review processes and did not engage in research or monitoring activities. He drew particular attention to its summaries for policymakers, which were reviewed by Governments on a word-by-word basis ensuring their full ownership of the final product. While linked to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Panel was totally independent of the Convention and its subsidiary bodies.

19. Responding to participants' questions, the Chair said that, in addition to the central secretariat, there were secretariats for each of the Panel's three working groups, each of which hosted three or four employees and represented a cost of between \$500,000 and \$1 million per annum. Various countries had sponsored the costs of those secretariats. Were subglobal assessments to be an important feature of the proposed platform's work, it would be important to consider whether its secretariat would be centralized or distributed regionally.

20. On membership of a possible platform that was linked to many biodiversity-related conventions, he said that, if the mechanism were independent with co-sponsoring organizations, members of the governing bodies of those organizations could be members of the platform. He stressed that the Panel's principles and procedures ensured ownership and credibility and provided clear guidelines on processes such as the nomination and selection of experts and evaluation of the Panel's documents.

21. On the Panel's provisions for capacity-building, he said that the Panel had supported capacity-building through full representation of experts from developing countries in its processes, including provision of fellowships and scholarships to enhance their participation. He noted that funding for the participation of 40 young experts from developing countries had been provided for in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.

22. One participant requested the secretariat to provide a more detailed document on the Panel, including on its governance and approach to the science-policy aspect. He described essential elements of the Panel's work: peer and government review processes, equitable geographical representation in its working groups to ensure legitimacy and a catalytic role.

C. Statement by the Executive Director

23. Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP, took the opportunity during the debate under the present item to address participants. Stressing the interconnected nature of global warming, biodiversity and ecosystem services, and noting the fact that the loss of biodiversity and ecosystems was becoming systemic, he called for a shift of focus from such negative trends to positive developments, such as the amassed store of knowledge, including traditional knowledge, which constituted one of the

driving forces behind the current undertaking. In that context, he agreed that a body modelled on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change could help to resolve the dilemma whereby scientists felt misunderstood and policymakers found scientific arguments obstructive. The Panel had shown that the independence of science and the incontrovertible power of fact and empirical understanding could serve to foster international consensus-building.

24. Rather than focus exclusively on the identified gaps, he urged participants to consider instead how to achieve synergies between all the bodies involved. Noting that more than 80 per cent of the world's new protected areas lay in developing countries, he also called for action to redress imbalances between developing and developed countries in that process. Turning the issue of the institutional nature of any new body, he said that there was a wide array of institutions that contributed to the spectrum of opportunity. In moving from design to reality, it was vital to keep the process simple, and to ensure efficiency, equity and accountability. For that purpose, it was important to develop various levels of partnerships: an undertaking of the nature envisaged could not succeed if it remained within the remit of a single entity. Given the complexity of biodiversity, he urged participants to keep their focus on science, lest the task before them became insuperable. Lastly, he expressed his optimism about the prospects for success and gave his assurances that, whatever role was assigned to UNEP by the international community in that process, it could rely on the organization's full support.

V. Adoption of recommendations

25. The Chair undertook to produce a summary of the meeting, intended to lay the groundwork for a third and final meeting, in place of recommendations. In the ensuing discussion, all participants considered that the Chair's summary accurately reflected the outcome of the discussions at the meeting. The text of the Chair's summary is set out in the annex to the present report.

VI. Adoption of the report

26. The present report was adopted on Friday, 9 October 2009, on the basis of the draft report contained in documents UNEP/IPBES/2/L.1, Add.1 and Add.2. Participants agreed to entrust the finalization of the report of the meeting to the Rapporteur, working in consultation with the Chair.

VII. Closure of the meeting

27. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.30 p.m. on Friday, 9 October 2009.

Annex

Chair's summary¹

1. Representatives at the second ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, held in Nairobi from 5 to 9 October 2009, all acknowledged the importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services, which, while critically important for sustainable development and current and future human well-being, particularly for poverty eradication, were currently experiencing significant loss; that the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services must be strengthened at all levels; the importance of ensuring the quality and independence of the science made available; and the importance of active collaboration with relevant United Nations agencies to maximize synergies and build capacity to mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem services.

I. Findings and needs as identified in the gap analysis

2. The discussion in the present section is based on the overall needs of a strengthened science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services and not specific to the potential functions of the proposed platform, which are discussed in section II.

3. There was general agreement that the gap analysis provided a basis for considering ways and means of strengthening the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services, but it was acknowledged that the analysis of some issues, such as current and relevant capacity-building initiatives and the assessment landscape at various scales, needed further development.

4. There was agreement that a strengthened science-policy interface needed: scientific independence (credibility, relevance and legitimacy); knowledge generation (collaboration and coordination for common and shared knowledge bases); knowledge assessments (regular and timely assessments to generate and disseminate policy-relevant but not policy-prescriptive advice with full and equal involvement of experts from all regions of the world); knowledge use (support for policy development and implementation); and capacity-building to enhance the science-policy interface and mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem services for human well-being (e.g., poverty eradication, food, water and energy security).

5. There was recognition that the science-policy interface could, at least in part, be improved by strengthening existing mechanisms, but that a new mechanism building upon existing and strengthened mechanisms could potentially add significant value in areas in which strengthening was inadequate.

6. There was agreement that no intergovernmental mechanism currently exists to meet all the science-policy needs of the multiple multilateral environmental agreements and processes in the field of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

A. Improved collaboration and coordination to generate knowledge for a common and shared knowledge base

7. Participants acknowledged the urgent need to strengthen the generation of knowledge at the national, regional and global levels, building upon existing scientific networks. Examples of knowledge generation needs included:

- (a) A review of the adequacy, consistency and transferability of practical indicators and measures for determining the status and trends of biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- (b) National and regional frameworks for monitoring biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- (c) Spatially explicit models that predicted the response of biodiversity and ecosystem services to pressures and drivers and the resultant implications for human well-being.

8. Participants stressed the importance of local and traditional knowledge, along with other forms of knowledge, to inform policy processes to ensure that the outcomes (research, data and tools and good practices for the sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services) were useful to users at all levels.

¹ The Chair's summary has not been formally edited.

9. An interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach beyond the biodiversity community, including social and economic research, was seen as essential. There was also a need to adopt a bottom-up approach in knowledge generation to ensure that it was not only the scientific or policy community that determined the needs, but also the broader user community.

B. Need for regular and timely assessments to generate and disseminate policy relevant and not policy prescriptive information

10. There is a need to provide independent, legitimate, relevant and credible scientific assessments and information to policymakers in the field of biodiversity and ecosystem services and to the broader development community.

11. In addition, there is a need for assessments that in general involve Governments and other relevant stakeholders through an intergovernmental process (i.e., a legitimate process), policy-relevant but not policy-prescriptive, involving experts from all regions of the world fully and equally (recognizing the need for capacity-building for many developing countries) and peer-reviewed (i.e., credible). Those assessments should highlight the links between biodiversity, ecosystem services and poverty alleviation (e.g., food, energy and water security), encompass the valuation of ecosystems and highlight the drivers for change and emerging issues.

12. Assessments should be demand-driven, based on problem identification and user needs, including the needs of decision makers, all relevant multilateral environmental agreements (e.g., the six biodiversity-related conventions, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Convention on Migratory Species, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat, and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and the Convention to Combat Desertification) and United Nations agencies; incorporate all forms of knowledge, including indigenous and traditional knowledge; cover all temporal (past, present and future) and spatial scales (local, subregional, regional and global); use a common conceptual framework and methodologies; and be interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary. They should tackle thematic and emerging issues; complement, rather than duplicate, existing assessments; learn from the experiences of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and also other international assessment processes, such as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the Global Biodiversity Outlook, the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development and the “assessment of assessments” of the state of the marine environment; consider value-related and social and economic aspects; and identify knowledge gaps.

13. Processes need to be agreed to approve the governance structure and scope of such assessments; the nomination and selection of authors and review editors; and the peer review, approval, and outreach and communication processes. The financial and human resource needs for such assessments should be acknowledged and met. Assessments needed to be translated into a language that could be understood and used by end-users, including local communities.

14. Participation of policymakers and relevant stakeholders, in particular at the local levels representing appropriate knowledge systems, was essential to ensuring that the science-policy interface was strengthened.

C. Support policy implementation by providing scientific support in the form of decision-support tools and methodologies

15. While there is a need to support policy formulation and implementation (especially for the six biodiversity-related conventions and the Convention to Combat Desertification), it is also necessary to broaden the client and user base of scientific information to include Governments, United Nations organizations, civil society, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. Awareness-raising campaigns for the general public are also needed.

16. Access to and use of knowledge, which should be policy-relevant and not policy-prescriptive, was seen as critically important. It was also important, upon request, to develop tools and methodologies to assist policy formulation, e.g., sub-global assessments with the involvement of end-users; multicriteria decision analysis tools; cost-benefit analyses; and valuation methodologies for ecosystem services. It is vital for the knowledge base to be interpreted for users.

17. There is also a need to consider the various mechanisms for science and technology transfer to render seamless the delivery to the policy process in an appropriate form.

D. Need for building capacity to mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem services for human well-being

18. There was general agreement on the importance of capacity-building for the generation, assessment and use of knowledge at various levels. Capacity-building for scientists, policymakers and members of civil society, including local communities, should be catalysed to enable them to participate more effectively in the science-policy interface, in addition to increasing the participation and involvement of scientists from developing countries and ensuring that focused technical and scientific support was provided to facilitate that greater involvement.

19. Specific needs identified by participants included but not limited to:

(a) Access to data and knowledge, e.g., free and open online access to journals, virtual libraries, geo-referenced data and satellite data;

(b) Training programmes and opportunities for scientists from developing countries, e.g., the provision of scholarships and fellowships, and access to modelling tools;

(c) Network of focal points to facilitate national and regional assessments, and capacity-building for South-South and North-South cooperation;

20. There is a need to integrate and expand capacity-building into programmes and processes by building upon existing activities, including through bilateral cooperation with, among others, the Global Environment Facility as a financing instrument and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Bank and regional development banks.

21. There is a need for an improved understanding of the full range of current capacity-building activities, and gaps therein, required to meet the needs of a strengthened science-policy interface.

II. Functions of the proposed platform

22. The proposed platform is intended to strengthen in a cost-effective manner existing, but fragmented and uncoordinated, science-policy interfaces associated with biodiversity and ecosystem services.

23. Most participants endorsed the importance of ensuring scientific independence, i.e., having the governance structure of the proposed platform separate from, but responsive to, the governance structures of multilateral environmental agreements and United Nations bodies in providing credible, legitimate and relevant scientific information on biodiversity and ecosystem services that is policy-relevant but not policy-prescriptive.

24. Prior to finalizing the potential functions of a platform, it will be essential to ensure a solid understanding of the current capabilities and ways of strengthening them, in order for the platform to be designed to add value in a cost-effective manner to existing capabilities and not duplicate or replace them. Further analysis was requested for: capacity-building; the assessment landscape; the governance structure and procedures of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; and the potential costs of and options for such a platform. A new platform could play a critical role in coordinating and catalysing existing mechanisms, in addition to performing a number of functions currently not being performed by any other organization or mechanism. Initial ideas for potential platform functions included:

(a) Catalysing an improved collaboration and coordination for the generation of knowledge for a common and shared knowledge base by:

(i) Identifying and prioritizing key scientific information needed for policymakers at various spatial scales, including through the assessment process;

(ii) Creating a mechanism for dialogue between the scientific community, policymakers and funding organizations to catalyse the generation of the required information nationally and in partnership with international organizations such as the International Council for Science and its programmes,

such as Diversitas, and the World Conservation Union. The mechanism would not fund or conduct primary scientific research itself;

- (b) Coordinating and performing regular and timely assessments to generate and disseminate policy-relevant but not policy-prescriptive information by:
 - (i) Identifying the need for, and catalysing the implementation of sub-global assessments (national, sub-regional and regional): that would build on and coordinate with the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment follow-up;
 - (ii) Synthesizing the findings of sub-global assessments regionally and thematically;
 - (iii) Conducting comprehensive sub-regional, regional and global assessments, building upon the sub-global assessments and other sources;
 - (iv) Undertaking assessments on thematic issues;
 - (v) Disseminating assessment findings to appropriate stakeholders;
 - (vi) Maintaining an up-to-date catalogue of relevant assessments, facilitating collaboration with such assessments, while ensuring no duplication;
- (c) Supporting policy formulation and implementation by identifying policy-relevant tools and methodologies and meeting the needs of policymakers and other users of scientific information. That would include by providing assessment findings at various spatial scales and information on best practice use of the tools and methodologies and where needed catalysing their further development;
- (d) Building capacity to mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem services for human well-being by identifying the capacity-building needs (building upon the indicative list above) of scientists and policymakers and other users of scientific information over a range of spatial scales and creating a mechanism, with organizations responsible for capacity-building, including the Global Environment Facility for financing, and activities of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, the World Bank and regional development banks, and civil society organizations to facilitate and leverage the delivery of identified needs. Most participants expressed support for enhancing national capacity, especially in developing countries, including improving access to relevant scientific information and technologies, and providing training programmes and opportunities.

III. Governance structure

25. A number of possible intergovernmental governance structures were discussed, as follows:

- (a) There was general agreement that the plenary should comprise representatives from all Governments represented in the United Nations, with participants being invited from relevant stakeholder groups. Some delegates said that participants from relevant stakeholders should be invited as observers, whereas others argued that these participants should be invited according to the modalities to be agreed by a possible platform at its first meeting;
- (b) Two views were expressed with regard to an executive body or bureau. One view was that it should comprise elected scientific and technical experts in a manner analogous to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, with appropriate geographic balance and appropriate ad hoc members (e.g., chairs of the scientific subsidiary bodies of the six biodiversity-related conventions and Convention to Combat Desertification). Those participants saw no need for a scientific advisory panel given the scientific and technical excellence of the elected members of the executive body or bureau. The other view was that the members of the executive body or bureau should not be technical experts and should perform administrative functions only, meaning that the body would then need to be complemented by an elected scientific advisory panel to ensure scientific credibility, with appropriate ad hoc members (e.g., chairs of multilateral environment agreement scientific subsidiary bodies).
- (c) A range of views were expressed on the relationship between the platform and governing bodies of the six biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements and the Convention to Combat Desertification, and United Nations agencies, with many participants supporting a direct relationship between the agreements and the plenary or executive body, while those supporting a scientific advisory panel preferred the interface of the agreements to be with the scientific advisory body;

(d) There was strong endorsement of operating at all spatial scales, i.e., national, sub-regional, regional and global;

(e) There was general agreement on the need for a small secretariat, but the functions, sponsors and location should be assessed. The United Nations Environment Programme secretariat was requested to assess various types of secretariat institutional arrangements and the criteria to be used to select the secretariat's location;

(f) There were diverging views as to whether the working groups should be ad hoc, time-bound and formed as needed, and therefore indeterminate in number, or whether they should be permanent, but with flexible, demand-driven work programmes. Many representatives who supported permanent working groups suggested that there should be two (assessments and capacity-building). There were, however, conflicting views as to whether regional working groups were needed or whether existing institutional arrangements could be used. There was general agreement that working groups would be established, as needed, at the first plenary meeting;

(g) There was limited discussion of a financing mechanism, beyond the possible establishment of a trust fund, or the level of financial needs, which could not be evaluated until the work programme had been finalized.

IV. Conclusions and the way forward

26. In general there was strong support expressed for a new intergovernmental mechanism to strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services, provided that it did not duplicate or substitute the mandates or programmes of work of existing multilateral environmental agreements or mechanisms, where the strengthening of existing mechanisms was inadequate. Most participants endorsed the importance of ensuring the scientific independence of the new intergovernmental mechanism by having its governance structure separate from, but responsive to, the governance structures of multilateral environmental agreements and United Nations bodies. There was a divergence of views as to whether such a mechanism would respond only to the needs of multilateral environmental agreements and their scientific subsidiary bodies, with full and equitable representation from developing countries, and the reports subject to peer review by experts and Governments, or whether it should also respond to the needs of other stakeholders, e.g., United Nations agencies. While participants agreed that it should be intergovernmental, there were divergent views as to whether interested stakeholders should be invited as observers or whether participants should be invited according to the modalities to be agreed by a possible Platform at its first meeting. There was agreement that any reports should have value for the full range of stakeholders.

27. The platform should support and complement the scientific subsidiary bodies of the six biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements and processes and the Convention to Combat Desertification, as explained above. There were, however, diverging views as to whether such a mechanism should also involve appropriate United Nations organizations, the scientific community and other stakeholders, such as relevant non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society organizations.

28. Such an intergovernmental mechanism might play a role in the field of biodiversity and ecosystem services similar to that played by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in the field of climate change, but adopt a more holistic approach that included not only assessing knowledge but also catalysing improved collaboration and coordination for the generation of knowledge for a common and shared knowledge base; supporting policy implementation by identifying policy-relevant tools and methodologies to meet policymakers' needs; and building capacity to mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem services for human well-being.

29. To ensure that there was no duplication of efforts and that the new mechanism would add value in a manner that could not be accomplished by any other existing mechanism, some participants requested additional information to be able to decide whether to establish a new intergovernmental mechanism. The additional analysis requested included: current and planned capacity-building activities; the assessment landscape, including the state of play of existing and current indicators; the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change governance structure and procedures; options and criteria for a possible secretariat; and information on possible financing needs and possible platform governance structures.

30. Some participants recommended that the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme should inform the Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention on

Biological Diversity at its third meeting about progress achieved at the current meeting in order for it to consider the implications of the work for the Convention on Biological Diversity, including its strategic plan.

31. Participants recommended that the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme should report at the eleventh special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, in February 2010, on the outcome of the current meeting, and that the Governing Council should request the Executive Director, in cooperation with the relevant United Nations agencies, to convene a third and final intergovernmental multi-stakeholder meeting to negotiate and decide whether to establish an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, the outcome of which should be transmitted to the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly in 2010.

32. Some participants also recommended that further informal consultations between Governments and relevant organizations should be carried out at the bilateral and regional levels to facilitate consultations for the third and final meeting, and invited Governments and organizations in a position to do so to facilitate the holding of such consultations.

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