



**United Nations
Environment
Programme**

Distr.: General
12 November 2008

Original: English



Ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services
Putrajaya, Malaysia, 10–12 November 2008

Report of the 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 Putrajaya International Convention Centre, Putrajaya, and commenced with an opening ceremony at 10.20 a.m. on Monday, 10 November 2008, which was facilitated by Ms. Norhayati Nordin.

B. Opening statements

2. Opening statements were delivered by Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); Mr. Jochen Flasbarth, Director-General, Nature Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources at the Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany; Mr. Abdul Hamid Zakri, Director, Institute of Advanced Studies, United Nations University; Ms. Valérie Pécresse, Minister for Higher Education and Research of France; and Mr. Douglas Uggah Embas, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Malaysia.

3. In his opening statement, Mr. Steiner explained the need to strengthen the intergovernmental science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services, pointing out that the current meeting represented an endeavour to understand how science, research and knowledge could best be brought to the policy level with regard to the future use and management of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Given that form followed function, he stressed that stakeholders, particularly those intended to be the clients of such a platform, should have a clear understanding of what they would gain from the platform so that action could be taken for the good of humanity as a whole.

4. He pointed out that, between 1986 and 2005, the overall global gross domestic product had doubled, but the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment had found that, over the past 50 years, 60 per cent of all ecosystem services were at maximum use or were being overused and depleted. The rationalization of biodiversity in economic terms remained, he said, an uncomfortable notion for many. There were strong links between ecosystem services and biodiversity, on the one hand, and human survival, livelihoods and poverty alleviation, on the other: accordingly, it was essential to ensure that future generations would have access to ecosystem services as a means of sustaining humankind. The

perception that humankind was not affecting fundamental ecosystem services in a way that threatened generations could not continue.

5. The proposed platform was not an alternative to existing mechanisms, but a missing piece of the science-policy jigsaw that would enable scientific discourse to respond to specific questions that could be posed by ministers, thereby enabling policy actions and ensuring that the relevant data were available at the point where Governments were compelled to act. Recalling the creation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change some 20 years previously, he said that the current meeting offered the opportunity to break the same ground for biodiversity and ecosystem services. He stressed that national policy should complement international cooperation and expressed the hope that the current meeting would produce a process that not only looked at politics, but would also give science an arena to inform the public and empower Governments to act, given that the survival of humankind was ultimately at stake.

6. Mr. Flasbarth, speaking as Chair of the Bureau of the Convention on Biological Diversity, welcomed the commitment of the Government of Malaysia to biodiversity policy, as evidenced by its hosting of the current meeting and of two meetings under the Convention in 2009. The topic of the current meeting was one of particular urgency, given that the goal of reducing significantly the rate of biodiversity loss globally by 2010, set at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, would most certainly not be met, as losses were being seen daily at every level, for example in terms of habitat, species and variety of species. That unwelcome prospect was attributable not to the lack of data: there was no shortage of data but they were presented in ways that confused policymakers. The need to create a mechanism to enable politicians to understand better the complex questions of biodiversity had led to decision IX/15 being taken at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to support a science-policy interface.

7. Noting that concerns had been expressed about the proposed platform, he stated his conviction that it would not weaken or undermine other scientific bodies or conventions; rather it would be of benefit to them, as it would define what kind of scientific information was needed and facilitate their work, as in the case of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. He welcomed the work of UNEP in the field, particularly its leadership in the various efforts undertaken, and its willingness to respond to the request made at the final meeting of the International Steering Committee of the consultative process towards an international mechanism of scientific expertise on biodiversity, held in Montpellier, France, in November 2007 to convene the current meeting. He noted that the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre was a centre of excellence for biodiversity and already linked with various stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and the scientific community. In conclusion, given that there was no one correct solution in terms of the structure of the overall platform, he called for participants to have a clear view of the various options, and, since the 2010 target loomed near, to be ambitious and flexible in their search for good results.

8. Mr. Zakri expressed the belief that that it was imperative for the scientific community to be engaged actively with politicians and policymakers to help to facilitate the latter to make better decisions and to develop mechanisms for the scientific community to obtain advice from policymakers, ensuring that information flowed both ways in a genuine dialogue. He pointed that, over the past 50 years, humankind had consumed more biodiversity than at any other time in history, requiring ever greater multilateral cooperation and scientific understanding, which was the foundation and first step for any political agreement to solve environmental problems. Without a scientific basis, attempts at international cooperation would be wasted, he stressed, but added that mobilizing the resources to provide the science, information and knowledge that decision makers needed was a challenging and complex task that required a credible intergovernmental science-policy platform for biodiversity.

9. Noting that the most successful multilateral environmental agreements were those with permanent scientific mechanisms, he said that the proposed platform represented a chance to make history by creating a new body based on ecosystem services and establishing deeper scientific connections between such agreements as a fundamental basis for synergies and interlinkages. The platform should be, he said, transparent, consultative, geographically balanced and represent the best experts of the international community, with a focus on capacity-building, particularly for young scientists from the South. It would be a hybrid of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and the international mechanism of scientific expertise on biodiversity. Urging participants to be innovative in their deliberations, he pointed out that the longer that they waited to act, the more difficult the task that lay ahead of them.

10. Ms. Péresse noted that participants at the current meeting would take decisions that would protect the future of humankind and nature, given the inextricable interlinkages between the two. She

restated the view that the sixth wave of extinction had begun and recalled that the world was constantly being transformed, with new threats arising, such as avian influenza, meaning that action was required.

11. In that context, she described the history of the consultative process towards an international mechanism of scientific expertise on biodiversity, which had been initiated by her Government in Paris four years previously, and stressed that it depended upon global cooperation, as would the platform. She noted that, just as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the platform would offer a framework to mobilize the scientific community and act as a tool accessible to all stakeholders. It was also crucial to remember that protecting biodiversity remained inseparable from issues of growth and development, requiring the disparities between the North and the South to be borne in mind when constructing the platform.

12. It was vital for the platform to benefit from all guarantees of scientific independence and transparent functioning, including the international scientific standards of peer evaluation. Her Government was willing to host the secretariat of the proposed platform at the Museum of Mankind in Paris and proposed that it should be placed under the dual auspices of UNEP and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). That would, she said, provide the body with its own independence. Stressing the urgent need to act, she called for science to be accorded its legitimate place as the best tool available to humankind to act in the best interests of itself and of the world.

13. Mr. Uggah Embas, welcoming the participants to the current meeting and to Malaysia, stressed that the world was witnessing unprecedented losses and changes in biodiversity and ecosystem services, which had a direct impact on human well-being and sustainable development. He acknowledged the value to be obtained from ecosystem services, such as climate regulation and nutrient cycling, meaning that international cooperation was required if action were to be taken to protect ecosystems.

14. He outlined efforts in Malaysia to protect its rich diversity of flora and fauna, such as the country's emphasis on sustainable forest management and its emphasis on the sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services for economic and social development. The Government had also launched a national physical plan to guide development with a view to obtaining fully developed nation status by 2020, one of the main objectives of which was the inclusion of the principle of ecosystem management in overall development programmes and activities.

15. He pointed out that any approach to the issues facing the international community, such as the burgeoning global population, would require a multidisciplinary and holistic approach, which would also allow for the use of traditional knowledge. He urged the platform to act as a conduit for the latest collective science to be injected into the international policy community and called for swift action, given that the current decline in biodiversity and ecosystem services was projected to increase.

16. The meeting was officially declared open at 11.40 a.m.

C. Attendance

17. Representatives of the following countries attended the meeting: Algeria, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, China, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kiribati, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, Niue, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Senegal, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zambia.

18. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations and secretariats of conventions were also present: Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), European Commission, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Global Environment Facility Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU/IAS).

19. Representatives of the following governmental, non-governmental, private sector and business organizations attended the meeting: ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, Biodiversity International, BirdLife International, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, DIVERSITAS, European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBAS), Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), Global Change System for Analysis, Research and Training (START), Institut du Développement Durable et des Relations Internationales (IDDRI), Global Network for Forest Science Cooperation (IUFRO), International Council for Science (ICSU), International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMOSEB), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), National Biodiversity and Biosafety Center and World Resources Institute (WRI).

II. Organizational matters

A. Election of officers

20. Mr. Steiner said that the rules of procedure of the UNEP Governing Council would be applied to the meeting, *mutatis mutandis*, for the purposes of conducting its business. One participant expressed a preference for the rules of procedure of the Convention on Biological Diversity for that purpose, as those rules – in contrast to those of the Governing Council – did not allow for voting and required all decisions to be taken by consensus, an approach which he believed was more consistent with the open consultative nature of the current meeting. The Senior Legal Officer of UNEP explained, however, that, as the meeting had been convened by UNEP, it was constrained to apply the rules of procedure of that body. It was agreed that those rules would be applied on the understanding that the discussions were of a nature that allowed active participation of Governments and other stakeholders, precluded confrontation and required decisions to be taken by consensus.

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

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Chair: | Mr. Suboh Mohd Yassin (Malaysia), Asian region |
| Vice-chairs: | Mr. Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (Ghana), African region |
| | Mr. Nicolae Manta (Romania), Eastern European region |
| | Mr. Hesiquio Benítez (Mexico), Latin American and Caribbean region |
| | Mr. Robert Watson (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Western European and others region |

Mr. Benítez and Mr. Manta agreed to serve as rapporteurs for the meeting.

B. Adoption of the agenda

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

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Election of officers;
 - (b) Adoption of the agenda;
 - (c) Organization of work.
3. Consideration of an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services:
 - (a) Objectives and functions of an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services;
 - (b) Programme of work and budget;

- (c) Governance structure and secretariat functions;
- (d) Rules and procedures.
- 4. Other matters.
- 5. Adoption of recommendations.
- 6. Adoption of the report.
- 7. Closure of the meeting.

C. Organization of work

23. The meeting agreed to conduct its work in plenary and would endeavour not to establish contact groups. If the need arose for specific issues to be debated in contact groups, however, smaller open-ended groups could be set up, but, in view of the limited size of most delegations, would not meet concurrently with the plenary.

III. Consideration of an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services

24. The Chair introduced the item, recalling analogous processes that had already been launched under a number of other organizations and multilateral agreements and the tangible results that some of them had achieved. He expressed his confidence that the process upon which UNEP had embarked with the current meeting would pave the way to the improved management and conservation of biological diversity and ecosystem services, and help arrest the current loss of such diversity and services by promoting dialogue between the science community and policymakers.

A. Objectives and functions of an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services

25. In considering the item, participants had before them document UNEP/IPBES/1/2, a revised concept note by the secretariat on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, which was introduced by the representative of the secretariat.

26. In the ensuing discussion, there was general agreement on the importance and unacceptable levels of loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services and of the link with development and poverty eradication. The view was expressed that scientific knowledge needed strengthening at all levels of interest, with attention being paid to local and community knowledge. Ecosystem services were extremely important, as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment had focused on such services and brought into relief the importance of the direct benefits of resilient ecosystems that functioned well.

27. All participants noted the need to strengthen the science-policy interface. Many, including representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations and multilateral environmental agreements, expressed support for the establishment of the platform, while some participants representing Governments raised concerns about the creation of a new body, given that a number of similar bodies and arrangements were already in place, and cautioned against duplication and the waste of scarce resources. They maintained that other options should be explored, particularly as there was, they suggested, a risk of undermining and diminishing existing conventions, particularly the Convention on Biological Diversity. Other participants argued that, far from undermining the conventions, the platform could go beyond them and enhance them by performing tasks that otherwise could not be undertaken and by improving coherence between the conventions.

28. Some participants suggested that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change offered a useful model, although others expressed the view that the Panel's experience was less applicable, given the exclusively global scope of climate change issues and the complex and multidisciplinary nature of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Mention was also made of the international mechanism of scientific expertise on biodiversity as a comparable exercise that had brought significant benefit. There was broad agreement that the proposed new mechanism should be open, multidisciplinary, inclusive of both intergovernmental partners and other stakeholders, complement existing international bodies, avoid duplicating efforts, have clear added value and be policy-relevant rather than policy-prescriptive. It was also important for it to be both scientifically and politically credible, with organizations such as the International Council for Science able to offer assistance in that regard.

29. Many participants felt that the proposed platform should be fully independent and should support all the biodiversity-related conventions, particularly considering the importance of synergistic relationships, but two felt that it should be within and part of the Convention on Biological Diversity, preferably under the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. One participant questioned the secretariat's understanding of decision IX/15, suggesting that the intention of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity had been to strengthen the Subsidiary Body by examining the issue within the context of the Convention. A number of participants, however, argued against including the platform in the Convention, as it would compromise its independence, and pointed out that the Subsidiary Body was, among other things, politicized and lacking in financial resources. Several participants suggested placing the platform under the auspices of UNEP or other interested United Nations agencies. A question was raised as to whether the platform would be able to meet all the needs of all the biodiversity-related conventions. One participant pointed out that the process had only just begun and cautioned against an over-hasty decision on the matter.

30. One participant suggested that the platform should be established as an independent high-level working group, along the lines of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, that would bring together scientists, ecologists and politicians, among others, to produce reports that would raise awareness about biodiversity loss or depletion of ecosystem services at the international level and propose solutions to conserve and safeguard such biodiversity and ecosystem services. Another suggested that policy experts should also be brought on board, given that the reports produced by the platform could lead to policy changes. Another evoked the idea of using the platform as a form of clearing house.

31. Some concern was expressed about human and financial resources and the need for capacity-building, particularly given that many developing countries were rich in biodiversity. One participant suggested that the main purpose of the platform should be to build scientific capacity and research networks in developing countries. Participants stressed also the immediate need to detail the functions of the platform before reflecting on the structure of the body and discussing the proposed activities on the basis that form should follow function.

32. Several participants expressed the view that the platform should not be used to generate new knowledge, but rather to compile and synthesize existing information with a view to identifying gaps and uncertainties in knowledge. That role, it was proposed, would enable review of policy implications and the potential consequence of such knowledge.

33. It was suggested that there was a need to understand who would be the clients of the platform. If, as some participants suggested, the platform was to be needs-driven, a variety of clients with differing needs would be involved at each stage in the process. There was much emphasis on the role of assessments, particularly sub-global assessments, in that regard. Several participants suggested, however, that the platform could be country-driven.

34. One participant recalled that authoritative scientific advice from the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel to the Global Environment Facility had helped the Facility in its programmes and projects that were implemented by the World Bank, UNEP, the United Nations Development Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, among others. The Panel saw benefits from linkages between the proposed platform and the Facility.

35. Some participants referred to the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity: "conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and to technologies, and by appropriate funding". It was suggested that there was a need for the platform to serve those objectives, with one participant saying that the second objective, in particular, could be best served by forging a close link between the platform and FAO. Other participants stated that the platform should not be confined solely to the Convention's objectives.

36. The representatives of UNESCO and the Republic of Korea offered to host the secretariat for the platform. The representative of FAO also offered to co-host or host any secretariat that could be established, subject to further consultations.

37. One participant was of the view that, prior to taking a decision on the establishment of the platform, due consideration should be given to other options in achieving the intended objectives, including the use of the existing arrangements.

B. Programme of work and budget

38. In considering the item, participants had before them document UNEP/IPBES/1/3, a note by the Secretariat providing a programme of work and budget for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services for an initial four-year period, which was introduced by Mr. Charles Perrings on behalf of the secretariat.

39. Many participants were reluctant to discuss the issue on the basis that it was premature, given that vital decisions were yet to be taken on the establishment and function of the platform. One participant questioned why the budget was conceived over a period of four years and in two phases and suggested a two-year period, to coincide with the administrative arrangements of the Convention on Biological Diversity. One found the figures to be reasonable, which suggested that a small and useful mechanism was at issue, while another considered them expensive. Several participants gave assurances that their Governments would provide financial support or assistance in the form of the services of experts.

C. Governance structure and secretariat functions

40. In considering the item, participants had before them document UNEP/IPBES/1/4, a note by the secretariat on the governance structure and secretariat functions for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, which was introduced by the representative of the secretariat.

41. In the ensuing discussion, several participants again expressed the feeling that it was premature to consider the item before other crucial decisions had been made, such as where the proposed platform would be located.

42. On being asked to choose between the five options under the heading "legal status", as set out in section II, paragraph 4, of the note by the secretariat, most participants were in favour of option (b) whereby the platform would be established as an intergovernmental body whose status would be distinct from the existing intergovernmental organizations but would be institutionally linked with one or more of the existing international organizations. There was also support for option (d), whereby the platform would be established as a body in which intergovernmental and non-governmental entities would be combined and would be distinct from the existing intergovernmental organizations. Two participants were in favour of option (c), whereby the platform would be established as an intergovernmental body which would be a subsidiary body of an existing intergovernmental organization and might be established by a decision of the governing body of an existing intergovernmental organization. It was agreed, however, that all five options would be maintained for the time being, without prejudice to any other options that might emerge.

43. With regard to section III of the document, participants once again expressed the opinion that consideration of the plenary for the platform was premature, although one expressed support for the first option in paragraph 6, which stated that the platform would be open to all States that were members of the United Nations or specialized agencies in addition to relevant organizations and stakeholders; the latter without the right to vote.

44. With regard to section IV on the executive body, several divergent views were put forward, including the necessary independence of the platform, that the platform should be constituted as a panel of experts under the Convention on Biological Diversity and reporting to the Conference of the Parties, or that it should follow the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change model with a bureau within the Convention's Subsidiary Body. A number of participants expressed support for option (a), whereby a bureau would be established comprising the chair of the platform and other members elected by the platform at its plenary meeting, and one of those participants also expressed the view that geographical representation should be respected when electing the bureau.

45. While one representative suggested that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change could be used as a model for the advisory group for the panel, there was general agreement that discussion of that issue was premature. Some participants supported the idea that the platform should be a network of networks.

46. With regard to the secretariat of the body, while many participants suggested the involvement one or more United Nations bodies, several others proposed bodies outside the system, such as local organizations or non-governmental organizations. It was stressed that any secretariat that might be set

up should be small and efficient. Noting that several offers to host the secretariat had been made, one participant said that an open and transparent process should be used to evaluate the proposals.

47. Following discussion on the need for a gap analysis, to determine possible areas not already adequately covered by other processes and mechanisms, where the proposed platform could most usefully add value, consideration was given to the idea of establishing a small group to work on an indicative list of such areas. While a number of participants expressed interest in joining such a group, it was also felt that the formation a contact group might run counter to the open and consultative spirit of the meeting and that such exercises should be conducted in plenary, with maximum representation. Accordingly the meeting agreed to entrust the Bureau with the preparation of some discussion points, which could also give suggestions as to the possible way forward for the process, and would inform further discussion of the issue in the plenary.

48. It was also agreed that the Chair would compile the various views put forward in plenary discussions and present them as a Chair's text. The text, as compiled by the Chair, is contained in the annex to the present report.

49. Following that agreement, Mr. Steiner addressed the meeting, reviewing the history of the process, including decision IX/15 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and reaffirming the commitment of UNEP to its role as trustee and convener, rather than advocating any particular position or outcome. He stressed that the current meeting was not the continuation of any earlier process but an entirely new beginning and that it was therefore unrealistic to expect any significant or specific outcome. That said, however, the meeting should not be seen merely as an exchange of views with no consequences: the Chair's summary should be seized as an opportunity to assess the direction of the discussions and to map out options for a possible way forward. It was, he said, indicative of the concern felt across the international community about the issues under discussion that the meeting had enjoyed such wide participation and keen interest. In that context, he hoped that the Chair's summary would enable him to pass on a strong message of that concern to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its forthcoming session, since it had clearly emerged from the discussions in Putrajaya that, whatever differences might exist about the details of any proposed mechanism on science and policy, there was universal agreement on the need to improve the interface between science and policy.

D. Rules and procedures

50. It was agreed that no discussion on the rules and procedures for the proposed platform would take place, in the light of concerns expressed that such discussion would be premature.

IV. Other matters

51. The representative of the secretariat gave a slide presentation on gap analysis. In the ensuing discussion, participants identified areas that merited consideration in the preparation of a gap analysis, in particular capacity-building needs in developing countries. Several participants expressed the belief that further consideration should be given to the areas upon which a gap analysis should focus. Various options for such analysis were put forward, but participants stressed that it should be kept as simple as possible, given that the level of detail was critical to its expeditious publication.

52. The Chair said that the preliminary analysis would be undertaken by UNEP prior to the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council.

V. Adoption of recommendations

53. It was agreed that no recommendations as such would be adopted, but that the Chair's summary, which can be found in the annex to the present report, would serve as the outcome from the meeting.

VI. Adoption of the report

54. The present report was adopted on Wednesday, 12 November 2008, on the basis of the draft report contained in document UNEP/IPBES/1/L.1. 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

55. Following the conclusion of its business, participants, including representatives of groups and of the science community, made closing statements. In his closing remarks, the representative of UNEP thanked the Malaysian Government for its generosity and cooperation in hosting the meeting and those Governments which had provided funding for it, namely, France, Germany, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In his closing remarks, the Chair commended UNEP on its initiative in organizing the meeting and expressed the gratification that his Government felt at having been part of that important process, which, he hoped, might continue on what could be termed the “Putrajaya road map”, leading to appropriate follow-up to and further consideration of the issues adumbrated at the current meeting.

56. The Chair declared the meeting closed at 6.20 p.m. on Wednesday, 12 November 2008.

Annex

Summary by the Chair: Putrajaya Road Map

1. Following the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the international mechanism of scientific expertise on biodiversity consultations and decision IX/15 of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of Convention on Biological Diversity, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) convened a meeting to consider establishing an efficient intergovernmental science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services for human well-being and sustainable development.
2. There was uniform recognition of the importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services, which are currently experiencing significant loss and are critically important for human well-being, particularly poverty alleviation. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment demonstrated that, over the past 50 years, humanity had caused unprecedented losses in biodiversity and declines in ecosystem services. In all, 60 per cent of the 24 assessed ecosystem services were in decline and further degradation was expected if immediate action was not taken. That would in particular, but not exclusively, have a negative impact on the development processes in developing countries.
3. The meeting documents were based on a concept note prepared by UNEP and reviewed by Governments and stakeholders.
4. Participants from 78 countries and 25 organizations met in Putrajaya, Malaysia, to discuss needs and modalities to strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services, including the potential of an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services.
5. For three days there was a highly constructive exchange of views on the concept, content and structure of a potential intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, with the current meeting being viewed as the first step towards strengthening the science-policy interface.
6. There was broad recognition that there was a need to improve the science-policy interface, which should use existing relevant assessments and the best available multidisciplinary knowledge (i.e., natural, social and economic sciences, including traditional and indigenous knowledge).
7. Most participants recognized that there were currently numerous national and international science-policy interfaces (mechanisms and processes) for biodiversity and ecosystem services. Those participants expressed the need for a gap analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing interfaces and coordination among them at all spatial scales (including the scientific subsidiary and advisory bodies of relevant biodiversity-related multilateral environment agreements and United Nations bodies). The gap analysis should also assess the potential for strengthening existing interfaces and the added value of a potential new mechanism that would overcome the recognized weaknesses in the current system. Participants had differing views as to which gaps in the science-policy interface were most significant, with some participants noting the lack of an effective assessment process that provided policy-relevant information and advice to multiple biodiversity-related conventions, while most developing country participants viewed the greatest gap as capacity-building.
8. To complement and add value to the existing mechanisms, many participants supported the need for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services that would be distinct and independent from existing institutions or mechanisms. Others, however, considered that it was too early to conclude whether there was a need for a new and independent body, preferring to wait for the results of the gap analysis.
9. While there was broad agreement that the platform should be intergovernmental, a range of views were expressed on how to involve other stakeholders.
10. It was argued that any new body must complement existing mechanisms, have added value and therefore strengthen existing mechanisms. Some participants suggested that a network of networks could enhance current capabilities.
11. Many participants supported the proposal that the platform should be independent but linked to an existing organization or organizations (e.g., UNEP with other United Nations organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization). They also expressed the view that the platform should serve a range of stakeholders, including multiple biodiversity-related

conventions. Some participants supported the platform being a subsidiary body to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Most participants noted that if the platform were to be a subsidiary of a single convention then it would be difficult to serve other stakeholders and conventions, though one participant noted that it would be difficult for a single body to serve many different forums.

12. Many participants agreed that the role of a science-policy platform should be to compile, assess and synthesize existing scientific knowledge, thereby indentifying areas of science requiring further development, and to provide policy-relevant information to multiple stakeholders, including multilateral environmental agreements, without being policy-prescriptive. One participant suggested that a framework for contextualizing existing and future assessments could be useful.

13. Many participants stated that the assessment should be independent, but policy-relevant, to provide credible, evidence-based knowledge.

14. Most participants noted that the assessments and other activities should be demand-driven, depending on user requests, with some noting the importance of input from the scientific community. The assessments would include:

(a) Assessments at the local, national, and regional level, which would be promoted, catalysed and synthesized by the platform, but not necessarily undertaken by it;

(b) Thematic assessments (e.g., regional impact of climate change on biodiversity);

(c) Global assessments (e.g., Millennium Ecosystem Assessment).

15. There was broad agreement that the assessments must have a rigorous peer review.

16. With regard to document UNEP/IPBES/1/3 on the programme of work and budget, there was broad agreement that the discussion on the detailed programme of work and budget was premature, although a work programme and budget would be needed later.

17. Some participants suggested that the early warning and lessons activity (3 (a)) was an important activity in its own right, while others suggested that it could be integrated into the assessment processes (activity 3 (b)), as outlined in document UNEP/IPBES/1/3. One participant recommended that the two main activities of any new mechanism should be capacity-building and assessment, rather than the broader suite of activities outlined in document UNEP/IPBES/1/3, with capacity-building being incorporated into those other activities.

18. There was broad agreement that the platform should include building capacity in developing countries in respect of assessing and using knowledge. Some participants suggested that capacity-building was an integral part of the assessment process.

19. Even though there was general agreement that the discussion on legal status was premature, there was a very useful preliminary discussion of views. In general there was strong support for options B¹ or D,² with some support for option C,³ but without removing any options from the table.

20. There was broad agreement that detailed discussion of the governance paper was premature concerning the plenary, scientific body and executive body. There was, however, some support for the platform to use the structure of a body akin to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Two participants suggested that the plenary could be the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

21. Several participants suggested the need for criteria and a transparent process for selecting the secretariat. There was agreement that it should be a small secretariat, with one participant suggesting the

1 Option B: The platform is established as an intergovernmental body whose status is distinct from the existing intergovernmental organizations but is institutionally linked with one or more of the existing international organizations (e.g., through the provision of the secretariat or administrative services therefore). It might be established by a decision of an intergovernmental conference or by a decision of an existing intergovernmental organization or concurrent decisions of two or more intergovernmental organizations.

2 Option D: The platform is established as a body in which intergovernmental and non-governmental entities are combined and is distinct from the existing intergovernmental organizations. It might be established by a decision of an intergovernmental or other international conference.

3 Option C: The platform is established as an intergovernmental body, which is a subsidiary body of an existing intergovernmental organization. It might be established by a decision of the governing body of an existing intergovernmental organization).

use of an existing secretariat if the proposed platform was a subsidiary body of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Several participants offered to support and host a secretariat.

22. There was no discussion on document UNEP/IPBES/1/5.

23. The Chair recommended:

(a) That mechanisms to improve the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for human well-being and sustainable development should continue to be explored. Such mechanisms could include components of early warning, multiple-scale assessments, policy information and capacity development;

(b) That a gap analysis should be undertaken for the purpose of strengthening the science-policy interface and that a preliminary report should be made available at the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum.

24. The meeting recommended that the Executive Director of UNEP should report at the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum on the outcome of the present meeting and that the Governing Council should request the Executive Director to convene a second intergovernmental multi-stakeholder meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services with the view to strengthening and improving the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for human well-being, including consideration of a new science-policy platform. One participant further requested that the outcome of the meeting should be presented at the third meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
