



## IPBES-3 HIGHLIGHTS: 12 JANUARY 2015

IPBES-3 opened on Monday, 12 January 2015, in Bonn, Germany. In the morning, delegates heard opening statements from dignitaries, regional groups and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and discussed: organizational matters; membership of the Platform; credentials; and reports from the IPBES Executive Secretary Anne Larigauderie and MEP members on implementing the work programme 2014–2018.

In the afternoon, delegates resumed their discussions on implementing the work programme, and deliberated on the task forces on capacity-building, knowledge and data and indigenous and local knowledge systems (ILK).

Delegates were invited to attend an evening reception hosted by the Government of Germany.

### OPENING SESSION

IPBES Chair Abdul Hamid Zakri (Malaysia) opened IPBES-3, highlighting progress in achieving the work programme deliverables, and 20 workshops held during the intersessional period.

Executive Secretary Larigauderie, welcomed delegates “recht herzlich.” Telling of a “very rich year of implementation of the first IPBES work programme,” she reported, *inter alia*: 14 expert groups established; and IPBES’ new conceptual framework is proving to be a robust tool promoting coherence across deliverables.

Jacqueline McGlade, UNEP, speaking on behalf of UNEP, UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), said the UN agencies will continue to support IPBES through, among others: inter-agency agreements; and interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches for data collection and management.

Barbara Hendricks, German Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, highlighted key issues to be addressed by IPBES, including biodiversity mainstreaming, sustainable use and communication.

Jürgen Nimptsch, Lord Mayor of Bonn, welcomed delegates to Bonn, noting IPBES’ “good fit” with the other international organizations headquartered in the city.

Malaysia, for the ASIA-PACIFIC GROUP, supported further work on, *inter alia*: the global assessment; and assessments in the thematic areas of pollination and pollinators, invasive alien species (IAS), and land degradation and restoration.

Mexico, for the LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GROUP (GRULAC), stressed that the assessments of sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity and IAS should be addressed in the same manner as that of pollination and pollinators. He welcomed progress by the ILK task force highlighting this as a key issue for GRULAC. Latvia, for

the EU, called for adopting “pending items” from IPBES-2, including the rules of procedure and the stakeholder engagement strategy.

South Africa, for the AFRICAN GROUP, underscored capacity building for successfully implementing the work programme. He supported holding joint meetings of task forces to allow for addressing crosscutting issues in an effective and efficient manner.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, for EASTERN EUROPE, noted that the region’s underrepresentation in the expert groups indicates the need for improvements in capacity, regional cooperation, and linkages between scientific and government bodies.

The CBD said the Convention’s Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) will explore ways of incorporating the outcomes of IPBES assessments in order to boost synergies. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) welcomed exploring further collaboration with IPBES on the thematic assessment on sustainable use.

The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) underscored the CMS assessment of economic benefits of migratory species as a possible area of synergy.

The Society for Conservation Biology, representing Stakeholders, highlighted the outcomes of the Stakeholder Days held immediately prior to IPBES-3. She urged IPBES-3 to prioritize discussion on adoption of the revised draft stakeholder engagement strategy.

### ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Chair Zakri noted that the rules of procedure governing IPBES-3 will be those adopted at IPBES-1 and amended at IPBES-2.

Chair Zakri introduced the agenda and organization of work (IPBES/3/1 and Add.1), suggesting that a briefing from Rajendra Pachauri, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Chair, on the latest IPCC reports be heard on Tuesday morning. He also suggested tabling a document containing proposed draft decisions.

FRANCE, with RUSSIA, expressed concern regarding the scheduling of evening sessions for working groups as no translation would be available. RUSSIA also queried if this was an efficient use of time.

Executive Secretary Larigauderie noted that translation has not previously been provided for working groups. Chair Zakri said that scheduling night sessions is a norm for IPBES.

RUSSIA underscored that IPBES is being operationalized and therefore it is key to ensure that its scheduling is in line with principles adopted by other international organizations and MEAs. FRANCE agreed to provisionally accept the agenda and organization of work provided that the Bureau discusses the matter and reverts to the Plenary with a proposal on how to address this issue going forward. The US said that the document of draft decisions should remain a non-paper at this juncture.



The agenda and organization of work were adopted as amended.

On the membership of the Platform, Chair Zakri stated that as of 12 January 2015, there are 123 member states that have joined the Platform.

On the admission of observers to IPBES-3, Chair Zakri said that the observers admitted to IPBES-2 will automatically be admitted to IPBES-3. He said that there are 67 new observers to be admitted to the Plenary. ISRAEL opposed reference to Palestine as the State of Palestine in the list of observers. He requested this objection be minuted in the meeting reports.

#### **CREDENTIALS OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Chair Zakri said that the credentials submitted will be examined by the Bureau and a report back to the Plenary will be made later in the week.

#### **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME 2014–2018**

Executive Secretary Larigauderie introduced the report of the work programme 2014–2018 (IPBES/3/2). MEP Co-Chair Mark Lonsdale, elaborated on the implementation of the work programme. IPBES Vice-Chair Robert Watson (UK) presented four options for the further implementation of the work programme, noting the objective is to tackle the heavy workload of Secretariat staff and technical experts and respond to the funding gap in the current budget.

CHINA offered to host the Technical Support Unit (TSU) for the Asia-Pacific region and to provide technical, regional and financial support for assessments in the region. ETHIOPIA offered technical experts and logistical and financial support for the African TSU and regional assessments. ISRAEL questioned why none of the nominated Israeli experts were included in the MEP.

NORWAY, supported by the US, NEW ZEALAND and CANADA, called for delaying the planned oceans assessment to await the outcome of the Global Marine Assessment. The US favored prioritizing thematic assessments.

BOLIVIA, TURKEY, BRAZIL, COLOMBIA, PERU, GUATEMALA, ISRAEL and ARGENTINA expressed support for option one (implementation of the current work programme with minor adjustments). Reiterating GRULAC's preference for option one, MEXICO called for equal priority to all three thematic assessments, noting that funding for the sustainable use and IAS assessments has not been utilized.

The EU expressed willingness to consider option two (workload spread over a longer time period), saying that the timelines should continue to be reviewed at future plenary meetings.

INDONESIA favored option three (reduced workload, more integration), saying this option can help reduce the workload while promoting integration.

The AFRICAN GROUP, with JAPAN, SWITZERLAND, MALAYSIA and BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, called for adopting option four (lowest workload, highest integration). AUSTRALIA urged considering how to adequately "resource" IPBES in an increasingly resource-constrained environment.

INDIA said his country is willing to work with others to identify the best option for further implementation of the work programme. The AFRICAN GROUP said the Group expressed flexibility to modify option four so as to address concerns. PAKISTAN favored integrating options three and four.

IUCN proposed a "fifth option," which draws on strategic partnerships, noting this would also help redress the current focus on assessments by increasing capacity to tackle the remaining three IPBES functions. He reiterated IUCN's offer to contribute half-time staff positions for thematic assessments and provide office space across the different regions.

The International Council for Science (ICSU) highlighted the contribution of the Future Earth programme to IPBES' assessment work. The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) underscored the strong "political and policy demand" for a global, stand-alone assessment on land degradation and restoration.

#### **INITIAL WORK PROGRAMME OF THE PLATFORM TASK FORCES ON CAPACITY-BUILDING, KNOWLEDGE AND DATA, AND INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS: Capacity-building:** The Secretariat introduced documents IPBES/3/3 and IPBES/3/INF/1.

Many delegations, including the AFRICAN GROUP, CHINA, INDONESIA, SWITZERLAND, SWEDEN and MALAYSIA, welcomed the work undertaken by the capacity-building task force and endorsed the priority actions identified, cautioning against raising unrealistic expectations on Platform deliverables. The AFRICAN GROUP called for regular evaluation of the proposed fellowships programme to ensure its relevance to capacity-building needs.

FRANCE emphasized the need for strengthening, among others, "big" and long-term data to observe trends. BELGIUM supported avoiding duplication of efforts and asked for clarification on quality control and data harmonization. INDIA highlighted the need for incrementally scaling up capacity-building programmes. GUATEMALA called for increased funding for fellowships, exchange and training programmes. BOLIVIA, CÔTE D'IVOIRE, COSTA RICA and SWEDEN underscored the importance of ILK. BOTSWANA called for explicit efforts to build capacity for women, young scientists and policy-makers.

The Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) highlighted opportunities provided through the GBIF network, notably the launch of a new European Commission (EC) initiative led by GBIF providing €3.9 million over five years, to be launched in March 2015.

**Knowledge and data and ILK:** The Secretariat introduced documents IPBES/3/4, IPBES/3/4/INF/2 and IPBES/3/4/INF/3.

COLOMBIA called for clarity on how local communities and indigenous peoples will participate in decision-making. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC, she suggested building bridges between science and policy "in a balanced manner." The AFRICAN GROUP emphasized that making data only available "online" does not ensure accessibility for all member states. He requested clarification on the definition of "open science" and its implications for intellectual property rights and ensuring that ILK is not exploited. INDONESIA and MALAYSIA called for recognizing the rights of knowledge holders, including respecting the principle of free, prior and informed consent.

The US suggested, *inter alia*, creating an information portal and, with the UK, clarifying specific roles of the task forces and TSUs. BOLIVIA emphasized the need for a participatory mechanism that facilitates and strengthens indigenous peoples' participation in all functions of the Platform.

Discussions on this item will resume in the morning.

#### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

Arriving at the World Conference Centre on Monday morning, where one observed greetings among familiar faces, delegates did not mind that "the snow that covered Bonn during IPBES-1 two years ago had not arrived yet", as IPBES Chair Zakri jokingly apologized in his opening.

While there was consensus on appreciating this meteorological boon, Monday's plenary discussions were marked by differing appreciations of how to conceive of time – both elapsed and available. Concerns over the planned organization of work that provides for parallel evening meetings without interpretation during the week were countered by reminders that this is how IPBES has organized its work in the past and recognition that there is a heavy agenda before delegates. Views also diverged on proposed adjustments to the work programme, with several members questioning the need, and wisdom, of reopening the "Antalya Consensus" just over a year after it was reached.

As delegates gathered for the German reception, taking advantage of their only "free" evening this week, some suggested that these opening discussions reflect the fact that IPBES is an ambitious platform up against budget, time and human constraints.