

**Rules of procedure for the Plenary of the Platform (as agreed at the second session of the plenary meeting to determine the modalities and institutional arrangements for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, held in Panama City, Panama from 16 – 20 April 2012: Document Number UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9)**

**I. Scope**

**Rule 1**

These rules of procedure apply to any session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services convened in accordance with a decision of the Plenary and in compliance with these rules.

**II. Definitions**

**Rule 2**

For the purposes of these rules:

(a) “Platform” means the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services;

(b) “Members of the Platform” means States Members of the United Nations expressing their intent to be members of the Platform.

*[Issues of membership/participation of regional economic integration organizations remain under discussion with a view to resolution as soon as possible.]<sup>1</sup>*

(c) “Plenary” means the Platform’s decision-making body, comprising all members of the Platform;

(d) “Session” means any ordinary or extraordinary session of the Plenary;

(e) “Members present and voting” means members of the Platform present at a session and casting an affirmative or negative vote. Members who abstain from voting are considered as not voting;

(f) “Secretariat” means the secretariat of the Platform;

(g) “Observer” means any State not a member of the Platform and any body, organization or agency, whether national or international, governmental, intergovernmental or non-governmental, or [organization of] [accredited representative of] indigenous peoples and local communities, which is qualified in matters covered by the Platform, and which has informed the secretariat of the Platform of its wish to be represented at sessions of the Plenary, subject to provisions set out in these rules of procedure;

(h) “Meeting” means a single sitting at a session of the Plenary of the Platform;

(i) “Bureau” refers to the body of elected members of the Bureau of the session of the Plenary as set forth in these rules of procedure;

(j) “Bureau member” or “member of the Bureau” refers to any person who holds one of the posts in the Bureau;

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<sup>1</sup> Participation is open to regional economic integration organizations as observers ad interim.

(k) “Multidisciplinarity” connotes an approach that crosses many disciplinary boundaries, knowledge systems and approaches to create a holistic approach, focusing on complex problems that require expertise across two or more disciplines. Multidisciplinarity arises when scientists (including natural and social scientists), policy and technical experts, natural resource managers, other relevant knowledge holders and users, interact in an open discussion and dialogue giving consideration to each perspective.

### **III. Venue, dates and notice of sessions**

#### **Rule 3**

The venue and dates of each session are to be decided by the members of the Platform.

#### **Rule 4**

The secretariat will invite and notify the members and observers of the Platform of the venue and dates of any session at least eight weeks before it is due to commence.

### **IV. Members and observers**

#### **Rule 5**

1. Membership of the Platform is open to States Members of the United Nations, who may become members by expressing their intent to be members of the Platform.

2. *[Issues of membership/participation of regional economic integration organizations remain under discussion with a view to resolution as soon as possible.]*<sup>2</sup>

3. “Observer” means any State not a member of the Platform and any body, organization or agency, whether national or international, governmental, intergovernmental or non-governmental, or [organization of] [accredited representative of] indigenous peoples and local communities, which is qualified in matters covered by the Platform, and which has informed the secretariat of the Platform of its wish to be represented at sessions of the Plenary, subject to provisions set out in these rules of procedure.

*Admission of observers*

#### **Rule 6**

1. The Plenary will adopt at its first session the Platform’s policy and procedures on admission of observers.

2. The provisions on observers set forth in the rules of procedure of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme will apply to the first session of the Plenary, unless the Plenary decides otherwise by consensus.

*Participation by observers*

#### **Rule 7**

Any observer may, upon the invitation of the Chair, participate in the Plenary without the ability to cast votes or join or block consensus.

### **[V. Agenda**

*(Note: this section may be deleted if the Plenary so decides.)*

#### **Rule 8**

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<sup>2</sup> Participation is open to regional economic integration organizations as observers ad interim.

1. The secretariat will, in consultation with and under the guidance of the Bureau, prepare a provisional agenda for each session in accordance with the guidance of the Plenary. Any member of the Platform may request the secretariat [/Chair] of the Plenary to include specific items in the provisional agenda.

2. The secretariat will distribute the provisional agenda for each session, along with other official documents to be considered at the session, to the members and those entitled to be represented as observers in the official languages of the Platform at least six weeks before the session is due to commence.

3. Between the date of distribution of the provisional agenda and the date of adoption of the agenda by the Plenary, members of the Platform may propose supplementary items for inclusion in the agenda, provided they are of an important and urgent nature. The secretariat will, with the consent of the Bureau, include such items on the provisional agenda.

#### **Rule 9**

At the beginning of each session the members of the Platform that are present will adopt the agenda for the session on the basis of the provisional agenda and any supplementary items proposed in accordance with paragraph 3 of rule 8.

#### **Rule 10**

During any session members of the Platform may revise the agenda by adding, deleting or amending items. Only items that members consider to be of an important and urgent nature may be added to the agenda during a session.

#### **Rule 11**

Any item of the agenda of an ordinary session, consideration of which has not been completed at the session, shall be included automatically in the agenda of the next ordinary session, unless otherwise decided by the Plenary.]

## **VI. Representation, credentials and accreditation**

#### **Rule 12**

Each member of the Platform participating in a session will be represented by a delegation consisting of a head of delegation and such other accredited representatives, alternate representatives and advisers as it may require. An alternate representative or adviser may act as a representative upon designation by the head of delegation.

#### **Rule 13**

1. The credentials of representatives of members of the Platform and the names of alternate representatives and advisers need to be submitted to the secretariat, if possible not later than 24 hours after the opening of the session. Information regarding any later change in the composition of a delegation, along with any necessary credentials, also needs to be submitted to the secretariat.

2. The credentials of the representatives of any member of the Platform need to be issued by or on behalf of the member's Head of State or Government or minister for foreign affairs consistent with each country's policies and law. [The credentials of the representatives of a regional economic integration organization need to be issued by the competent authority of that organization.]

#### **Rule 14**

The Bureau [shall] [will] examine the credentials and submit a report thereon to the Plenary.

#### **Rule 15**

Representatives of members of the plenary are entitled to participate provisionally in a session pending a decision by the Plenary to accept their credentials. These representatives [shall] [will] not have the right to make decisions until their credentials are accepted.

## **VII. Members and operation of the Bureau**

### **Rule 16**

1. Candidates for the Bureau will be proposed by Governments for nomination by regions and election by the Plenary. [In the event that a region cannot agree on their nomination the Plenary will decide.]

2. The Bureau of the Plenary, consisting of the Chair, four Vice Chairs, and five other officers, [shall] [will] be elected from among the members of the Platform. Each region [shall] [will] be represented by two officers in the Bureau, taking into account the principle of geographical representation. The Chair and four Vice Chairs, one of whom [shall] [will] act as Rapporteur, will be selected with due consideration to scientific and technical expertise and will be selected from each of the five United Nations regions. The five additional members of the Bureau will carry out relevant administrative functions. [The officers of the Bureau [shall][will] remain in office until their replacement is elected.]

*[The term of office of the Bureau members should be staggered and should be decided by the Plenary. The term of the office of each Bureau member should start at the end of the session at which he/she is elected and end at the close of the session at which his or her successor is elected. The Chair will be rotated among the five regions every [X] years. The Plenary should decide on term limits and possible re-election of the officers]*

3. Each region may designate alternates, to be approved by the Plenary, to represent the region at a Bureau meeting if the designate is unable to attend.

### **Rule 17**

The Bureau [shall][will] meet as necessary, either in person or by means of telecommunication, to advise the Chair and the secretariat on the conduct of business of the Plenary and its subsidiary bodies.

### **Rule 18**

1. In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him or her elsewhere in these rules, the Chair [shall][will]:

- (a) Declare the opening and closure of each session;
- (b) Preside at sessions of the Plenary and meetings of the Bureau;
- (c) Ensure the observance of the present rules in accordance with the definitions, functions and operating principles of the Platform;
- (d) Accord participants the right to speak;
- (e) Apply the decision-making procedure in rule 28;
- (f) Rule on any points of order;
- (g) Subject to these rules, exercise complete control over the proceedings and maintain order.

2. The Chair may also propose:

- (a) The closure of the list of speakers;
- (b) A limitation on the time to be allowed to speakers and on the number of times a member or observer may speak on an issue;

- (c) The adjournment or closure of debate on an issue;
- (d) The suspension or adjournment of a meeting.

3. The Chair and the Bureau, in the exercise of their functions, remain at all times under the authority of the Plenary.

#### **Rule 19**

The Chair participates in sessions in that capacity and may not at the same time exercise the rights of a representative of a member of the Platform.

#### **Rule 20**

1. The Chair, if absent from a session or any part thereof, should designate one of the Vice-Chairs to act as Chair.

2. A Vice-Chair acting as Chair has the same powers and duties as the Chair and may not at the same time exercise the rights of a representative of a member of the Platform.

#### **Rule 21**

1. If the Chair resigns or is otherwise unable to complete his or her assigned term of office or to perform the functions of that office, a new Chair is to be elected at the next session to serve the remainder of the term of office of the departing Chair. Until a new Chair is elected, one of the Vice-Chairs, as agreed by the Bureau, serves as the Acting Chair.

2. If a member of the Bureau, other than the Chair, resigns or is otherwise unable to complete the assigned term of office or to perform the functions of that office, that member [will][shall] be replaced by the alternate from the same region.

#### *Election of members of the Bureau*

#### **Rule 22**

1. The members of the Bureau will be elected by the Plenary by consensus unless the Plenary decides otherwise.

2. If the Plenary decides to elect members of the Bureau by vote:

(a) This[shall][will] be held at ordinary sessions of the Plenary;

(b) Each member of the Plenary has one vote in the elections;

(c) All elections [shall][will] be decided by a majority of the members present and voting. All elections [shall][will] be held by secret ballot, unless otherwise decided by the Plenary;

(d) After completion of the elections, the number of votes for each candidate and the number of abstentions [shall][will] be recorded.

#### *Nominations*

#### **Rule 23**

1. All nominees for election as the Chair and Vice-Chairs need to have relevant expertise from the agreed guidelines. Curricula vitae of all nominees are to be submitted to the secretariat and made available to members of the Platform before the elections.

2. The secretariat of the Platform will invite members of the Platform to submit to the secretariat written nominations [in accordance with rule 16] and accompanying curricula vitae of nominees for the Chair and the Vice-Chairs no less than four months before the scheduled election. The Plenary can accept late nominations at its discretion. [In the event that a region cannot agree on their nomination, the Plenary will decide.] The secretariat will post the names of persons nominated, as well as the identity of the region making the nomination, on the website of the Platform in a time frame that will facilitate consideration of such persons by members of the Platform.

*Guidelines for the nomination and selection of the members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel*

**Rule 24**

Each region will nominate five candidates for interim membership to the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, subject to approval by the Plenary. The following criteria could be taken into account in nominating and selecting the members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel:

- (a) Scientific expertise in biodiversity and ecosystem services with regard to both natural and social sciences and traditional knowledge among the members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel;
- (b) Scientific, technical or policy expertise and knowledge of the main elements of the Platform's programme of work;
- (c) Experience in communicating, promoting and incorporating science into policy development processes;
- (d) Ability to work in international scientific and policy processes.

**VIII. Secretariat**

*[To be developed]*

**IX. Subsidiary bodies**

**Rule 25**

- 1. The members of the Platform may:
  - (a) Establish subsidiary bodies to carry out such objectives as may be agreed upon at a session of the Plenary;
  - (b) Determine the matters to be considered by any subsidiary body;
  - (c) Establish the terms of reference of any subsidiary body.
- 2. The Plenary will keep under review the composition, effectiveness and need for its subsidiary bodies, including the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, as part of the periodic review of the operation of the Platform.

**X. Conduct of business**

*Quorum*

**Rule 26**

The Chair may not declare a meeting of any session open and permit discussion to proceed unless at least one third of those members of the Platform participating in the session are present.

*Quorum for decision-making*

**Rule 27**

The presence of a majority of the members of the Platform participating in the session is needed for any decision to be taken.

**XI. Decision-making**

**[Rule 28**

The members of the Platform [should][will][must][may][should in general] take decisions on matters of substance by consensus, unless otherwise provided in these rules.

[When consensus is not reached the main reasons for the objections shall be recorded in the report of the session.]

On matters of procedure, the members of the Platform are to make every effort to achieve consensus. If all efforts by the members of the Platform to achieve consensus on a matter of procedure have been exhausted, and no consensus has been reached, the decision will, as a last resort, unless otherwise provided by these rules of procedure, be taken by a [majority][two thirds] vote of the members of the Platform present and voting.]

## **XII. Languages**

### **Rule 29**

1. The official languages of the Platform are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.
2. Interpretation into all the official languages of the Platform will be provided for all the sessions of the Plenary. A member may speak in a language other than an official language if the participant provides for interpretation into one of the official languages.

### **Rule 30**

Official documents of the Plenary [shall][will] be drawn up in one of the official languages and translated into the other official languages.

## **XIII. Modifications to the rules of procedure**

### **[Rule 31**

1. Modifications to these rules of procedure may be adopted by [consensus of] the members of the Platform.
2. Any modifications proposed to these rules of procedure, submitted by members of the Platform or by the Bureau, should be communicated to all members of the Platform at least eight weeks before they are submitted to the session where the proposals are expected to be discussed.]