Latin American and Caribbean regional consultation on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, Panama City, 27 and 28 August 2009

Note by the secretariat

The annex to the present note contains a summary of the outcomes of a regional consultation on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, held in Panama City on 27 and 28 August 2009, and attended by representatives of countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region. The summary is presented as received and has not been formally edited.
Summary of Meeting Outcomes- Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Consultation
Panama City 27-28 August 2009

Country Delegations from the Latin American and the Caribbean Region convened in Panama City on 27 and 28 August 2009 to debate on the need and opportunities to improve and strengthening the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services. The participant Country Delegations were: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, St. Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and Grenadines, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The participant Delegations from the Region made use of the full gap analysis, its executive summary and the needs and action document to strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services. The delegates highlighted the following five key topics of significant importance for achieving an effective science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Establishment of a potential mechanism

Country Delegations from the Latin American and the Caribbean Region recognise the need to strengthening the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services and many support the establishment of a proposed mechanism as a means to strengthening the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services. Country Delegations recognise the need to disseminate useful information and tools to decision-making between the academic, private and public sector and local communities.

Scope and purpose of a proposed mechanism

Country Delegations from the Latin American and the Caribbean Region identified as a key topic to clarify the purpose of a proposed mechanism based on the following elements:

- The information should be useful for decision-making and not policy prescriptive so as to avoid politicising of the mechanism;
- The information should correspond to the appropriate scales ranging from local to global as needed;
- The mechanism should consider an approach ranging from local to global.

1 A list of participants is attached in Annex
The objectives of a proposed mechanism might be:

- Produce scientifically independent, credible and relevant information to support decision-making for the implementation of biodiversity related MEAs and other processes. It should also facilitate information exchange and ensure complementarities across these various processes.
- Promote activities at different scales that might include among others support to assessments, scenarios and modelling and related capacity building.
- Provide tools for decision-making and generation, communication and dissemination of scientific information, in particular in developing countries, which is essential for an effective science-policy interface.
- Build capacities in developing countries to generate and make new information accessible, which is necessary to guarantee their substantive participation in the new mechanism.
- Make use of already existing National, Sub-regional and Regional experiences and initiatives as a means to incorporate best practices which embrace the needs and characteristics of each country.
- Dissemination and outreach should be crucial components of the new mechanism as to raise awareness on the importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services for maintaining and improving human wellbeing, promotion of sustainable development and contribution towards poverty eradication.
- Ensure that various knowledge systems and multiple disciplines are recognised as integral components of this interface.

Legal Basis and Governance structure

Delegations emphasised that the new mechanism should be intergovernmental and demand driven. The mechanism should support CBD and other biodiversity related conventions.

Regarding the framework where the proposed mechanism should be established, some Delegations supported the idea that the mechanism should be established under the framework of the CBD, while other Delegations preferred that the mechanism should be under the framework of UNEP.

Delegations also highlighted the importance of defining a governance structure for the new mechanism to strengthening the science-policy interface biodiversity and ecosystem services at the national, regional and global levels. This governance structure should guarantee its relevance for decision-makers and the scientific community and therefore establish a fluent two-way dialogue between science and policy, without being policy prescriptive. This governance structure should also identify selection criteria for scientific experts for the preparation of assessments and other relevant studies for decision-making, which ensure an
equitable access by all regions throughout the world. Regional initiatives and existing networks would be key to the functioning of the new mechanism.

Regional initiatives and networks should draw from existing networks and must contribute to the work of the new mechanism.

**Funding**

Finally, Delegations highlighted the need to clarify the sources of funding for the proposed mechanism and emphasised in no case create additional burdens to developing countries.

The participant countries in this meeting request UNEP to present preliminary budgets regarding each of the alternatives to the establishment of the mechanism.
ANNEX
List of Participants

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