



**United Nations
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**Third ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder
meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform
on biodiversity and ecosystem services**

Busan, Republic of Korea, 7–11 June 2010

Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

**Consideration of whether to establish an
intergovernmental science-policy platform
on biodiversity and ecosystem services**

**Options and criteria for selecting the secretariat: executive
summary**

Note by the secretariat

Addendum

Executive summary

1. 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, participants discussed the need to strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services. There was a general consensus in favour of a new intergovernmental mechanism in that regard. Such a mechanism would have scientific independence and could, among other things, generate knowledge, undertake knowledge assessments and support policy development and implementation and capacity-building. There was also general agreement on the need for a small secretariat, should the platform be established.
2. To facilitate further discussions, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was requested to assess various types of secretariat arrangements and the criteria to be used to select the secretariat's location. The present note has been prepared in response to that request.
3. The role of a secretariat is likely to include supporting the work of the proposed new platform in the implementation of any functions and work programme and administering the platform. Possible functions of the secretariat, as described in the note by the secretariat on options for improving the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services (UNEP/IPBES/3/2), might be:

* UNEP/IPBES/3/1.

- (a) To support the platform's work by organizing meetings and providing administrative and substantive support for meetings and other work;
- (b) To identify, acquire, coordinate and manage information to assist the platform in its work and to manage data, resources and documents to support its work;
- (c) To assist in preparing documents for, and reports to, the governing body of the platform and others as needed;
- (d) To facilitate coordination between working groups;
- (e) To liaise with member Governments, civil society organizations and all other relevant stakeholder organizations;
- (f) To organize and coordinate public information and outreach activities, including editorial work and the release of reports and other products;
- (g) To serve as a focal point to promote and facilitate achievement of the platform's objectives;
- (h) To develop the platform's programme and budget and manage and report on related funds and trust funds;
- (i) To help to mobilize financial resources in accordance with the governing body's directions.

4. The note by the secretariat on options for improving the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services (UNEP/IPBES/3/2) sets out the following four possible institutional arrangements for the secretariat:

- (a) *Option 1:* The secretariat would be hosted by one or more existing intergovernmental organizations within the United Nations. It might be established by a resolution of the General Assembly upon recommendation of an intergovernmental conference or by a decision of an existing intergovernmental organization or concurrent decisions of two or more intergovernmental organizations;
- (b) *Option 2:* The secretariat would be hosted by one or more existing intergovernmental organizations outside the United Nations system, with or without the support of intergovernmental organizations inside the system. It might be established by a decision of an existing intergovernmental organization or concurrent decisions of two or more intergovernmental organizations upon recommendation of an intergovernmental conference;
- (c) *Option 3:* The secretariat would be hosted wholly or partly by an existing intergovernmental organization whose secretariat is hosted by another organization. It might be established by a decision of the governing body of an existing intergovernmental organization upon recommendation of an intergovernmental conference;
- (d) *Option 4:* The secretariat would be hosted by one or more international non governmental organizations, together with one or more intergovernmental organizations. It might be established by a decision of the governing body of an existing intergovernmental and international organization upon recommendation of an intergovernmental conference.

5. Many existing United Nations bodies and agencies and other intergovernmental entities are relevant to the proposed new platform's work. They include:

- (a) Convention on Biological Diversity;
- (b) Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora;
- (c) Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals;
- (d) Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat;
- (e) Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);
- (f) Global Environment Facility;
- (g) Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission;
- (h) International Plant Protection Convention;
- (i) International Treaty on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;

- (j) International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN);
- (k) UNEP;
- (l) United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;
- (m) United Nations Development Programme;
- (n) United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO);
- (o) United Nations Forum on Forests;
- (p) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- (q) United Nations University;
- (r) World Bank.

6. The International Council for Science, the International Social Sciences Council and the InterAcademy Panel on International Issues are among the academic organizations that could contribute to the platform's work. Furthermore, many national systems of assessments, universities and foundations are relevant. Arrangements for hosting the secretariat could therefore take into account that many stakeholders are involved.

7. There is an advantage in associating key stakeholders in the operations of the secretariat, whatever option may be chosen. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment is an example of this. UNEP provided coordination for the Assessment, but its secretariat was widely distributed between relevant organizations. Another example is the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development. Its secretariat is geographically distributed, with the major component being in Washington D.C., and others in Rome (at FAO), Nairobi (at UNEP) and Paris (at UNESCO). Other secretariat staff members are located at subglobal management entities.

8. A range of criteria may be considered in selecting the host institution or institutions of the secretariat. These criteria include:

- (a) Relevance of the mandate, objectives and functions of the host institution or institutions to the mandate, objectives and functions of the new platform;
- (b) Legal basis for the institutional arrangements of the host institution or institutions to provide the secretariat and carry out secretariat functions;
- (c) Existing organizational structures of the host institution or institutions capable of providing administrative or programmatic support for the platform's functions;
- (d) Established administrative and financial procedures for the provision of the secretariat;
- (e) Ability of the host institution or institutions to operate at all levels of governance;
- (f) Ability of the host institution or institutions to enter into collaborative and working relationships with Governments, relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders;
- (g) Existence of channels of communication with Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;
- (h) Existence of infrastructures within the host institution or institutions concerning public information and communications;
- (i) Experience in establishing and servicing intergovernmental bodies or arrangements;
- (j) Experience in convening intergovernmental meetings and providing services for such meetings;
- (k) Experience in the provision of a secretariat or secretariat functions for intergovernmental bodies, programmes and arrangements that are legally distinct from the host institution or institutions;
- (l) Experience in matters relating to the platform's possible functions;
- (m) Past or current involvement in the platform's development;
- (n) Political support for the platform expressed by members of the governing bodies of the host institution or institutions;

(o) Extent to which the host institution or institutions could provide technical support for the platform's functions;

(p) Extent to which the host institution or institutions could provide support for the operation of the secretariat (recruitment, training and management of staff, meeting logistics, etc.);

(q) Readiness of the host institution or institutions to provide financial and human support when required.

9. Some possible host institutions to be considered include UNEP, which is the principal United Nations body in the field of the environment; FAO, which is involved in plant and gene protection; UNESCO, which provides the secretariats for the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and has many programmes of relevance; secretariats of conventions relating to biodiversity, along with the scientific and technological bodies of those conventions; the United Nations University, which acts as a bridge between the United Nations and the international academic community; the United Nations Development Programme, which specializes in global development issues and operates through its worldwide network; IUCN, which has been involved in a range of biodiversity issues for more than 60 years; and international academic organizations and programmes such as the International Council for Science, the InterAcademy Panel on International Issues, the International Social Science Council and Diversitas. A combination of two or more of these organizations could be considered as the host or hosts of the secretariat. From the experience of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the Global Biodiversity Assessment and the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development, it is clear that the new platform will benefit from being associated with many stakeholders in its activities.

10. A range of criteria may be considered in selecting the secretariat's physical location. These criteria include:

(a) Privileges and immunities that would be conferred on the permanent secretariat and its staff members;

(b) Rules, including any restrictions, applicable to the employment of dependants of staff members;

(c) Availability of international conference facilities and their cost;

(d) Access to qualified conference servicing staff (interpreters, translators, editors, etc.);

(e) Ease of arranging the printing of documents;

(f) Ease of communication, including modern information communication technology infrastructure;

(g) Ease of arranging international travel, including the time needed for processing entry requirements and flight connections;

(h) Ease of recruitment, training and management of staff, including the availability of local trained staff with language and other skills;

(i) Availability of health facilities;

(j) Local transportation facilities;

(k) Availability of suitable housing;

(l) Availability of schools providing education in languages other than the local language;

(m) Availability of facilities for the transfer of funds to and from foreign countries for the secretariat and its staff members;

(n) Security;

(o) Costs of premises (i.e., rental, use free of charge, utilities, services, security for the premises, etc.) and in-kind contributions by the host Government to cover some of those costs;

(p) Effect of location on staff costs (i.e., post adjustment allowances);

(q) Salaries of national staff (e.g., non-professional staff);

(r) Diplomatic representation in the host city;

- (s) Presence of international organizations;
- (t) Any additional contributions to be made by the host Government to meet operating costs.

11. The options for the secretariat's physical location might include cities in which the relevant organizations are located or other cities if there are offers made by Governments.
