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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**

**Background document on the Intergovernmental Panel on
Climate Change**

Note by the secretariat

1. The present background document was prepared in response to a request by participants at the second ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services.¹ It is for the purpose of information only and should not be considered an authoritative description of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). It is based on official IPCC documents and is an endeavour by the secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to provide a summary of the principles governing IPCC work. The summary provides additional detail to that provided at the second meeting and at the same time synthesizes the text of the principles governing IPCC work to provide representatives with a brief overview, rather than having to refer to the many pages of the original text and its appendices.²

2. In making their request, participants sought more detailed information about IPCC, including its governance and science-policy approach, and the essential elements of its work: peer and government review processes, equitable geographical representation in its working groups to ensure legitimacy and its catalytic role.

* UNEP/IPBES/3/1.

1 See UNEP/IPBES/2/4/Rev.1, para. 22.

2 The full text of those principles can be found at www.ipcc.ch.

I. Purpose

3. IPCC is the leading body for the assessment of climate change, established by UNEP and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to provide the world with a clear scientific view on the current state of climate change and its potential environmental and social and economic consequences.

4. The role of IPCC is to assess on a comprehensive, objective, open and transparent basis the scientific, technical, social and economic information relevant to understanding the risk of human-induced climate change, its potential impacts and options for adaptation and mitigation. IPCC reports should be neutral with respect to policy, although they may need to deal objectively with scientific, technical, social and economic factors relevant to the application of particular policies.

II. Organization

5. IPCC is open to all member countries of UNEP and WMO. At present 194 countries are members. The governance structure comprises the Panel (which holds plenary meetings), the Bureau, the secretariat, three working groups and a task force.

6. The Panel in its plenary meeting is the decision-making body that accepts, adopts or approves reports presented by working groups, with advice from the Bureau. The plenary meetings are open to all Governments who are member countries of UNEP or WMO and to accredited observers with voice but not vote.

7. The Panel in plenary meeting makes decisions on the following matters:

- (a) Election of the Chair;
- (b) Regional distribution of the Bureau;
- (c) Principles and procedures:
 - (i) Author and review editor functions;
 - (ii) Peer review process;
 - (iii) Report approval and acceptance processes;
- (d) Overall work programme, including the scope of assessments;
- (e) Funding decisions;
- (f) Secretariat work programme.

8. The Bureau has 30 members, comprising the IPCC Chair, vice-chairs, working group co-chairs and vice-chairs, and the task force co-chairs, with balanced distribution from the six WMO geographical regions, who are appointed by election in plenary meeting. The Chair does not represent a region. Members are elected with due consideration of scientific and technical requirements. Each region nominates its own representatives. Representatives of United Nations agencies and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change may be present as observers.

9. Three working groups and one task force are established for the duration of an assessment cycle (between five and seven years). The three working groups cover the physical science basis; impacts, adaptation and vulnerability; and mitigation of climate change. The task force covers greenhouse gas inventory methodologies.

10. Each working group has a bureau comprising members from the main Bureau. A working group bureau comprises two co-chairs and six members, and a secretariat to manage the working group work programme. This includes selecting authors and peer reviewers, subject to endorsement by the working group in plenary meeting and managing the peer review processes.

11. The secretariat supports the Chair, the Bureau and the Panel. It oversees and implements the Panel's work programme by working with the technical support units of working groups and the task force. It organizes plenary meetings and working group sessions, Bureau meetings, manages the Trust Fund and organizes publications and outreach activities.

III. Participation

12. Participation in the Panel's work is open to all member countries of UNEP and WMO. Interpretation in the six official United Nations languages is provided for Panel sessions.
13. Invitations to participate in Panel sessions are extended to Governments and participating organizations by the IPCC Chair.
14. Experts from UNEP and WMO member countries or international, intergovernmental or non-governmental organizations may be invited in their own right to contribute to the work of the IPCC working groups and task forces. Governments should be informed in advance of invitations extended to experts from their countries and they may nominate additional experts.

IV. Conflict resolution

15. The Panel, its working groups and any task forces should endeavour to reach consensus in taking decisions regarding all matters related to IPCC, and in approving, adopting and accepting reports. If consensus is judged impossible by the relevant body, the following procedures should be followed:
 - (a) On procedural issues the General Regulations of WMO should be followed to resolve the matter;
 - (b) For decisions on approval, adoption or acceptance of reports, the differing views should be explained and, upon request, recorded. Differing views on a matter concerning a scientific, technical, social or economic document should be represented in the document concerned. Differing views on matters of policy should be recorded in the report of the session.

V. Procedures for the preparation, review, acceptance, adoption, approval and publication of reports

A. Definitions

16. Definitions of terms used in the principles governing IPCC work are as follows:
 - “*Acceptance*” signifies that the material has not been subjected to line-by-line discussion and agreement, but represents a comprehensive, objective and balanced view of the subject matter;
 - “*Adoption*” is a process of endorsement section by section (not line by line);
 - “*Approval*” signifies that the material has been subjected to line-by-line discussion and agreement;
 - “*Assessment reports*” are published materials composed of the full scientific and technical assessment of climate change, generally in three volumes, one for each of the working groups of IPCC. Each volume may be composed of two or more sections, including a summary for policymakers; an optional technical summary; and individual chapters and their executive summaries;
 - “*Members of the IPCC*” are countries that are members of WMO or UNEP;
 - “*Methodology reports*” are published materials that provide practical guidelines for the preparation of greenhouse gas inventories. Such reports may be composed of two or more sections, including an overview chapter, which broadly describes the background, structure and major features of the report; individual chapters; and technical annexes;
 - “*Reports*” refer to the main IPCC materials (including assessments, synthesis, methodology and special reports and their summaries for policymakers and overview chapters);
 - “*Session of a working group*” refers to a series of meetings at the plenary level of the governmental representatives to a working group of IPCC;
 - “*Session of the Bureau*” refers to a series of meetings of the elected members of the IPCC Bureau, who may be accompanied by a representative of their Government;
 - “*Task force Bureau*” refers to the elected members of the Bureau of the task force on national greenhouse gas inventories. It is chaired by two co-chairs;

“*Session of the Panel*” refers to a series of meetings at the plenary level of the governmental representatives to IPCC;

“*Special report*” is an assessment of a specific issue and generally follows the same structure as a volume of an assessment report;

“*Summary for policymakers*” is a component of a report, such as an assessment, special or synthesis report, which provides a policy-relevant but policy-neutral summary of that report;

“*Supporting material*” consists of published material, workshop proceedings and material from expert meetings that are either commissioned or supported by IPCC. Supporting material may include software or databases to facilitate the use of the IPCC methodology reports;

“*Synthesis reports*” synthesize and integrate materials contained within the assessment reports and special reports. They are written in a non-technical style suitable for policymakers and address a broad range of policy-relevant but policy-neutral questions. They are composed of a summary for policymakers and a longer report;

“*Technical papers*” are based on the material already in the assessment reports and special reports and are prepared on topics for which an objective international scientific or technical perspective is deemed essential.

B. Preparation of reports and peer review process

17. To ensure proper preparation and review, the following steps should be taken:

- (a) Compilation of lists of coordinating lead authors, lead authors, contributing authors, expert reviewers, review editors and government focal points;
- (b) Selection of coordinating lead authors and lead authors;
- (c) Preparation of draft report;
- (d) Review:
 - (i) First review (by experts),
 - (ii) Second review (by Governments and experts);
- (e) Preparation of final draft report;
- (f) Acceptance of report at a session of the working group(s) or the Panel respectively.

18. At least six weeks should be allowed for review by experts and Governments. All written expert and government review comments will be made available to reviewers on request during the review process and will be retained, on completion of the report, in an open archive in a location determined by the IPCC secretariat for a period of at least five years.

19. The purpose of the review process is to ensure that the IPCC reports present a comprehensive, objective and balanced view of the latest scientific, technical, social and economic findings. The content of the authored chapters is the responsibility of the lead authors. After acceptance by the Panel, only grammatical or minor editorial changes can be made prior to publication.

20. IPCC reports are made available to Governments and other participating organizations by the secretariat at least six weeks in advance of the plenary meeting for final acceptance, adoption or approval and, to the extent possible, the summaries for policymakers will be distributed in all official United Nations languages.

C. Compilation of nominees for authors, reviewers and review editors

21. At the request of the working group or task force Bureau co-chairs, through the IPCC secretariat, all Governments and participating organizations identify appropriate experts for each area in the report to act as coordinating lead authors, lead authors, contributing authors, expert reviewers or review editors. To facilitate the identification of experts and peer reviewers, Governments and non-governmental stakeholders should designate focal points. Bureau members should ensure, where necessary, balanced representation of experts and reviewers from developed countries, developing countries and countries with economies in transition. These recommendations shall be maintained by the IPCC secretariat and be available to all IPCC members. The tasks and responsibilities of coordinating lead authors, lead authors, contributing authors, expert reviewers, review editors and

government focal points are outlined in annex I to the present document (which summarizes the content of annex 1 to appendix A of the principles governing IPCC work).

D. Selection of authors

22. Coordinating lead authors and lead authors are selected by the relevant working group or the task force Bureau, under general guidance and review provided by the session of the working group or, in the case of reports prepared by the task force on national greenhouse gas inventories, the Panel, from the experts cited in the lists provided by Governments and participating organizations, and other experts as appropriate, known through their publications and works. The composition of the group reflects the need to aim for a range of views, expertise, gender and geographical representation. The coordinating lead authors and lead authors may enlist other experts as contributing authors to assist in their work.

23. At the earliest opportunity, the IPCC secretariat should inform all Governments and participating organizations who the coordinating lead authors and lead authors are for different chapters and indicate the general content area that the person will contribute to the chapter.

E. Preparation of draft reports

24. Coordinating lead authors and lead authors undertake preparation of the first draft of the IPCC reports. Contributions should be supported as far as possible with references from the peer-reviewed and internationally available literature, including selected non-peer-reviewed manuscripts that can be made available for review. Material that is not published but is available to experts and reviewers may be included, provided that its inclusion is fully justified in the context of the IPCC assessment process. Procedures for using non-published and non-peer-reviewed sources in IPCC reports are outlined in annex II to the present document (which summarizes the content of annex 2 to appendix A of the principles governing IPCC work).

F. Review

25. Three general principles govern the review process of the IPCC reports:

(a) The best possible scientific and technical advice should be included so that the reports represent the latest scientific, technical, social and economic findings and are as comprehensive as possible;

(b) Circulation should aim to involve as many experts as possible, with particular attention paid to independent experts (not involved in the preparation of the chapter) from developed countries, developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

(c) The review should be objective, open and transparent.

26. At the stage of the first review (by experts), first draft reports should be circulated by working group and task force Bureau co-chairs for review by experts selected by the working group or task force Bureau and, in addition, those on the lists provided by Governments and participating organizations, noting the need for a range of views, expertise and geographical representation.

27. At the stage of the second review (by Governments and experts), a revised draft should be distributed by the appropriate working group or task force Bureau co-chairs or through the IPCC secretariat to Governments through the designated government focal points, and to all the coordinating lead authors, lead authors, contributing authors and expert reviewers.

28. Coordinating lead authors, in consultation with the review editors and the secretariat, may supplement the draft revision process with a wider meeting of principal lead authors and expert reviewers, if time and funding permit, to pay special attention to particular points where major differences exist.

29. Expert reviewers should provide comments to the appropriate working group or task force Bureau co-chairs with a copy to their Government or participating organization focal point. Each Government should send one integrated set of comments for each report to the appropriate working group or task force Bureau co-chairs through their government focal points.

G. Preparation of final draft of reports

30. The coordinating lead authors and lead authors, in consultation with the review editors, should prepare the final draft of the reports. Government and expert comments should be considered in this

final draft. If necessary, and if time and finances permit, a wider meeting with coordinating lead authors, lead authors and expert and government reviewers may be held to attend to particular areas where major scientific differences exist. It is important that the reports describe different (possibly controversial) scientific, technical, social and economic views on a subject, particularly if they are relevant to a policy debate. The final draft should credit all coordinating lead authors, lead authors, contributing authors, reviewers and review editors by name and affiliation at the end of the report text.

H. Approval and acceptance of summaries for decision makers

31. Summary sections of reports approved by the working groups and accepted by the Panel will principally be the summaries for policymakers, prepared by the respective working groups, of their full scientific, technical, social and economic assessments, and summaries for policymakers of special reports prepared by the working groups. The summaries for policymakers should be subject to simultaneous review by both experts and Governments and to a final line-by-line approval by a session of the working group. Responsibility for preparing first drafts and revised drafts of summaries for policymakers lies with the respective working group co-chairs. The summaries for policymakers should be prepared concurrently with the main IPCC reports.

32. Approval of the summaries for policymakers at the session of the working group signifies that it is consistent with the factual material contained in the full scientific, technical and socioeconomic assessments or special reports accepted by the working group. Coordinating lead authors may be asked to provide technical assistance in ensuring the documents are consistent. The summaries for policymakers should be formally and prominently described as “a report of (working group X of) the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change”.

I. Reports approved or adopted by the Panel

33. Reports approved or adopted by the Panel will be the synthesis report of the assessment reports and other reports as decided by the Panel.

34. The synthesis report will synthesize and integrate materials contained within the assessment reports and special report and should be written in a non-technical style suitable for policymakers and address a broad range of policy-relevant but policy-neutral questions approved by the Panel.

VI. Budget

35. IPCC has a trust fund with a normal turnover of about \$5 million per year. The main source of the trust fund is voluntary contributions from its member countries. The trust fund covers the cost of the operation of the secretariat (\$700,000), excluding salaries for the Secretary (D-2) and the Deputy Secretary (D-1), which are paid by WMO and UNEP respectively. The main expenditures are for the cost of travel and daily subsistence allowance for experts from developing countries, cost of plenary and expert meetings including interpretation in all six United Nations languages, and publication and translation of the IPCC reports.

36. The cost of the technical support units (which support the work of the IPCC working groups and task force and coordinate the working groups' activities, including arranging authors' meetings and assisting them during the draft of the reports) is not counted in the IPCC programme budget approved by the Panel, as it is covered by the host country (normally a developed country). The cost of the technical support units for the working groups is approximately \$1.5 million per year, including support to the co-chairs and staff salaries. The trust fund does not cover the cost of participation of developed-country experts.

VII. Institutional links with the Framework Convention on Climate Change and legal status

37. IPCC has delivered on a regular basis the most comprehensive scientific reports about climate change produced worldwide, namely the assessment reports to support the negotiations and implementation of the Framework Convention on Climate Change. It has also continued to respond to the need of the Convention, in particular its scientific body, for information on scientific and technical matters, including through preparation of special reports, technical papers and methodologies and guidelines for national greenhouse gas inventories.

38. While IPCC and the Convention are legally distinct and separate entities, the Kyoto Protocol, in its articles 3 and 5, requires the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol to take into account, among other things, the methodological work of IPCC when it takes relevant decisions as envisaged in those articles. In this context, the work of IPCC is institutionally recognized by the Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol.

Annex I

Tasks and responsibilities for lead authors, coordinating lead authors, contributing authors, expert reviewers and review editors of reports and government focal points

A. Lead authors

Function: Responsible for the production of designated sections addressing items of the work programme based on the best scientific, technical, social and economic information available.

Comment: Lead authors will typically work in groups that have the responsibility for ensuring that the various components of their section are brought together on time, are of uniformly high quality, and conform to any overall standards of style set for the document as a whole.

The task of lead authors is a demanding one and, in recognition of this, the names of lead authors will appear prominently in the final report. During the final stages of report preparation, when the workload is often heavy and lead authors are dependent upon each other to read and edit material and to agree to changes promptly, it is essential that the work should be accorded the highest priority.

The essence of the lead authors' task is the synthesis of relevant material. Lead authors, in conjunction with review editors, are also required to take into account expert and government review comments. Lead authors must have the proven ability to develop text that is scientifically and technically sound and that represents, to the extent that this is possible, contributions by a wide variety of experts. The ability to complete work by deadlines is critical.

Lead authors are required to record in the report views that cannot be reconciled with a consensus view but that are nonetheless scientifically or technically valid. Lead authors may convene meetings with contributing authors, as appropriate, in the preparation of their section or to discuss expert or government review comments, subject to budget availability. The names of all lead authors will be acknowledged in the report.

B. Coordinating lead authors

Function: Overall responsibility for coordinating major sections of a report.

Comment: Coordinating lead authors will be lead authors with the added responsibility of ensuring that major sections of the report for which they are responsible are completed to a high standard, in a timely manner and in conformance with style requirements. Coordinating lead authors will play a leading role in ensuring that any cross-cutting scientific or technical issues that may involve several sections of a report are addressed in a complete and coherent manner and reflect the latest information available. It is essential that coordinating lead authors have organizational skills as well as the skills and resources required of lead authors. The names of coordinating lead authors will be acknowledged in the report.

C. Contributing authors

Function: Prepare technical information in the form of text, graphs or data for assimilation by lead authors.

Comment: Input from a wide range of contributors is a key element to the success of the report. Contributions should be supported with references from the peer-reviewed and internationally available literature if possible. For any unpublished material cited, copies must be provided to the Secretariat with clear instructions on how to access the material.

D. Expert reviewers

Function: To comment on the accuracy, balance and completeness of the scientific and technical content.

Comment: Reviewers will comment on the text according to their own knowledge and experience.

E. Review editors

Function: Will assist in identifying reviewers, ensure that all substantive expert and government review comments are given appropriate consideration, advise lead authors on how to handle contentious or controversial issues and ensure genuine controversies are adequately reflected in the text of the report.

Comment: In order to carry out these tasks, typically one or two review editors with a broad understanding of the wider scientific and technical issues will be required per chapter. Although responsibility for the final text remains with the lead authors, review editors will need to ensure that where significant differences of opinion remain, such differences are described in an annex to the report.

F. Government focal points

Function: To nominate experts as required to help implement the IPCC work programme, prepare and review the reports and provide integrated comments on the accuracy, balance and completeness of the scientific or technical content.

Comment: Government review will typically be carried out within and between a number of departments and ministries, often with the assistance of the academic community. For administrative convenience, each Government and participating organization should designate one focal point for all IPCC activities, provide full information on contact coordinates for that person to the IPCC Secretariat and notify the Secretariat of any changes in that information. The focal point should liaise with the IPCC Secretariat regarding the logistics of the review process.

Annex II

Procedure for using non-published or non-peer-reviewed sources in the assessment report

1. Responsibilities of coordinating, lead and contributing authors: Authors who wish to include information from a non-published or non-peer-reviewed source are requested to:
 - (a) Critically assess any source. Each chapter team should review the quality and validity of the source;
 - (b) Send one copy of each unpublished or un-refereed source to the working group or Task Force Bureau co-chairs, including the following information:
 - Title;
 - Author(s);
 - Name of the journal or other publication in which it appears, if applicable;
 - Information on the availability of underlying data to the public;
 - English-language executive summary or abstract, if source not written in English;
 - Names and contact information for one or two people who can be contacted for more information about the source.
 2. Responsibilities of review editors: The review editors will ensure that the sources are selected and used in a consistent manner across the report.
 3. Responsibilities of the working group and Task Force Bureau co-chairs: The co-chairs will (a) collect and index the sources received from authors, as well as the accompanying information about each source; and (b) send copies of unpublished sources to reviewers upon request during the review process.
 4. Responsibilities of the IPCC Secretariat: The Secretariat will store the complete sets of indexed, non-published sources and send copies to reviewers who request them.
 5. Treatment in IPCC reports: The reference sections of IPCC reports will contain both sources that have been peer reviewed and those that have not been peer reviewed. If the source was not peer reviewed, a note will indicate that this is the case and will provide details on how to access the material.
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