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**Plenary meeting to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services
First session**

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Item 4 (d) of the provisional agenda*

Rules of procedure for meetings of the platform

Rules of procedure for the platform's plenary

Note by the secretariat

1. The representatives of Governments, in the outcome document of the third ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem-services known as the "Busan outcome", agreed that the platform should be established as an independent intergovernmental body administered by one or more existing United Nations organizations, agencies, funds or programmes, and envisaged that a body known as the "plenary" would be established as the platform's decision-making body.
2. Paragraph 6 (g) of the Busan outcome states that the plenary is to "establish" its rules of procedure. Subject to institutional arrangements to be made between the platform and relevant United Nations organizations, agencies, funds or programme, the platform's plenary might consider adopting its own rules of procedure, applying the rules of procedures of the governing body of one of those organizations for the work of the platform's plenary or adopting a combination of those two approaches.
3. The annex to the present note contains draft rules of procedure for the platform's plenary, on the assumption that it may wish to adopt its own rules of procedure. The draft rules are based on the rules of procedure of the governing bodies of existing organizations within the United Nations system, appropriately modified. They also take into account, where relevant, guidance from the Busan outcome.
4. Should the platform's plenary decide to apply the rules of procedure of an existing governing body or to combine its own new rules of procedure with such existing rules, the draft rules set out in the annex to the present note might help it to identify an appropriate approach in doing so.
5. It should be noted that the references contained in the draft rules with respect to various aspects of institutional arrangements of the platform, such as members, observers, the platform's plenary, subsidiary bodies or officers, are subject to outcomes of consideration of institutional arrangements of the platform and that, where appropriate, those references might need to be adjusted to reflect any agreement on those matters.

* UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/1.

Annex

Draft rules of procedure for the platform's plenary

I. Scope

Rule 1

These rules of procedure shall apply to any session of the plenary of the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem-services.¹

II. Definitions

Rule 2

For the purposes of these rules:

1. "Platform" means the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem-services.²
2. "Members of the platform" means States Members of the United Nations, its specialized agencies or the International Atomic Energy Agency that have notified the platform's secretariat of their intent to participate in the platform, or regional economic integration organizations constituted by sovereign States of a given region, to which its member States have transferred competence in respect of matters within the mandate of the platform and that have notified the platform's secretariat of their intent to participate in the platform.³
3. "Plenary" means a body comprising all members of the platform.⁴
4. "Session" means any ordinary or extraordinary session of the plenary.
5. "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.
6. "Secretariat" means the secretariat of the platform.

III. Venue, dates and notice of sessions

Rule 3

The venue and dates of each session shall be decided by the members of the platform after consulting the secretariat.

Rule 4

The secretariat shall notify the members of the platform of the venue and dates of any session at least eight weeks before it is due to commence.

IV. Observers

Rule 5

1. The United Nations, its specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as any States not members of the platform, may be represented at sessions as observers.
2. Such observers may, upon invitation of the Chair, participate without the right to vote in the proceedings of any session unless at least one third of the members of the platform present at the session object.

1 Language regarding the legal basis for convening meetings of the platform's plenary may need to be inserted at the end of the sentence.

2 The legislative authority by which the platform is established may need to be identified and appropriate language inserted accordingly.

3 This definition is provided only for the purpose of facilitating consideration of possible elements of the draft rules of procedure of the platform's plenary, without prejudice to the outcome of consideration of the issue of the membership of the platform.

4 The legal basis for the establishment of the platform's plenary may need to be identified and appropriate language inserted accordingly.

Rule 6

1. Any body or agency, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental, that is qualified in matters covered by the platform and has informed the Secretariat of its wish to be represented at a session as an observer may be so represented unless at least one third of the members of the platform present at the meeting object.
2. Such observers may, upon invitation of the Chair, participate without the right to vote in the proceedings of any session in respect of matters of direct concern to the body or agency they represent, unless at least one third of the members of the platform present at the meeting object.

Rule 7

The secretariat shall notify those entitled to be observers and those that have informed the Secretariat of their wish to be represented pursuant to rules 5 and 6 of the dates and venue of the next session.

V. Agenda**Rule 8**

1. The secretariat shall, in consultation with and under the guidance of the Bureau, prepare a provisional agenda for each session in accordance with the functions of the plenary.⁵ Any participant may request the secretariat to include specific items in the provisional agenda.
2. The secretariat shall 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 shall, 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 present shall 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.

VI. Representation, credentials and accreditation**Rule 11**

Each member of the platform participating in a session shall 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 12

1. The credentials of representatives of members of the platform and the names of alternate representatives and advisers shall 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, shall also be submitted to the secretariat.
2. The credentials of the representatives of any member of the platform shall be issued by the member's Head of State or Government or minister for foreign affairs; the credentials of the representatives of a regional economic integration organization, shall be issued by the competent authority of that organization.

⁵ The legislative authority defining the functions of the plenary may be identified and inserted at the end of the sentence.

Rule 13

The Bureau shall examine the credentials and submit a report thereon to the plenary.

Rule 14

Representatives of members of the plenary shall be entitled to participate provisionally in a session pending a decision by the plenary to accept their credentials.

Rule 15

1. Observers shall be duly accredited.
2. The names of any United Nations bodies and agencies and other intergovernmental bodies or intergovernmental organizations that are seeking accreditation as observers at a session shall be submitted to the secretariat, if possible no later than twenty-four hours after the opening of the session. At the same time, a responsible representative of each such body, agency or organization shall submit to the secretariat the names of those who are to represent it at the session. Information regarding any later change in the list of names shall also be submitted to the secretariat.
3. The name of any non-governmental organizations seeking accreditation as observers shall be submitted to the secretariat, if possible no later than twenty-four hours after the opening of the session. At the same time, a responsible official of such organization shall include a statement describing the activities, expertise and responsibilities of the organization and how they are consistent with the purpose and objectives of the platform, and shall submit to the secretariat the names of those who represent it at the plenary. Any later change in that list of names shall also be submitted to the secretariat. Upon the secretariat's verification of receipt of the above information, the organization shall be admitted to the session unless one-third or more of the members of the platform object.

VII. Officers and operation of the Bureau⁶

Rule 16

1. At the first session of the plenary, the Chair and four Vice-Chairs, one of whom shall act as Rapporteur, shall be elected by and from among the representatives of the members of the platform present at the session. These elected representatives shall serve as the Bureau of the plenary. The Bureau shall remain in office until a new Bureau is elected.⁷
2. In electing the officers, members of the platform shall have due regard for the principle of equitable geographical representation. Each of the five regions of the United Nations shall be represented by one officer in the Bureau.
3. For the purpose of this rule, members of the platform shall not include any regional economic integration organization.
4. Each member of the Bureau may designate a representative of the same member to represent him or her at those Bureau meetings that the member is unable to attend.

Rule 17

The Bureau shall meet as necessary, either in person or by telecommunication means, to advise the Chair and the secretariat on the conduct of the business of the plenary and its subsidiary bodies. The secretariat shall service its meetings. The chair of any subsidiary body may be invited to participate in Bureau meetings to report on and discuss the progress of work of the body for which he or she is responsible.

Rule 18

1. In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him or her elsewhere in these rules, the Chair shall:
 - (a) Declare the opening and closure of each session;
 - (b) Preside at session of the plenary and meetings of the Bureau;

⁶ The use of the term "Bureau" is subject to consideration of institutional arrangements of the platform.

⁷ The terms of office of the officers and the limit of the number of such terms that they may serve, if any, may need to be defined, which would determine the modality of electing those officers to be specified in the rules of procedure. In addition, whether the office of Chair and Rapporteur might be subject to rotation among the five regions of the United Nations should be considered.

- (c) Ensure the observance of these rules;
 - (d) Accord participants the right to speak;
 - (e) Put questions to the vote or apply the decision-making procedure in rule 35, in accordance with these rules, and announce decisions;
 - (f) Rule on any points of order; and
 - (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; and
 - (d) The suspension or adjournment of a meeting.
3. The Chair, in the exercise of his or her functions, remains at all times under the authority of the plenary.

Rule 19

The Chair shall participate in sessions in the capacity of Chair and shall not at the same time exercise the rights of a representative of a member of the platform. The member of the platform concerned shall designate another representative who shall be entitled to represent it at session and exercise the right to vote.

Rule 20

1. The Chair, if absent from a session or any part thereof, shall designate a Vice-Chair to act as Chair.
2. A Vice-Chair acting as Chair shall have the same powers and duties as the Chair and shall not at the same time exercise the rights of a representative of a member of the platform.

Rule 21

If an officer of the Bureau resigns or is otherwise unable to complete his or her term of office or to perform the functions of that office, a replacement representative of the same member of the platform shall be designated by that member as soon as possible.

VIII. Secretariat**Rule 22**

The executive head of the organization designated to provide the functions of the secretariat⁸ shall provide and direct the staff of the secretariat required to service the plenary, including any subsidiary bodies that the plenary may establish.

Rule 23

The executive head of the organization designated to provide the functions of the secretariat⁹ shall be responsible for convening sessions in accordance with rules 3 and 4 and for making all the necessary arrangements for such sessions, including the preparation and distribution of official documents in the six official languages of the United Nations at least six weeks in advance of the sessions in accordance with rule 8.

Rule 24

In addition to the functions specified for it by the plenary, the secretariat shall, in accordance with these rules:

- (a) Arrange for interpretation at sessions;
- (b) Receive, translate, reproduce and distribute the official documents for each session;

⁸ The organization or organizations designated to provide the functions of the secretariat may be specified.

⁹ It might be adequate to refer only to the title of the executive head of the organization.

- (c) Arrange for the custody and preservation of the documents of each session in the archives of the secretariat; and
- (d) Perform such other tasks as the plenary may require in relation to its functions.

IX. Subsidiary bodies¹⁰

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; and
 - (c) Establish the terms of reference of any subsidiary body.
2. Unless the plenary decides otherwise, the present rules of procedure shall apply mutatis mutandis to the proceedings of any subsidiary body, except that:
 - (a) The bureau of a subsidiary body shall have no more than five members;
 - (b) The chair of a subsidiary body shall be appointed by the members of the platform from among representatives of members;
 - (c) Any vice-chair and rapporteur of a subsidiary body shall be appointed by the members of the platform from among representatives of members represented in the subsidiary body; and
 - (d) A subsidiary body may opt for a chair or co-chair arrangement in lieu of a bureau.
3. The plenary shall keep under review the composition, effectiveness and need for its subsidiary bodies as part of the periodic review of the operation of the platform.

X. Conduct of business

Rule 26

The Chair may declare a meeting of any session open and permit debate to proceed when the representatives of at least one third of those members of the platform participating in the session are present. The presence of two thirds of the members participating in the session shall be required for any decision to be taken.

Rule 27

1. No one may speak at a meeting of any session without obtaining the permission of the Chair. Without prejudice to rules 28, 29, 30 and 32, the Chair shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak. The secretariat shall maintain a list of speakers. The Chair may call a speaker to order if the speaker's remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.
2. The plenary may, on a proposal from the Chair or from any member of the platform, limit the time allowed to each speaker and the number of times that each member of the platform or observer may speak on a question. Before a decision is taken on a proposal to set such limits, two members of the platform may speak in favour of the proposal and two against. When debate is limited and a speaker exceeds the allotted time, the Chair shall call the speaker to order without delay.

Rule 28

The chair or rapporteur of a subsidiary body may be accorded precedence for the purpose of explaining the conclusions reached by that subsidiary body.

Rule 29

During the discussion of any matter, a member may at any time raise a point of order, which shall be decided immediately by the Chair in accordance with the present rules. A member may appeal against the ruling of the Chair. The appeal shall be put to the vote immediately and the ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the members of the platform present and voting. A member may not, in raising a point of order, speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

¹⁰ This section is subject to any decision of the plenary regarding the establishment of its subsidiary bodies.

Rule 30

Any motion calling for a decision on the competence of the plenary to discuss any matter or to adopt a proposal or an amendment to a proposal shall be decided upon in accordance with the procedures set out in paragraphs 1 and 2 of rule 35 before the matter is discussed or a decision is taken on the proposal or amendment in question.

Rule 31

Proposals and amendments to proposals shall normally be introduced in writing in one of the official languages of the platform by a member of the platform and handed to the secretariat, which shall circulate copies to the members of the platform. Proposals for plenary decisions or resolutions shall be circulated, where possible, to members no later than 30 days before the session at which they are to be considered is due to commence. As a general rule, no proposal may be discussed or put to the vote at any session unless copies of it have been circulated to members at least 24 hours before the proposal is debated. The Chair may permit the discussion and consideration of proposals, amendments to proposals or procedural motions even though these proposals, amendments or motions have not been circulated in accordance with the foregoing or have been circulated only the same day.

Rule 32

1. Subject to rule 29, the following motions shall have precedence in the order indicated below over all other proposals or motions:

- (a) To suspend a session;
- (b) To adjourn a session;
- (c) To adjourn the debate on a question under discussion;
- (d) To close the debate on a question under discussion.

2. Permission to speak on a motion falling within paragraphs 1 (a)–(d) shall be granted to the proponent and, in addition, to one speaker in favour of and two against the motion, after which it shall be immediately decided in accordance with the procedure set out in paragraph 3 of rule 35.

Rule 33

A proposal or motion may be withdrawn by its proponent at any time before a decision is made on it or voting has begun, provided that the proposal or motion has not been amended. A proposal or motion thus withdrawn may be reintroduced by any other participant.

Rule 34

When a proposal has been adopted or rejected, it may not be reconsidered at the same session unless the plenary decides otherwise in accordance with the procedures set out in paragraphs 1 and 2 of rule 35. Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider shall be accorded only to the movant and one other supporter, after which it shall be immediately decided in accordance with the procedures set out in paragraphs 1 and 2 of rule 35.

XI. Adoption of decisions**Rule 35**

1. The members of the platform shall make every effort to reach agreement on all matters of substance and procedure by consensus.

2. If all efforts by the members of the platform to achieve consensus on a matter of substance, other than a financial matter, have been exhausted, and no consensus reached, [insert appropriate provisions].

3. 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 shall, as a last resort, unless otherwise provided by the present rules of procedure, be taken by a majority vote of the members of the platform present and voting.

4. If the question arises whether a matter is procedural or substantive, the Chair shall rule on the question. An appeal against this ruling shall be put to the vote immediately and the Chair's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the members of the platform present and voting.

5. For the purpose of paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 above and any decision-making that involves voting members shall not include any regional economic integration organization.

Rule 36

As is accepted international practice, in the event that a participant wishes to explain its position in respect of a matter under consideration at a session of the plenary, such participant may include a statement of view in the report resulting from the session of the plenary. Such statement should be a reasonable length.

Rule 37

If two or more amendments to a proposal are moved, the plenary shall first decide on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal, then on the amendment next furthest removed therefrom, and so on until decisions have been made on all the amendments.

Rule 38

Voting on a single proposal shall normally be by show of hands. A roll-call vote shall be taken if one is requested by any member of the platform. It shall be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the members of the platform whose representatives are present for the vote, beginning with the country whose name is drawn by lot by the Chair.

Rule 39

The vote of each member of the platform in a roll-call vote shall be recorded in the report of the session.

Rule 40

After the Chair has announced the beginning of voting, no participant shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting. The Chair may permit members to explain their votes, either before or after the voting, and may limit the time allowed for such explanations.

Rule 41

In the absence of consensus to proceed otherwise, elections shall be decided by secret ballot.

Rule 42

1. If, when one person is to be elected, no candidate obtains in the first ballot a majority of the votes cast by the members of the platform present and voting a second ballot restricted to the two candidates obtaining the largest number of votes shall be taken. If in the second ballot the votes are equally divided the Chair shall decide between the candidates by drawing lots.
2. In the case of a tie in the first ballot between three or more candidates obtaining the largest number of votes a second ballot shall be held. If a tie results between more than two candidates the number shall be reduced to two by lot and the balloting, restricted to them, shall continue in accordance with the procedure set out in paragraph 1.

XII. Public and private sessions

Rule 43

The sessions of the plenary shall be held in public unless the members of the platform decide otherwise.

Rule 44

The meetings of subsidiary bodies, other than those of any drafting group that may be established, shall be held in public unless the members of the platform decide otherwise.

XIII. Languages

Rule 45

The official languages of the plenary shall be Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

Rule 46

1. Statements made in one official language shall be interpreted into the other official languages.
2. 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 47

Official documents of the plenary shall be drawn up in one of the official languages and translated into the other official languages.

XIV. Amendments to rules of procedure**Rule 48**

Amendments to these rules of procedure shall be adopted by consensus of the members of the platform.
