



**United Nations  
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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**

Nairobi, 3–7 October 2011

Item 4 (e) of the provisional agenda\*

**Consideration of the modalities and institutional arrangements for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services: process and criteria for selecting the host institution or institutions and the physical location of the platform's secretariat**

**Process and criteria for selecting the host institution or institutions and the physical location of the platform's secretariat**

**Note by the secretariat**

**Introduction**

1. 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”, Governments agreed that the new platform should be established as an independent intergovernmental body administered by one or more existing United Nations organizations, agencies, funds or programmes.<sup>1</sup>
2. By its resolution 65/162 of 20 December 2010, the General Assembly requested the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), without prejudice to the final institutional arrangements for the platform and in consultation with all relevant organizations and bodies, in order to fully operationalize the platform, to convene a plenary meeting providing for the full and effective participation of all Member States, in particular representatives from developing countries, to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for the platform at the earliest opportunity.
3. By its decision 26/4 of 24 February 2011, the UNEP Governing Council decided, based on the above-mentioned request by the General Assembly, without prejudice to the final institutional arrangements for the platform and in consultation with all relevant organizations and bodies, in order fully to operationalize the platform, to convene a plenary meeting providing for the full and effective participation of all member States, in particular representatives from developing countries, to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for the platform at the earliest opportunity.

\* UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/1.

1 UNEP/IPBES/3/3, annex, para. 6 (f).

4. Among the issues to be discussed by Governments at the plenary meeting in relation to the platform's institutional arrangements are the host institution or institutions of the platform's secretariat and its physical location.

## **I. Selection of the host institution or institutions of the platform's secretariat**

5. As set out in the Busan outcome, at the third ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on the platform, Governments welcomed the interest expressed in supporting the proposed platform by UNEP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and encouraged further consideration of their roles by their respective governing bodies. Governments also noted the interest of the United Nations Development Programme in the proposed platform and the important role of that organization in capacity-building within the United Nations system.

6. The Busan outcome was further considered by the governing bodies of some of the above-mentioned organizations and decisions and resolutions adopted. These include decision 185 EX/43 of the Executive Board of UNESCO, by which the Executive Board took note of the organization's intention to seek institutional association with the platform, if established; resolution 14/2011 of 2 July 2011 of the Conference of FAO at its thirty-seventh session, by which the Director-General of FAO was authorized to offer to establish and (co-)host or otherwise support the platform with other relevant international organizations, and decision 26/4 of the Governing Council of UNEP, by which the Executive Director was invited to submit an offer of interest to be considered along with other offers and subject to the procedures agreed during the plenary meeting, signifying the interest of UNEP in hosting or otherwise supporting the secretariat of the platform.

7. It is expected that governing bodies of other interested United Nations organizations, agencies, funds or programmes may further consider the matter and adopt decisions regarding association with the platform's secretariat.

### **A. Possible criteria for selecting the host institution or institutions of the secretariat**

8. In selecting the host institution or institutions of the secretariat, the following criteria might be considered:

- (a) Relevance of the mandate, objectives and functions of the host institution or institutions to the mandate, objectives and functions of the platform;
- (b) Existing organizational structures of the host institution or institutions capable of providing administrative or programmatic support for the platform's functions;
- (c) Established administrative and financial procedures for the provision of the secretariat;
- (d) 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;
- (e) Existence of channels of communication with Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;
- (f) Existence of infrastructures within the host institution or institutions concerning public information and communications;
- (g) Experience in establishing and servicing intergovernmental bodies, programmes or arrangements;
- (h) Experience in convening intergovernmental meetings and providing services for such meetings;
- (i) Experience in the provision of a secretariat or secretariat functions for intergovernmental bodies, programmes or arrangements that are legally distinct from the host institution or institutions;
- (j) Experience in matters relating to the platform's possible functions;
- (k) Past or current involvement in the platform's development;

- (l) Political support for the platform expressed by members of the governing bodies of the host institution or institutions;
- (m) Extent to which the host institution or institutions could provide technical support for the platform's functions;
- (n) Extent to which the host institution or institutions could provide support for the operation of the secretariat (financial, human resources, recruitment, training and management of staff, meeting logistics, etc.).

## **B. Proposed process for inviting organizations to signify their interest in hosting the secretariat**

9. Governments may wish to invite interested organizations to signify their interest in hosting the platform's secretariat, and to provide detailed information on the conditions and advantages attached to their offers, with special focus on the selection criteria agreed upon by the government representatives at the meeting. Interested organizations may indicate in their proposals any preferred options or constraints regarding the physical location of the platform's secretariat. Such offers should be submitted through the secretariat by 15 December 2011 for consideration at the second session of the plenary meeting.

## **C. Proposed process for reviewing proposals and selecting the host institution or institutions of the secretariat**

10. The secretariat will compile the offers from the interested organizations and ensure that all the required information is provided. The information will then be submitted by the secretariat for consideration at the second session of the plenary meeting.

11. At the first session of the plenary meeting, Governments might request the Bureau to undertake a preliminary review of the offers to determine whether the quality of the information provided therein is adequate to cover the criteria identified at the session. Alternatively, Governments might consider establishing an ad hoc intersessional committee to undertake such work. At the second session, Governments might then consider the information submitted by the Bureau or the ad hoc intersessional committee, with a view to making a recommendation on the host institution or institutions of the secretariat for consideration by the platform's plenary.

# **II. Selection of the physical location of the platform's secretariat**

12. At the previous ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meetings on the platform, some Governments expressed their interest in physically hosting the platform's secretariat. Subject to the discussions and subsequent decision on the host institution or institutions of the secretariat, Governments may wish further to consider the physical location of the platform's secretariat.

## **A. Possible criteria for selecting the physical location of the secretariat**

13. In selecting the physical location of the secretariat, the following criteria might be considered:

### **Local facilities and conditions**

- (a) Availability of international conference facilities and the conditions for their use (e.g., use free of charge, rental);
- (b) Access to qualified conference-servicing staff (e.g., interpreters, translators, editors and meeting coordinators who are familiar with United Nations conferences and practices);
- (c) Availability of international transportation facilities and ease of arranging international travel (e.g., flight connections and time needed for processing entry requirements);
- (d) Availability of local transportation facilities;
- (e) Ease of communication, including modern information communication technology infrastructure;
- (f) Diplomatic representation in the host city;
- (g) Presence of international organizations;
- (h) Level of security;
- (i) Availability of health facilities;

- (j) Availability of suitable housing;
- (k) Availability of schools at all levels, including those providing education in languages other than the local language;
- (l) Availability of facilities for the transfer of funds to and from foreign countries for the secretariat and its staff members;
- (m) Effect of location on staff costs (e.g., post adjustment allowances, costs of hiring national staff);
- (n) Ease of access to local employment for dependants of secretariat staff members;

#### **Features of the office site and related financial issues**

- (o) Availability and features of the building to house the secretariat, including office space, facilities for conferences and availability of general services (e.g., security, maintenance);
- (p) Basis for placing the office facilities at the disposal of the secretariat, such as ownership by the secretariat through donation or purchase; ownership by the host Government without rent; or ownership by the host Government with rent, and amount of such rent;
- (q) Responsibility for major maintenance and repairs of the office facilities; normal maintenance and repair; and utilities, including communications facilities;
- (r) Extent to which the office facilities would be furnished and equipped by the host Government;
- (s) Duration of arrangements regarding office space;

#### **Legal framework**

- (t) Privileges and immunities that would be conferred on the secretariat and its staff members;
- (u) Rules, including any restrictions, applicable to the employment of dependants of staff members;

#### **Other relevant information**

- (v) Any additional contributions to be made by the host Government to meet the secretariat's operating costs or to defray conference-servicing expenses.

### **B. Proposed process for inviting submissions of proposals for the secretariat's physical location**

14. Interested Governments may wish to make available their offers for the physical location of the platform's secretariat for consideration at the second session of the plenary meeting. Such offers may include detailed information on the conditions and advantages attached to their offers, with special focus on the selection criteria agreed upon at the first session. Such offers should be submitted to the secretariat by 15 December 2011.

### **C. Proposed process for reviewing proposals and selecting the secretariat's physical location**

15. The secretariat will compile the offers from the interested Governments and ensure that all the required information is provided. The information will then be submitted by the secretariat for consideration at the second session of the plenary meeting.

16. At the first session of the plenary meeting, Governments might request the Bureau to undertake a preliminary review of the offers to determine whether the quality of the information provided therein is adequate to cover the criteria identified at the session. Alternatively, Governments might consider establishing an ad hoc intersessional committee to undertake such work. At the second session, Governments might then consider the information submitted by the Bureau or the ad hoc intersessional committee, with a view to making a recommendation on the physical location of the secretariat for consideration by the platform's plenary.