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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 (f) of the provisional agenda*

Consideration of the modalities and institutional arrangements for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services: work programme of the platform

Work programme of the platform

Note by the secretariat

1. By subparagraphs 6 (b)–(e) of the Busan outcome,¹ representatives of Governments at the third ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, held in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 7 to 11 June 2010, agreed on the following overarching functions related to the work programme of the platform. Those subparagraphs state as follows:

- (b) The new platform should identify and prioritize key scientific information needed for policymakers at appropriate scales and catalyse efforts to generate new knowledge by engaging in dialogue with key scientific organizations, policymakers and funding organizations, but should not directly undertake new research;
- (c) The new platform should perform regular and timely assessments of knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services and their interlinkages, which should include comprehensive global, regional and, as necessary, subregional assessments and thematic issues at appropriate scales and new topics identified by science and as decided upon by the plenary. These assessments must be scientifically credible, independent and peer-reviewed, and must identify uncertainties. There should be a clear and transparent process for sharing and incorporating relevant data. The new platform should maintain a catalogue of relevant assessments, identify the need for regional and subregional assessments and help to catalyse support for subregional and national assessments, as appropriate;
- (d) The new platform should support policy formulation and implementation by identifying policy-relevant tools and methodologies, such as those arising from assessments, to enable decision makers to gain access to those tools and methodologies, and, where necessary, to promote and catalyse their further development;
- (e) The new platform should prioritize key capacity-building needs to improve the science-policy interface at appropriate levels and then provide and call for financial and other support for the highest-priority needs related directly to its activities, as decided by the

* UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/1.

¹ UNEP/IPBES/3/3, annex.

plenary, and catalyse financing for such capacity-building activities by providing a forum with conventional and potential sources of funding;

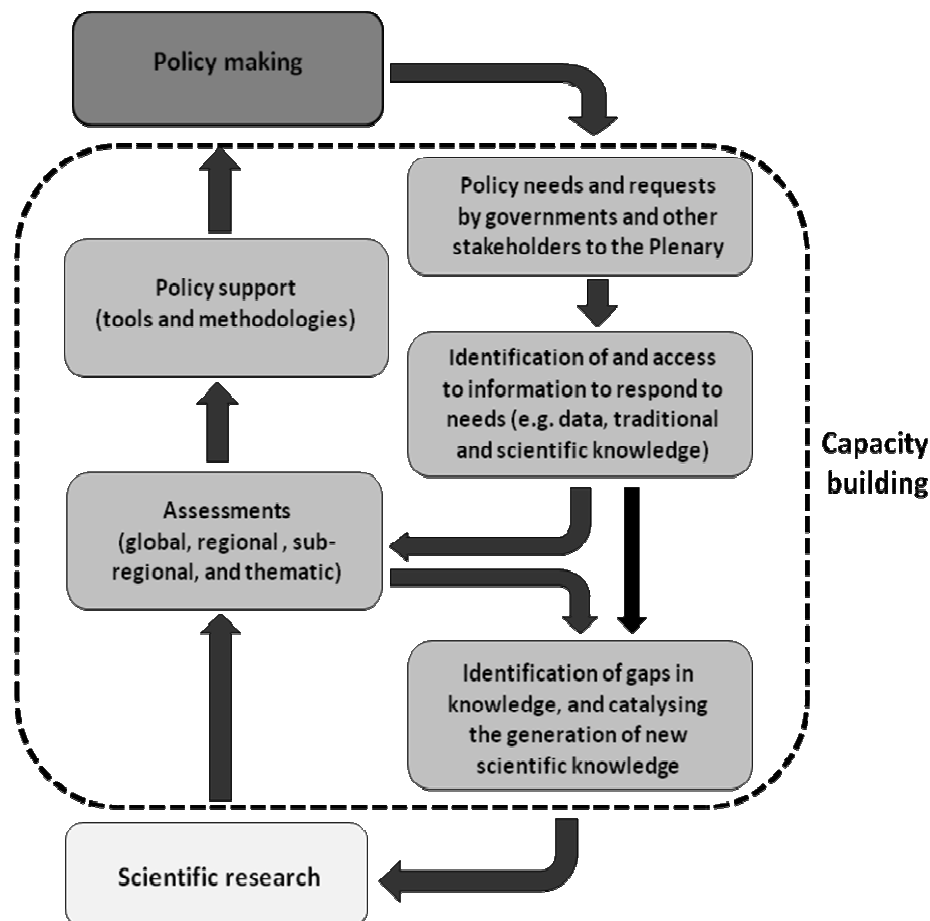
2. The importance of the work programme of the platform being responsive to requests was also agreed, with the Busan outcome reading as follows:

Focusing on government needs and based on priorities established by the plenary, the platform should respond to requests from Governments, including those conveyed to it by multilateral environmental agreements related to biodiversity and ecosystem services as determined by their respective governing bodies. The plenary should welcome inputs and suggestions from, and the participation of, United Nations bodies related to biodiversity and ecosystem services as determined by their respective governing bodies. The plenary should also encourage and take into account, as appropriate, inputs and suggestions made by relevant stakeholders, such as other intergovernmental organizations, international and regional scientific organizations, environment trust funds, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. To facilitate this, and to ensure that the platform's work programme is focused and efficient, a process to receive and prioritize requests should be established by the plenary;

3. The agreed functions of the platform relate to one another in terms of concept and possible mechanisms for their implementation. Such relationships are recognized in paragraph 7 of the Busan outcome, in which it is agreed that the platform should, among other things, integrate capacity-building into all relevant aspects of its work according to priorities decided by the plenary.

4. In addition to the importance of capacity-building for the delivery of all aspects of the platform's work programme, other clear relationships between the platform's agreed functions include the role of assessments in identifying gaps in knowledge, the importance of facilitating knowledge generation for informing future assessments and the role of assessments as tools for policy support and in identifying and assessing policy-relevant tools and methodologies.

5. A possible approach to representing the relationships between the agreed functions of the platform is provided in the figure below, where capacity-building is shown to encompass the full extent of other platform functions within the dotted line.



6. Other principles agreed at the third meeting relating to the delivery of the work programme are articulated in subparagraphs 7 (g)–(k), which state that the platform should:

- (g) Recognize the unique biodiversity and scientific knowledge thereof within and among regions, and also recognize the need for the full and effective participation of developing countries and for balanced regional representation and participation in its structure and work;
- (h) Take an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach that incorporates all relevant disciplines, including social and natural sciences;
- (i) Recognize the need for gender equity in all relevant aspects of its work;
- (j) Address terrestrial, marine and inland water biodiversity and ecosystem services and their interactions;
- (k) Ensure the full use of national, subregional and regional assessments and knowledge, as appropriate;

7. Preliminary consideration of the possible scope of work of the platform and options for the implementation of its four functions are discussed in the following documents, which could provide a basis for initial discussions on the work programme at the first session of the plenary meeting:

- (a) Knowledge generation (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/3);
- (b) Assessment (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/4);
- (c) Policy support (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/5);
- (d) Capacity-building (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/6).

8. In addition, the outcomes of various informal expert meetings could also provide useful insights that could inform the discussions on the work programme. These meetings include an international expert meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services and capacity-building held in Trondheim, Norway, in May 2011 and co-hosted by

the Governments of Brazil and Norway (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/10); a meeting of scientific organizations interested in the platform convened by the International Council for Science in Paris in June 2011 (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/11); and an informal pre-plenary scientific international workshop on assessment and an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services held in Tokyo in July 2011 and organized by the Governments of Japan and South Africa, hosted by the United Nations University (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/12).

9. A range of possible budget scenarios for implementing the platform's functions is presented in document UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/7.
