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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

Report of the first session of the plenary meeting to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services

I. Opening of the session

1. The first session of the plenary meeting to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services took place at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi. It began on Monday, 3 October 2011, with an opening ceremony facilitated by Ms. Fatoumata Keita Ouane, Chief, Scientific Assessment Branch, Division of Early Warning and Assessment, UNEP.
2. She paid tribute to one of Africa's illustrious daughters, Ms. Wangari Maathai, globally celebrated Kenyan environmentalist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, who had passed away on 25 September 2011. She evoked Ms. Maathai's call during her Nobel Peace Prize lecture in December 2004 for humanity to shift to a new level of consciousness and reach a higher moral ground, and for people to shed their fears and to give one another hope. The representatives observed a minute of silence to pay tribute to the memory of Ms. Maathai.
3. Opening remarks were then made by Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP, and Mr. Kalonzo Musyoka, Vice-President of Kenya.
4. The Executive Director welcomed the representatives to Nairobi, saying that the process to establish an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, in circumstances echoing those leading to the creation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change over two decades earlier, marked a new chapter in the history of the international community's cooperation and demonstrated clearly its reliance on scientific evidence to inform policymaking and concerted action. In a world that could feed itself but nevertheless faced biodiversity loss, species extinction and dire crises such as the drought currently afflicting the Horn of Africa, the vision, energy and collective will to act on the imperatives documented by science, even in the absence of perfect knowledge, were paramount. The platform thus had a vital part to play, allowing for the timely consideration, assessment and review of scientific findings, strengthening the international community's ability to respond more rapidly and in a more focused, transparent and collective manner to environmental change that fundamentally affected humankind and its life support systems.
5. He expressed his gratitude to the Government of Kenya for supporting the platform process and to the Governments of France, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, South Africa and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, together with the European Commission, for providing financial support. He also thanked the United Nations

Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, which had played an important role by working closely with UNEP on the process to establish the platform, and Mr. Kim Chan-woo, newly appointed permanent representative of the Republic of Korea to UNEP, for his contribution as chair of the third meeting on the platform.

6. In closing, he expressed the hope that in the birthplace of Ms. Maathai, an extraordinary individual with the ability to bridge the gap between global scientific understanding and the intuitive knowledge of local village women, the representatives would rise to the occasion, overcoming areas of disagreement, to forge a robust link between science and policymaking.

7. In his remarks Mr. Musyoka spoke of the historical importance of the plenary meeting for the conservation and sustainability of biodiversity and ecosystem services and its particular significance for Kenya at a time when the country was mourning the loss of Ms. Maathai. He urged the representatives to perpetuate her legacy by emulating her courage and example. The plenary meeting was the culmination of three years of discussions among stakeholders who had unanimously decided that an intergovernmental science-policy platform was needed to tackle the inadequacies in the interface between science and policy on biodiversity and ecosystem services. Although there were sensitive legal and other issues to overcome, it was important to operationalize the platform fully without delay. To that end, he urged the representatives to proceed in a positive spirit, mindful of the immense benefits that an effective platform would bring. He recalled that the President of Kenya had expressed his Government's interest in hosting the platform in his speech to the Governing Council of UNEP at its twenty-sixth session, in February 2011; since then several other Governments had followed suit in a healthy demonstration of the high level of commitment to the platform. The immediate priority, however, was for the platform to begin performing identifiable functions. He expressed gratitude to the Government of Norway for providing financial support for the African regional consultations that had enabled African countries to consolidate their common view on the functions of the platform.

8. Following Mr. Musyoka's remarks the Executive Director formally declared the meeting open.

II. Organizational matters

9. The Executive Director proposed that the rules of procedure of the UNEP Governing Council should be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to the proceedings of the plenary meeting with the exception that proposals could be made by any Government, and decisions would be adopted by all Governments, rather than just by members of the Governing Council.

10. Many representatives emphasized the importance of proceeding on the basis of consensus, following the practice adopted at previous meetings on the platform, and a number of representatives said that the representatives should adopt such modifications of the rules of procedure of the Governing Council as they deemed necessary.

11. The UNEP Senior Legal Officer said that the meeting could proceed on the understanding that decisions would be taken by consensus. Any additional issues pertaining to the rules of procedure would be dealt with as they arose.

12. The representatives accepted the Executive Director's proposal and agreed to proceed on the basis of consensus.

A. Election of officers

13. The following officers were elected to the bureau of the meeting, each representing one of the five United Nations regions:

Chair: Mr. Robert Watson (United Kingdom), Western European and other States

Vice-Chairs: Mr. Ali Mohamed (Kenya), African States

Mr. Yeon-chul Yoo (Republic of Korea), Asian States

Ms. Senka Barudanovich (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Eastern European States

Mr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias (Brazil), Latin American and Caribbean States

14. It was decided that Mr. Watson, Mr. Mohamed and Ms. Barudanovich would serve for both sessions of the meeting, while Mr. Yoo and Mr. Ferreira de Souza Dias would be replaced by

Mr. Atsushi Suginaka (Japan) and Mr. Hesiquio Benitez (Mexico) for the second session. Subsequently, Mr. Mohamed was replaced as Vice-Chair by Ms. Zena Nzibo (Kenya).

B. Adoption of the agenda

15. The representatives adopted the agenda set out below, on the basis of the provisional agenda that had been circulated as document UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/1:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Election of officers;
 - (b) Adoption of the agenda;
 - (c) Organization of work.
3. Credentials of representatives.
4. Consideration of the modalities and institutional arrangements for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services:
 - (a) Legal issues relating to the establishment and operationalization of the platform;
 - (b) Functions and operating principles of the platform;
 - (c) Functions and structures of bodies that might be established under the platform;
 - (d) Rules of procedure for meetings of the platform;
 - (e) Process and criteria for selecting the host institution or institutions and the physical location of the platform's secretariat;
 - (f) Work programme of the platform.
5. Adoption of the report.
6. Closure of the session.

16. A number of representatives expressed concern at discussing agenda item 4 (a) before the other items, as they wished to see the legal advice that had been requested from the Office of Legal Affairs before doing so. It was therefore decided that they would proceed to consider the other items and return to item 4 (a) once that legal advice had been received.

C. Organization of work

17. The representatives decided that they would endeavour to conduct all work in plenary session. If any working or drafting groups were established to consider specific issues, those groups would, unless decided otherwise in a plenary meeting, meet outside the hours allocated to plenary meetings. The representatives also decided, where meeting times were concerned, to follow the standard practice for United Nations meetings.

18. In an effort to make the meeting as environmentally friendly as possible, the number of hard copies of documents available was significantly reduced, with pre-session and in-session material being made available online.

D. Attendance

19. Representatives of the following Governments attended the meeting: Afghanistan, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Cook Islands, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom

of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Yemen, Zimbabwe.

20. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations and secretariats or scientific subsidiary bodies of conventions were also present as observers: Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Convention on Migratory Species, Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Global Environment Facility, GRID-ARENDA, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, International Union for Conservation of Nature, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre, United Nations University.

21. A number of representatives of governmental, non-governmental, private-sector and business organizations attended the meeting as observers. Their names can be found in the list of participants, which was circulated as document UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/15.

III. Credentials of representatives

22. In accordance with rule 17, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure of the Governing Council, applicable mutatis mutandis to the plenary meeting, the Bureau examined the credentials of the representatives attending the session. Representatives of 112 States attended the session and the credentials submitted by 86 States were found to be in order, as were the credentials submitted by the European Union. The Bureau so reported to the plenary meeting, which approved the Bureau's report on 7 October 2011.

IV. Consideration of the modalities and institutional arrangements for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services

A. Legal issues relating to the establishment and operationalization of the platform

23. The UNEP Senior Legal Officer gave a presentation on legal issues pertaining to the establishment of the platform, after which various representatives sought clarification on a number of points. The Senior Legal Officer undertook to provide the requested clarification in a conference room paper. That clarification was subsequently circulated, along with legal advice from the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/14) and a supplementary legal opinion of the UNEP secretariat (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/INF/9), and a discussion of legal issues ensued.

24. All the representatives who took the floor said that it was crucial to operationalize the platform in view of the urgency of the threats facing the world's biodiversity, with one also emphasizing the threats posed to livelihoods. There was, however, some divergence of views as to the platform's status.

25. Several representatives said that it had already been established by a resolution of the General Assembly and that no further action was necessary, including endorsement by the General Assembly or the Governing Council. They said too that the member States present at the current meeting were not bound to follow the various legal opinions provided.

26. A number of representatives, however, argued that the platform had not yet been established. One, speaking on behalf of a United Nations regional group, said that the platform could be established only by a resolution of the General Assembly, consistent with their interpretation of the Busan outcome, and that the legal opinions considered to date clearly showed that the platform had not yet been established. He went on to say that it would be acting with undue haste to take a decision on the subject at the current session; instead, the representatives would do well to allow time for further consideration of the material before them and take a decision at the second session. Another suggested that intersessional work could be carried out on the subject. Several representatives stressed the need to focus on the mandate of the current meeting, i.e., modalities and institutional arrangements, rather than seeking to settle the establishment of the platform. One, however, advanced a contrary argument, saying that there was no need to create the specific structures of the platform before its establishment.

27. One representative stressed that how the platform was established was distinct from how it would be administered. Many representatives said that all that was needed to establish the platform was a resolution by those present, in which case the current session could become the first plenary

meeting of the platform itself. They said that as the representatives had presented their credentials they were entitled to take decisions. Many representatives said that the matter at hand was one of policy, not law, and that the principle of State sovereignty overrode all other considerations and permitted the establishment of the platform; there was thus no legal controversy about the platform and its legitimacy had already been conferred by the international community.

28. Many representatives expressed their support for the option to establish the platform by the current plenary meeting and transform it into the first plenary meeting of the platform. Several representatives said that they would support the option of requesting the relevant United Nations bodies and agencies to establish the platform as they believed that it would accord the platform a more legally sound basis.

29. A number of views were expressed with regard to the platform's status within the United Nations. Several representatives said that the platform should be an independent intergovernmental body administered by one or more United Nations agencies. Others, given the urgency of establishing the platform, suggested that at least initially it did not need to fall within the purview of the United Nations, although the possibility of bringing it into the Organization at a later date should remain open. Other representatives agreed that that was true, regardless of the urgency. In response to a request for clarification, the UNEP Senior Legal Officer explained that there were precedents of bodies being constituted outside the United Nations system and subsequently being embraced by the system, citing the example of the United Nations World Tourism Organization. One representative drew attention to the relationship between the International Atomic Energy Agency and the United Nations as an example of how a collaborative process could be instituted swiftly.

30. The Chair, echoed by many representatives, said that given the very nature of the debate it was not possible to proceed regarding the platform's status without consensus. He therefore urged all representatives to consider one another's positions.

B. Functions and operating principles of the platform

31. The representatives took up the various issues under the item, based on the information contained in the note by secretariat on the functions and operating principles of the platform (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/3). The results of their deliberations are reflected in annex I to the present report, which was approved by the representatives at the current session for further consideration by the plenary of the platform.

32. The representatives of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela said that the concept of ecosystem services did not reflect adequately their vision of the relationship between human beings and nature and would limit the focus of the platform's work. They would, however, join the consensus on the understanding that the matter would be further considered and discussed by the plenary of the platform.

C. Functions and structures of bodies that might be established under the platform

33. The representatives took up the various issues under the item, based on the information contained in the note by secretariat on the functions and structures of bodies that might be established under the platform (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/4). The results of their deliberations are reflected in annex II to the present report and will be further considered at the second session of the plenary meeting.

D. Rules of procedure for meetings of the platform

34. The representatives exchanged initial views on the rules of procedure for meetings of the platform, on the basis of the information set out in the annex to the note by the secretariat on the subject (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/5). Several representatives said that, while the draft rules of procedure provided a basis for considering the matter, the platform would require additional elements to the draft rules of procedure to support its functions. A group of friends of the Chair, co-chaired by Ms. Barudanovich and Mr. Yoo, was established to consider the matter further. In reporting back to the plenary, the co-chairs noted the need for intersessional work to make progress on the matter.

35. The participants were invited, jointly or individually, electronically to submit proposals regarding rules of procedure and related procedures to the UNEP secretariat no later than 15 December 2011. The secretariat was requested to compile those submissions, without substantive editing, and to circulate them to the participants at the second session of the plenary no later than six weeks before the second session.

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

36. The representatives took up the various issues under the item, based on the information contained in the note by secretariat on the process and criteria for selecting the host institution or institutions and the physical location of the platform's secretariat (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/6). One representative requested guidance on the size of the secretariat to assist Governments in developing their proposals.

37. Relevant organizations were invited to signify their interest in providing the secretariat for the platform and Governments to signify their interest in providing the physical location of the secretariat and to submit their proposals in the manner specified in the guidance set out in annex III to the present report, which was approved by the representatives. It was agreed that the plenary would use the material set out in annex III in taking decisions on the subject at its second session.

F. Work programme of the platform

38. The representatives took up the various issues under the item, based on the information contained in the note by secretariat on the work programme of the platform (UNEP/IPBES.MI/1/7). The discussions took the form of a preliminary sharing of ideas on possible elements of an initial work programme of the platform. In addition to various specific suggestions on the individual functions of the platform, there was a general recognition that the four functions of the platform should be delivered in an integrated manner through the work programme.

39. It was agreed that the UNEP secretariat would developed a revised document on the work programme based on the comments received during the current meeting and make it available on an interactive website by 31 October 2011. All comments received on the document by 15 December 2011 would be compiled and made available with an updated version of the work programme document for the second session of the plenary meeting

V. Adoption of the report

40. The representatives adopted the present report on the basis of the draft report circulated during the meeting, as orally amended and on the understanding that the secretariat would be entrusted with its finalization.¹

VI. Closure of the session

41. The Chair declared the meeting closed at 6.30 p.m. on Friday, 7 October 2011.

¹ Given the lack of time available, the representative of Egypt submitted a written statement to the Secretariat, which was made available online at <http://www.ipbes.net>.

Annex I

Functions and operating principles of the platform

I. Functions of the platform

1. The platform's objective is to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development, with the following functions:

(a) Focusing on government needs and based on priorities established by the plenary, the platform responds 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 welcomes 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 also encourages and takes 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, indigenous peoples and local communities and the private sector. To facilitate this, and to ensure that the work programme of the platform is focused and efficient, a process to receive and prioritize requests, inputs and suggestions will be established by the plenary;

(b) The platform identifies and prioritizes key scientific information needed for policymakers at appropriate scales and catalyses 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 platform performs 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 platform maintains a catalogue of relevant assessments, identifies the need for regional and subregional assessments and helps to catalyse support for subregional and national assessments, as appropriate;

(d) The platform supports 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 platform prioritizes key capacity-building needs to improve the science-policy interface at appropriate levels and then provides and calls for financial and other support for the highest-priority needs related directly to its activities, as decided by the plenary, and catalyses financing for such capacity-building activities by providing a forum with conventional and potential sources of funding.

II. Operating principles of the platform

2. In carrying out its work the platform will be guided by the following operating principles:

(a) Collaborate with existing initiatives on biodiversity and ecosystem services, including multilateral environment agreements, United Nations bodies and networks of scientists and knowledge holders, to fill gaps and build upon their work while avoiding duplication;

(b) Be scientifically independent and ensure credibility, relevance and legitimacy through peer review of its work and transparency in its decision-making processes;

(c) Use clear, transparent and scientifically credible processes for the exchange, sharing and use of data, information and technologies from all relevant sources, including non peer-reviewed literature, as appropriate;

(d) Recognize and respect the contribution of indigenous and local knowledge to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems;

- (e) Provide policy-relevant information, but not policy-prescriptive advice, mindful of the respective mandates of the multilateral environmental agreements;
 - (f) Integrate capacity-building into all relevant aspects of its work according to priorities decided by the plenary;
 - (g) Recognize the unique biodiversity and scientific knowledge thereof within and among regions and the need for the full and effective participation of developing countries and 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, including by ensuring a bottom-up approach.
3. The platform's efficiency and effectiveness will be independently reviewed and evaluated on a periodic basis as decided by the plenary, with adjustments to be made as necessary.

Annex II

Functions and structures of bodies that might be established under an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services

Introduction

1. 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, representatives of Governments agreed that an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services should be established, as stated in the “Busan outcome”, the outcome document of the meeting. They also identified the platform’s main functions and operating principles and principal institutional arrangements. Annex I highlights the platform’s main functions and operating principles. The present annex outlines the possible functions and structures of bodies that might be established under the platform.

I. Institutional arrangements for the platform

2. The Busan outcome states that the platform should be established as an independent intergovernmental body administered by one or more existing United Nations organizations, agencies, funds or programmes. While the legal status of the platform will be defined by the way in which it is established, as an independent intergovernmental body it will be constituted by Governments with a permanent structure so that it can function autonomously. For the purpose of its administration, the platform is expected to be institutionally linked to existing United Nations organizations, agencies, funds or programmes, which might agree to perform administrative functions for it.

II. Plenary

3. As stated in the Busan outcome, the plenary should be the platform’s decision-making body.

A. [Membership

4. *No agreement has yet been reached.*

B. Participation of United Nations bodies and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

5. *No agreement has yet been reached.*

C. Functions

6. The functions of the Plenary include:

- (a) Acting as the platform’s decision-making body;
- (b) Responding 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;
- (c) Welcoming inputs and suggestions from, and the participation of, United Nations bodies related to biodiversity and ecosystem services as determined by their respective governing bodies;
- (d) Encouraging and taking into account, as appropriate, inputs and suggestions made by relevant stakeholders, such as other intergovernmental organizations, international and regional scientific organizations, environmental trust funds, non-governmental organizations, indigenous [peoples] and local communities and the private sector;

[(d) *bis* Establishing a mechanism to ensure the active and efficient participation of civil society in the plenary.]

- (e) Selecting one Chair and four Vice-Chairs, taking due account of the principle of geographical balance among the five United Nations regions, based on criteria, a nomination process and length of service to be decided by the plenary;

- (f) Selecting members of any subsidiary body, taking due account of the principle of geographical balance among the five United Nations regions, based on criteria, a nomination process and length of service to be decided by the plenary;
- (g) Approving a budget and overseeing the allocation of the trust fund[s];
- (h) Deciding on an evaluation process for independently reviewing the platform's efficiency and effectiveness on a periodic basis;
- (i) Adopting a programme of work for the platform, including on knowledge generation, assessments, policy support and capacity-building;
- (j) Establishing subsidiary bodies and working groups as appropriate;
- (k) Setting up a transparent peer review process for the production of reports by the platform;
- (l) Deciding on a process for defining the scope of reports and for the adoption or approval of any reports produced by the platform (following agreement on the work programme);
- (m) Adopting and amending rules of procedures and financial rules.

D. Officers of the plenary

1. Composition

7. With regard to the officers of the plenary, one Chair and four Vice-Chairs should be selected by Governments that are members of the plenary, taking due account of geographical balance among the five United Nations regions. Guidelines covering the nomination process, length of service and any rotation of the chair of the plenary among the regions are provided for in the rules of procedure of the plenary.

2. Functions

8. As set out in the rules of procedure and as decided and directed by the plenary, the functions of the Chair include the following:

- (a) Presiding over meetings of the plenary;
- (b) Chairing the Bureau of the plenary;
- (c) Representing the platform as its Chair.

9. As set out in the rules of procedure and as decided and directed by the plenary, the functions to be carried out by the Vice-Chairs include the following:

- (a) Serving as rapporteur of the plenary;
- (b) Participating in the work of the Bureau;
- (c) Acting as the representative of the platform as Vice-Chair as necessary.

3. Guidelines for the nomination and selection of the Chair and Vice-Chairs

10. The following guidelines could be taken into account in the processes for nominating and selecting the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the plenary:

- (a) Ability to carry out the agreed functions of the Chair and Vice-Chairs;
- (b) Scientific expertise in biodiversity and ecosystem services with regard to both natural and social sciences among the officers of the plenary;
- (c) Scientific, technical or policy expertise and knowledge of the main elements of the platform's programme of work;
- (d) Experience in communicating, promoting and incorporating science into policy development processes;
- (e) Ability both to lead and work in international scientific and policy processes.

11. The guidelines for the selection of officers by the plenary might need to be viewed in the light of the programme of work adopted by the plenary and agreement on the work programme. The extent to which the skills of the Chair and the Vice-Chairs complement one another might also need to be taken into consideration in the nomination and selection processes.

III. Administrative and scientific functions to facilitate the work of the platform

12. One or more subsidiary bodies should be established by, and report to, the plenary to support the smooth, effective and timely operation of the platform. The subsidiary body or bodies will, as decided by the plenary, provide administrative and scientific oversight and facilitate the operations of the platform.

13. Such administrative functions include:

- (a) Addressing requests related to the platform's programme of work and products that require attention by the platform between sessions of the plenary;
- (b) Overseeing communication and outreach activities;
- (c) Reviewing progress in the implementation of decisions of the plenary, if so directed by the plenary;
- (d) Monitoring the secretariat's performance;
- (e) Organizing and helping to conduct the sessions of the plenary;
- (f) [Reviewing the observance of the platform's rules and procedures;]
- (g) [Reviewing the management of resources and observance of financial rules and reporting thereon to the plenary;]
- (h) Advising the plenary on coordination between the platform and other relevant institutions;
- (i) Identifying donors and developing partnership arrangements for the implementation of the platform's activities.

14. Such scientific and technical functions include:

- (a) Providing advice to the plenary on scientific and technical aspects of the platform's programme of work;
- (b) Providing advice and assistance on technical and/or scientific communication matters;
- (c) Managing the platform's peer-review process to ensure the highest levels of scientific quality, independence and credibility for all products delivered by the platform at all stages of the process;
- (d) [Engaging the scientific community and other knowledge holders with the work programme, taking into account the need for different disciplines and types of knowledge and effective contribution by scientists from developing countries;]
- (e) Assuring scientific and technical coordination among structures set up under the platform and facilitating coordination between the platform and other related processes to build upon existing efforts;
- (f) [Facilitating technology transfer in the context of capacity-building according to the work programme of the platform;]
- (g) Exploring ways and means to bring different knowledge systems, including indigenous knowledge systems, into the science-policy interface.

Section B was the subject of preliminary discussion only. No agreement was reached.

[B. Potential options for the structure and composition of subsidiary bodies of the plenary

15. There are a number of options for the structure of any subsidiary bodies that might be established by the plenary. Options that appeared to receive the greatest support during initial discussions on subsidiary bodies included:

Option 1: One subsidiary body would be established, which would be an expanded Bureau of the plenary. This body would perform all the functions listed above. The Bureau would include the Chair, four Vice-Chairs and additional members (such as an additional three members from each region) in a manner respecting geographical, gender and disciplinary balance. The Bureau might also

include additional stakeholders, such as representatives of multilateral environmental agreements, United Nations agencies and intergovernmental organizations as observers;

Option 2: Two subsidiary bodies would be established. In this option, the plenary might establish a small Bureau comprising of only the Chair and Vice-Chairs that would oversee the administrative functions listed above, and a larger science panel that would carry out the scientific and technical functions listed above. The science panel would be established in a manner respecting geographical, gender and disciplinary balance. The science panel might also include additional stakeholders, such as representatives of multilateral environmental agreements, United Nations agencies and intergovernmental organizations as observers.

16. Regarding option 1, the ability of a large and infrequently convened body to carry out the functions ascribed to it would need to be reviewed to ensure that it could deliver a high-quality service to the plenary. Upon such review, a future option available to the expanded Bureau to consider might be to establish a smaller Executive Committee comprising the Chair, Vice-Chairs and a small subset of Bureau members to support functions that might require more regular support.

17. Regarding option 2, the relationship and independence between the small Bureau and the science panel would have to be clarified to avoid conflict, duplication or confusion. To avoid overburdening the small Bureau with the administrative functions assigned to it, the Bureau would almost certainly require additional support from the Secretariat to implement its functions.]

Section C was not discussed.

[C. Working groups

18. In addition to the above subsidiary bodies, and depending on the decisions related to their establishment, the plenary might establish working groups or other structures to implement the platform's work programme. The functions to be performed by such groups or structures could include:

(a) To identify and prioritize key scientific information needed for policymakers and to catalyse efforts to generate new knowledge (without undertaking new research);

(b) To perform regular and timely assessments of knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services and their interlinkages, which might include comprehensive global, regional and, as necessary, subregional assessments, thematic issues at appropriate scales and new topics identified by science;

(c) To identify 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;

(d) To prioritize 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 plenary, and to catalyse financing for such capacity-building activities by providing a forum with conventional and potential sources of funding.

19. While recognizing that any agreement to establish working groups would take place only after more detailed discussion of the work programme, preliminary options for the establishment of working groups or other structures to deliver the platform's work programme might include:

(a) *Option 1:* Two working groups are established, one to undertake assessments, generate knowledge and support policy, and the other to oversee the capacity-building work on the platform in relation to knowledge generation, assessment and policy support. Both working groups are established with geographic, disciplinary and gender balance;

(b) *Option 2:* Two working groups are established, one to undertake assessments and the other to oversee the work on knowledge generation, policy support and capacity-building. Both working groups are established with geographic, disciplinary and gender balance;

(c) *Option 3:* Regional structures are established (whether working groups or centres), to oversee the full programme of work (knowledge generation, assessment, policy support and capacity-building) at the regional level. Regional working groups would comprise regional experts with gender, disciplinary and within-region geographic balance. In addition, ad hoc and time-bound working groups might be formed to undertake global and/or thematic assessments. Such global and/or thematic groups would be formed with geographic, disciplinary and gender balance.]

IV. Secretariat

20. The secretariat will have the following indicative administrative functions, acting under the direction of the plenary:

- (a) Organize meetings and provide administrative support for meetings, including the preparation of documents and reports to the plenary and its subsidiary bodies as needed;
- (b) Assist the officers of the plenary [and any subsidiary bodies established by the plenary] to undertake their respective functions as decided by the plenary, including facilitating communication between the various stakeholders of the platform;
- (c) Facilitate communication among any working groups that might be established by the plenary;
- (d) Disseminate public information and assist in outreach activities and in the production of relevant communication materials;
- (e) Prepare the platform's draft budget for submission to the plenary, manage the trust fund[s] and prepare any necessary financial reports;
- (f) Assist in mobilizing financial resources;
- (g) Assist in facilitating the monitoring and evaluation of the platform's work.

21. Furthermore, the secretariat might be tasked by the plenary with undertaking technical support functions, such as providing relevant assistance to ensure that the platform implements its work programme. Such potential functions need to be developed following discussion of the work programme and would be implemented under the direction of the plenary.

22. Options available for the institutional arrangements of the secretariat might include:

(a) *[Option 1: A single central secretariat dealing with administrative functions only. In such an arrangement, one or more United Nations organizations and specialized agencies (such as the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme) could consider seconding fully dedicated staff to the platform. At its inception, the secretariat would operate from a single location while exploring networking with regional and thematic technical structures;]*

(b) *[Option 2: A distributed secretariat dealing with administrative functions at both the central and regional levels. In such an arrangement, United Nations organizations and specialized agencies and other regional organizations with appropriate expertise could consider:*

- (i) Providing administrative support to the platform;
- (ii) Seconding fully dedicated staff;
- (iii) Exploring networking through the World Wide Web.]

V. Financial and other contributions to the platform

23. A core trust fund to be allocated by the plenary will be established to receive voluntary contributions from Governments, as well as from United Nations bodies, the Global Environment Facility, other intergovernmental organizations and other stakeholders such as the private sector and foundations, on the understanding that such funding will come without conditionalities, will not orient the work of the platform and cannot be earmarked for specific activities. Its use will be determined by the plenary in an open and transparent manner. Specific requirements for governing the trust fund will be specified in financial rules and procedures to be adopted by the plenary.

24. Exceptionally, subject to approval by the plenary, additional voluntary contributions may be accepted outside the trust fund, such as direct support for specific activities of the platform's work programme.

25. In kind contributions from Governments, the scientific community, other [knowledge-holders] and [stakeholders] are encouraged and will be key to the success of the implementation of the work programme.

VI. Evaluation of the operation of the platform

26. The platform's efficiency and effectiveness should be independently and externally reviewed and evaluated on a periodic basis as decided by the plenary, with adjustments to be made as necessary.

Annex III

Process and elements that might be considered in selecting the host institution or institutions and the physical location of the platform's secretariat

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

1. 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 the United Nations Environment Programme (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.
2. 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.
3. 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 elements for consideration in selecting the host institution or institutions of the secretariat

4. Interested organizations should include in any proposals they submit information covering the following set of elements. These elements might be considered by the plenary in reviewing proposals and identifying the host institution or institutions of the secretariat:
 - (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) 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) Ability of the host institution or institutions to support and promote networking among relevant institutions and processes;
 - (f) Existence of channels of communication with Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;
 - (g) Existence of infrastructures within the host institution or institutions concerning public information and communications;
 - (h) Experience in establishing and servicing intergovernmental bodies, programmes or arrangements;
 - (i) Experience in convening intergovernmental meetings and providing services for such meetings;

- (j) 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;
- (k) Experience in matters relating to the platform's possible functions and areas related to biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- (l) Past or current involvement in the platform's development;
- (m) Support for the platform expressed by the governing bodies of the host institution or institutions;
- (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, appropriate technology, etc.).
- (o) Experience in and potential arrangements for administering any funds;
- (p) Extent to which the host institution or institutions could provide personnel fully dedicated to the work of the secretariat;
- (q) Ability to support activities at the regional level in liaison with regional networks and processes.

B. Process for inviting organizations to signify their interest in hosting the single administrative secretariat

5. Governments 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 any offers they wish to make, with special focus on the elements listed above agreed upon by the government representatives at the meeting.
6. Governments invite UNEP, UNESCO, FAO and UNDP to submit a joint proposal, which should highlight possible collaborative arrangements, including electronic networking, and clarify the responsibilities of each entity. It should also highlight the advantages and disadvantages and the indicative costs of any options proposed.
7. Any proposal should be submitted to the Chair of the Bureau both electronically and in hard copy twelve weeks prior to the second session of the plenary meeting but no later than 15 January 2012, for consideration by the plenary at its second session. The Chair will acknowledge the receipt of any such proposal.

C. Process for reviewing proposals and selecting the host institution or institutions of the secretariat

8. Working with the support of the UNEP secretariat, the Bureau will arrange for the collation and translation of all offers from interested organizations and forward them to Governments at least six weeks prior to the second session of the plenary meeting.
9. At its second session the plenary will consider the proposals from interested organizations with a view to making a decision on the host institution or institutions.

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

A. Possible elements for consideration in selecting the physical location of the single administrative secretariat

10. Interested Governments may wish to include in any proposals they submit information related to the set of elements listed below. These elements might be taken into consideration by Governments at the second session of the plenary meeting in identifying the physical location of the secretariat, while ensuring that none of them would disadvantage proposals from any countries. The elements are:

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 relevant capacities and human resources to support the work of the platform;
- (d) Availability of international transportation facilities and ease of arranging international travel (e.g., flight connections and time needed for processing entry requirements);
- (e) Availability of local transportation facilities;
- (f) Ease of communication, including modern information communication technology infrastructure, including the ability to develop effective communication platforms to support the work of the platform and promote networking;
- (g) Access to diplomatic representation;
- (h) Presence of international, regional or national organizations that are relevant to the field of biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- (i) Availability of health facilities;
- (j) Availability of schools at all levels, including those providing education in languages other than the local official language;
- (k) Availability of facilities for the transfer of funds to and from foreign countries for the secretariat and its staff members;
- (l) Effect of location on staff costs (e.g., post adjustment allowances, costs of hiring national staff);
- (m) Ease of access to local employment for dependants of secretariat staff members;

Features of the office site and related financial issues

- (n) 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);
- (o) 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;
- (p) Responsibility for major maintenance and repairs of the office facilities, normal maintenance and repair and utilities, including communications facilities;
- (q) Extent to which the office facilities would be furnished and equipped by the host Government;
- (r) Duration of arrangements regarding office space;

Legal framework

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

Other relevant information

- (u) The country's experience with and commitment to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- (v) Availability of institutional mechanisms that can support activities at the regional and subregional levels;
- (w) Any additional contributions to be made by the host Government to meet the secretariat's operating costs or to defray conference-servicing expenses.

B. Process for inviting submissions of proposals for the secretariat's physical location

11. Interested Governments, individually or jointly, may wish to make available offers to provide 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 them, with special focus on the above elements. Such offers, which should be a maximum of 15 pages in length plus an additional executive summary of a maximum of two pages, should be submitted to

the Chair of the Bureau both electronically and in hard copy at least 12 weeks prior to the second session of the plenary meeting but no later than 15 January 2012, for its consideration. The Chair will acknowledge the receipt of all offers received.

C. Process for reviewing proposals and selecting the secretariat's physical location

12. Working with the support of the UNEP secretariat, the Bureau will collate and translate the executive summaries into the six official United Nations languages and forward any proposals from interested Governments at least six weeks prior to the second session of the plenary meeting.

13. At its second session the plenary will consider the proposals from Governments with a view to making a decision on the physical location of the secretariat.
