



Distr.: General
10 April 2012
English only



**United Nations
Environment
Programme**

**Plenary meeting to determine modalities and institutional
arrangements for an intergovernmental science-policy
platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services
Second session
Panama City, 16–21 April 2012**

**Report of the Asia-Pacific regional meeting on an
intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and
ecosystem services**

Note by the secretariat

The annex to the present note contains the report of the Asia-Pacific regional meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, which was convened by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in Tehran, from 10 to 12 March 2012. The annex is presented as received from the Chair of the meeting and has not been formally edited.

Annex

ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL MEETING ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL PLATFORM ON BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (IPBES) 10-12 March 2012, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Chair's Report

The Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting on Inter-governmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) was held from 10-12 March 2012 in Tehran, hosted by the Department of Environment of Islamic Republic of Iran, in collaboration with the ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ECO-IEST), with support from UNEP and ECO secretariat, and financial support from the governments of Norway and Republic of Korea. Almost 70 participants from Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Liberia, Maldives, Mauritius, Nepal, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Republic of Korea, and Turkey were attended the meeting. Representatives of the UNDP, UNEP-WCMC, UNESCO and ECO Secretariat were also present as an observer. List of participants is attached as **Annex-I**.

Objectives of the meeting

- Providing background information on IPBES and on related activities;
- Receive feedback from various IPBES stakeholders and their activities (experts' workshops, forums, etc.);
- Present and discuss the main documents UNEP has been requested to prepare in coordination with UNDP, FAO and UNESCO for the second session;
- Provide an opportunity for government representatives for an initial exchange of views on these documents; and
- Gather feedback and suggestions from countries (governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, scientific institutions, etc).
- Partnership building and synergies with Rio Conventions.
- Exchange of lessons learned and best practices with regard to biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Opening Session

- Dr. Asghar Mohammadi Fazel, Deputy Head of Natural Environment & Biodiversity of the Department of Environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the President of ECO-IEST made his inaugural statement.
- Mr. Ali Khanbutayev, Director (EME) of the ECO Secretariat, in his opening statement, presented short overview of the ECO activities on the biodiversity and expressed readiness to continue on his effort on the said field.
- H.E. Mr. Mohammad Javed Mohammadi Zadeh, Vice President and Head of the Department of Environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran also welcomed to the participants. He hoped that IPBES can help us to raise political and public awareness of the meaning of biodiversity, in order to finally halt its ongoing loss and build capacities in order to strengthen the knowledge base in developing countries, and to establishing global and regional networks of biodiversity experts.
- During the inauguration session delegates from the Republic of Korea, Representative of Government of Norway, UNDP and UNEP also made their statements.

Election of the Officers

Dr. Asghar Mohammadi Fazel, Deputy Head of Natural Environment & Biodiversity of the Department of Environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the President of ECO-IEST was elected as Chairman and H.E. Mr. Yeon-chul Yoo, Director General of Ministry of Environment of South Korea was elected as co-Chairman of the Meeting.

The meeting decided to form a Drafting Committee including the delegates of Iran, Pakistan, Liberia, Republic of Korea, UNESCO and the ECO Secretariat to assist the chair to prepare the Report of the meeting which is hereby attached.

Key Points

1. Agenda item on Introduction to IPBES and the process to date

Delegates stressed the following points:

- The need to ensure IPBES avoids duplication with, and builds on existing activities and work of institutions in the region.
- The need to ensure IPBES engages with the scientific and technical communities in the regions, in addition to political focal points in governments.
- The option for a registry of relevant organisations to be maintained to facilitate engagement at regional and national level
- The importance of IPBES building from the bottom up, from national initiatives through to regional efforts up to global.
- The importance of starting gradually, building up the platform as needs and funds are available.
- The need to ensure a clear relationship with the MEAs.
- Develop resource mobilization strategy for sustainable financing IPBES Programme.
- Funding for capacity building should be considered as a part of platform's work program in the early stage.

2. Agenda item on expectations for Panama session

- The importance of making progress and taking decisions in Panama so that the platform can become operational thereafter – including establishing the platform in Panama.
- The importance of attracting private sector financing to the IPBES trust fund.
- The importance of fully understand the hosting offers on the table from the five proposals received by governments.

3. Agenda item on stakeholder engagement

- The need to engage a wide range of stakeholders to ensure the full range of issues are covered by the platform, across biodiversity, ecosystem services, and human well-being, including across disciplines.
- The importance of indigenous and traditional knowledge in the work of the platform, recognizing their important relationship with biodiversity and ecosystem services. The possibility of establishing a specific function for a supporting unit to facilitate the integration of indigenous knowledge into the platform.

4. Agenda item of the work programme

- The need to fully engage all stakeholders in the design and implementation of the work programme, particularly the multidisciplinary scientific community, NGOs, IGOs, local communities and representatives of the private sector.
- The need to build on and encourage robust monitoring networks, at national, regional, sub-regional and global scales.
- Communication, education and public awareness should be as a priority in the work of IPBES
- The importance of a strong communications strategy to ensure the findings of the work programme are disseminated widely, including to children and education programmes, but also to ensure engagement of stakeholders in the implementation of the work programme.
- The need to consider IPBES' requirements for a data management system to make available data used in IPBES work programme in order to strengthen transparency and credibility of the platforms work.
- To build capacity through the more open access to data and information used in IPBES' work, Such a data management system should build on virtual technologies.
- The need to build capacity for national level assessment, that will feed into regional and global assessments.
- The importance of regional activities of the work programme, and therefore for a regional structure to support its implementation.
- The need to incorporate indigenous and traditional knowledge and knowledge holders across the work programme.
- The importance of considering gender issues, in relation to both the balanced involvement of scientists in the work programme, and in relation to the role of women in managing, conserving and using biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- The importance of ensuring strong quality control procedures, including of peer review of all outputs of IPBES.

- The option of considering a biogeographical structure to the assessment work of the platform, in addition to a regional structure.
- Existing policy related tools including models, indicators and methodologies should be harmonized/ synergized with the advice of science panel for better implementation and desired outcome.
- Relevant organizations such as Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) may be invited to participate in all Environmental meetings.

5. Agenda item of the structure and functions of bodies that might be established under the platform

- A general sense that a small bureau and an additional science panel would best serve the needs of the platform.
- The importance of permanent working groups to deliver the work programme, which could be constituted at regional level to oversee the integrated implementation of the work of the platform.
- The need for a central secretariat, but also for a regional node structure (with possible also sub-regional structure in diverse regions such as Asia-Pacific) to support delivery of the work at regional level. Such a regional structure would not necessarily need to be provided by UN agencies, but could be subject to an open call for proposals, in the same way as the global secretariat.
- The importance of starting small and simple, and then growing as necessary to meet the evolving needs of the platform to respond to the requests it receives.
- The important role of the secretariat in providing technical support to the implementation of the work programme.

6. Agenda item of the rules of procedures

- The need to fully engage all governments in the work programme, whether as members of otherwise as active participants in the platform.
- The urgent need to clarify the issues of membership and status and role of observer organisations in the platform so that work can progress.
- The need to consider the terms of office for officers of the plenary to ensure a regional rotation as appropriate.

7. Agenda item of the secretariat

- The need to consider the various elements/criteria to be used for deciding on the location of the secretariat, including accessibility, security and other aspects, in addition to the financial support being offered by the proposed host countries.
- The need to consider the structure of the secretariat, but that this could be done in parallel with selecting the host of the central secretariat.
- The importance of agreeing on the process by which the selection of the host country will be determined.

8. Agenda item of the budget

- The importance of being clear on the budget breakdown.
- The importance of trying to save costs, through for example working with virtual environmentally friendly technologies and saving on meeting costs.
- The importance of hearing pledges from donor countries in Panama to better understand the potential availability of resources for the platform.
- The need to ensure sufficient contingency is included in the budget to ensure that any emerging issues are able to be addressed.

9. Agenda item of the legal issue

- The urgency to establish the platform in the second plenary meeting in Panama to ensure a quick start to IPBES.
- The importance of seeking legal advice, but also the recognition that the platform has many options for establishment, all of which appear to have a legal basis, but that there are other considerations that would need to be taken into account, such as the schedule of being operational, and political considerations.

- IPBES should be established as an independent inter-governmental body, administered by one or more UN Agencies as early as possible, exploring the possibility of transforming it into UN body later.

Closing Session

All the participants whole-heartedly thanked the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology for excellent arrangements made to hold this meeting and for the warm hospitality extended to the participants during their stay as well as appreciated the UNEP for their assistance. The Chairman announced the closing of the meeting.

Annex I**The Asia- Pacific Regional Capacity Building Workshop and Consultative Meeting on Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)****10 -12 March 2012, Tehran- Islamic Republic of IRAN**

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