**IPBES SHD Closing Speech**

**Christophe Aubel, Director General of the French Agency for Biodiversity (AFB)**

First of all, I would like to thank IPBES for allowing the French Agency for Biodiversity to take part in this stakeholder day closing session. AFB is a government agency responsible for ensuring public policies are applied in the following areas: knowledge, support for public policies on biodiversity and the integration of biodiversity into sectoral policies, the management of protected areas, the environmental police and mobilising society.

One of the first decisions we made in 2017 was to support IPBES. We are very proud of that because we believe that this intergovernmental platform is indispensable.

Turning to this stakeholder day now, I would like to commend the quality of the exchanges and point out a common thread that is supported unanimously: the importance of stakeholders for IPBES.

This has been made clear to us since the start of this stakeholder day, and I shall quote a few of the opinions expressed:

* *The stakeholders must guarantee the success of IPBES*
* *They must broaden IPBES’ horizon*
* *We would like to receive proposals from the stakeholders*
* *IPBES must cooperate with the stakeholders.*

Al the speeches over the course of the day have corroborated this, and I share this point of view.

So, I’d like to make a few recommendations:

I think we need to expand the circle of stakeholders; we need more communities in the room and also more non-environmental NGOs and trade unions.

As IPBES Chair Robert Watson said: biodiversity is also a social subject, so let’s look for social actors.

The second key point of the day (there might be others, but I’ve only got 5 minutes) was raised by Robert Watson, "the world still does not get it".

Someone in the room went further by pointing out that the planet is collapsing, but that the decision-makers are in no hurry to act, and he then questioned whether we are doing enough to reflect the reality of the urgency of the situation.

Another person recalled that IPBES reports were only valid if they were adopted, shared and finally implemented. This is when the stakeholders become even more important. They are the ones who can, who must take over from IPBES. IPBES can only be prescriptive, the stakeholders meanwhile can be prescriptive too, but they can also make proposals, exert influence, encourage people and take action.

* In this respect, the national platforms need to be strengthened
* We must remember the suggestion to make documents that make the assessment available to other audiences such as the world of education but also local politicians, trade unions and professional organisations.
* We must create coalitions of actors who act, and test actions in order to lead by example.
* At some point, action will need to be taken in a given area, so let us look for regional and local authorities and companies.
* We must focus more on the press, not only to reach scientific or environmental journalists, but also political journalists and columnists.
* The stakeholders must help IPBES in budgetary matters.
* Finally, we must go out and find our fellow citizens, in each of our countries, because without a social demand for biodiversity expressed forcefully, the decision-makers remain timid. Bringing citizens on board requires us to be able to convey a strong message on the links between the environment and social justice.

“The world still does not get it”, and it is our collective responsibility to change that.

One suggestion is for a future stakeholder day to take the form of a participatory workshop, adopting a collective intelligence approach, as a design thinking workshop, to find a way of ensuring that the world finally does get it.

We cannot continue to treat the living world in this way, because we cannot continue to treat our future in this way. The good news is that changing our relationship with the living world is a very meaningful project, with high added value, that can help re-enchant societies that I believe really need this.

I hope you all have a good working week, and commend the efforts of all those who keep IPBES going and are committed to its success. The French Agency for Biodiversity will be at your side.