

Chair Professor Sir Bob Watson, The Municipality of Bonn, The Government of Germany, (others?...), Executive Secretary, dear delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I speak here today on behalf of the four UN agencies supporting the IPBES, namely FAO, UNDP, UNESCO and UN Environment.

The world is facing major challenges in meeting global and national commitments for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and for the preservation of critical Ecosystem Services that underpin sustainable development. Significant **progress is being made** in some areas. However there is **still much to be done** by Governments, the international community, the private sector, and the wider civil society.

Progress will depend on decisions to be taken by governments and –increasingly so- also by other actors. Such decisions **should be based on** the best-available **scientific information**, and also to **traditional knowledge**, related to biodiversity and ecosystem services. The four UN agencies remain firmly committed to help IPBES generate and catalyze this vital information for policy and decision makers.

IPBES has now matured to the stage where its **early assessment products and other important deliverables have been completed.**

Progress has also been made at the regional level, and **decisions are on the table** at this plenary, to move ahead with providing the global knowledge foundation on a range of **additional and important thematic areas**. Such robust knowledge products are needed to underpin future decisions around policies and management practices for invasive species, and for the sustainable use of wildlife around the world.

The growing threat from **Invasive Alien Species** remains hugely important. However it is often overlooked, and it has fallen from much of the world’s political radar in recent years. IPBES has the **opportunity to redress this science-policy mismatch**, through its new work in this area.

Likewise – while the world is moving quickly to develop new policies, regulations, and incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services - IPBES can offer a major contribution in this area, with the proposed new **methodological assessment on the diverse conceptualization of the multiple values of nature and its benefits.**

Later this year the **High Level Political Forum** will consider progress towards SDGs on marine living resources, and next year likewise on terrestrial ecosystems. The knowledge provided by IPBES will be an important contribution to these processes, and their follow up.

We should also ensure that the IPBES products **benefit from, and are synergic with**, other **relevant processes such as** the **Global Environment Outlook**, or new **Environment Live** data platform.

At the Convention of Biological Diversity CoP in Cancun at the end of last year, governments and other stakeholders focused on the challenges and opportunities for **mainstreaming biodiversity** across agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism. Here IPBES needs to consider which role it wants to play, in **reaching out beyond the traditional ‘biodiversity and ecosystem services’ community**. Whilst retaining IPBES’ independence, it will be extremely important to strengthen partnerships across sectors that depend on, or have an impact on,

biodiversity and ecosystem services – such as agriculture, trade, development, transport, energy, water, etc. **This will be key to the effective delivery and uptake of the Platform’s work.** The many partnerships already in place do provide for the delivery of the current work programme. However there is certainly **still significant potential** to make wider use of partnerships, and to consolidate the existing ones. Under the relevant agenda item later this week, we will further present some of the on-going support of the UN system to the Platform.

We very much welcome the increased focus on **capacity building**, and the strengthened **communications capacity** of IPBES. We are also looking forward to the implementation of the IPBES **stakeholder engagement strategy**. These are all key avenues to facilitate contributions into the IPBES process, and to further increase the uptake of the Platform’s products.

These are difficult financial times, and we have to consider this, when implementing our current work programme, and when starting the development a new one. It will be important to build on our achievements, while making the most out of all available in-kind contributions. Because we feel it is very important for **IPBES to retain its ambition to make a difference** in the world.

I would like to end with our huge thanks to the **members of the Bureau** and of the **Multi-disciplinary Expert Panel**; for their tireless work in providing leadership, oversight and direction to IPBES; to the **Secretariat** for their professional and dedicated management of the entire process, including the preparations for this plenary; to the growing list of **authors, reviewers and other experts** involved in the various deliverables; and to you, the **governments and other stakeholders** who provide such solid support in many different forms, including through the important discussions in the days ahead, and through your vital financing.

We look forward to a productive plenary. As a UN family we shall continue to support IPBES and its Members as we move forward in this work programme, and in considering the future work programme, in the months and years to come.

Thank you