



CBD



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/CBD/COP/9/INF/34
07 April 2008

ENGLISH ONLY

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Ninth meeting

Bonn, 19–30 May 2008

Items 4.4 of the provisional agenda*

**SUMMARY REPORT, AND CONCLUSIONS, OF THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS TO
ASSESS THE NEED FOR, MODALITIES OF, AND OPTIONS FOR AN INTERNATIONAL
MECHANISM OF SCIENTIFIC EXPERTISE ON BIODIVERSITY**

Note by the Executive Secretary

1. In decision VIII/9 paragraphs 29 and 30, the Conference of the Parties decided to consider, at its ninth meeting the need for another integrated assessment of biodiversity and ecosystems and options for improving the availability to the SBSTTA of scientific information and advice on biodiversity taking into account the results of other relevant processes, keeping in mind the need to avoid duplication of efforts.
2. The Executive Secretary is hereby presenting information on this subject, prepared by the Executive Secretariat of the Consultative Process towards an International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB).
3. This document is circulated in the form and language in which it was received by the Secretariat.

* UNEP/CBD/COP/9/1.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document presents the background to, past and current activities of the IMoSEB initiative (International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity). ¹/

The consultative process was a broad, multidisciplinary exploratory process that involved a large number of stakeholders and had an important political and media audience. Its aim was the creation of a true value-added process by fully taking into account existing and proposed initiatives. This approach had frequently been appreciated by participants for its originality, openness and inclusive participative orientation.

Initiated at the 2005-Conference of Paris “Biodiversity: Science and Governance”, the consultative process towards an IMoSEB started officially in February 2006 with the first International Steering Committee (ISC) meeting and the appointment of an Executive Committee. Following a two step action plan: (i) case studies conducted at the Science-Policy Interface; and (ii) targeted and regional consultations; occurred in 2007 covering 6 continents and involved 300 participants and 40 international/regional organisations, from 70 different countries. The ISC met a second time in November 2007, in Montpellier, France, to formulate recommendations for an IMoSEB according to the consultation results. ISC members agreed on a statement giving the main characteristics and guidelines of an IMoSEB. All agreed on the fact that any new body would be intergovernmental with scientific credibility, political legitimacy and relevance, supported and building upon networks of scientists and biodiversity knowledge holders, and would meet users' needs identified during the consultation. They also recommended to ensure interaction with other ongoing processes, such as the Global Strategy of the MA Follow up, and to convene a meeting under the auspice of UNEP in 2008 in order to launch the process.. A first joint meeting “IMoSEB-MA Follow up: Strengthening the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Interface on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services” took place in March 2008 to develop a common approach.

¹ The term 'biodiversity' is used here in the broadest sense and covers all interacting living organisms, including micro-organisms, and the services rendered by ecosystems. Biodiversity is addressed in its relation with major issues such as poverty reduction, food security and water supply, economic growth, conflicts related to the use and appropriation of resources, human, animal and plant health, energy and the evolution of the climate. This viewpoint implies the linking of biodiversity and human well-being in the spirit of the achieving of the Millennium Development Goals.

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I. THE 2005 CONFERENCE OF PARIS “BIODIVERSITY: SCIENCE AND GOVERNANCE”

A - The conference of Paris

1. The Paris conference on “Biodiversity: Science and governance” was proposed by the French president, Jacques Chirac, during the G8 meeting in Evian in 2003. This international conference, held from 24-28 January 2005, had the goal to establish dialogue between scientists and decision-makers at the highest level. In response to the call for action from the President of France, one of the main outcomes of the conference was the launch of an international multi stakeholder consultative process guided by a balanced multi stakeholder steering committee. This process would assess the need for an international mechanism that would:

- a. Provide a critical assessment of the scientific information and policy options required for decision-making; and
- b. Build on existing bodies, current and recent activities.

B - The Interim Steering Committee

2. Following the conference, the government of France convened a meeting of an Interim Steering Committee. This Steering Committee was mandated to produce a list of members for the International Steering Committee that will carry out the assessment of the need for and feasibility of the International Mechanism.

3. An interim bureau was appointed and promoted the idea of the consultative process towards an IMoSEB at several international conferences such as the Working Group on the Review of Implementation of the CBD (Montreal, September 2005) or the Open Science Conference of DIVERSITAS (Oaxaca, November 2005).

4. On a voluntary basis, scientists, governments, local and indigenous communities, NGOs, inter-governmental and international organizations, including United Nations Specialized Agencies, were identified and invited to be part of the International Steering Committee of the Consultative process towards an IMoSEB.

5. An Executive Secretariat, entrusted to the Institut Français de la Biodiversité, was established to support and facilitate discussions.

II. THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE (ISC) OF THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS TOWARDS AN IMOSEB

6. The consultative process was officially launched at the first International Steering Committee (ISC) meeting, held at the National Museum of Natural History in Paris on 21 and 22 February, 2006. Seventy-four of the 90 members previously identified attended the meeting.

7. The meeting ended upon the agreement to:

- a. Undertake a review to identify, define and assess the needs and gaps at the biodiversity knowledge-policy interface; and
- b. To hold worldwide consultations that would foster an open dialogue and explore different several possible options.

8. The plenary ISC meeting appointed an Executive Committee (EC) and tasked it to draft a plan of action for the consultation phase of the process. Participants agreed that the EC would be co-chaired by **Alfred Oteng-Yeboah** and **Michel Loreau** and that the following would be members of the EC: **Ivar Baste, Martha Chouchena-Rojas, Christine Dawson, Horst Korn, Keping Ma, Georgina Mace,**

Martha Mapangou, Charles Perrings, Peter Raven, José Sarukhan, Robert Watson, Jacques Weber. In addition participants of the ISC agreed that the membership would remain open to a modest number of members from under-represented sectors, such as the private sector or indigenous people: **Stephan Schnierer** was later appointed as local and indigenous communities representative.

9. The EC prepared a plan of action, and set in motion a two-phase consultative process:
 - a. The preparation of a set of studies to be completed by November 2006;
 - b. A wide international consultation, taking into account the results of the above-mentioned studies, between January and October 2007; and
 - c. A final ISC meeting to consider the results of the consultation, and make a set of final recommendations on possible follow-up as appropriate in November 2007.

III. THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS TOWARDS AN IMOSEB IN 2006 & 2007

A - The Case Studies²

10. Six case studies were finally selected by the EC and conducted by different partners or scientists in 2006:
 - a. Examples of the use of basic scientific information and its application to the conservation and management of biodiversity in Mexico (*Lira-Noriega and Sarukhan, Nov 2006*);
 - b. The role and contribution of biodiversity science expertise to understanding and illuminating decision-making on the emergence and spread of H5N1 Avian influenza (*Daszak and Chimura, November 2006*);
 - c. Science-Policy Interface: The role of Scientific Assessments (*Watson and Gitay, Nov 2006*);
 - d. Decision making and Biodiversity, Institutions, Actors and processes, (*Rafaelli and Holt, Nov 2006*) with a focus on Traditional Knowledge (Mobilizing Traditional Knowledge and Expertise for Decision-making on biodiversity, *Bannister and Hardison, Nov 2006*);
 - e. Lessons from fisheries (*Héral, Nov 2006*); and
 - f. Lessons from Invasive Marine Species management in a marine environment (*Gouletquer, Dec 2006*)

B - Promotion of the consultative process towards an IMoSEB

11. The Executive Secretariat of the Consultative process, supported by the ISC and the EC, undertook a preliminary consultation by organizing and participating at several events where the consultative process towards an IMoSEB and its goals were discussed and debated at several opportunities (Side-event at CBD-COP8 Curitiba, Brazil; Earth System Science Partnership conference in Beijing, China, European Congress on Conservation Biology, EPBRS, EU Green-week, British Ecological Society annual meeting, Conservation International Team meeting in Madagascar, etc.).

12. An open forum for discussion was also launched to collect and exchange views, opinions and experiences of biodiversity stakeholders concerning the consultative process towards an IMoSEB.

² Case studies available at http://www.imoseb.net/case_studies

C - Voluntary contributions to the consultative process towards an IMoSEB³

13. Organizations and research initiatives had the opportunity to organize meetings and workshops to discuss and report on the consultative process towards an IMoSEB. Several other workshops took place during the consultation (2006-2007) to provide inputs to the consultative process as well as contributions from scientific bodies including:

- a. The Leipzig workshop “International Science-Policy Interfaces for Biodiversity governance – Needs, Challenges, Experiences, A contribution to the IMoSEB consultative process” was the main workshop where IMoSEB was discussed. It was held in Leipzig, October 2-4 2006 and gathered experts to open up the discussion on needs, gaps and options for an international mechanism on Science-Policy interface in biodiversity governance;
- b. The SANBI-DIVERSITAS workshop “Recommendations from the Science-Policy Dialogue on biodiversity: a contribution to discussions concerning IMoSEB” took place in Cape Town, South Africa, 29-30 March 2007;
- c. During the Bi-national meeting of the Chilean Ecological Society and Argentinian Association of Ecology at La Serena, Chile on October 3 , 2007, the scope and possible models for IMOSEB were discussed in detail between scientists and resulted in extended consultations in South America; and
- d. The UK Royal Society produced a document: “Royal Society response to the IMoSEB consultation” in November 2007.

IV. THE SECOND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

14. In December 2006, a second meeting of the EC was held in Paris. Based on the findings of the first phase (results of the case studies, voluntary contributions and, open forum), the objectives of the meeting were to: (a) identify the needs at the biodiversity knowledge–decision making interface, and (b) formulate options for meeting those needs. Thus, the Executive Committee identified eight needs and proposed four options.

15. The eight needs were:

- a. To bring insights from the relevant sciences and other forms of knowledge to bear on local/national decisions that affect biodiversity where those decisions have international consequences;
- b. To provide independent scientific information from all relevant sources to support the work of international conventions and institutions, with particular emphasis on the CBD;
- c. To enhance our capacity to predict the consequences of current actions affecting biodiversity, drawing on the sciences of both natural and social systems;
- d. To provide, proactively, scientific advice on emerging threats and issues associated with biodiversity change and to be responsive to concerns expressed by stakeholder;
- e. To communicate scientific results on biodiversity to wider relevant audiences;
- f. To provide scientific support to existing biodiversity and related monitoring and assessment exercises, and potentially to supplement these as necessary;
- g. To reduce the time lag between the publication of scientific results on biodiversity and their incorporation in decision-processes; and

³ Report of Leipzig, SANBI and from the Royal Society available at http://www.imoseb.net/information_center

- h. To inform science and science funding agencies about biodiversity research priorities implied by decision-makers' concerns.
16. The four options were:
- a. To form a partnership with existing mechanisms for delivering science to national and international decision-making bodies;
 - b. To create a new mechanism, modelled loosely on the IPCC, but with both intergovernmental and nongovernmental components;
 - c. To invite the IPCC to consider developing a biodiversity aspect to their activity; and
 - d. To use and strengthen existing networks of independent scientists to feed science, standards and principles into different fora through a small coordination mechanism.
17. The EC decided to broaden and deepen consultations by holding meetings on each continent, while remaining attentive to the institutional reforms and ongoing initiatives. It was agreed also that, in addition to the regional consultation, small consultations with targeted people should be undertaken. Biodiversity stakeholders not represented in the ISC would be contacted to involve them in the consultation process and receive their advices and views.
18. The ISC subsequently reviewed and commented the "Needs & Options"⁴ document prepared by the Executive Committee. The final version of the document served as a basis for wider discussions during the 2007 regional consultations.

V. THE REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS

A - The Regional consultations⁵

19. The Executive secretariat organized six regional consultation meetings that were held between January and October 2007, for North America, Africa, Europe, Asia, Latin America and Oceania.
20. These regional consultations and the ISC examined and shared their perspectives on the list of needs for the biodiversity knowledge-decision-making interface identified by the EC in December 2006 and the first ISC feedback. These meetings-involved more than 300 participants and 40 international / regional organisations from 70 different countries and represented a broad range of biodiversity stakeholders.
21. Throughout 2007, the consultative process received an increasing political and media audience and was mentioned in several official documents. The consultative process towards an IMoSEB received support in the "Potsdam initiative - Biological Diversity 2010 " from the G8+5⁶ and from the European Platform on Biodiversity Research Strategy. It was also presented and discussed during the Carnegie Group (meeting of the G8 Ministers for Research).

The North American regional consultation

22. The North American consultation was held from 30 to 31 January 2007 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. It was hosted by Environment Canada with the support of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada,

⁴ Available at http://www.imoseb.net/information_center

⁵ The results of each regional consultations are available at http://www.imoseb.net/regional_consultations

⁶This initiative was launched by the Ministry of Environment of the G8+5 (Italy, Germany, France, Canada, USA, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom + China, India, Mexico, South Africa, Brasil) mentioned and supported the consultative process in the second point of the declaration : "2) Science : We will strengthen the scientific basis for biodiversity and are committed to improve the science policy interface. In this context we will support the ongoing consultative process on an international mechanism for providing scientific advice (IMoSEB) ». http://www.imoseb.net/information_center

the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, the City of Montreal, Montreal International, and the Executive Secretariat of the Consultative Process towards an IMoSEB.

23. Participants underlined that it would be a very ambitious challenge to fulfil all the needs with one single mechanism. Scepticism remained about the need and supporting rationale for a new body or if existing institutions could meet these needs with enhanced capacity. Issues on the costs of a new body (in a context of limited resources) and on the duplication of what is already done were raised. Moreover, participants recognized also that more science is better but translation of information into action was even more important.

The African Regional consultation

24. The African consultation was held from 1 to 3 March 2007, in Yaoundé, Cameroon, alongside the XVIII Congress of the Association for the Taxonomy study of Flora of Tropical Africa under the patronage of the Cameroon Ministry for Scientific Research and Information and in partnership with the CIRAD (French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development).

25. Participants focused on the difficulty of assessing information, and accessing world databases and other sources of information. They also highlighted the need for improved North-South and South-South cooperation and considered that IMoSEB could consist of a knowledge network to support and inform decision-makers taking into account existing institutional expertise at the local and international level. If created, this network must not in any case duplicate existing efforts but instead should provide added value to existing bodies.

The European Regional consultation

26. The European consultation took place in Geneva, Switzerland from 26 to 28 April 2007 and was hosted by IUCN, the Secretariat of Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Swiss Biodiversity Forum and the Natural History Museum of Geneva with the support of the Institut Français de la Biodiversité (IFB) and the European Environmental Agency (EEA).

27. Participants, including private sector representatives, took into account the recommendations from the two previous consultations to refine the list of needs. They also developed a hybrid model with a possible structure for an IMoSEB as a “networks of networks” that would react quickly to requests from the subsidiary scientific bodies of the biodiversity related conventions and other biodiversity stakeholders.

28. Such a body, built upon and supporting existing mechanisms while considering new structures and initiatives, could help to meet the needs and so improve the knowledge-policy interface for biodiversity.

The Asian Regional consultation

29. The Asian consultation was held from 24 to 25 September in Beijing, China, in a strong partnership with the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the United Nations University-Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS) and the National Council of Science of Laos.

30. Participants agreed on the need for a new mechanism to address the needs identified in the previous consultations. It would have the form of an intergovernmental panel on biodiversity, including a multi stakeholder component affiliated to the UN. They also agreed as a mandate for this body should be as defined at the Leipzig workshop. Regional needs and specificities related to Asia were also highlighted.

The South American Regional consultation

31. The South American consultation took place in Bariloche, from 2 to 3 October 2007 during the II Latin-American Congress of Natural Parks and Others Protected Areas and was co-hosted by the

Prosper Project, IUCN, and the Secretary of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation and Secretary of the Environment and Sustainable Development of Argentina.

32. Participants considered the results of the previous consultations and while approving the needs identified, proposed one option mixing the intergovernmental panel and the meta-network. They also highlighted the need to strengthen the existing Latin-American network, with a focus on the national levels.

The Oceania regional consultation

33. The Oceania regional consultation was co-hosted by SPREP (South Pacific Regional Environment Programme) and held alongside the 8th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas. It took place 19-20 October 2007, in Alotau, Papua New Guinea.

34. Participants, after having reviewed the previous consultations and considering their own needs, proposed a new structure. This structure would provide scientific advice at different levels of decision-making through a process of translation / synthesis of existing knowledge on biodiversity from all sources. Information produced would be made available and would spread into existing networks (SPREP, National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, etc.) to improve scientific advice and information. Advice would be made available from users upon request. This mechanism should be civil society driven, and both reactive and pro active.

B - Main outcomes⁷

35. Although the interface between knowledge and decision has clearly been identified as a critical need, the difficulty of taking up such a challenge is very real. The IMoSEB consultation has not been the only one aiming at reducing this gap. Whether they are taken by intergovernmental bodies, national bodies, NGOs, enterprises, local authorities or even private individuals, decisions that have direct or indirect interactions with biodiversity are often difficult to take with full knowledge of the facts. Indeed, biodiversity is closely linked to human activities in the long and short term. This linkage often has local or global consequences whose relations and impacts are difficult to quantify with any accuracy. Furthermore, when information does exist, it is difficult to access, frequently dispersed and often unusable in a raw state.

36. Many stakeholders still consider the field of data and information on biodiversity to be a competitive area at different levels—especially between scientists, between NGOs, between enterprises and even between countries. This competition is seen in particular for reasons of power and for receipt of funding. Numerous initiatives have been launched in recent years to improve this situation but there is not yet a major, encompassing initiative on a scale of that undertaken for decades in other fields such as those covering physical features (climate, natural catastrophes, etc.), the exploration of space and nuclear power, except in the field of taxonomy.

Purpose of an IMoSEB

37. The consultations particularly emphasised the fact that an IMoSEB should contribute true value-addition to existing mechanisms and initiatives and in no way be seen as duplicating existing efforts. The aim of an IMoSEB would not be the development of biodiversity sciences but the improvement of translation of knowledge into action and the links between knowledge and decision processes.

38. From the outset there has been recognition of the obvious need to improve the interface between knowledge and policies concerning the governance of biodiversity and its management by more effective organisation of the contribution of scientists and other possessors of knowledge to the bodies entrusted with the governance of biodiversity. The need was also recognised for more sustained discussion between the scientific community in the broad sense and systems for the governance of biodiversity.

⁷ Main results of the Regional consultations available at http://www.imoseb/regional_consultations

39. Even if the process has focused on the interface between knowledge and decisions, it has been very widely recognised that other aspects explain the poor governance of biodiversity, such as a lack of political will, decisions that harm biodiversity irrespective of knowledge, questions of the ownership of or access to biological resources and the divergence between the interests of the stakeholders concerned.

40. The participants frequently indicated that there will be an increasing need to improve comprehension, development and appraisal of the interface between knowledge and policies. The appraisal process has been seen as the transformation of the complex problems of biodiversity into messages that are both simpler and clearer, in order to establish discussion between knowledge holders and decision makers, the purpose of which is to guide the decision process and improve the implementation of policies that affect biodiversity.

Users and Suppliers

41. The users of an IMoSEB- identified mainly by the consultations are the decision makers at various levels from local to international, and in different public, private, community or collective categories, such as governments, international organisations, local communities, indigenous peoples, NGOs, academies, scientists, the media, consumers, enterprises, planners, development stakeholders, chambers of commerce, etc.

42. All of the regional consultations recognised that biodiversity appraisals can draw on several types of knowledge: fundamental research, targeted research with decision making, lay knowledge, local and traditional knowledge, indigenous knowledge and the skills of enterprises from the local to the international scale.

43. The following suggestions were repeated:

- a. enhancing interaction between modern and traditional knowledge with emphasis on mutual contributions and the need for mutual validation-use for better biodiversity management; and
- b. setting up synergy between decision makers and holders of knowledge, between traditional and scientific knowledge and between the specialists in the various groups of themes.

44. Interactions between the users and suppliers of expert skills should be encouraged through partnerships and collaboration through networking. This is particularly important insofar as the users of certain information may be the suppliers of other information. This is the case in particular with the involvement of certain local authorities and enterprises in the development of biodiversity knowledge systems related to their activities.

Mandate and functions

45. The proposals for a mandate for an IMoSEB, defined at the Leipzig workshop, have been taken up in particular by the Asian consultation:

- a. Synthesize and communicate a knowledge base on biodiversity in support of decision making and implementation;
- b. Bring together and acknowledge diverse understandings, perspectives, and values regarding biodiversity loss and change;
- c. Create a mechanism for dialogue and exchange among holders of diverse knowledge and knowledge systems (i.e., all forms of traditional and modern knowledge and science);
- d. Foster deeper understanding of the ways in which biodiversity loss and change transcend scales (spatial, temporal, etc.) and jurisdictional boundaries; and

- e. Through its activities enhance and improve abilities to collect, exchange and disseminate knowledge and information, and promote actions in favour of better biodiversity management at all levels.

46. The new mechanism could therefore undertake independent appraisals, draw up a synthesis of available knowledge on biodiversity and translate this information into the 'languages' of the target audiences. It should be integrated in networks to draw on different types of specialists and appraisals and could disseminate existing methodologies and specify the type of biodiversity evaluation needed in the long term and, on a periodic basis, initiate or provide support for appraisals and also rapid responses to urgent questions and, if necessary, identify, create and support fresh research work.

47. A parallel has been drawn on many occasions between the experience of IPCC and a possible IMoSEB. The exemplary performance of IPCC in mobilising scientific communities, public opinion, politicians and the media is something of a reference in the determination to include biodiversity in political and decision agendas. However, there has been constant agreement to emphasise the fact that biodiversity governance is very different to that of climate change.

48. The mechanism should work in close interaction with subsidiary scientific bodies of the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) entrusted with supplying scientific opinions for the biodiversity related conventions. However, it should also be capable of proactively addressing new problems that emerge in this field. It is necessary to plan a mechanism making it possible to be responsive and/or proactive according to circumstances and themes. It can also be designed to respond to the needs of the civil society and/or the obligations of international conventions.

49. With regard to relations with international conventions, the consultations have in general stressed the potential role of an IMoSEB within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and in particular to strengthen the scientific contribution within the SBSTTA. It has been proposed almost without exception to conceive an IMoSEB with a specific governance system that is independent of the CBD but with special links with the latter it and under the auspices of a UN body, or possibly to set it up by the General Assembly of the United Nations and have it housed within a UN structure. Links should also be established with the other main biodiversity related conventions (CITES, CMS, UNCCD, Ramsar Convention, and WHC) concerning biodiversity, in particular with recognition of the legitimacy and role of the liaison group on biodiversity, and with other conventions or agreements that have impacts on or links with biodiversity concerns such as the UNFCCC, WTO, etc.

50. If it is set up, it should mobilise expertise for ongoing or future appraisals (e.g. GBO3, GEO5, MAIL, 'Stern' type report of the Potsdam Initiative).

51. The mandate should be defined as soon as possible in order to provide the mechanism with all the legitimacy and all the authority required, and it should be implemented very soon and with a long-term perspective so as to set up the resources for monitoring the state and evolution of biodiversity, the options and responses that could abate loss of biodiversity and that would enhance the goods and services provided by ecosystems.

52. The potential of new information and communication technologies and networking can be central in facilitating the mobilisation of all expertise. This covers the mobilisation of voluntary expertise, a return flow of brains, the re-appropriation of knowledge and data in the regions of origin, the use of individual and community expertise and continuing education.

C - Main recommendations on the way forward

Guiding principles

53. The consultations have shown the need for such a mechanism to be awarded sufficient legitimacy and authority. These should be accompanied by assurances of independence and free and unrestrained appraisal in liaison with the requirements of decision makers. The consultations have

stressed that when science is mentioned it must be seen to be legitimate and authoritative, and also underline the important role of all the sciences — natural sciences, social sciences and economics.

54. Following the discussions and contributions of the preceding consultations, three guiding principles for an IMoSEB were highlighted by the Asian consultation:

- a. scientific credibility;
- b. political legitimacy; and
- c. relevance (meeting the needs of users).

55. The African consultation requested a light, decentralised, adaptive, flexible, non-bureaucratic structure that is close and accessible to stakeholders and capable of a mutual information approach to decision making.

56. The Oceania regional consultation underlined the need for the representation of regions and types of stakeholders to be balanced at the highest level of an IMoSEB. In particular, support should be provided for those that belong to marginalised groups.

Points of divergence

57. Practically all the consultation participants agreed that present governance of biodiversity does not match the issues and the risks, even if opinions regarding the ways to proceed differed. The points of divergence are fundamental as they highlight above all the differences on 'vision' or 'positioning' of an IMoSEB within the framework of the governance of biodiversity. While there was always a full consensus on making a particular proposal of options, some consultations clearly took a strategic, tactical position in favour of an option in the name of real potential for power (intergovernmental panel), of possible backing from governments or the presumed effectiveness of an IMoSEB (a meta-network). The setting up of a structure that has received the approval and support of governments will require a certain political consensus which does not exist.

58. Some considered that an IMoSEB could be constructed little by little by broadening its competences and possibly using the creation of a pilot structure at the region or sub-region scale as proposed by the African consultation. Others were of the opinion that any mechanism of this type should operate at world level to begin with planning and that structures and procedures operating at other levels could be incorporated at a later date.

Regional or local characteristics

59. Whatever the final outcome, existing networks — some of which were identified during regional meetings — should be taken into account.

60. Access to information and to databases is difficult in some regions - in particular for economic or legal reasons (private data), technical reasons (the 'digital divide') or political reasons (information held outside the country). Mention was also made of many difficulties in research systems and for individual scientists in the field of biodiversity and appraisal: shortage of human resources, ageing researchers, lack of facilities and encouragement, brain drain to non-governmental or international bodies, shortages of regional or local expertise in certain fields.

Communication on biodiversity

61. Communication on biodiversity was often considered as a fundamental feature for an IMoSEB. Several proposals or recommendations were made: face to face discussions between scientists and decision makers, an annual forum on biodiversity on the lines of the Davos Summit, regional journals devoted to the management of biodiversity, a "Wikipedia" type system devoted to biodiversity, etc. The messages should be proactive, relevant, short and concise and delivered at the appropriate moment. They should be authoritative, take the appropriate scale into account and result from a cooperative and interdisciplinary procedure.

VI. THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS TOWARDS AN IMOSEB

A - Background

62. The second International Steering Committee (ISC) of the Consultative Process towards an IMoSEB was held 15-17 November 2007, at the Corum Conference Centre in Montpellier, France. More than 60 Scientists, representatives of Governments, Inter-Governmental or International Organizations, United Nations and Specialized Agencies, non-governmental organizations, research initiatives and others attended. After 2 days deliberation the participants agreed on a final Statement.

B - IMoSEB Statement ⁸

63. The Final IMoSEB ISC meeting concluded on a final statement. It was agreed that the regional consultations highlighted needs at the Science-Policy interface as well as additional needs notably related to biodiversity governance, and related biodiversity emergencies. A set of principles, that should be respected to strengthen the Science –Policy Interface were underlined as follows:

- a. be scientifically independent, credible, inclusive, and subject - where appropriate - to critical expert peer review;
- b. be policy legitimate through inter-governmental and multi-stakeholder involvement in transparent and representative processes at all stages;
- c. be policy relevant without being policy prescriptive;
- d. be responsive to policy needs as identified by decision-making organs at multiple scales, including biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs);
- e. be communicated in a clear, readily accessible way through outreach to decision-making bodies for their consideration and possible action;
- f. be supported by a network of scientific and national capacities and by capacity building integrated into the assessment process and/or networking efforts;
- g. be based on a robust conceptual framework respecting the scope of the question under consideration with a focus on the impacts of biodiversity change on ecosystem services and human well-being to enhance understanding of the trade-offs involved in alternative decisions;
- h. address decision-makers from governments and other sectors of society at global, regional and national scales; and
- i. promote dialogue between international agencies and decision-makers.

64. The establishment of a means and the enhancement of existing institutions, to provide an objective source of information about biodiversity and ecosystem services changes was also considered.

65. This new body would include as activities:

- a. to build upon, and promote, regular global and sub-global assessments of the state and trends in biodiversity and ecosystem services, and their effects on human well-being at multiple spatial scales;
- b. to undertake or promote special studies on emerging issues of importance to biodiversity, particularly those that are transnational and/or cross-cultural in nature, either in response to requests of decision-makers or indicated by science;

⁸ Full Statement from the International Steering Committee, http://www.imoseb.net/international_steering_committee_2

- c. to contribute rapid, authoritative scientific information on biodiversity-related emergencies at short time scales;
- d. to promote development of the capacity to generate and use the information, methodology and techniques to accomplish the above objectives;
- e. to promote effective communication, including the results of activities performed under (a), (b) and (c); and
- f. to undertake any other activities consistent with its objectives as may be appropriate.

66. Finally, the IMoSEB ISC invited the Executive Director of UNEP, in collaboration with the Government of France and other governments, the CBD (Secretariat, SBSTTA and COP Bureaus) and the partners of the IMoSEB consultation process ⁹, to convene an international meeting to consider establishing an efficient international science-policy interface to address the objectives above identified, and with the following characteristics:

- a. be flexible, be intergovernmental but also include non-governmental stakeholders, and build upon existing networks of scientists and knowledge-holders;
- b. in collaboration and as a follow up of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, consider the need, scope and requirements for assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem changes at the global level;
- c. ensure the interaction with other relevant assessment processes; and
- d. has monitoring procedures for measuring its effectiveness, used from the outset for programme evaluation, development and continuation.

VII. FOLLOW UP OF THE IMOSEB INITIATIVE

67. In conclusion to the ISC meeting, the French Secretary of State for Ecology, Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, highlighted the French government commitment on the consultation and its follow up.

68. Back to back to the IMoSEB ISC meeting, the French Ministry of Research and High Level Education, Valérie Pécresse, invited the two co-chairs of the consultative process, Michel Loreau and Alfred Oteng Yeboah, and the Executive Secretariat to present the recommendations of Montpellier. Following this meeting, it was decided that the follow up of the IMoSEB initiative will be given to Laurence Tubiana, director of IDDRI, (Institut du Développement Durable et des Relations Internationales), who will be in charge to conduct the initiative, being in close relations within UNEP and taking into account the Global Strategy of the Follow up of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.

69. A first joint meeting “IMoSEB-MA Follow up: Strengthening the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Interface on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services” was convened by UNEP and the French government in March 2008 to develop a common approach and strategy for the upcoming intergovernmental and multi stakeholder meeting tentatively scheduled for September 2008.

⁹ including Bioversity International, CI, CITES, CMS, DIVERSITAS, EEA, FAO, GBIF, ICSU, IUCN, Ramsar Convention, Smithsonian Institute, TNC, UNCCD, UNDP, UNESCO, UNEP, UNEP-WCMC, World Bank, WWF