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CONFERENCE

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Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

Executive Summary

This document provides information on the establishment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). Although Governments have agreed that IPBES should be established, the institutional arrangements as well as the location of the IPBES secretariat have not yet been decided. The United Nations General Assembly has asked UNEP, in consultation with all relevant organizations and bodies, to convene a meeting to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for IPBES at the earliest opportunity.

Suggested action by the Conference

The Conference may wish to adopt the draft resolution contained in the *Appendix* to this document.

Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:

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I. Introduction

1. On 20 December 2010, the United Nations General Assembly called on the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to take the necessary steps to establish an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

The General Assembly requested UNEP,

“(…) without prejudice to the final institutional arrangements for the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services and in consultation with all relevant organizations and bodies, in order to fully operationalize the platform, to convene a plenary meeting providing for the full and effective participation of all Member States, in particular representatives from developing countries, to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for the platform at the earliest opportunity;”¹

2. In February 2011, the UNEP Governing Council requested its Executive Director to convene the plenary meeting in 2011, in cooperation with UNESCO, FAO and UNDP and to facilitate any ensuing process to implement the platform until such time as a secretariat is established.²

3. In April 2011, the FAO Council noted that a draft Resolution on IPBES will be submitted to the 37th session of Conference in June-July 2011, together with a background document including cost implications.³ This document provides such background information as well as a draft Conference Resolution in the Appendix.

II. Background

4. Between September 2008 and June 2010, the UNEP convened three ad hoc open-ended intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meetings on an IPBES. FAO participated, as an observer, in these meetings and reported on FAO’s numerous past, on-going and future relevant assessments and activities in the field of biodiversity and ecosystem services.⁴ At the third meeting, held in June 2010 in Busan, Republic of Korea, Government representatives adopted the *Busan Outcome* recommending that an “intergovernmental science-policy platform for biodiversity and ecosystem services should be established 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.”⁵

5. The *Busan Outcome* recommends that IPBES be established like its prototype, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), as an independent intergovernmental body administered by one or more existing United Nations organizations, agencies, funds or programmes. The plenary, which should be the decision-making body of IPBES, should be open to participation by all States Members of the United Nations and by regional economic organizations. Intergovernmental Organizations and other relevant stakeholders should be allowed to participate as observers, in accordance with rules of procedure to be adopted by IPBES.

6. At the request of Governments, IPBES should perform regular and timely assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services and their interlinkages. The assessments must be scientifically credible, independent and peer-reviewed, and identify uncertainties. The platform should catalyse key scientific information, rather than directly undertake new research. The information provided by the platform should be policy-relevant, but not policy-prescriptive. IPBES should also support policy formulation and implementation as well as prioritize key capacity-building needs to improve the science-policy interface at appropriate levels.

¹ A/RES/65/162.

² UNEP GC/GMEF 26.

³ CL 141/REP, paragraph 49.

⁴ See *Submission by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations* (UNEP/IPBES/1/INF/2/Rev.1), at: <http://ipbes.net/previous-ipbes-meetings/1st-meeting-on-ipbes.html>

⁵ See <http://ipbes.net/previous-ipbes-meetings/3rd-meeting-on-ipbes.html>

7. The *Busan Outcome* does neither specify the institutional arrangements for IPBES nor the location of its secretariat. Decisions on these and other issues still need to be taken. The *Busan Outcome* encourages further consideration by the Governing Bodies of UNEP, UNESCO and FAO of the roles of their respective organizations in this regard.

8. The *Busan Outcome* was welcomed by the G8 Muskoka Declaration and the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.⁶ The Executive Board of UNESCO took note of UNESCO's intention to seek institutional association with IPBES, if established.⁷

9. UNEP is currently working closely with UNESCO, FAO, UNDP and other relevant organizations to convene a plenary meeting, in the form of an open-ended intergovernmental meeting, which is provisionally scheduled for two sessions. At the first plenary meeting, expected to take place in October 2011, Government representatives should consider draft principles and procedures governing the work of IPBES, its governance structure, the processes for nomination and election of officers and the nomination and selection of host institution(s) and host country for IPBES.

III. FAO and Global Assessments in the Area of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

10. In the light of FAO's mandate as well as its experience and long-standing role in relation to periodic assessments of the state of the world's genetic resources for food and agriculture and other assessments relevant to biodiversity and ecosystem services, Government representatives participating in the IPBES consultations have identified FAO as an important player and possible key partner for IPBES.

11. FAO, under the guidance of its intergovernmental Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission), prepared global assessments of plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture. In response to and based on these assessments, the Commission developed policies, action plans, codes of conduct and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, all of which confirm the relevance of credible scientific information and analysis for the development of effective policies for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture, at national and international level. The Commission requested FAO to present, in 2017, the first ever report on *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*. In addition, FAO is responsible for the collection, compilation and analysis of data and information relevant to food and agriculture, in particular for forestry and fisheries. FAO's global databases, including the Global Terrestrial Observing System (GTOS), FishStat Plus and the Global Land Degradation Assessment (GLADA) as well as FAO's flagship publications, such as the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA), the State of the World's Forests (SOFO) and the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA), are essential tools for the global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services and assist FAO and its Members in policy development and implementation.

IV. Cost Implications

12. No decisions have been taken yet with regard to the governance structure of IPBES, the host institution(s) and host country for IPBES, as well as its work programme and budget. It is therefore difficult, at this stage, to assess the financial resources needed and any cost implications of an involvement of FAO in the establishment and operation of IPBES. It is important to note that, as stated in the *Busan Outcome*, a core trust fund to be allocated by the IPBES plenary should be established to receive voluntary contributions from Governments, United Nations bodies, the Global Environment Facility, other intergovernmental organizations and other stakeholders, such as the private sector and foundations.

⁶ Decision X/11.

⁷ 185 EX/Decisions, p. 54.

13. The table below provides an overview of the estimated average annual costs for low-range and high-end options for a work programme of IPBES, as provided by the UNEP Secretariat to the 3rd ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on IPBES (7-11 June 2010). It estimates that, depending on the work programme, the annual indicative budget for the new platform would range between USD 5,731,000 and USD 8,141,000. The total estimated average annual costs for the secretariat, including personnel and other expenses, is USD 1,366,000.⁸

	Low-range options	High-end options
Work programme		
Knowledge generation	30 000	40 000
Regular and timely assessments	2 375 000	3 275 000
Supporting policy formulation and implementation	90 000	240 000
Capacity-building	50 000	1 400 000
Subtotal	2 545 000	4 955 000
Administration of platform		
Meetings of government bodies	1 200 000	1 200 000
Publications, outreach and communication – secretariat	620 000	620 000
(a) Personnel	1 120 000	1 120 000
(b) Other costs	246 000	246 000
Subtotal	3 186 000	3 186 000
Total	USD 5,731,000	8,141,000

V. Conclusions

14. It would seem important to ensure that the work programmes of IPBES and FAO complement each other and create synergies, rather than overlap, and that IPBES and FAO coordinate and collaborate closely on relevant assessments and other activities. FAO Members may therefore wish to authorize the Director-General to work closely with UNEP, UNESCO, UNDP and other relevant international organizations in the preparation of the forthcoming plenary meeting of IPBES, and to offer to establish and (co-)host IPBES with other relevant international organizations, provided that the arrangements are satisfactory to the Director-General and that costs be met through extra-budgetary resources with appropriate administrative and operational support costs reimbursed in accordance with the prevailing FAO Support Cost Policy.

⁸ See *Indicative budget for an intergovernmental science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services* (UNEP/IPBES/3/INF/6), and, *Indicative budget for an intergovernmental science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services: executive summary* (UNEP/IPBES/3/INF/6/Add.1), at: <http://ipbes.net/previous-ipbes-meetings/3rd-meeting-on-ipbes.html>

Appendix Draft Resolution

DRAFT RESOLUTION ___/2011

Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

THE CONFERENCE

Noting the outcome of the third meeting of the ad hoc open-ended intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), held in Busan, South Korea;

Noting Resolution 65/162 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, which requests UNEP, without prejudice to the final institutional arrangements for IPBES and in consultation with all relevant organizations and bodies, in order to fully operationalize the platform, to convene a plenary meeting providing for the full and effective participation of all Member States, in particular representatives from developing countries, to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for the platform at the earliest opportunity;

Taking note of the decision X/11 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity by which the Conference of the Parties welcomed the establishment of IPBES;

Recognizing FAO's experience and long-standing role in relation to periodic assessments of the state of the world's genetic resources for food and agriculture and other assessments relevant to biodiversity and ecosystem services;

1. **Welcomes** the decision of Governments to establish IPBES;
2. **Requests** the Director-General to work closely with UNEP and other relevant international organizations and bodies in the preparation of the forthcoming meetings for the operationalization of IPBES;
3. **Authorizes** the Director-General to offer to establish and (co-)host IPBES with other relevant international organizations, provided that the arrangements are satisfactory to the Director-General and that costs be met through extra-budgetary resources with appropriate administrative and operational support costs reimbursed in accordance with the prevailing FAO Support Cost Policy;
4. **Requests** the Director-General to report to Council on progress in the establishment of IPBES and its financial and administrative implications.

(Adopted on..... 2011)