

**Statement from the IMoSEB Consultation
International Steering Committee meeting**

Montpellier, 17 November 2007

The International Steering Committee of the consultation process towards an International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB),

Recognising the undisputed importance of biodiversity to human well-being and the critical and urgent need to improve the scientific and other knowledge base of decision-making;

Recalling the Paris Declaration on Biodiversity and the Statement adopted by the International Conference "Biodiversity: Science and Governance" held in Paris in January 2005;

Welcoming the support from the governments of France and Germany to the open and transparent consultation on the needs and options for an IMoSEB as well as the governments of the countries that have hosted regional consultations;

Recalling the statement from the G8 summit in Heiligendamm, Germany;

Understanding and welcoming the work recently undertaken in preparing for a follow-up to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, and noting that the further consideration of an IMoSEB will take full account of this on-going work;

Having considered the range of views of the global and regional consultations in North America, Africa, Europe, Asia, Latin America and Oceania, which identified a set of needs and options to strengthen the interface between science and policy at global and sub-global levels in the area of biodiversity and ecosystem services;

Recognising that the consultative process revealed a number of needs to improve the interface between science and policy at global and sub-global levels, i.e.:

a) Need for independent scientific expertise:

- Independent, synthetic, comprehensive scientific information from all relevant sources to support the work of international conventions and institutions, with a remit for biodiversity management, with particular emphasis on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD),
- Proactive scientific expertise on emerging threats and issues associated with biodiversity change, and especially loss,
- Increased ability at national, regional and global levels to predict the consequences of current actions affecting biodiversity, ecosystem services and how they, in turn, affect human well-being, to explore alternative scenarios, and to evaluate the effectiveness of measures already taken,
- Insights from the relevant sciences and other forms of knowledge to inform local/national decisions on topical issues that affect biodiversity where those decisions have international consequences, and where the knowledge base is particularly weak or unconsolidated,

b) Need for more capacity:

- Mobilization of scientific expertise for local, national and regional level capacity building,

- Improved, better coordinated and more operational monitoring and assessments of drivers, pressures, state, impacts and responses relating to biodiversity and ecosystem services,
- c) Need for improved communication:
 - Enhanced understanding and application of scientific results on biodiversity by all relevant audiences,
 - Improved access and timeliness of peer-reviewed scientific results on biodiversity so that they can be more readily and more effectively used in decision making,
 - Promotion of dialogue among diverse knowledge systems and understandings, perspectives and values regarding biodiversity, to help make policy decisions more effective,
 - Identification of biodiversity research priorities and gaps implied by decision-makers' concerns at all levels, and promotion/diffusion of these to the scientific community and the science funding agencies;

Recognising that there are a number of intergovernmental and non-governmental institutions that address some of these needs;

Recognises additional needs for:

- a) credible, timely and accessible information to support biodiversity governance where this is not currently available,
- b) the capacity to identify and respond rapidly to biodiversity-related emergencies,
- c) strengthening scientific activities at global and sub-global scales, and in the short, medium and long term,
- d) enhancing linkages between relevant information-using organisations;
- e) providing linkages between science and policy interface for biodiversity science and other environmental and development processes which impact or depend on biodiversity;

Recommends that measures be taken to strengthen the science-policy interface in ways that respect a number of principles:

- 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,
- i) promote dialogue between international agencies and decision-makers;

Recommends further and urgent consideration of the establishment of a means and enhancement of existing institutions, to provide an objective source of information about biodiversity change and its impacts on ecosystem services and human well-being, employing high scientific and technical standards, and reflecting a range of views, expertise, and wide geographic coverage, and more specifically:

- 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,
- 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),
- f) to undertake any other activities consistent with its objectives as may be appropriate;

Invites 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*, to convene an intergovernmental meeting with relevant governmental, and non-governmental organisations, including the relevant MEAs, academic institutions and civil society (including local communities and indigenous people) to consider establishing an efficient international science-policy interface to address the above objectives, 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,
- d) has monitoring procedures for measuring its effectiveness, used from the outset for programme evaluation, development and continuation;

Welcomes the pledge from the Government of France to provide the secretarial and financial support to prepare the above meeting and its aftermaths;

Invites donors and governments in a position to do so to provide support for the further and urgent consideration of the establishment of the above science-policy interface, and *invites* MEAs and other relevant multilateral bodies to contribute to its development.

* 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.