

**Global biodiversity mechanisms:
a thematic review of recent developments and future evidence needs**

Strand Palace Hotel, London 20th May 2009

Thematic Briefing

Science-policy interface

May 2009

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Briefing note: Science-policy interface

Ever since the former French President Jacques Chirac set out ambitious views for the creation of a new international science-policy mechanism for biodiversity at the international conference on 'Biodiversity: Science and Governance' in Paris in 2005 there has been a progressively more inclusive international debate on what is wrong with existing mechanisms and science bodies within the Conventions, what else is needed and how this could be delivered. A particular focus has been on creation of an independent scientific body similar to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Following a wide consultation on user needs undertaken by the French-sponsored '*International Mechanism on Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB)*' project, and with encouragement from the CBD Conference of the Parties in Bonn in May 2008, a meeting about the creation of an '*Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)*' was organised by UNEP in Putrajaya in Malaysia in November 2008, with support from the UK Government. The meeting did not reach agreement on the establishment of a new panel but instead the Chairs recommended further exploration of mechanisms to improve the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for human well-being and sustainable development. Such mechanisms could include: (1) components of early warning; (2) multiple scale assessments; (3) policy information; and, (4) capacity development. The Chairs requested a preliminary gap analysis to be undertaken to inform further consideration by the UNEP Governing Council.

In February 2009, the UNEP Governing Council requested UNEP to undertake a further process to explore mechanisms for improving and strengthening the science policy interface with the aim of reporting progress at the special session on biodiversity at the 65th UN General Assembly in 2010 and other relevant meetings (i.e. CBD COP10). Prior to this, UNEP was asked to convene a second intergovernmental and multi stakeholder meeting in [October] 2009, following completion of the full gap analysis. Consultation on this gap analysis is now taking place.

In parallel, the European Commission and European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS) have developed the concept of a 'network of knowledge' as a means of facilitating greater engagement of existing science and science-policy bodies in provision of advice to international conventions and EU bodies. A workshop to discuss this concept will be held in Brussels on 6th May.

The purpose of the discussion on this topic is to gain further insight about the most critical gaps and weaknesses in the international science-policy interface and to further develop thinking on how these could be delivered cost-effectively as a contribution to this international process. Relevant results of this meeting will be forwarded to UNEP and the European Commission.