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**Governing Council  
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Environment Programme**

**Twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council/  
Global Ministerial Environment Forum**  
Nairobi, 18–22 February 2013  
Item 4 of the provisional agenda\*

**Policy issues**

**Progress made in operationalizing the Intergovernmental  
Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services**

**Note by the Executive Director**

*Summary*

The present note provides an overview of the progress made in operationalizing the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, including the outcome of the second session of the plenary meeting to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, held in Panama City from 16 to 21 April 2012.<sup>1</sup>

\* UNEP/GC/27/1.

<sup>1</sup> The report of the second session of the plenary meeting to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services is set out in document UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9.

1. By its decision 26/4, the Governing Council decided, based on a request by the General Assembly, to convene a plenary meeting to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for the platform. It requested the Executive Director, in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to convene the plenary meeting and to continue to facilitate any ensuing process to implement the platform until such time as a secretariat was established.
2. As described in the note by the Executive Director (UNEP/GCSS.XII/6) submitted to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twelfth special session, the first session of the plenary meeting was held in Nairobi from 3 to 7 October 2011. In order to finalize the deliberations on the modalities and institutional arrangements for the platform, a second session of the plenary meeting was held in Panama City from 16 to 21 April 2012. At that meeting, on 21 April 2012, the consenting Governments adopted a resolution<sup>2</sup> in which they decided to establish the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services as an independent intergovernmental body. It was agreed that the Platform would be open to States Members of the United Nations, which may become members by expressing their intent to do so. As at 7 December 2012, there were 97 members of the Platform. The meeting agreed that the seat of the secretariat of the Platform would be located in Bonn, Germany.
3. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was requested to facilitate the Platform until the secretariat of the Platform is established, with a view to its being administered by one of more of the following: UNEP, UNESCO, FAO, UNDP.
4. The agreed functions, operating principles and institutional arrangements of the Platform are set out in appendix I to the resolution adopted by the consenting Governments at the meeting in Panama City.<sup>3</sup> The rules of procedure, as contained in appendix II to the resolution, are to be used by the Plenary of the Platform and may be modified by the Plenary. It was agreed that the resolution adopted in Panama City and any future decisions of the Platform would have a legally non-binding nature.
5. At the meeting in Panama City, an intersessional process was agreed upon to facilitate operationalization of the Platform, to support the preparation of the first plenary meeting of the Platform, which will be held from 21 to 26 January 2013 in Bonn, and to underpin the development of the initial IPBES work programme.
6. The key elements of the intersessional process included the submission by Governments and other stakeholders of suggestions and review of draft documentation on:
  - (a) Processes by which IPBES will receive and prioritize requests put to it;
  - (b) The scoping process for determining IPBES assessment reports and other deliverables;
  - (c) Updating the rules of procedure for the Platform;
  - (d) The admission of observer organizations;
  - (e) Compiling a catalogue and review of existing and ongoing assessments;
  - (f) Developing a conceptual framework for IPBES;
  - (g) Nominations by members of candidates for the IPBES Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel.
7. Inputs and suggestions received from Governments and other stakeholders are being incorporated in the official documents prepared for the first session of the Plenary of the Platform.
8. Regarding the arrangements for the secretariat of the Platform, pursuant to Governing Council decision 26/4, as well as in response to the outcome of the first session of the plenary meeting, UNEP has been working with UNESCO, FAO and UNDP to elaborate a joint proposal on the four agencies' possible individual and collective contribution to the secretariat of the Platform and on potential administrative arrangements. This joint proposal for administering the secretariat<sup>4</sup> will be presented and discussed at the first session of the Plenary of the Platform.

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<sup>2</sup> UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9, annex I.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> IPBES/1/7/Rev.1.

9. It is envisaged that a report by the Chair of the IPBES Plenary will be submitted to the Governing Council. Further information, including the report of the second session of the plenary meeting to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9) and the documentation for the first meeting of the Plenary of IPBES, is available at [www.ipbes.net](http://www.ipbes.net).

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