



IMoSEB South American Regional Consultation Bulletin

A summary report of the South American Regional Consultation of the Consultative Process Towards an International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB)

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SUMMARY OF THE IMOSEB SOUTH AMERICAN REGIONAL CONSULTATION: 2-3 OCTOBER 2007

The South American Regional Consultation of the Consultative Process Towards an International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB) was held from 2-3 October 2007, in Bariloche, Argentina. The fifth in a series of regional meetings planned for the IMoSEB process, the Bariloche meeting was attended by five IMoSEB representatives and 19 experts from 9 Latin American countries, including representatives of international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), scientific research institutions, universities and governments.

Participants heard presentations, exchanged views and discussed various options for a possible IMoSEB, its structure and governance, and issues relevant to the Latin American region, in the context of the science-policy interface. Discussions were held in plenary sessions and in two working groups. Participants reached broad agreement on the needs for an IMoSEB, and put forward two options for such a mechanism. The first option would consist of an international panel of scientists, political figures and other biodiversity actors, supported by a “network of networks” for exchanging and building scientific information. The second option would strengthen existing scientific information networks and mechanisms, with a focus on enhancing national and regional-level decision-making on biodiversity issues. The meeting also reached agreement on the specific needs and challenges of the Latin American region, the relationship of an IMoSEB to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and other biodiversity-related conventions, and the role of the private sector and indigenous communities.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE IMOSEB PROCESS

The proposal for a Consultative Process Towards an IMoSEB was initiated at the Paris Conference on Biodiversity, Science and Governance, held in January 2005 (see IISD Reporting Services’ report: <http://www.iisd.ca/sd/icb/>). The proposal focused on a consultation to assess the need, scope and possible form of an international mechanism of scientific expertise on biodiversity. The proposal received political support from French President Jacques Chirac and the French Government.

A consultative process was launched, with an International Steering Committee, an Executive Committee and an Executive Secretariat entrusted to the Institut Français de la Biodiversité, established to support and facilitate discussions. The International Steering Committee is an open group composed of around 90 members, including scientists,

government representatives, intergovernmental, international and non-governmental organizations and indigenous and local community representatives.

The International Steering Committee met for the first time in Paris, France, from 21-22 February 2006. Participants agreed that the current system for bridging the gap between science and policy in the area of biodiversity needs further improvement, and that a consultation should identify gaps and needs at the science-policy interface, if any, in the existing processes and formulate appropriate steps forward. It tasked the Executive Committee to propose a plan of action for the consultation phase. It was decided that the consultation should begin with the development of relevant case studies and feedback, and be followed by a broader consultation.

A number of case studies were developed in 2006, while the idea for an IMoSEB was also discussed at a number of events, including the eighth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD COP-8) in March 2006, and a workshop on “International Science-Policy Interfaces for Biodiversity Governance,” held in Leipzig, Germany, from 2-4 October 2006.

At its second meeting in December 2006, the Executive Committee discussed the results of the case studies, and paved the way for wider consultations on any IMoSEB that might be considered by identifying a series of “needs and options.” These needs and options were circulated to members of the International Steering Committee for their input, and a document outlining the ideas, entitled “International Steering Committee Members’ Responses: ‘Needs and Options’ Document,” was prepared by the IMoSEB Consultative Process Executive Secretariat and distributed in January 2007. The document was designed to assist participants during a series of regional consultations in 2007.

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