

# The challenge of linking biodiversity science and policy

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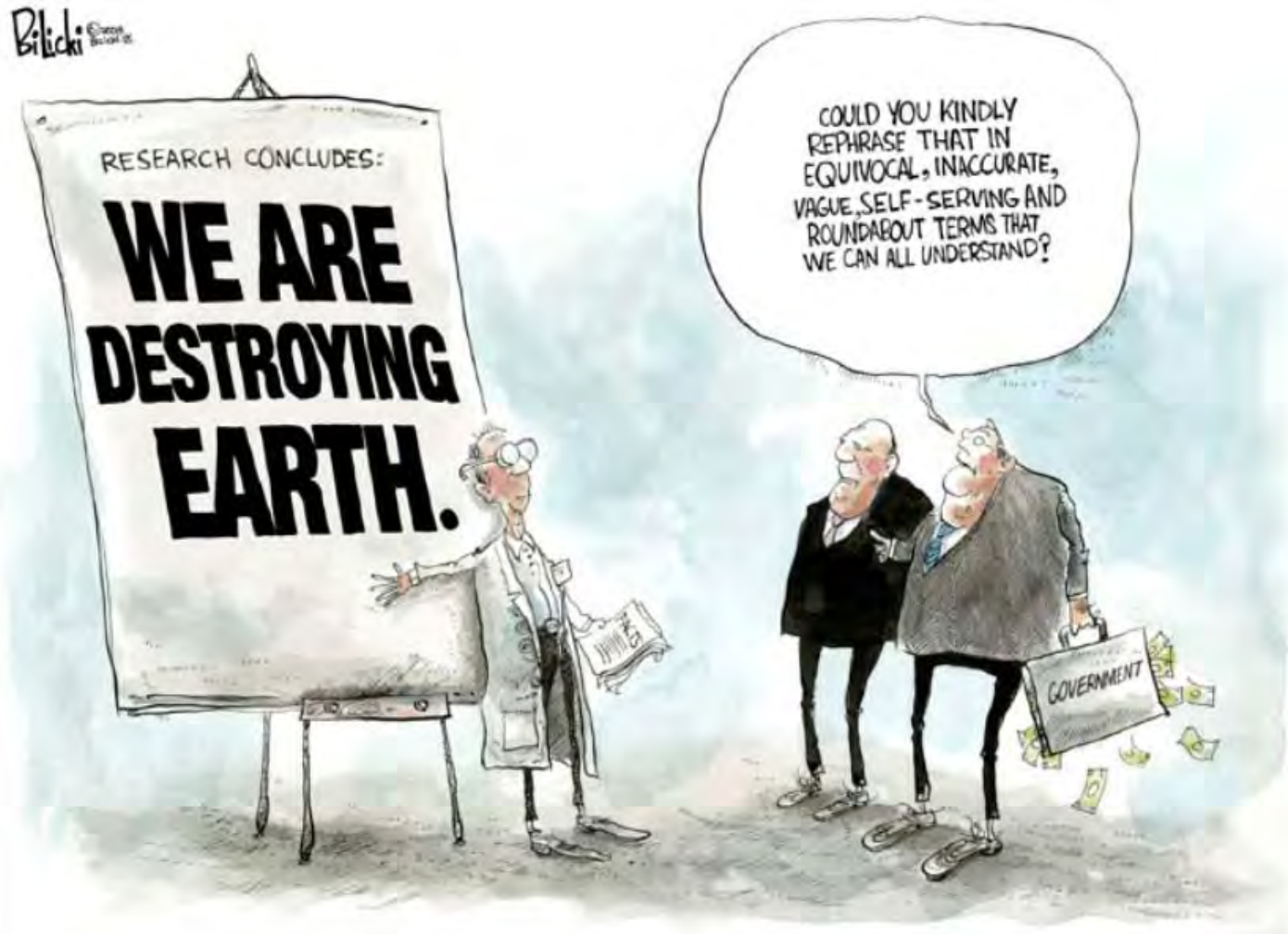
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# Why is linking biodiversity science and policy a challenge?

- Science and policy are two social practices that have very different objectives and methods: science is focused on “objective” knowledge; policy is focused on “subjective” choice and action
- Interaction between science and policy is fraught with tension and frustration but is inevitable and necessary, especially in the environmental sciences
- Environmental sciences have a specific social responsibility in drawing public attention to environmental threats that would otherwise go unnoticed

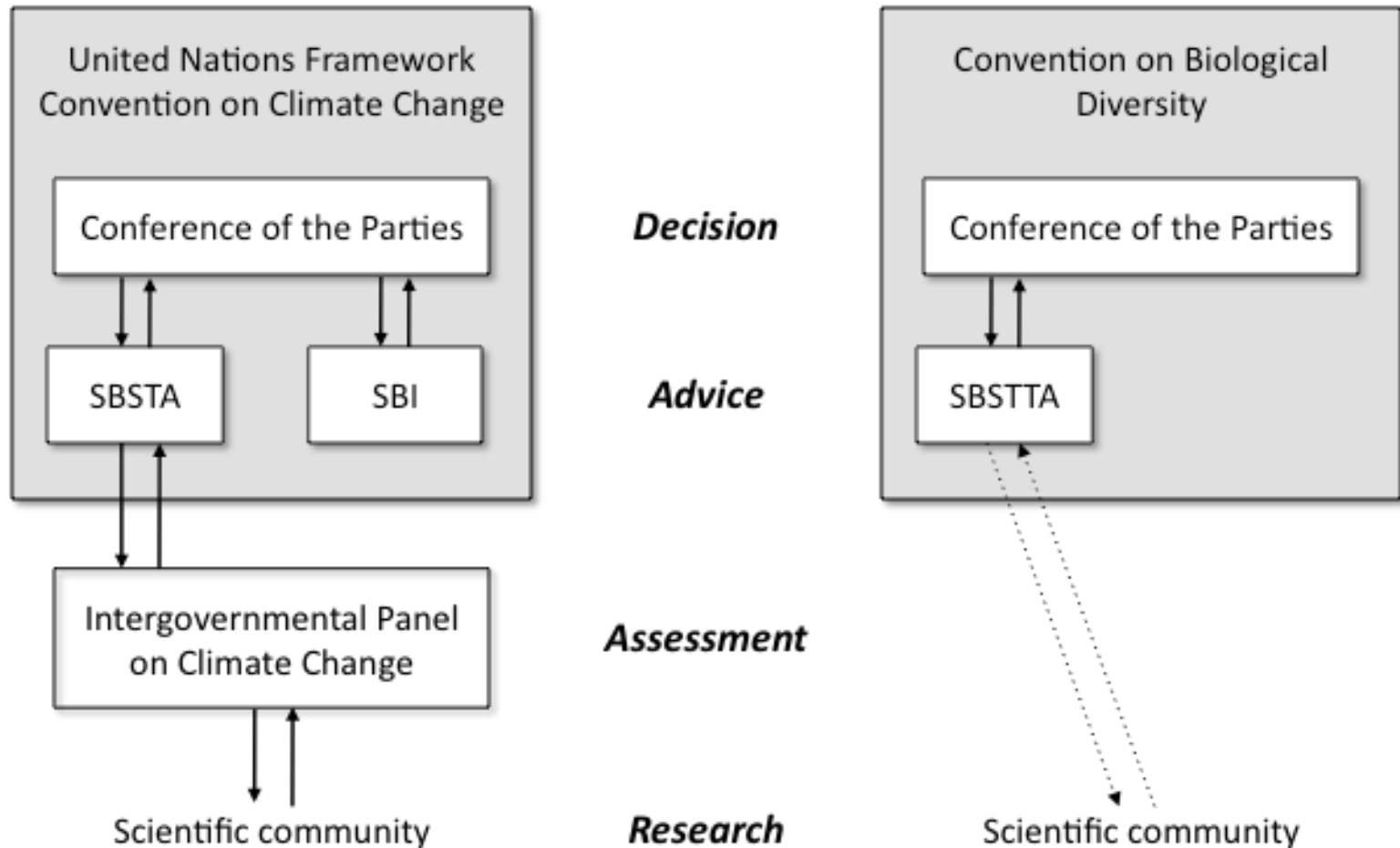
# Why is linking biodiversity science and policy a challenge?



# International scientific assessments

- Collective scientific processes aiming to inform or guide policy decision regarding complex or contentious global environmental issues that require international agreements
- Most successful international scientific assessments to date: international ozone assessments and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
- Direct ownership by governments and sustained effort were key to their success

# Scientific assessment: The missing link between biodiversity science and policy



# Scientific assessment: The missing link between biodiversity science and policy

- Example of the 2010 Biodiversity Target adopted in 2002: “Achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth”
- This target was not only vague, but also unrealistic and impossible to assess with the technical means available at that time
- Although it had positive side effects politically in some countries, as a target it lacked solid scientific foundations and, as a result, was doomed to remain political wishful thinking

# Scientific assessment: The missing link between biodiversity science and policy

- New 20 targets for 2020 adopted in Nagoya include:
  - Eliminate subsidies harmful to biodiversity
  - Halve, or bring close to zero, the rate of loss of all natural habitats
  - Sustainably manage and harvest all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants
  - Reduce pollution to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystems and biodiversity
  - Control or eradicate prioritized invasive alien species
  - Minimize anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs
  - Conserve at least 17% of terrestrial and 10% of coastal and marine areas in protected zones
  - Prevent the extinction of known threatened species
  - Restore at least 15% of degraded ecosystems
- These targets are a big progress but they require considerable input from science to be met or be made realistic

# Building an international panel on biodiversity

- Project born during the International Conference *Biodiversity Science and Governance* (Paris, 2005)
- Consultation process on an International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB, 2005-2007)
- Intergovernmental negotiation process on an Intergovernmental science–policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES, 2008-2010)



# Building an international panel on biodiversity

- IPBES will be a major step forward provided that:
  - It is based on the highest standards in terms of scientific quality, independence, objectivity, and representativeness
  - It produces clear, readily accessible information allowing definition of clear targets for action
  - It builds synergy with existing mechanisms