



CHAIR'S CONCLUSIONS – LIFE FOR EUROPE'S BIODIVERSITY 5TH INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE *BIODIVERSITY IN EUROPE*

Executive Summary

Liege, Belgium, 22-24 September 2009

The 5th *Biodiversity in Europe* Conference brought together over 120 representatives of governments, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, the private sector and scientists from the pan-European region to exchange views and expertise and provide input to the post 2010 biodiversity framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The conference was organized in the framework of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS).

The Conference welcomed the results of pan-European cooperation over the last 15 years. In particular the Kyiv Resolution with the target to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010 and the focused action on the Pan European Ecological Network, on Monitoring and Indicators, on Forestry and on Business, Banking and Biodiversity.

The Conference underlined the economic and financial value of Europe's biodiversity, while also acknowledging its intrinsic, cultural and other values especially in relation to human well-being. The preliminary results of the study on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) were presented, and estimated a global welfare loss equivalent to 7% of the GDP in 2050 under a business as usual scenario, and highlighted that the yearly loss of ecosystem services far supersedes the impact of the current financial crisis.

The Conference furthermore recognized that biodiversity provides a security and insurance function for human well-being in relation to climate change, including as a buffer for unforeseen events and for providing options for future solutions, and highlighted in particular that;

- Improved knowledge on ecological tipping points and resilience of ecosystems are available, and must be used.
- Use of ecosystem-based approaches would promote ecologically and socially sound solutions both for securing and enhancing carbon storage and for developing sustainable adaptation measures.
- In many cases it is more cost effective and efficient to invest in biodiversity for mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change, e.g. in Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), REDD+, land use management, conserving land cover and restoration, and maintaining intact peatlands, forests, and wetlands compared to investing in more expensive, man-made solutions.
- There is a need to ensure that mitigation activities, including bioenergy production, take due consideration of biodiversity concerns, risk assessments must be carried out, and the precautionary approach must be applied.
- Climate change is an added stress to biodiversity, and to mitigate its impact on biodiversity, other stresses must be decreased, particularly from fragmentation, land conversions, urban

sprawls, invasive species, chemical contamination and over-exploitation. This is particularly urgent for specific ecosystems in Europe experiencing stress from climate change, including the Arctic, mountain ecosystems, the Mediterranean, coastal and marine areas, peatlands, wetlands, steppes and grasslands.

The Conference acknowledged that the target to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010 would not be reached in 2010 and that a strengthened and renewed effort is urgently needed for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the pan-European region. The Conference proposed that the global post 2010 message should be inspirational, simple and politically attractive while at the same time realistic.

It was furthermore suggested that the overall target for pan Europe is to halt any further loss of species and habitats and to restore, by 2025, degraded areas with an emphasis on links between biodiversity, ecosystem services, climate change and human well-being with regular monitoring using relevant indicators to assess progress. It was also suggested that, in an equitable way, a 1 to 1 ecological footprint should be achieved in our lifetime.

The Conference highlighted the role of regional cooperation in the achievement of the new vision and targets as well as the implementation of the CBD strategic plan. The pan European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) must be linked to the new CBD Strategic Plan. The special needs of the countries of the Eastern European, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) region should be considered. The representation and implementation capacity of those countries must be increased and incentives and funding is necessary. The UNEP regional offices may have a useful role in the implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements at the regional level.

The Conference requested the PEBLDS Council to establish, without delay, a process to prepare a new post 2010 Pan-European strategic framework to be endorsed by the Ministerial *Environment for Europe Conference* in 2011 in Kazakhstan.

The Conference recognized that achieving any post 2010 biodiversity target will require additional financial resources. The current financial crisis has and will impact the future availability of financial resources for biodiversity conservation. The conference recommended the following:

- Carry out a realistic assessment of the financial needs to achieve the post 2010 target within the pan-European region, including the possible establishment of a Biodiversity Technical Support Facility.
- Enhance existing financial instruments such as the GEF, the EEA Grants and EU neighborhood policy.
- Follow up on the Message of Paris on mainstreaming biodiversity into development cooperation.
- Build on the CBD Resource Mobilization Strategy by initiating a process to further explore and advance in the identification and establishment of new innovative financial resources and mechanisms for sustained biodiversity financing in the Pan European region.
- Increased engagement of the private sector.

Finally, the Conference acknowledged the need for an improved science-policy interface by enabling and enhancing knowledge transfers through mechanisms such as those proposed in the context of the IPBES process, and further underlined that mainstreaming of the biodiversity targets into other sectors and development of economic and regulatory instruments to address the drivers behind biodiversity loss are needed.

Annex

CHAIR'S CONCLUSIONS – LIFE FOR EUROPE'S BIODIVERSITY 5TH INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE BIODIVERSITY IN EUROPE Liège, Belgium, 22-24 September 2009

This document is the Chair's summary of the results of the 5th Intergovernmental Conference *Biodiversity in Europe* that took place from 22 to 24 September in Liège, Belgium at the premises of the University of Liège.

On behalf of Mrs. Heidi Sorensen, State Secretary of the Environment of Norway, deputy director-general of the Ministry of Environment, Mrs. Birthe Ivars, opened the conference with the PEBLDS President, Mr. Robert Lamb, on 22 September. Other high level guests at the opening session included Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Mrs Asa Norrman, Director General of the Ministry of Environment representing the Presidency of the European Union, Ms. Snezana Prokic, as CBD Bureau member for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Ms. Zsuzsanna Flachner, on behalf of civil society. Mr. Frederic Chemay, Environmental Adviser, on behalf of H.E. Paul Magnette, Minister of Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment of Belgium, delivered the closing speech on 24 September.

Introduction

The 5th *Biodiversity in Europe* Conference brought together over 120 representatives of governments, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, the private sector and scientists from the pan-European region to exchange views and expertise and provide input to the post 2010 biodiversity framework while also discussing implementation challenges of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The conference was organized in the framework of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS), and hosted by the government of Norway, with the support of the government of Belgium, UNEP and the Council of Europe. Financial support was provided by the governments of Norway, Switzerland and Belgium.

This conference was one of the stepping stones for achieving valuable outcomes at the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP-10), by building on previous events such as Bonn, Athens, Siracusa and Strömstad, which also addressed the elements required for a post 2010 biodiversity framework.¹

The conference welcomed the results of pan European cooperation over the last 15 years which provided an essential platform for moving towards achieving the 2010 biodiversity target, but it also acknowledged that the target would not be reached in 2010. The European Environment Agency report on Progress towards the European 2010 target illustrates that biodiversity remains under serious pressure in the pan European region:

- Around 40-85 % of habitats and 40-70 % of species of European interest have an unfavorable conservation status. Grasslands and wetlands across Europe are particularly at risk.

¹ Full title of all meetings.

- Overexploitation of marine fisheries remains a threat to marine ecosystems, with some 45 % of assessed European stocks falling outside safe biological limits.
- Urban sprawl and abandonment of agricultural land put pressure on natural and semi-natural areas. Forest fragmentation is another key threat and has increased since 1990.

In light of these acknowledgements it was clear to the conference the urgent need for strengthened and renewed efforts for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The participants discussed priority themes from a pan European perspective for a post 2010 strategy and it also provided an opportunity to establish fruitful partnerships among private sector, government and NGO participants at a 'Biodiversity Fair' (Project Marketplace).

The Conference concluded and recommended the following:

Pan-European cooperation

1. The conference recognized that some progress had been made in the implementation of the Kyiv Resolution, in particular the targets on the Pan European Ecological Network, on Monitoring and Indicators, on Forestry and on Business, Banking and Biodiversity. The role of the Countdown 2010 as an important vehicle to communicate and support the implementation of the 2010 target was acknowledged. As a result of the 2010 biodiversity target, many more people were aware of the importance of biodiversity and a dialogue had been initiated with other sectors.
2. The conference acknowledged the need for an improved science-policy interface by enabling and enhancing knowledge transfers through mechanisms such as those proposed in the context of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Interface on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) process.
3. The Conference requested the PEBLDS Council to establish, without delay, a process to prepare a new post 2010 Pan-European strategic framework to be endorsed by the Ministerial *Environment for Europe Conference* in 2011 in Kazakhstan.

Value of biodiversity and ecosystem services

The conference underlined the economic and financial value of Europe's biodiversity, while also acknowledging its intrinsic, cultural and other values especially in relation to human well-being:

4. Grave concern was expressed about the continuing decline of ecosystem services worldwide and in Europe as described in the study on *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB)*², estimated in a welfare loss equivalent to 7% of the GDP in 2050 under a business as usual scenario, and in the yearly loss of ecosystem services far superseding the impact of the current financial crisis.
5. The current financial crisis should result in more efforts to integrate biodiversity and related ecosystem services into mainstream economic and financial processes and policies. Priority sectors include fisheries, agriculture, forestry, energy, infrastructure development, water management, regional development and international trade.
6. TEEB outcomes and approaches should be advocated at international, regional, national and sub-national levels while adopting tailor-made communication efforts, addressing policy-makers, administrators, businesses and consumers.

² TEEB information and reports : [www .teebweb.org](http://www.teebweb.org)

7. Strong enabling and encouraging policies and legislative frameworks for conserving ecosystem services are required, including on incorporating ecosystem services into Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Strategic Impact Assessment.
8. Subsidies in all policy areas should be neutral or positive for the maintenance or enhancement of biodiversity and ecosystem services.
9. Urgent reform of national accounting by including resources for ecosystem services is of vital importance for improving management of biodiversity and to support sustainable development.

Climate change and Biodiversity

The Conference underlined that reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and adaptation to climate change are central for life on earth. At the same time so is biodiversity. Therefore action has to be taken to keep temperature rise as low as possible while planning for the necessary adaptation while maintaining the integrity of the biodiversity and related ecosystem services.

The climate change community should take advantage of advice from the biodiversity community with regard to using ecosystem-based approaches to achieve the best results for both communities. This would promote ecologically and socially sound solutions both for securing and enhancing carbon storage and for developing sustainable adaptation measures.

The Conference recommended:

10. To encourage and facilitate dialogue and exchange between the 'biodiversity' and the 'climate change' communities at the global, regional and national level. This should be done with an aim to improve coherence of existing and future policies and instruments. We should develop 'communication kits' so that key issues on climate change and biodiversity can be communicated well to politicians, other sectors and to the public.
11. To improve the message that in many cases it is more cost effective and efficient to invest in biodiversity for mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, e.g. in Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), REDD+, land use management, conserving land cover and restoration, and maintaining intact peatlands, forests, and wetlands compared to investing in more expensive technologies and other man-made solutions.
12. It should be explored if the next Ministerial Conference *Environment for Europe* (2011) could have climate change and biodiversity as the major topic on the agenda. This could also include looking at consequences of our consumption and production patterns on biodiversity and at efforts to reduce our ecological footprint inside and outside the region.
13. Biodiversity provides a security and insurance function for human well-being in relation to climate change, including as a buffer for unforeseen events and for providing options for future solutions.
14. There is a lot of knowledge available and although some basic research is still necessary, including for some ecosystems, determination of tipping points (*make a footnote to explain*) and the economic value of biodiversity and ecosystem services, it is urgent to take action with the knowledge we already have.

The Conference recommended that management for biodiversity and ecosystem services facing climate change should be based on the precautionary approach and include efforts to:

15. Enhance and develop green infrastructure (corridors, protected areas, buffer zones) applying the ecosystem approach, including spatial planning and management of multifunctional landscapes.
16. Decrease other stresses to biodiversity, particularly from fragmentation, land conversions, urban sprawls, invasive species, chemical contamination and over-exploitation. This is particularly urgent for several ecosystems in Europe experiencing severe negative effects from climate change, including the Arctic, mountain ecosystems and the Mediterranean, coastal areas, oceans, peatlands, agricultural ecosystems, freshwater ecosystems, steppes and grasslands.
17. Install appropriate management for protected areas and species in order to strengthen their resilience.
18. Apply biodiversity risk assessments, including in environmental impact assessments, consideration of cumulative effects to species and ecosystems, and use of climate scenarios and projections at appropriate scales.
19. Strengthen monitoring and early warning systems, using appropriate indicators to be able to stop harmful practices at an early stage. Efforts should include collaboration with non-professional observers and by drawing on traditional ecological knowledge.
20. Apply adaptive management of biological diversity, including for fisheries management, protected areas and endangered species, etc.
21. Maintain genetic diversity, especially by keeping genetic pools *in situ*.
22. Strengthen efforts to monitor, control and where possible eradicate destructive invasive species in particular giving consideration to 'Early Warning' systems which could include an element of public involvement.

The Conference recognized that maintaining and enhancing biodiversity as well as the resilience³ of ecosystems will help human societies to better adapt to climate change, and gave the following advice:

23. It is necessary to analyze and redirect incentive measures and production systems to facilitate adaptation measures that maintain and make better use of biodiversity and ecosystem services.
24. There is a need to ensure that mitigation activities, including bioenergy production, should take due consideration of biodiversity concerns; and in cases where such activities could negatively impact on biodiversity and ecosystem services, the precautionary approach and risk assessments be carried out.
25. Priority should be given to multiple-win solutions, including REDD which properly designed will provide carbon storage, biodiversity conservation and income generation.

³ Swedish Resilience Report

Post 2010 Vision for the Pan European Region

The Conference proposed that the **post 2010 message should be inspirational, simple and politically attractive while at the same time realistic**. Some participants questioned if it was realistic to lose between 1.4 and 3 trillion US Dollars each year in biodiversity value and insisted the target should match this reality.

The Conference stressed that the new vision, targets and strategic plan of the CBD should be relevant for the countries of the Eastern European, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) region. The post 2010 vision of the pan European region should promote more regional cooperation by decreasing differences amongst countries in a biodiversity context. The Conference recommended the following:

26. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the science-policy interface process, regional, subregional and national assessments, and the results of The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) initiative are useful tools and mechanisms to underpin the new vision and new target and sub-targets.
27. The overall target for pan Europe suggested by the participants is **to halt any further loss of species and habitats and, by 2025, restoration of degraded areas with an emphasis on links between biodiversity, ecosystem services, climate change and human well-being** with regular monitoring using relevant indicators to assess progress. At the same time economic and regulatory instruments to address the drivers behind biodiversity loss need to be developed. It was also suggested that, in an equitable way, a 1 to 1 ecological footprint should be achieved in our lifetime. A related concern with trade was raised and the need to make it more sustainable.
28. A number of sub-targets and instruments were recommended including stopping the decline of rural biodiversity, protecting cultural diversity and local languages, capturing traditional knowledge about the use and management of biodiversity and ecosystem services, emphasizing the importance of ecological networks for mitigation and adaptation to climate change, and adapting protected areas to ecosystem functions and services. In this context spatial planning was again highlighted as a key mechanism for driving the process of sectoral integration in planning for biodiversity. Better data and investment into long-term monitoring in order to improve and operationalize indicators is needed and the definition of a baseline and related sub-targets is essential.
29. The participants highlighted that the biodiversity target is not only important for the Convention on Biological Diversity; it should be relevant to other multilateral environmental agreements as well as to other sectors to ensure conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Therefore, the participants stressed the need to mainstream the biodiversity targets into other sectors, increase communication, education and public awareness, promote public participation and promote ownership of the biodiversity targets for all objectives of the CBD.
30. Participants at the Conference stressed that a thorough analysis was necessary to determine why the previous target had been missed, where progress had been made and why.
31. The Conference participants recommended continuing building on existing instruments that were developed under the Convention on Biological Diversity and at the Pan-European level (Natura 2000, Emerald Network, PEEN and SEBI2010) and have worked well.

32. The participants highlighted the role of regional cooperation in the achievement of the new vision and targets as well as the implementation of the CBD strategic plan. The pan European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS), the current regional cooperation mechanism for pan Europe, must be linked to the new CBD Strategic Plan in order to encourage Pan European ownership. The participants also recommended that transparency should be maintained, including participation from NGOs and other stakeholders. It is also important to get more involvement from economic sectors and the business sector.
33. It was suggested by the participants that any regional mechanism, such as the PEBLDS, must be able to translate the strategic plan into action and implementation. There is a need to focus on the special needs of the countries of the Eastern European, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) region and explore ways and means to engage them in the achievement of targets and sub-targets. The representation and implementation capacity of those countries must be increased and incentives and funding is necessary. The UNEP regional offices may have a useful role in the implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements at the regional level.

Financing Biodiversity – new ways, new possibilities

The conference discussed and explored numerous approaches to sustaining and increasing financial support towards the implementation of the CBD in the Pan European region.

The conference recognized that achieving any post 2010 biodiversity target will require additional financial resources. The current financial crisis has and will impact the future availability of financial resources for biodiversity conservation. Government funding is essential, but will not suffice to achieve any new biodiversity target. It is essential that the donor community understand the needs of the recipient countries prior to designing the financial support mechanism. The conference recommended the following:

34. Carry out a realistic assessment of the financial needs for achieving the post 2010 target within the Pan European region. Consideration should also be given for the establishment of a Biodiversity Technical Support Facility, which would *inter alia* include a clearing house mechanism to bring together information on available financial resources and to assist streamlining of donor funding based on national and regional demands and priorities;
35. Enhance existing financial instruments for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, such as:
 - Ensure that the 5th Replenishment of the GEF provides additional resource for implementing the post 2010 target;
 - Existing financial mechanisms, such as the EEA Grants, should have an enhanced targeted biodiversity support;
 - EU finance mechanisms such as the EU neighborhood policy should include a stronger focus on the new post 2010 biodiversity target;
 - follow up on the outcomes of the Message of Paris on mainstreaming biodiversity into development cooperation.
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36. Build on the CBD Resource Mobilisation Strategy by initiating a process to further explore and advance in the identification and establishment of new innovative financial resources and mechanisms for sustained biodiversity financing in the Pan European region, by:
 - exploring the feasibility of establishing a Green Development Mechanism;
 - the potential of moving towards a green economy;

- incorporating payments for ecosystem services as a means for increasing biodiversity finance;
 - further expanding the potential of charities/lotteries for conservation finance.
37. Finally recognized the need for an increased engagement of the private sector:
- The ecological footprint of businesses on other parts of the world should be strongly taken into account (fair prices, sustainable trade patterns, informing consumers);
 - Biodiversity must move from the margins to the mainstream of business operations, ensuring long term provision of raw materials, compliance with regulations, consumer demands, reputational issues, innovation in technologies;
 - Biodiversity 'markets' should be explored and promoted, while developing or taking into account eco-labelling, ethical codes for marketing and advertising industry.