

The Potsdam Recommendations on the Convention on Biological Diversity

**submitted by the
Eminent Experts**

**meeting in the
Potsdam Retreat**

**Workshop on Implementation of the
Convention on Biological Diversity**

Potsdam, Germany, 13-15 December 2006

The German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety hosted a workshop of eminent experts in the area of biodiversity on 13-15 December 2006 in Potsdam. The workshop was organized by Ecologic – Institute for International and European Environmental Policy. It was attended by 20 participants attending in their personal capacity and included former and active senior government officials from all regions of the world, as well as representatives from NGOs, the private sector, local and indigenous communities. The task of the group was to look “out of the box” and come up with visionary ideas for advancing the Convention beyond 2010.

The participants congratulated the German government for taking this important and timely initiative to prepare for the Ninth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 9) to be held in Bonn in May 2008.

The participants were concerned that so far few policies were in place to ensure that countries could meet the target to significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010, which is a goal adopted by Heads of State and Government in Johannesburg in 2002. The participants considered options to improve the implementation and operation of the Convention. They agreed that the Convention has reached a turning point, where after 15 years of work to provide guidance and tools for implementation the focus now needs to be on practical implementation and compliance. The main challenges that the Convention now faces are the lack of awareness among the general public and decision-makers about the importance of biodiversity, the lack of capacity and financial resources in many developing countries and the lack of integration of the commitments of the Convention in relevant economic sectors. The objectives of the Convention are the conservation of biological diversity, its sustainable use and the sharing of benefits resulting from such use. These objectives need to be in particular integrated into agriculture, forestry, fisheries, land use, transport, energy and water policies, as well as development planning, development co-operation and international trade.

The participants agreed to convey the following recommendations to Sigmar Gabriel, German Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, in his position as host of COP 9, bearing in mind that Germany also has the presidency of the European Union and of the G8. They invited Minister Gabriel to transmit the following recommendations to the Contracting Parties of the Convention.

Awareness Raising

1. Taking into account the 2010 Biodiversity Target, Parties should promote awareness by developing a comprehensive, well co-ordinated awareness raising strategy, building alliances with other actors that have successfully facilitated environmental awareness-raising. Elements of such a strategy could be:
 - To focus on a single or a small number of targeted messages that demonstrate the interconnections between biodiversity, climate and poverty in areas that appeal to people and have high policy priority, such as health, energy and food;
 - To collect and promote examples showing the value of biodiversity for satisfying different needs of people;
 - To communicate complex issues by using positive examples, “story-telling” and scenarios;
 - To establish biodiversity media awards.
2. A campaign on CBD in 2007/2008 to communicate the consequences of biodiversity loss.
3. The initiation of a high profile report illustrating the economic and social costs of biodiversity loss to be finalised before COP 9.
4. Increase awareness of biodiversity issues and solutions in the development / finance sector.

Legal and Regulatory Framework

5. National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) need to be turned into ‘living documents’ that guide decision making at all levels. To achieve this:
 - NBSAPs need to be prepared or updated with the participation of a broad set of people from all major groups to build ownership and commitment;
 - Consultation should include those responsible for policies in other areas so as to promote policy integration and cross-sectoral and horizontal co-operation to ensure coherence;
 - NBSAPs must be incorporated into national strategies for sustainable development and poverty reduction and must be fully taken into account in planning and decision-making.
6. In case of insufficient progress on the significant reduction of the rate of biodiversity loss, COP 10 should consider mechanisms to strengthen compliance.

Policy Integration

7. Departments responsible for sectoral policies such as health, agriculture, infrastructure and energy should work with Ministers of Environment to ensure integration of biodiversity concerns into their policies, strategies and implementation plans.
8. Relevant guidelines and standards of the CBD, especially those on Environmental Impact Assessments, Strategic Environmental Assessments and the Agwe-Kon guidelines for the conduct of cultural, environmental and social impact assessments, should be applied in planning processes.
9. Case studies should be prepared for COP 9 that highlight the importance of strong cross-sectoral planning and provide empirical evidence on the value of biodiversity for specific sectors.
10. All international agencies should be invited to report on how they integrate biodiversity into their strategies, programmes and plans.
11. The concepts of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development should be mainstreamed into bilateral and multilateral funding mechanisms and institutions.

Economic Incentives and Funding

12. Over the next six months, the German Government should provide leadership in development of a G8+5 Biodiversity Action Programme for achieving the 2010 biodiversity target to be adopted at the Heiligendamm Summit in 2007. The G8 Biodiversity Action Programme should substantially raise the profile of biodiversity and generate concrete funding initiatives that can then be presented at COP 9 and should focus on
 - conservation of the world's remaining large "intact forests",
 - conservation of marine and coastal ecosystems and
 - combining objectives for biodiversity, climate change, poverty, livelihoods and human rights.Future G8+5 meetings should review progress on the G8+5 Biodiversity Action Programme.
13. The German Government should promote international action for biodiversity protection through its EU Presidency, for instance, by holding a joint meeting of Environment and Development Ministers.
14. With a view to going beyond the project-by-project approach, donors should establish funds and mechanisms for long-term funding for the implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas. Trust funds in support of quantitative protected-area targets and timetables can be particularly useful.
15. Donors should implement the recommendations in the Message from Paris on integrating biodiversity into development co-operation, in particular by establishing new Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds earmarked to support the 2010 biodiversity target.

16. In addition, Parties should collaborate on establishing new international funding mechanisms for biodiversity, such as international levies on tourism or charges for ecosystem service.

Involvement of Civil Society

17. In recognition of the vital role citizens play in achieving the objectives of the Convention, civil society participation should be encouraged and strengthened in preparation for and during COP 9.
18. Civil society should be invited to contribute to the above mentioned awareness-raising campaigns. These activities might include:
- a people's summit and tour to European leaders prior to COP 9;
 - a documentation of a series of case studies;
 - creating synergies with other initiatives and alliances, such as the Equator Initiative, Countdown 2010 or the Global Biodiversity partnership;
 - linking biodiversity and sustainable production and consumption patterns.
19. At COP 9 and in the preparatory process, civil society should have full access to all negotiations and the opportunity of making interventions in discussions.

Involvement of the Private Sector

20. Business and industry should strive to reach the objectives of the CBD by first addressing the biodiversity impacts of their activities and revising any harmful practices so that they become supportive of the Convention's objectives. Only those businesses meeting these requirements should be allowed to financially contribute to activities that are part of the Convention process.
21. The Global Biodiversity Forum and the Equator Initiative should be linked more closely in order to ensure a proper and focused input into COP 9. This could build on the experience of the 2010 Biodiversity Forum, organised by more than 35 civil society and government institutions during COP 8, which proposed a 2010 roadmap.
22. The participants welcome the conference on business and biodiversity in November 2007 under the EU Presidency of Portugal and hope for a successful outcome.

Indigenous and Local Communities

23. Indigenous peoples should be given at a minimum the same level of access and standing in the COP as in Brazil.
24. Resources should be provided for capacity building and dialogues. These should involve specialists as well as organisations representing indigenous and local peoples and should cover issues in the field of Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing (ABS) and Traditional Knowledge (TK).

25. Assistance should be provided to indigenous peoples and local communities for capacity building that is attuned to customary resource, knowledge management systems and respects local autonomy.
26. Innovative approaches to facilitate the participation and consideration of the needs and expectations of local communities in the work of the Convention.
27. A wider and more integral interpretation of Article 8j obligations should be promoted, including practical and innovative ways to protect, respect and promote wider use of traditional knowledge and practices through non proprietary and collective forms of protection.
28. COP 9 should consider the results of the International Expert Seminar on Indicators relevant for Indigenous Peoples to be held in March 2007, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Millennium Development Goals towards monitoring benefits for indigenous peoples and local communities in the implementation of the Convention.

Preparatory Process

29. A Standing Committee should be established to be responsible for all inter-sessional work of the CBD, consisting of permanent representatives of the Contracting Parties and allowing participation of observers. The mandate of the Committee should include discussions of the operation of existing instruments (work programmes, guidelines, implementation of COP decisions) and the preparation of COP decisions. The Committee should meet on a regular basis (e.g. monthly).
30. The Standing Committee should also have a role in relation to the Ministerial Meetings of the COP, the policy review and compliance.

Decision-Making Mechanisms

31. Ministerial meetings would gain in strategic meaning and momentum if they address issues that have an urgent need for ground-breaking and innovative political orientation. The setting could vary (e.g. ministers from other sectors invited as necessary) and should be issue-oriented. The Ministerial Meeting in 2010 should be focussed on the urgently needed follow-up of the 2010 target.
32. Such issues should be identified inter-sessionally by the Standing Committee.
33. The outstanding decision of rule 40.1 on the rules of procedure (voting) needs to be taken not later than 2010.

Reporting, Policy Review, Compliance

34. An implementation review procedure is urgently needed under the CBD and should be established as soon as possible. Reporting, policy development and implementation actions on the ground have to be provided with supportive advice by review teams in individual countries.

35. Review issues must include implementation of measures related to all three objectives of the Convention, including the relation between resources available from GEF and other financial sources.

Science and the CBD

36. Scientific input, including natural, social and economic disciplines, needs to be strengthened, particularly in relation to identifying impact on biodiversity and related issues and proposing policy solutions. The functioning of SBSTTA needs to be examined in this light. The work of SBSTTA should be complemented by a science-policy interface. The IMOSEB initiative, a periodic continuation of the MA or the extension of the mandate of IPPC to cover biodiversity could be options for this.
37. Monitoring data on the status and trends of biodiversity need to be freely and immediately available to all individuals, regardless of institution or nationality. Co-ordination and standardisation of monitoring and assessment methods and data-access policies will allow integration and use of these data at the local, national, regional and global scales.
38. The CBD should recognise different knowledge systems as equally valid. As such, there should be full participation of traditional and indigenous knowledge holders in the SBSTTA, monitoring systems and other appropriate fora.

International Regime on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing

39. The negotiations on an International Regime on Access and Benefit Sharing should be concluded by 2010. The negotiations need decisive progress at COP 9 in 2008, in particular regarding the contributions and obligations of user and donor countries.
40. Participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in international Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing (ABS) negotiations needs to be strengthened, inter alia clarifying rights, roles and mechanisms for participation, including access to information and communication and supporting their internal preparatory strategy meetings.

Co-operation among International Agreements and Processes

Relating to sustainable development instruments

41. The Conference of Parties should seek to establish joint work programmes, research endeavours and capacity building projects between CBD and related international environmental, development and trade instruments.
42. CBD should agree on biodiversity standards that are needed for the implementation of the FCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, in particular carbon sinks, avoided deforestation and biomass. A process has to be established to interlink both negotiations at the Ministerial Meeting of COP 9.
43. CBD should clarify its respective responsibilities regarding forests in order to ensure synergies in the implementation, in particular in the work of United Nations Forum on

Forests (UNFF) and the CBD Programmes of Work on Protected Areas and on Forests by COP 9.

Relating to Development

44. The biodiversity goal to anticipate, prevent and attack the causes of significant reduction or loss of biological diversity should be incorporated into the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
45. Bilateral/multilateral instruments should earmark funds for the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention while mainstreaming biodiversity into development co-operation and poverty reduction policies and instruments.

Relating to Trade

46. Trade instruments and modalities being negotiated under the World Trade Organisation (WTO) should not undermine but rather support the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
47. CBD should agree and/or support the implementation of biodiversity standards related to trade for example in areas regarding:
 - biomass production;
 - certification and labelling;
 - trade with products from illegal, uncontrolled or unregulated practices (e.g. timber, fisheries);
 - positive and perverse incentives.
48. The CBD dispute resolution mechanism should be used (and where necessary strengthened and operationalised) in the first instance biodiversity trade related issues are under dispute (Art. 27).
49. The CBD and the WTO secretariats should have the same standing and observer position within the bodies under the respective agreement. This applies in particular to the agreements on Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), Trade and Agriculture and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS), the Services and Goods Councils, as well as the Trade and Environment Committee.
50. Synergies should be developed on a pragmatic basis at national level. High level national political guidance should be sought to establish clear agendas.
51. Public information and participation and consultations involving all key stakeholders should take place on all relevant issues on the national level.