

**To:**            **ICLEI Council**  
**From:**        **City of Cape Town, City of Durban, City of Edmonton**  
**Date:**        **5 June 2009**  
**Re:**            **Local Action for Biodiversity as an ICLEI Programme**

**Recommendation:**

That the ICLEI Council approves the proposal by the City of Cape Town and supported by the Cities of Durban and Edmonton, that ICLEI adopts the Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB) Initiative as a global ICLEI Programme to be understood on the context of the background below and on the following basis and

**Recognising**

- That with more than half the world's population now living in cities, the importance of conserving urban biodiversity, reintroducing nature into cities and restoring damaged habitats, for recreational, aesthetic, spiritual and economic reasons, is becoming a priority for city leaders.
- Particularly in the global south, access to biodiversity within urban ecosystems is critically important for subsistence, health, shelter, fuel and recreation.
- That biodiversity is defined in the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity as the "variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species and between species and of ecosystems".
- That Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB) has been recognised by significant international stakeholders as the definitive global programme dealing with biodiversity within urban contexts and is endorsed by its participants.
- That within the last 3 years, related biodiversity activities and projects were started, including a series of Mayors Conferences at the UN-CBD Conference of the Parties, capacity building efforts and regional Local Action for Biodiversity initiatives.
- The importance of understanding and planning around connections between climate change and biodiversity.
- Commitment expressed by a growing number of local governments to enhance their biodiversity management and global networking (for example through signing the "Countdown 2010 Declaration" and LAB's Durban Commitment).
- That ICLEI, through its LAB initiative, is well-placed to bring together local governments from across the world that are interested in committing to enhance biodiversity management.
- The importance of and opportunity for consolidating a strong biodiversity programme within ICLEI, in cooperation with IUCN, aimed at enhancing biodiversity at local level.

## Understanding

- The goal of the Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB) Initiative is to guide, support, capacitate and motivate local governments and their partners from across the world to integrate biodiversity into all aspects of policy and decision making and implementation activities to result in increased, enhanced and more sustainable biodiversity conservation and management. Acknowledgement of accountability and responsibility for the health and well-being of communities and recognition of biodiversity as the foundation of our existence and essential ecosystem services, are core components of the goal.
- The Local Action for Biodiversity Initiative is based on the three year Pioneer Project Local Action for Biodiversity, as adopted by the Council in 2006. The commitment and intensive work by the 21 pioneer local and regional governments as well as of the project's Steering Committee and project team, is explicitly appreciated. The LAB Initiative, which shall be coordinated by ICLEI in partnership with IUCN (based on the existing MoU between the parties and in terms of which further ToRs will be developed), will involve local governments and their partners in various work streams. These work streams (described in Annexure 1) shall be implemented at a global level and in as many regions as possible.

It is recommended as follows:

- That the ICLEI Council adopts "Local Action for Biodiversity as a global ICLEI Programme", as outlined in Annexure A.
- That the ICLEI Africa Secretariat be appointed to lead the Initiative and facilitate ICLEI internal coordination.
- That ICLEI shall work in close cooperation with IUCN in further planning, developing and implementing the biodiversity programme.
- ICLEI and IUCN shall continue to partner with the UN-CBD Secretariat and cooperate with the "Global Partnership Cities and Biodiversity".
- The ICLEI Biodiversity Programme shall establish an Advisory Committee, including representatives of committed Members, as well as policy and scientific partners.

## Background

Just over three years ago the City of Cape Town, supported by the City of eThekweni, tabled a motion at the ICLEI Council meeting at the World Congress in 2006. The motion, which motivated that ICLEI adopt “Local Action for Biodiversity”, was unanimously supported. Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB) was conceptualized as a three years pilot project involving 15 – 20 cities in a global network to enhance biodiversity within their area of jurisdiction. The motion was the outcome of a process whereby the host of the ICLEI World Congress 2006, Cape Town, introduced biodiversity to the World Congress agenda for the first time.

The adoption of the motion by ICLEI allowed the concept to become a reality and a highly successful project, recognized and endorsed by many leading organisations and agencies around the world, was implemented. Today, the City of Cape Town once again comes before this Council of members, reporting back on the pioneer LAB initiative and seeking further endorsement for this initiative now to be adopted as a global ICLEI programme.

Local Action for Biodiversity was developed in accordance with the ICLEI Strategic Plan (2007 – 2012), which referred to the initiative in section 3.2.3, stating that “a vision for ICLEI’s role in the promotion of a local government biodiversity initiative shall be developed within a conceptual phase” and that in terms of the strategic approach, “ICLEI shall facilitate the participation of interested members in the conceptualization of a Local Action for Biodiversity initiative as proposed and led by the City of Cape Town.” In addition it stated that the goal would be to “identify opportunities for the creation of an inter-regional local government network for biodiversity, which would promote a greater understanding of urban biodiversity issues and the implementation of actions.”

Over the past three years the initially conceptualised three year pilot project has developed considerably into the broader overarching biodiversity initiative that ICLEI visualized in its Strategic Plan (2007 – 2012). The LAB initiative has become synonymous with cutting edge technical innovation and action, set to change the face of cities worldwide through its expanding participation at local and regional level and through its partnerships with leading biodiversity related organizations and agencies and has been a primary mover, shaper and participant in the “Global Partnership on Cities and Biodiversity” which is coordinated by the Secretariat of the Convention for Biological Diversity.

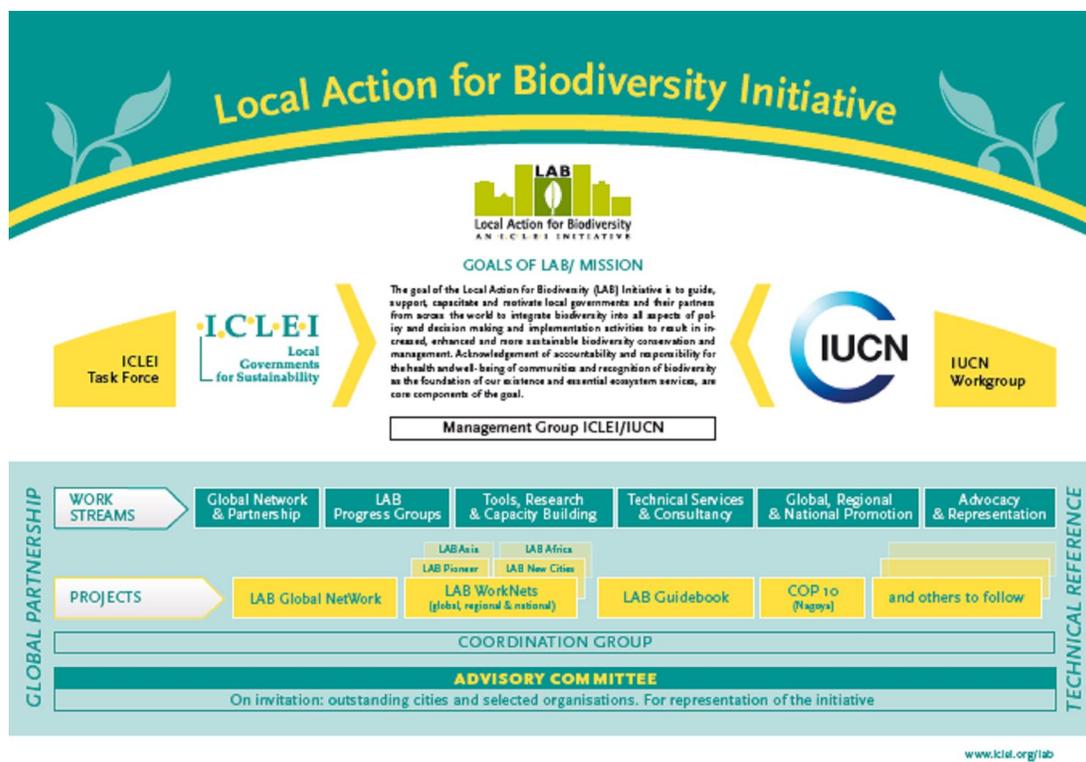
The LAB Pioneer Project, which involved the intensive participation of 21 local and regional governments in a five-step process, which considerably enhanced the biodiversity capacity of the participants, represented a partnership between ICLEI and other organisations including the IUCN, Countdown 2010, SANBI and RomaNatura.

Significant achievements resulted from the project, including:

- Participation by 21 local and regional governments in the 5 step process
- Publication of 15 biodiversity reports
- Signing of the Durban Commitment by all 21 local and regional governments
- Compilation of long term Local Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (LBSAPs)
- Design and implementation of on-the-ground biodiversity initiatives
- Compilation (in coordination with other partners) of a Cities and Biodiversity Case Description Series
- Strong participation in the Mayors Conference at the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity’s 9<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (UNCBD COP 9) in Bonn which led to a formal CBD COP decision on cities and biodiversity
- Participation in the CBD’s Cities and Biodiversity Taskforce and formation of the Global Partnership on Cities and Biodiversity

Based on the achievements and results of the pioneering phase of the LAB initiative over the last 3 years, we strongly motivate that the recommendations “Local Action for Biodiversity as a global ICLEI Programme” is adopted.

## Annexure A:



### Description of Local Action for Biodiversity Initiative Work streams

- **Global NetWork:** this global network shall comprise committed local governments that have signed the Durban Commitment (see Annexure B) or the Countdown 2010 Declaration and wish to exchange and cooperate.
- **LAB Progress Groups:** Goal orientated cooperation projects with specific Members to guide and support their local biodiversity action, established at global, regional and/or national scale and co-funded by the participating Members;
- **Tools, Research & Capacity Building:** appropriate methodologies shall continue to be developed, good practice and practical information, guidance material and tools for local governments and their partners shall be provided to enhance capacity regarding biodiversity conservation and management at local level, based on the best available scientific information and research and in cooperation with leading scientists.
- **Technical Services & Consultancy:** these services shall be through a pool of experts, who shall be available for contract on a case-by-case basis at negotiated rates, depending on the specific needs.
- **Promotion & Partnership:** Promoting local biodiversity within sub-national, national and regional frameworks shall help to enable framework conditions for local action. Through the establishment of partnerships, cooperation with international agencies and national and regional authorities shall be facilitated through the implementation of higher level biodiversity policies, strategies and initiatives. Contributions shall be made to global reporting on biodiversity from a local perspective, including cooperation with initiatives such as the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Millennium Ecosystems Reporting.
- **Advocacy & Representation:** global and regional advocacy processes and events shall be organised, including the local government component of the UN-CBD Conferences of Parties, especially the one in Nagoya in 2010 with the aim of strengthening the LAB Initiative's global representation.

Quality and performance criteria for biodiversity projects and activities on the local level, as well as for the global support structure, shall be developed in cooperation and harmony with other global ICLEI and IUCN programmes.

## **Annexure B: Durban Commitment**

**The Durban Commitment: Local Governments for Biodiversity** was developed, founded and signed by 21 Local Action for Biodiversity Local Governments:

- Barcelona City Council (Spain)
- City of Amsterdam (Netherlands)
- City of Bonn (Germany)
- City of Cape Town (South Africa)
- City of Curitiba (Brazil)
- City of Edmonton (Canada)
- City of Johannesburg (South Africa)
- City of Joondalup (Australia)
- City of Nagoya (Japan)
- City of Tilburg (Netherlands)
- City of Zagreb (Croatia)
- eThekweni Municipality (South Africa)
- Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality (South Africa)
- Île de France (France)
- King County (U.S.A)
- Leicester City Council (England)
- Liverpool City Council (Australia)
- Municipality of Walvis Bay (Namibia)
- São Paulo City (Brazil)
- Seoul Metropolitan Government (South Korea)
- Waitakere City Council (New Zealand)

as a commitment and model by local government, for local government and the communities they serve, to protect and enhance biodiversity at the local level.

**1. By signing this Commitment,** ..... joins these leading local governments from across the world as a partner and we acknowledge accountability and responsibility for the health and well-being of our communities through protecting, sustainably utilising and managing biodiversity and recognising its role as the foundation of our existence.

This Commitment recognises that biodiversity is the variety of life on earth on which human well-being is dependent and that biodiversity provides ecosystem services that underpin all of our community's needs. Furthermore, it recognises that the value of biodiversity is multi-faceted - including ecological, economic, tourism, recreational, environmental, heritage, stewardship, spiritual, intrinsic, medicinal, nutritional, health, educational, scientific, cultural and social dimensions.

**2. Through signing this Commitment we acknowledge that:**

- 2.1 Biodiversity is increasingly under pressure with unprecedented rates of loss due to human activities including the over-consumption of natural resources;
- 2.2 Increasing global trends towards urbanisation are placing increased direct pressure on biodiversity at both the local area level and globally through increased resource consumption and ecological footprints;
- 2.3 The impacts of climate change on biodiversity pattern and process will be significant and therefore we need to build appropriate programmes to address, mitigate and adapt to these changes;
- 2.4 Future sustainable development and human well-being are dependent on our ability to meet the biodiversity challenges we face;
- 2.5 Ecosystem services can play an important role in poverty alleviation and as a result the consequences of biodiversity loss and ecosystem disruption are harshest for the poor;
- 2.6 It is our collective responsibility to reverse the current trends of biodiversity loss; and
- 2.7 Local government, which works most closely with communities and biodiversity, has a critical role and responsibility (globally, nationally and locally) to ensure that biodiversity is conserved, protected, restored and sustainably used for the benefit of current and future generations.

**3. By signing this Commitment** we commit to promoting, increasing and enhancing biodiversity within our administrative area and recognise that our ecological footprint extends beyond our administrative area: we will therefore integrate biodiversity considerations into all aspects of our governance and development planning.

**4. By signing this Commitment we declare our intention to:**

- 4.1 Regularly publish *biodiversity reports* on the state of biodiversity within our administrative area and our progress in protecting biodiversity, which will stand as public record;
- 4.2 Contribute towards the formulation of globally relevant local authority biodiversity good practice guidelines;
- 4.3 Develop and implement a long-term local *biodiversity strategy* for our administrative area and governance practices, which will address, for example:
  - 4.3.1 The consideration of biodiversity in all aspects of local planning including, amongst other things: land-use planning, mobility planning, economic development planning, and conservation planning;
  - 4.3.2 The management of natural areas and green spaces, including the restoration and rehabilitation of degraded natural areas and the control of invasive species;
  - 4.3.3 The provision of municipal services, including fresh and waste water treatment, energy generation and housing;
  - 4.3.4 Public procurement strategies, including purchasing of eco-certified goods and services and the ban of hazardous products;
  - 4.3.5 Social development including poverty alleviation and job creation;
  - 4.3.6 Awareness-raising of the value of biodiversity and the need for its protection in all sectors of society;
  - 4.3.7 Stakeholder participation in all relevant aspects of local biodiversity governance; and

- 4.3.8 The inclusion of biodiversity in city partnerships and cooperation projects with public and private partners.
- 4.4 Remain committed to ongoing implementation of that long-term local *biodiversity strategy* through the enactment of guiding policies;
- 4.5 Actively engage with, and ensure participation and involvement of all stakeholders; and
- 4.6 Actively participate in the ICLEI Local Action for Biodiversity Initiative as the global network of local governments for biodiversity.

**5. As a local government, we support** efforts to promote greater recognition by national governments and international bodies of the critical role local government plays in protecting biodiversity at the local and global level. We recognise our own role within the global environment and by signing this Commitment we entrench our dedication to global biodiversity. We recognise the need to contribute actively to the implementation of the objectives of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and the objectives of the 2010 biodiversity target, adopted at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and a part of the Millennium Development Goals, aimed at reducing the rate of loss of biodiversity on our planet. We entrench our dedication to global biodiversity by becoming a formal partner to Countdown 2010 (if not already a partner) and by signing the Countdown 2010 Declaration, thereby committing to its targets, goals, objectives and principles.