

**Cities and the United Nations Are Pulling Together For Biodiversity:
Global Partnership for Biodiversity Meets in Bonn
Agreement Signed on City Biodiversity Outlook**

On 5 and 6 September 2011 the Old Town Hall was the venue of an international strategic meeting. Bonn's Mayor Jürgen Nimptsch, jointly with Executive Secretary to the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), Dr. Ahmed Djoghla, had invited the members of the Global Partnership on Local and Sub-national Action for Biodiversity to Bonn, in order to work on a Plan of Action for the local and sub-national level, which had been adopted during the last Conference of the Parties for Biological Diversity in Nagoya, Japan, in 2010. Also, the members were to agree on further steps to be taken before the next Conference of the Parties will convene in Hyderabad, India in 2012. On this occasion, Executive Secretary Djoghla signed an agreement with the Stockholm Resilience Center, which will elaborate a status report on biodiversity in cities. Bonn has belonged to the steering committee of this Global Partnership since its foundation in 2007.

The UN Biodiversity Conference in Bonn in 2008, for the first time, recognized the important role that cities play for the protection and conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems. The Bonn Call for Action, adopted during an international Mayors Conference, which was hosted in Bonn parallel to the UN Conference, was carried to the high-level segment by four mayors from four continents. In autumn of 2008 this entailed the foundation of a Global Partnership for Cities and Biodiversity, under which cities and the city network ICLEI have sought cooperation with regions, with UN organizations (predominantly the Convention on Biodiversity), with scientific networks and with IUCN, the global organization for the conservation of nature. Two years later, the signatories to the Convention met in Nagoya, Japan, and adopted a Plan of Action for cities and sub-national levels of government.

This opened up new and suitable options for cities to take important steps towards the protection and conservation of our precious biological diversity. A first meeting on the implementation of the Plan of Action, held in Montpellier in January 2011, prepared the ground for future structures. An enlarged group of cities from five continents recently met in Bonn from 5 to 6 September 2011, in order to jointly work on strategies for the implementation of this Plan of Action for the local level – in cooperation with representatives of the Federal Government, the United Nations, the State Government, the scientific community and NGOs. The international guests that had come to Bonn included Mayor James Nxumalo from Durban, South Africa, Commissioner M.T. Krishna Babu from Hyderabad, India, host city to the next Conference of the Parties in 2012, as well as Axumite Gebre-Egziabher, Director of UN Habitat.

Another focus of the meeting was the agreement on interim goals and milestones while preparing for the next Conference of the Parties in Hyderabad, India in 2012, in the course of which another cities summit may take place, parallel to the Mayors Conferences hosted in Bonn and Nagoya respectively.

The importance of cities for the implementation of global strategies is highlighted once again by the fact that the Convention on Biodiversity, for the first time, will publish not only its regular Global Biodiversity Outlook, but also a separate status report on city biodiversity. An agreement on cooperation concerning this City Biodiversity Outlook was signed by CBD Executive Secretary Dr. Ahmed Djoghla and Dr. Thomas Elmqvist of the Stockholm Resilience Center.

Another aspect of the meeting was to stimulate cooperation among the participating cities and with other actors as well as to discuss future potentials of city engagement, such as in the lifeweb network. A good example of this excellent initiative is a project in Bonn's partner city of La Paz, which has been promoted via lifeweb. Municipalities, NGOs and scientists have cooperated under this project, in order to improve the quality of water in nature reserves and, thus, render an active contribution towards conserving biodiversity, protecting health and adapting to climate change.

On the occasion of the UN Decade for Biodiversity and as a sign of their commitment, the participants of this strategic meeting, jointly with Executive Secretary Djoghlaif, Mayor Nimptsch, Professor Jessel, President of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, and Professor Weigend, Director of the Bonn Botanical Gardens, planted a rowan tree in the Botanical Gardens of the University of Bonn on Monday evening (5 September).