

Results of the 9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in Bonn

1. ABS

After 16 years a common route is finally being pursued which will lead to an internationally binding agreement on the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of biological diversity. In Bonn a concrete mandate was adopted with a clear roadmap for the next two years, to enable an international ABS regime to be adopted at COP 10 in Japan.

This means that an important decision has at last been taken on the third pillar of the Convention – the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of biological diversity. Developing countries have been calling for this since the CBD was adopted. An ABS regime will finally give the countries of origin of biological resources the possibility of fair benefit sharing and enable them to take action against biopiracy.

In Bonn a concrete "Bonn Mandate" was adopted in a consensus of 190 countries which lays down the roadmap up to the adoption of an agreement on access and benefit sharing.

2. LifeWeb Initiative

The LifeWeb Initiative was officially launched during the High-Level Segment. It met with a very positive response and broad support because it facilitates the financing of new or existing protected areas in a swift and unbureaucratic way. With LifeWeb, Germany and other countries will provide additional funding, including for the financing of existing or new forest protected areas (cf point 7, Financing).

At present Germany is taking on the role of broker for this initiative. On the one hand we are collecting proposals from Parties for new protected areas, while on the other we have actively approached potential donors for support. In the medium term this coordinating role will be passed on to the Convention Secretariat.

Results of the presentation of the Parties' commitments:

There have been proposals for new protected areas corresponding to a total area of more than one and a half times the size of Germany.

= 45,981,106 ha (equals approx. 460,000 km²)

In comparison: area of Germany = approx. 357,000 km²

This is made up of

- areas contained in the general written statements of interest in LifeWeb received over the past few weeks (Mexico, DR Congo, Guatemala, Yemen): 19,705,881 ha and
- areas of the regions participating in our climate protection initiative projects.

3. Financing the LifeWeb Initiative

As announced by Chancellor Merkel, the German government will make additional funding of 500 million euro available between 2009 and 2012, in order to quickly find solutions to the problem of conserving forests and other ecosystems in the places where such areas are under threat. From 2013, Germany will make a long-term commitment of half a billion euro per year for the international conservation of rain-forests and other endangered ecosystems. These funds will help breathe life into COP 9's LifeWeb Initiative.

4. Strategy for mobilising new sources of financing

For the first time a Conference of the Parties adopted a strategy for mobilising new sources of financing. Of particular note is the fact that the meeting succeeded in initiating a process in the framework of the CBD to review the use of innovative financing mechanisms, such as the use of revenues from the auctioning of CO2 emission allowances.

5. Forest Biodiversity

In the past, a lack of funding was a major problem for the conservation of forests. COP 9 achieved a breakthrough on this issue. The earmarking of funds for the Life-Web Initiative by both Germany and other countries will provide financing on an unprecedented scale for existing and new forest protected areas.

New successes for forest conservation were also achieved in terms of content. For instance, the aim of protecting 10 percent of all forest types was strengthened, and

the identification of priority areas for biodiversity initiated. Germany will make this one of the key areas of activity for its COP Presidency, and will hold an international workshop in 2009. In addition, it was agreed that measures on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation must not violate the objectives of the CBD. On the issue of biofuels there was a far-reaching decision which included protecting forests against unsustainable biofuel production and use.

Regarding genetically modified trees, further measures were agreed based on the precautionary principle. The COP decided that without a risk analysis, Parties have the right to forego the use of genetically modified trees.

COP 9 voiced much stronger support for additional national and international measures against illegal logging and trade in illegally logged timber. The further process over the next two years for the implementation of the decision and the forest programme of work as a whole envisages decentralised workshops in the Earth's different forest regions. Germany will be very actively involved in this process.

6. Protected areas

The LifeWeb Initiative was expressly welcomed by the Parties and the coordinating role assigned to the Secretariat. A large number of countries have already stated that they will participate in the scheme by designating new areas. In addition, the decision strengthened regional processes for establishing national and regional protected area networks and agreed on improved information bases. The Bonn decisions have substantially advanced the international process for establishing the global network of protected areas.

7. Marine protection

To date only one percent of global marine areas are under protection. There are no international criteria for the selection of particularly valuable areas. But a breakthrough was achieved here in Bonn: criteria were adopted for the designation of protected areas. This represents a big step forward in achieving the overarching objective of creating a global network of marine protected areas by 2012. Agreement was also reached on initiating a process as a basis for designating appropriate marine protected areas.

8. Biodiversity and climate change

A clear decision was taken on improving cooperation between the Rio Conventions, in particular in the field of climate policy. An experts' group was appointed to this end, with the mandate to elaborate recommendations on how biodiversity aspects can be incorporated into the ongoing Reduced Emissions from Deforestation (REDD) process of the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The delegates also reached agreement to refrain from activities for the fertilisation of marine protected areas with the goal of carbon capture. The reason: scientists fear major negative impacts on the marine environment. Furthermore, as yet it is still completely unclear whether such activities really have the supposed positive impacts on the climate.

9. Biofuels

In a difficult but ultimately constructive negotiation process, a separate decision was adopted on biofuels and biodiversity. This significantly strengthens the standing of the issue biofuels and biodiversity within the CBD. Agreement was also reached that the production and use of biofuels must be sustainable. Furthermore, there was recognition that the CBD remains the right framework for developing this link, also with regard to processes for establishing general sustainability requirements for biofuels. In this context, agreement was reached on a concrete process up to the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2010. This process prescribes the documentation of the impacts of biofuels on biological diversity and the drawing up of proposals on how the issue of biofuels and the connection to biological diversity can be further considered in the framework of the CBD. The results of this process will be discussed at COP 10.

10. Rights of indigenous and local communities

For the first time the Parties recognised last year's UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples throughout all relevant decisions. Thus it was also recognised for the first time that biodiversity conservation must be implemented together with the people affected, the indigenous and local communities, not against them. Furthermore, the Parties and representatives of indigenous and local communities agreed to compile contributions to develop a strategy on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity to strengthen the rights of indigenous and local communities by the next working group session.

11. The economic value of biological diversity

The interim report on the study "The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity", initiated by Germany and the EU Commission and led by Pavan Sukhdev, met with an overall very positive response. Many Parties and NGOs confirmed the significant need for concrete data on the economic costs of the loss of biological diversity.

12. International science-policy interface

In the field of biological diversity there is as yet no international scientific body equivalent to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to act as a science-policy interface.

This is why in the past Germany supported France in carrying out an intensive consultation process with the different regions on establishing such a mechanism.

In Bonn it has now been possible to reaffirm the result of this process. The invitation announced by the UNEP Executive Director to an international meeting to determine further steps on establishing such a mechanism is welcomed.

13. Business & Biodiversity

34 internationally active companies presented themselves to the environment ministers at the High-Level Segment. These companies have all signed up to the Business and Biodiversity Initiative launched last year with the goals of greater involvement of the business sector in biodiversity conservation.

The companies that have joined the initiative sign a "Leadership Declaration", committing themselves to making the conservation of biodiversity a fixed component of their future corporate and management policies. The scope of the companies involved ranges from the tourism, timber and construction industries to financial services, the food industry and the natural cosmetics sector.

The companies' activities are very diverse. Some have decided to improve their own environmental management, others are supporting specific measures to conserve biodiversity.

The Federal Environment Ministry plans to continue this initiative during its CBD Presidency up to the next Conference of the Parties in 2010.

14. Special Session of the UN General Assembly

At the opening of the High-Level Segment, the President of the UN General Assembly, Dr Srgjan Kerim, announced the invitation to a special session of the UN General Assembly on the issue of biological diversity. Close cooperation with the German CBD Presidency was agreed.