

Statement in Working Group 1
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Local Action, Global Interaction
The New Bonn: Focus on Sustainability

Bonn in Profile

- Situated in the Rhine valley and surrounded by Germany's oldest nature conservation area
- Seat of global players, of service industries, little heavy industry
- With a population of 314,000 and measuring 141 square kilometres, Bonn is reasonably sized – it is by no means a large city. Some 51 percent of its space houses protected areas.

The New Bonn

- Bonn has been the German capital for almost fifty years
- In 1991, the German government decided to move part of the ministries and the parliament to Berlin. The move took place in 1999.
- The structural change has been successfully managed.
- Bonn is nowadays Germany's UN City , a platform for international dialogue and due to the global players an international business centre.

The Sustainability Cluster

- Bonn is home to thirteen UN organisations, among them the Climate Change Secretariat, the Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Migratory Species

- These operate under a common banner – The UN in Bonn: Working Towards Sustainable Development Worldwide
- Sustainability is also a key issue for many people who work in Bonn's research and industry sectors and in the 150 NGOs located throughout the city

The Sustainability Platform

Sustainability is the focus of many conferences hosted by Bonn. These cover issues like:

- Climate change and desertification
- Early warning
- Renewables and freshwater
- Sustainable Global Health
- And in 2008, the CBD COP 9 and the Cartagena Protocol COP/MOP 4

The Sustainability Hub

- Sustainability characterises our city and drives our actions
- Bonn has become an active player and a facilitator at local and global level

Promoting Sustainability

- Bonn supports sustainability issues at a wide range of events and in its public relations work
- The target group comprises the people of Bonn, conference participants, cooperation partners and contacts throughout the world
- The Lady Mayor of Bonn holds both local and global offices, e.g. the chair of the WMCCC

At local level

Awareness raising and education

- United Nations Day: past events have focused on topics like Consumer Awareness in 2004, the Millennium Development Goals in 2005 and Education for Sustainable Development in 2006
- Bonn publishes its own environmental report, climate change report and sustainability report
- Climate change and energy focus in all our activities

Focus on Biodiversity

From this year onwards we'll put a special focus of attention on biodiversity, especially under three aspects:

- Sensitive spatial planning and design – making its value more aware to the people
- Education for Biodiversity
- Awareness-raising as to crops and other cultivated plant species

Spatial planning and design

Over 51 percent of Bonn's space enjoys protected status

- The City of Bonn is surrounded by valuable natural spaces. To protect these areas from the uncontrolled impacts of building, recreation activities, transportation and so on, they have been designated as specially protected areas
- Landscape conservation areas, nature conservation areas, flora and fauna habitat. The last ones have special protection – they are all catalogued at EU level and incorporated into the European Union's NATURA 2000 Protection Network

- This places governments, administrations and citizens under special obligation to exercise restraint in using such areas and also their neighbouring areas
- Environmental impact assessments switch the burden of proof to benefit nature conservation needs
- These instruments include: landscape planning law, nature conservation law, the EU Habitats Directive and the EU Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (both transposed into national law)

To make it more concrete:

Situated in a growth region, Bonn has a great need for land to develop for housing. This leads to ongoing conflict in balancing urban development needs with those of landscape conservation – a compromise must be found that serves the requirement to compensate for the impact of any action taken. Compensation can take the form of afforestation, renaturalisation of a section of a stream, planting an orchard or adopting extensive farming practices.

In the case of particularly valuable areas, in-depth environmental impact assessments are required (such as those under the EU Habitats Directive) which recommend either imposing building restrictions (stipulating distances to be kept or allowing no basements to be built) or – in the worst case scenario – abandoning building projects altogether.

In recent years, spatial planning decisions have tipped the scales in favour of undeveloped spaces (which in 2005 had increased by 63 hectares).

Education for Biodiversity

The responsibility of current and future generations to maintain biodiversity calls for education and information

Biodiversity's global dimension, its links with climate change mitigation and its political importance with regard to its commercial use place huge responsibilities on current and future generations.

The City of Bonn is home to many research institutes and development NGOs who make a key contribution to educational services that promote the importance of biodiversity in sustainable development.

Rather than being restricted to a regional approach, this educational work stresses the global importance of biodiversity and its many related issues.

Instruments

- Special educational services for schools, nursery schools and adult education
- Art projects
- Exhibitions
- Excursions
- Presentations

Selected Services and Organisations

- Museum Koenig offers many educational services and partnerships
- The City Ecology Route. Some six kilometres long, with 23 stops, the route runs through the centre of Bonn. It illustrates the environmental relationships

within the city, tells Bonn's history and shows how it is used today. It demonstrates the city's role as a habitat for people, animals and plants, promotes responsible attitudes to nature and fosters environmental awareness.

- The Arboretum Park combines comprehensive collections of rose species, valuable solitary plants and extremely rare trees and shrubs. The Rhineland's mild climate allows cultivation of many frost-sensitive trees and shrubs, some from the Mediterranean. The park represents an artistic blend of garden design and plant collections.
- A biological monitoring station manages numerous biotopes throughout the city, provides maintenance plans and implements the plans either itself or in cooperation with farmers. It also advises farmers and foresters in nature conservation issues and conducts its own scientific surveys of flora and fauna.
- A forest nursery school (outdoor/all-weather facility) and a nature-focused nursery school which introduces children to all aspects of the environment.

Crops and other cultivated plant species: Increasing awareness to the riches of biodiversity

City dwellers are under a special obligation to maintain biodiversity, not just to protect it for protection's sake (as in landscape conservation) but to protect it as a valuable resource. This is especially the case regarding direct use of biodiversity in the form of crops and other cultivated plant species.

The vast majority of consumers live in cities. Plants and animals that provide food and raw materials are rarely grown or reared locally. They reach the consumer via ever-longer supply chains.

This makes it impossible for consumers to be aware of their origins and they are rarely able to trace production processes.

Along with the traditional practice of breeding and cultivation, biotechnology and especially gene manipulation offer new ways of shaping genetic diversity and its uses. The rediscovery of old species and breeds is accompanied by the use of gene manipulation to design new ones.

To a large extent, consumer behaviour determines whether the loss of conventional plants and animals continues, whether species are pushed out on technical grounds (being difficult to transport and store) and whether regionally adapted species maintain or regain their value.

People must be made aware of food crop diversity; we need to push the availability of regionally cultivated crops and highlight the relationships between the soil, the climate and food.

Instruments

- We improve framework conditions for regional products and services
- We promote location-specific crop-growing
- We promote organic farming and organic markets
- We provide product-tasting sessions
- We have a city councils' decision to use regional and fair products at our municipal receptions

The task at hand is to show people where biodiversity touches their own lives, how their actions put biodiversity at risk and what they can do to maintain it. It is especially important to get this message across to children and teenagers.

And we are not alone in this endeavour. We can benefit from the experience of others. By joining forces, we can achieve many things within our city walls and far beyond.

Within and Beyond the City Walls: Networking for Biodiversity

- In Bonn we have a lot of expertise and commitment from federal ministries and agencies like the Nature Conservation Agency, research institutes and some 150 NGOs
- At the European Level: The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), of which the Lady Mayor of Bonn is the Executive President, the EUROCITIES Network, have discovered climate change as a topic, but not yet biodiversity
- At the Global Level: ICLEI, WMCCC (the Lady Mayor of Bonn is the Chairperson), biodiversity is a top topic

These networks, be they less formal or institutionalised, provide platforms and potential pressure groups to support efforts towards achieving sustainable development and thus to maintaining biodiversity.

The Instruments

The Bonn Model for Municipal Preconferences

- Local-level preconferences have already been held on desertification, renewables, climate change and early warning – all in advance of global level sustainability conferences hosted in Bonn

The Bonn Project Partnerships Model

- We could use city-to-city cooperation for biodiversity as we do with climate (Buchara/Usbekistan) or sustainable urban development (Ulan Bator/Mongolia)

COP 9

Challenge and Commitment for Bonn

- Bonn will host the Ninth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 9)
- The city thus believes it has a special obligation to take up and position the issue at local level, and to work at global level to assist the urban contribution to biodiversity maintenance
- In this vein, Bonn has a particular interest in the substance and outcomes of the Mayors' Meeting in Curitiba
- The City of Bonn will host a preconference prior to COP 9, to which the Lady Mayor extended an invitation in her video address

For cities worldwide

- We are convinced: Unless cities make a contribution, the 2010 target cannot be reached
- We cities have a special strength: We have direct access to people and can heighten awareness
- We cities are confronted with balancing the needs of urban planning with those of landscape and nature conservation
- Cities can thus provide important input towards advancing the global debate and strategy
- We need to network our commitment and use existing structures wherever possible.

We think: ICLEI and WMCCC can be as successful in biodiversity as they were in climate change questions.

- In the case of Climate Change ICLEI has started the Cities for Climate Protection campaign

In the case of Biodiversity we now have the
Local Action for Biodiversity campaign

- The WMCCC membership comprises city leaders, whose cities are especially active in the climate change debate.
- In Kyoto, the WMCCC broadened its focus and decided to take climate-related issues in like biodiversity, soil and water.

At local level, ICLEI devises and implements strategies in cities.
The WMCCC adds the urban political voice to the global debate.

We in Bonn welcome the opportunity to highlight the municipal side of biodiversity efforts during COP 9. It will allow us to:

1. Exchange experience and problem-solving strategies
2. Find a way to transfer this complex issue and the conference substance to people's everyday lives
3. Identify how local authorities perhaps together with researchers could enhance mutual understanding and cooperation to accelerate a permanent dialogue on defining needs and outcomes

And may I add that:

Bonn is already well focused on climate change and will now place greater focus on biodiversity.

We take whatever action we can locally and we also look further afield to problems occurring beyond the city walls. We identify levers and activate them whenever the opportunity arises. We bring people together and we spark action. This sometimes results in change for the good.

This is what we hope to do when focusing on biodiversity.

I look forward to seeing many of you again in Bonn next year on the occasion of the municipal conference, which we organise together with ICLEI and InWEnt and the support of a large range of UN organisations.