



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

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Biodiversity and Climate Change

G-8 TO INCREASE EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE 2010 BIODIVERSITY TARGET

The leaders of the Group of Eight yesterday agreed to “increase our efforts for the protection and sustainable use of biological diversity to achieve our agreed goal of significantly reducing the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010”.

In their summit declaration, “Growth and Responsibility in the World Economy”, issued on 7 June 2007 at Heiligendamm, Germany, the leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States, included a commitment on biodiversity – a first for a G-8 Summit.

The text states:

“We emphasise the crucial importance of the conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity as an indispensable basis for the provision of vital ecosystem services and the long term provision of natural resources for the global economy. We acknowledge the ”Potsdam Initiative – Biological Diversity 2010” presented at the G8 Environmental Ministerial meeting in March 2007 and will increase our efforts for the protection and sustainable use of biological diversity to achieve our agreed goal of significantly reducing the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010.”

The declaration, which also includes important commitments on addressing climate change, acknowledges the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and ecosystems and highlights the potential role of reducing deforestation as a significant and cost-effective contribution towards mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and toward conserving biological diversity.

Ahmed Djoghlaf, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity said:

“This commitment by the Heads of State and Government of the G-8 to increase their efforts to achieve the 2010 biodiversity target is a substantial boost for the Convention. I applaud Chancellor Merkel and each of the leaders for this commitment. Their personal endorsement of the target, and support for the Potsdam Initiative augurs well for the success of the next Conference of the Parties to be held in Bonn, Germany in May 2008, and for the achievement of the target in 2010.”

This landmark agreement is the latest in an unprecedented series of high-level statements on biodiversity made this year and follows significant efforts of leadership by the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on the crucial global issues of climate change and biodiversity loss.



On 22 May, the Secretary General noted in a public message that: “through the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the international community is committed to conserving biodiversity and combating climate change. The global response to these challenges needs to move much more rapidly, and with more determination at all levels – global, national and local. For the sake of current and future generations, we must achieve the goals of these landmark instruments.”

The historic declaration by the G-8 leaders is one crucial step in meeting these objectives. The ninth meeting of the 190 Parties to the Convention to be held in Germany in May 2008 will provide a unique opportunity to translate the Heiligendamm commitments into concrete action.

Background and Information for Journalists:

On the eve of the G-8 summit, United Nations agencies and their partners called on the world’s leading industrialized nations, to take bold steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect biodiversity. Among these calls, Ahmed Djoghlaif stated that: “Climate change and biodiversity loss, two strongly linked issues, are poised to interfere with, and even reverse, progress that is being made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals” – specific targets agreed to by world leaders for reducing poverty and achieving major advances in health, education, environment and equality by 2015. The two issues could also disrupt economies and international trade, as well as fuel international conflict over access to natural resources, Dr. Djoghlaif added.

On World Environment Day, 5 June 2007, the Executive Secretary of the CBD issued a message to the G-8 through the German authorities on behalf of UNEP, UNDP, Countdown 2010, and the Equator Initiative, highlighting the links between biodiversity and climate change and called upon G-8 leaders to take action on these two issues.

On the International Day for Biological Diversity, 22 May 2007, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, highlighted the particular importance of biodiversity for the poorest citizens of the world and noted that the 2010 biodiversity target is now fully integrated into the framework of the Millennium Development Goals. For the sake of current and future generations, he called for the global response to the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss to move much more rapidly, and with more determination at all levels – global, national and local.

In preparation for the G-8 Summit, from 15-17 March 2007 the Environment Ministers from the G-8 and five newly industrializing megabiodiverse countries - Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa – met in Potsdam, Germany, and called for a re-linking of biodiversity, climate change, economics and poverty eradication as necessary to adequately address these global challenges. Recognizing the imperative to significantly scale up their efforts to tackle the global challenges, the Ministers supported the proposal of the German Government for the “Potsdam Initiative – Biological Diversity 2010” and its ten activities.

The Convention on Biological Diversity is one of the most broadly subscribed international environmental treaties in the world. Opened for signature at the Earth

Summit in Rio de Janeiro Brazil in 1992, it currently has 189 Parties—188 States and the European Community—who have committed themselves to its three main goals: the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of its components and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. The Secretariat of the Convention is located in Montreal. Its website may be found at www.cbd.int.

The 2010 biodiversity target: In April 2002, the Parties to the Convention committed themselves to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth. This target was subsequently endorsed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the United Nations General Assembly and was incorporated as a new target under the Millennium Development Goals (see www.cbd.int/2010)

The G8 Summit Declaration “Growth and Responsibility in the World Economy”, issued on 7 June, is available at:

<http://www.g-8.de/Webs/G8/EN/G8Summit/SummitDocuments/summit-documents.html>

The Potsdam Initiative is available at: http://www.g-8.de/Content/EN/_Anlagen/2007-03-18-potsdamer-erklaerung-en.property=publicationFile.pdf