



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



PRESS RELEASE

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Urban Biodiversity and the Role of Cities in Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use discussed at Bonn Biodiversity Conference

Bonn, 26 May—With more than half of the world's people now living in cities, 191 countries are, for the first time, discussing ways to promote biodiversity in an urban setting at the Biodiversity Conference taking place in Bonn, Germany. The countries are joined by the mayors of the world, who will commit to take action to contribute to reducing the rate of loss of biodiversity.

In conjunction with the UN Biodiversity Conference, more than 150 participants representing the cities of the world are attending "The Mayors Conference on Local Action for Biodiversity" to exchange their experiences and initiatives on urban biodiversity. Participants include Takehisa Matsubara of Nagoya, Amos Masondo of Johannesburg, Gerald Tremblay of Montreal, Carlos Alberto Richa of Curitiba and Bärbel Dieckmann of Bonn.

While cities cover only two per cent of the earth's land, people in cities account for 75 per cent of the biodiversity resources that are consumed. And the UN projects that over the next 30 years the population of African and Asian cities will double, adding 1.7 billion people—more than the populations of China and the United States combined.

Cities have long been viewed as major contributors to the pollution, consumption, waste and habitat loss that have contributed to the accelerating loss of biodiversity around the world. But in recent years, many cities have been at the forefront of efforts to conserve biodiversity resources within the urban setting.

"We welcome the Mayors to Bonn for the Biodiversity Conference and we look forward to their participation, both at the Biodiversity meeting as well as at the Mayors Conference," said Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity. "We have to look at our growing cities as part of the solution to our efforts to reduce the rate of loss of biodiversity."

"Biodiversity is essential to the health and vitality of our urban areas," he added. "We can't afford to shut nature out of the cities. It's not just a quality of life issue for city dwellers—it's about protecting life itself."

The Mayors and urban experts will discuss ways to incorporate biodiversity into the urban context through projects to protect water supplies, treat sewage, manage garbage, provide recreational facilities, and conserve biodiversity-rich areas adjacent to cities. Cities are also



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looking at ways they can incorporate biodiversity concerns into their purchasing, such as a buying certified lumber.

At the Bonn Biodiversity Conference, countries are considering measures that would encourage the role of cities in promoting biodiversity, to further involve city official and local authorities in the development and implementation of national action strategies, and to incorporate biodiversity concerns and elements into major infrastructure projects.

The results of the conference will be transmitted to the 3 Heads of State and over 80 Ministers who will be attending the Bonn Biodiversity Summit from 28 to 30 May.

The Mayors Conference is organized by ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability, the City of Bonn, InWEnt – a Partner of Deutsche Welle Global Media Forum, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN and several non-governmental organizations.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the Convention on Biological Diversity is the international framework for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of its benefits. With 190 Parties, the CBD has near-universal participation among countries who have committed to preserving life on Earth. The CBD seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The headquarters of the Secretariat of the Convention is located in Montreal. For additional information, please contact Marie Aminata Khan at +1 514 287 8701; email: marie.khan@cbd.int