



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



COMMUNIQUÉ

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND THEIR OVERSEAS ENTITIES MEET TO COUNTER CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY LOSS

Montreal, 11 July 2008. More than 450 participants representing 43 countries attended the first-ever international conference “The European Union and its Overseas Entities: Strategies to Counter Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss”, which was held from 7 to 11 July 2008 at Saint Denis on Reunion Island.

This meeting was one of the first initiatives of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Participants included focal points for the Convention from the member States of the European Union and their seven “outermost regions” (ORs) and 21 overseas countries and territories (OCTs), as well as other island countries such as Australia and selected representatives from small island developing States (SIDS), international and regional organizations, research institutes, civil society and the private sector.

The event was organized by IUCN, the Regional Council of Reunion Island and the French Observatory of the Impacts of Global Warming (ONERC), in partnership with the French Ministry of Internal Affairs and Overseas and Territorial Collectivities. The meeting was opened with the presence of French Minister of State for Sustainable Development Mr. Jean-Louis Borloo and IUCN Board member Mr. Russ Mittermeier, President of Conservation International. It was closed by the French Secretary of State and the President of the Regional Council of Reunion Island.

The Message from Reunion Island adopted by the participants stresses the importance of the implementation of the Convention’s work programme on island biodiversity and the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) concluded at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Curitiba in 2006. It also stresses the indivisibility of the issues of climate change and biodiversity, encouraging the members of European Union, OCTs, ORs, ACP countries and SIDS to unite in the face of climate change and biodiversity loss, by actively participating in international initiatives such as GLISPA.

In his closing statement, Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, stated that:

“It has often been remarked that islands make a contribution to global biodiversity that is out of proportion to their land area. Islands are home to some 600 million people—one tenth of the world’s population, while their combined area is less than 2 per cent of our land surface. Even if consumption levels of islanders are lower than those of developed countries, this means increased pressure on dwindling resources, and it may be good to remind ourselves that islands, while contributing very little to the causes of human-induced climate change, stand to face its most immediate effects.”

He also welcomed the offer of the Canary Islands to host a second meeting in the spring of 2010, which will also coincide with the celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity.

For more information, please refer to the programme of work on island biodiversity as adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in its decision VIII/1, which may be found at <http://www.cbd.int/decisions/?m=COP-08&id=11013&lg=0>



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