



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



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BIODIVERSITY

AND AGRICULTURE

The Bonn Biodiversity Summit: Birthplace of a “Globale Naturallianz” for life on Earth by **Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaf** **Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity**

In the early nineteenth century, the German composer, Felix Mendelssohn observed that “the essence of beautiful is unity in variety”. While Mendelssohn was more likely speaking about orchestral music rather than biological diversity, his remark captures one of the most fundamental and vital, yet vulnerable, aspects of the natural world: the interconnectedness of its different species and ecosystems makes it unique, special, and irreplaceable.

Life on Earth is without doubt irreplaceable. However, this web of life is under threat. According to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment¹, pressure from human activities on the natural functioning of the planet has reached such an extent that the ability of ecosystems to meet the needs of future generations is now seriously – perhaps irreversibly – jeopardized.

Human impacts on the natural functions of our planet have never been as destructive as they have been over the last half-century. The result has been an unparalleled loss of biodiversity. It is estimated that humans have increased species-extinction rates by as much as 1,000 times the typical historical background rates—as inferred from fossil records.

The fourth edition of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO-4)², issued last year by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), serves as another important reminder that biodiversity decline and loss of ecosystem services continue to be major global threats to future development and that there is an urgent need to step up efforts to protect life on Earth. The loss of biological resources has serious consequences for the billions of people around the world who depend on nature for their well-being.

We are facing a tremendous challenge, compounded by climate change. The Fourth IPCC Assessment Report, released last year, predicts that, as a result of climate change, up to 30 per cent of all known species are likely to be at increased risk of extinction before the end of this century.

At the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development, Heads of State and Government from around the world committed their countries to significantly reducing the rate of biological diversity loss by 2010 (“the 2010 biodiversity target”). Now, two years after the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-8) in Curitiba, Brazil, which marked the beginning of the enhanced implementation phase of the Convention on Biological Diversity and just two years before 2010, the Convention finds

¹ For more information see <http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/index.aspx> .

² For more information see <http://www.unep.org/geo/geo4/media/> .



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itself at the crossroads. The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in Bonn in May 2008, will take place at a time of unprecedented environmental challenges, as well as exceptional public and political awareness of the importance of taking action to protect our environment. The meeting offers a unique opportunity to build on the momentum achieved to date and be a pivotal point in the history of the Convention.

Addressing the United Nations General Assembly following her appointment as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Climate Change, Ms. Gro Harlem Brundtland stated:

“It is irresponsible, reckless and deeply immoral to question the seriousness of the situation. The time for diagnosis is over and the time for action is now.”

She stressed the importance of 2007 as a year when the wheels have to be set in motion. The call for action to find a solution to “the tragedy of the commons”, as Ms. Brundtland called it 20 years ago in her seminal report, *Our Common Future*, is being heard for climate change.

Several steps have been taken. Early this year, and for the first time in its history, the United Nations Security Council devoted a special meeting to address the issue of climate change and security. Three special envoys of the Secretary-General have been appointed. A summit of the General Assembly of the United Nations exclusively devoted to climate change with the participation of 70 Heads of State and Government was convened in New York in September last year. Again in 2007, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Mr. Al Gore, the former Vice-President of the United States of America, and to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In doing so, the Norwegian Nobel Committee has once again recognized the environmental dimension of peace and security.

The security implications of environmental degradation were recognized by the Committee in 2004, when, for the first time, it awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to an environmentalist—Professor Wangari Maathai. On that historic occasion, Mr. Ole Danbolt Mjøs, the Chairman of the Nobel Committee noted that:

“This year, the Norwegian Nobel Committee has evidently broadened its definition of peace still further. Environmental protection has become yet another path to peace.”

In accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, Professor Wangari Maathai stated that:

“There can be no peace without equitable development, and there can be no development without sustainable management of the environment in a democratic and peaceful space. I hope that this prize will help many people see the link between peace, development and environment.”

To a great extent, sustainable development is the new name for peace and security. Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai has tirelessly worked to highlight the link between peace and the environment, stating that:

“In a few decades, the relationship between the environment, resources and conflict may seem almost as obvious as the connection we see today between human rights, democracy and peace.”

It is encouraging to note that world leaders are seeing this link. At a conference on climate change held in Berlin in October 2007, the Foreign Minister of Germany, Mr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier said that:

“There is a ‘cold war’ at North Pole that we have to prevent. Climate change is a threat to worldwide peace and security.”

Just as climate change is a security issue, so too is the biodiversity crisis. It is for this reason that the international community celebrated the International Day for Biological Diversity on 22 May 2007 under the theme “Biodiversity and Climate Change”. In his message addressed to the international community on this occasion, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General of the United Nations stated that “the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is an essential element of any strategy to adapt to climate change”. At the Heiligendamm Summit in Germany in June 2007, for the first time in the history of the G-8, Heads of State and Government emphasized 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. They further acknowledged the “Potsdam Initiative – Biological Diversity 2010”³ presented at the G-8 Environment Ministers’ meeting in March 2007, and expressed the will to increase their efforts for the protection and sustainable use of biological diversity to achieve their agreed goal of significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. Great importance has to be attached to the fact that the United States participated in this process. As they are otherwise not yet a Party to the Convention on Biological Diversity, their engagement in this initiative will make a major contribution in achieving the 2010 target and the success of the enhanced phase of implementation of the Convention.

This historical achievement would not have been possible without the unique leadership of the Chancellor Angela Merkel, Sigmar Gabriel, the German Federal Environment Minister, and the people of Germany.

The protection of nature is part of Germany identity, culture and heritage. The UNESCO-endorsed Biosphere Reserve, Schorfheide-Chorin, protects not only a large variety of ecosystems but also lands of historical, cultural and national importance. It is therefore not surprising that a representative survey⁴ of the population on environmental awareness in Germany commissioned in 2004 by the Ministry of the Environment found that 90 per cent of respondents consider it very or quite important to prevent species extinction and to ensure nature conservation. About 290 million people visit nature parks, national parks and biosphere reserves in Germany. Forty-two per cent of Germans who take holidays in their own country rate the experience of nature as particularly important. According to the survey, nature and landscape help to strengthen regional identity and shape a sense of home.

It is therefore not surprising that the 48,000 animal species and approximately 14,400 fungi species and 9,500 plant species found in Germany are protected by 97 nature parks, 14 national parks and 14 biosphere reserves. 13, 5 % of the total land area of the country and 41 % of the marine areas of Germany, comprising 5,000 sites, are covered by the European Natura 2000 network⁵. Following re-unification in 1990, Germany gave itself and the world a wonderful gift of five national parks, six biosphere reserves and three nature parks- which were described as “*das Tafelsilber der deutschen Einheit*” (*The crown jewels of a united Germany*), by the Environment Minister at that time, Klaus Töpfer. National parks and protected areas are truly the

³ The Potsdam Initiative comprises a list of ten activities with the aim of implementing initiatives that will ultimately help reduce the loss of biodiversity. See the annex to the Chair’s conclusions of the G-8 Environment Ministers Meeting, Potsdam, 15-17 March 2007 at:

http://www.bmu.de/files/pdfs/allgemein/application/pdf/g8_potsdam_chair_conclusions_03_07.pdf.

⁴ See National Strategy on Biological Diversity of Germany, Chapter A4.

⁵ Ibid.

crown jewels of any country, providing not only natural beauty, but important ecological services, such as water and air purification.

Another unique example of biodiversity conservation in Germany is the long swath of land that once constituted the border between East and West Germany. While impassable and unusable by humans for decades, this land became a refuge for flora and fauna and allowed the natural world to flourish—one that encompasses almost every type of German landscape from coastal lowlands to low mountain regions, including currently endangered habitats. Yet, the initiative has not stopped at Germany's borders. This “Green Belt” has now formed the backbone of a project to create a trans-European “Green Belt” that will stretch from the Adriatic to the Barents Sea, across 22 countries. This European Green Belt furthers not only the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity, but also that of Natura 2000 and other European biodiversity initiatives.

Within the meaning of the words of the German poet Johann Christian Friedrich Hölderlin who said “where ever there is a danger, so too grows the solution”, Germany has been a leader in environmental initiatives throughout the years. The country has worked at all levels to raise the profile of biological diversity and awareness of its importance. The inclusion of a biodiversity section in the Heiligendamm Declaration adopted by the G-8 is a major contribution. The leaders took note also of the Potsdam Initiative. In March 2007, Germany convened a meeting of the Ministers of the Environment of the G-8 as well as Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa. Known as the G-8+5 initiative, this is a major and unique development in the Convention process and reflects unprecedented political will to respond to the urgent need to save life on Earth through the establishment of an enhanced North-South partnership.

In addition to its contribution in advancing the biodiversity agenda through the Potsdam Initiative and the Heiligendamm Summit, Germany took the initiative of establishing in December 2006 the “Triple Presidency of the European Union” with Portugal and Slovenia. The three countries committed themselves, together with the European Commission, to cooperate closely during the 18-month period covering their respective terms as EU President to ensure consistency in the preparation of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in order to make it an important milestone in the global biodiversity agenda. This has never happened before for any multilateral environmental conference. A precedent has thus been established which will guide the preparation of future meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

Moreover, Germany’s leadership, as the host country of the Bonn Biodiversity Summit, is crucial to achieving the 2010 biodiversity target. At the Gothenburg Summit in 2001, the Heads of State and Government of the member States of the European Union committed themselves to stop the loss of biodiversity by 2010. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in 2002 in Johannesburg, 110 Heads of State and Government committed themselves to substantially reduce the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010.

Germany has demonstrated its commitment to achieving this strategic target by including it as part of its national biodiversity strategy. The adoption in December 2007 of Germany’s national biodiversity strategy is yet another demonstration of Germany strong commitment to the three objectives of the Convention⁶. As evidenced by the proceedings of the First National

⁶ See Article 1 of the Convention on Biological Diversity: “...the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of

Biodiversity Forum, held in Berlin on 5-6 December 2007, with the participation of more than 250 experts, the German national biodiversity strategy is a model by its content as well as its approaches. The strategy contains a concrete vision, action areas, flagship projects and concrete measures on innovation and employment, as well as combating poverty and promoting justice. It also acts on the implications of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment to Germany. The strategy will be further elaborated through the convening of seven thematic regional forums involving all 16 Länder, to be held in Hanover, Munich, Lübbenau, Essen, Schwerin, Stuttgart and Frankfurt. This has never happened before.

The country's dedication to the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the 2010 target is also reflected in its various activities and initiatives leading up to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. For example, in December 2006, Germany convened an international biodiversity expert group to brainstorm and shape the agenda of the meeting—the first time such a consultative process has been used. On the occasion of the celebration of the International Day for Biological Diversity, on 22 May 2007, Sigmar Gabriel, the German Federal Environment Minister, launched an unprecedented “National Campaign for Biodiversity” to raise public awareness on biodiversity at national and local levels. The campaign is a model to be followed. A bus travelled thousand of kilometres throughout Germany with the motto “on the way for diversity” (“Unterwegs für Vielfalt”). This innovative campaign was launched with the support of the “Naturallianz” (*Nature Alliance*), a group of celebrities from politics, non-governmental organizations, business, the media, the scientific community and culture and aims at promoting increased public awareness of the value and benefits of biological diversity and of the upcoming meeting. For example, the German aviation group Lufthansa joined the “Naturallianz” and shows its strong commitment, among others, by distributing flyers under the motto “Living Planet – Fascination Nature” on all its national and international flights.

Another initiative is the unveiling of a special issue stamp featuring Knut, the all beloved polar bear from the Berlin Zoo and mascot of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The idea of the stamp is not only to draw attention to the issue of biological diversity, but also to use the revenues generated to support conversation measures by NGOs in Germany as well as abroad.

Moreover, the involvement and active engagement of German civil society in the preparation of the Bonn Biodiversity Summit is unprecedented. One hundred days before the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, an International Dialogue Forum was convened in Berlin on 7-8 February 2008 by the German NGO Forum on Environment and Development in collaboration with the German League for Nature Conservation. More than 200 participants including 20 foreign invitees attended the meeting. This too, has never happened before.

Achieving the three objectives of the Convention urgently requires the full engagement of all stakeholders, including women, youth and children as well as the scientific community. On the occasion on the International Biodiversity Day, held on 22 May 2007, the organization “genanet” launched a competition called “Women Live Diversity” (FrauenLebenVielfalt) with a view of sensitizing the public to the issue of biodiversity and gender. The award ceremony took

genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and to technologies, and by appropriate funding”.

place on 29 January 2008. Furthermore, the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties will have before it a plan of action on gender and biodiversity, prepared by the Secretariat under the coordination of the gender focal point and in cooperation with IUCN. A capacity-building training workshop on gender and biodiversity will be held in conjunction with the Bonn meeting and a special meeting of women ministers of the environment on biodiversity will be convened. Moreover, an International Youth Conference for the protection of biodiversity "Biodiversity on the Edge" will be convened from 13 to 19 May 2008 by the German Youth Association for the Protection of Nature (NAJU) and Youth and Environment Europe (YEE). The youth message will be delivered to the opening ceremony of the International Bonn Biodiversity Conference.

Indeed, the German Government has engaged in different initiatives to encourage the involvement of children and youth in biodiversity issues. For example, as early as June 2007, the German Environmental Ministry launched the distribution of educational material on biological diversity for 14.000 schools to sensitize children and youth on the issue of biodiversity. Also choosing the beloved polar bear "Knut" of the Berlin Zoo as the mascot for the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties brings biodiversity to life and has a significant effect on raising youth awareness. For example, students of the Thüringen College Weimar recently presented a photo exhibition with the theme "Biological diversity in the microcosm – macro photography". Though the project initially addressed the linkages between the biology of the eye and the physics of a photographic lens, it also demonstrated impressively real-life biology to understand and explore the world of insects. The students learned with surprise and fascination about the rich biodiversity just in front of their door. Small initiatives like this can have a huge impact and reach out to many people. Another example with a strong outreach effect is the photo exhibition entitled: "Nature - Our Precious Net", prepared by GTZ, GEO Magazine, IUCN (Countdown 2010), and the SCBD. It was inaugurated at the World Environment Day in the Museum of Natural Science in Berlin and is touring in Germany as well as abroad before it will be featured at the margins of COP-9 in Bonn.

The German Government is helping to spread the message of "Naturallianz" among children and youth globally through a "green wave" of tree planting that will take place on 22 May 2008. Building on a small project coordinated by Germany's Bundesamt für Naturschutz (BfN) in 2007, that involved schools and national focal points in ten countries around the world, schoolchildren in countries all around the world will water their chosen tree at 10.00 a.m local time on 22 May. Photos will be uploaded on the Internet giving a symbolic green wave of growth and action across time zones.

Also the "Naturathlon 2008 - the course of the world" aims at setting a record in bringing together people, from as many different countries as possible, in a 10 km race organized to galvanize effort for the implementation of the objectives of the convention on biological diversity. The 2007 Naturathlon organized by the city of New York assembled representatives from 108 nations.

Mobilizing the scientific community is key to the success of the enhanced phase of implementation of the three objectives of the Convention. It is for this reason that a CBD Consortium of eight major scientific institutions including the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation has been established. In addition, a COP9 scientific pre-conference

“Biodiversity research- safeguarding the future” will be organized from 12 to16 May 2008 by the German Research Foundation and the International Union for Biological Science.

Increasing public awareness of the issues goes hand in hand with including any and all stakeholders in the push to significantly reduce loss of biodiversity. In fact, some of the most pivotal stakeholders are ones that previously were not fully considered in the biodiversity discussion – they are the city-dwellers. In 2007, for the first time in history, the world’s urban population exceeded its rural population. Half of humanity now lives in towns and cities, and it is projected that by 2030, this figure will increase to two thirds. The growing urban world represents one of the most dramatic changes experienced by humanity in recent history and the impact is expected to have far-reaching implications. Unfortunately, as urban areas expand to accommodate this increase, they encroach on natural habitats and green spaces, contributing to environmental degradation generally, and loss of biodiversity specifically. In addition to “taking over” land for their physical expansion, cities indirectly encourage land conversion to agricultural activities in order to meet the needs of growing urban populations. Although cities occupy only 2.8 per cent of the Earth’s surface, urban dwellers use 75 per cent of the planet’s natural resources⁷.

As the cities will determine the fate of the remaining biodiversity of our planet, there is a strong view that the battle for life on Earth will be won or lost in the cities. The wealth of urban biodiversity is illustrated in the book *Wild Urban Woodlands: New Perspectives for Urban Forestry*⁸. For example, Berlin is home of the biggest population of nightingales, and Munich has as many butterfly species as found in the best natural reserves.

Prof. Reichholz in his book *Stadtnatur—Eine neue Heimat für Tiere und Pflanzen* has demonstrated that land-use changes in rural areas has elevated cities into centres of refuge for plant and animal biodiversity. Based on the conviction that “local authorities move the world”, 34 representatives of cities met and adopted in March 2007, the Curitiba Declaration on Cities and Biodiversity. As a follow-up to this first-ever Mayors Conference on “Cities and Biodiversity: Achieving the 2010 Biodiversity Target”, the City of Bonn will convene on 26-27 May 2008 at the margins of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, a Mayors Conference on “ Local Action for Biodiversity”.. The meeting will bring together local decision makers from all parts of the world who have made exceptional efforts to protect urban biodiversity. They will share their experiences and initiatives with a view of promoting best practices and disseminating lessons learned among the eighty mayors expected to attend this meeting. The mayors’ message will be conveyed to ministers attending the High-Level Segment of the Conference of the Parties and will be a valuable input to the negotiation process. This has never happened before.

The mayors meeting will be preceded from 21 to 24 May 2008 in Erfurt, the cultural heart of Germany, by the third Conference on Competence Network Urban Ecology. The International Conference on “Urban Biodiversity and Design” will summarize, for the first time, in a global context scientific and practical approaches of implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity in urban areas. This, too, has never happened before. In addition, in February 2008, the

⁷ UNEP, Urban Environment Unit: http://www.unep.org/urban_environment/issues/biodiversity.asp

⁸ Ingo Kowarik and Stefan Körner (eds.). *Wild Urban Woodlands New Perspectives for Urban Forestry* (Berlin, Springer, 2005). An abridged version can be found at

<http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=eAfXuTL5XsgC&dq=ingo+kowarik&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=xxXYIQ6LAF&sig=hFkFa2FD6wAbhBpM8kNoBL2YjNk>

“BioFrankfurt” network launched a public awareness campaign aimed at raising the understanding of biodiversity issues in Frankfurt. The campaign includes excursions, presentations, exhibitions and projects for pupils and teachers.

Under the motto “Vielfalt leben, Vielfalt erhalten” (Live diversity, conserve diversity), the Green Party of Germany organized on 16 February 2008 at Ingolstadt a conference on how to protect and conserve biodiversity. The CDU/CSU parliamentarian group of the German Bundestag organized on 9 April a conference on “assuming responsibility in conserving creation” conservation of biological diversity as a challenge for international politics with the participation of Dr Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as President Ravalomanana of Madagascar Francisco Santos Calderón, the Vice-President of Colombia and Monique Barbut, CEO of GEF.

Indeed, the enhanced phase of implementation of the three objectives of the Convention requires also the full engagement of the parliamentarians of the world. It is in this spirit that European Parliament is convening in Brussels on 14 May 2008 a hearing on the preparation of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, as well as on the relation between climate change and biodiversity. It is also in this spirit that, on 27 May 2008, the Environment Committee of the German Parliament will convene its regular session in Bonn and not in Berlin, and a dialogue will be organized with the parliamentarians of the world attending the Bonn biodiversity meeting. Parties have been encouraged to include parliamentarians in their delegations to the Bonn biodiversity meeting.

Another important dimension of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties will be the active participation of the business community. In addressing the New York business community early last year, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated that: “The United Nations and business need each other.” Stressing that business, trade and investment are “essential pillars of peace and prosperity”, Mr. Ban confirmed that the United Nations must engage more fully with non-State actors in order to bring about a prosperous, more secure and peaceful world. In today’s interdependent world, business and the United Nations share common goals of “building and supporting strong economies and communities, providing opportunities for people to pursue a livelihood, and ensuring that everyone can live in dignity”. The Secretary-General’s words are also relevant to the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

All businesses, irrespective of their size, location or sector of activity, ultimately depend on biodiversity. While different businesses have a various direct and indirect impact on biodiversity, they also possess biodiversity relevant knowledge, valuable technical resources and managerial skills. In fact, wise management of biodiversity is seen, more and more, as relevant to a company’s bottom line performance. Corporate, social and ecological responsibilities, are no longer catchwords, but serve increasingly as indicators for its overall assessment.

As a result of this increased recognition, a major stakeholder conference on business and biodiversity took place in Lisbon, in November 2007. As part of the European Union initiative “Building Better Partnerships: linking Business to Biodiversity” and under the auspices of Portugal on behalf of the “Triple EU Presidency”, this conference provided an exceptional opportunity for representatives of business, member States, NGOs and the European Commission to identify areas of mutual interest for cooperation in relation to the linkages between Business and Biodiversity.

The “Message from Lisbon on Business and Biodiversity” adopted by the 500 participants, including 162 representatives of the business community will be transmitted to the High level Segment of the Bonn Biodiversity Summit. It reflects not only the great commitment of the business community, but clearly underlines that there is “a strong business case for biodiversity, including the competitive advantage gained from conserving biodiversity and using biological resources in a sustainable way and recognizing that competitive markets also have an enormous potential to mobilize private resources and stimulate innovation.”⁹ As part of this initiative, the German Leadership Initiative was launched with the support of more than twenty major German companies. On 2-3 April, the environmental foundation Global Nature Fund (GNF) and GTZ will convene a conference on “Business and Biodiversity” with a view of engaging the business community for achieving the 2010 Biodiversity Target. This, too, has never happened before.

Furthermore, the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Bonn will create a persuasive precedent with respect to the participation of Heads of State and Government. For the first time, the High-level Segment will most probably include a component with the participation of Heads of State.

The Heads of State and Government component of the High-Level Segment of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Bonn will offer a unique opportunity to step up efforts for achieving the target set by Heads of State and Government at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. This target aims not only to substantially reduce by 2010 the loss of biodiversity, but also responds to the call for action to negotiate, within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, an international regime to promote access to genetic resources and safeguard the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of their utilization. In fact, the Ad Hoc Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing was mandated by the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting to complete its work on the elaboration and negotiation of the international regime at the earliest possible time before the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2010. Thus, the Bonn Biodiversity Summit will be a major step towards the finalization of the negotiation on the international regime on access and benefit-sharing, which will be crucial for operationalizing the third objective of the Convention. Conservation of biological resources goes hand in hand with its sustainable use as well as the fair and equitable sharing of its benefits.

According to the fourth edition of the Global Environment Outlook, one of the main reasons for the unprecedented loss of biodiversity is that current policies and economic systems do not incorporate the values of biodiversity effectively in either political or market systems, and many policies that are already in place are yet to be fully implemented. We cannot protect what we do not know, and we cannot protect what we do not value. It is for this reason that Germany suggested, as part of the Potsdam Initiative, the idea of a Stern-like report for biodiversity. The intention would be to undertake a “process of analysing the global economic benefits of biological biodiversity, the costs of the loss of biodiversity and the failure to take protective measures versus the cost of effective conservation”¹⁰.

⁹ See Message from Lisbon on Business and Biodiversity at <http://countdown2010.net/business> (as at 27 November 2007).

¹⁰ See annex of the Chair’s conclusion of the G-8 Environment Ministers Meeting, Potsdam, 15-17 March 2007 (http://www.bmu.de/files/pdfs/allgemein/application/pdf/g8_potsdam_chair_conclusions_03_07.pdf).

The European Commission is supporting this initiative with the preparatory work for the study and launched, in November 2007, a six-week-long Internet-based call for evidence on the economics of biodiversity loss¹¹. This review will be conducted in two phases. The expected results of the first phase—running up to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties—include: a review of relevant scientific and economic knowledge highlighting key issues; case-studies providing indications of the range of costs and benefits associated with the loss of biodiversity and the decline of ecosystem services; and elements for development of a methodological approach. An expert meeting on the review of the economic of biodiversity and ecosystem changes (REBEC) was held in Brussels in March 2008 under the leadership of Mr. Pavan Sukhdev. The result of the first phase will be presented to the Bonn Biodiversity Summit.

It is a simple truth that the three objectives of the Convention will be achieved only when the value of biodiversity, including its non-monetary components and the ecosystem services generated, is well understood by the public at large and fully integrated into decision making at all scales and in all economic and social sectors. This requires integrating biodiversity and ecosystem-services considerations into land-use policy and planning, into agricultural, forestry, fishery, tourism policies, and into trade and development cooperation policies. Indeed, it requires a paradigm shift – the environmental issue is no longer a “soft” issue, but has to be at the top of the global political and economic agenda.

The Bonn Biodiversity Summit represents a unique opportunity to enable the community of States to recognize the full value of biodiversity—not only its intrinsic worth, but also its instrumental value for the world’s economy, the daily lives and well-being of people all over the globe. Germany has taken the lead to ensure that the upcoming Conference of the Parties be considered as a landmark event in the renewed effort of the international community to address major environmental challenges, such as the present drastic loss of biodiversity. Indeed the High-Level Segment of the Bonn meeting has been organized to facilitate active engagement of all stakeholders and encourage them to make firm commitments. This has never happened before.

The Life Web Initiative for a Global Campaign on Protected Areas, to be launched at the initiative of Germany and its partners at the Bonn meeting is a case in point. Because protected areas are considered “safety-nets” for life on Earth, this first-ever initiative aims to match voluntary commitments by States to designate new protected areas with the respective commitment of donors for dedicated financing for these areas.

Therefore the Bonn Biodiversity Summit in May 2008 is not just another meeting but the beginning of a new chapter in the life of the Convention on Biological Diversity and new era of doing business differently when it comes to the relationship between man and nature. The Bonn Summit will be guided by the wisdom of the song entitled “I am part of it” performed by the German band “*Die Höhner*” prepared for the conference.

As Albert Einstein stated, “We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.” In offering to host the ninth meeting of the Convention, Germany has decided not only to offer the necessary conference facilities but to lead by example by promoting new thinking thus providing leadership to the world. In my capacity as the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity it is my sincere hope that the

¹¹ See http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/call_evidence.htm (as at 27 November 2007).

Bonn Biodiversity Summit, in May 2008, will be the birthplace of a universal “**Globale Naturallianz**” for the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention with the full and active engagement of all stakeholders.

In doing so, I hope that the participants in the Conference of the Parties will be guided by the words of Michael Succow, a German conservationist: “Our task is to consider and plan for a sustainable management of all land and sea so that they carry as much as possible of the world's genetic and ecological riches through the pressures of the next century into what we must all hope will be a stable and sustainable world beyond.”¹²

¹² See <http://www.rightlivelihood.org/succow.html>