

## NGO position on Communication, Education and Public Awareness

NGOs welcome the work on CEPA under the CBD, the Global Initiative on CEPA and the proposal for a short list of activities and plan of implementation to be discussed and endorsed at COP-8.

NGOs also acknowledge the contribution of global and Pan-European initiatives to awareness raising on biodiversity and its link to ecosystem functioning and human well-being, like the global Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the Pan-European Countdown 2010 Initiative and the Apeldoorn Appeal<sup>1</sup>.

NGOs point out that environmental problems and thus biodiversity decline as well, are caused by the harmful activities of **unsustainable production and consumption patterns**, as well as the present **fragmented institutional structure, which leads to conflicting policies and strategies**.

NGOs stress that these current problems are ultimately rooted in the **lack of interdisciplinary and holistic approach**, the **disrupted relationship between individuals and nature**, the **culture and values of the societies**.

The European countries, being among those, who provide development models for the rest of the world, have a special responsibility to realise this and bring about the necessary changes.

Therefore NGOs identify the primary objectives to:

- Provide an interdisciplinary, integrated education and thus cease the existing fragmentation of environmental, social and economic issues in the curricula
- Support the development of values that respect the objectives of CBD through education, communication and institutional changes
- Develop holistic approach in natural resources management, which also incorporates the Ecosystem Approach
- Enhance the personal attachment of people to their closer and wider natural surrounding
- Motivate people to have proactive approach towards biodiversity through communication, education and awareness raising.

For this aim the NGOs call upon Parties to support the above objectives in the field of CEPA and integrate the following issues into the short list of priority actions and plan of implementation recommended to COP-8.

### **Priority Activity 1: Establish implementation structure for CEPA activities**

Promote communication and collaboration among educational and cultural institutions, business sector and other stakeholders that play a practical role in the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity (school and farmers, traditional architects and spatial planners, etc.).

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<sup>1</sup> Apeldoorn Appeal endorsed at the European Nature Conference in September, 2005 in the Netherlands

### **Priority Activity 3: Develop key messages**

In addition to the issues identified in the recommendation to COP-8, a key message should be developed on the following point:

- Holistic nature of environmental, social and economic issues

### **Priority Activity 4: Implement media relations strategy**

- Provide capacity building for journalists and editors on biodiversity and its relation to ecosystem services and human well-being
- Encourage publication and production of programmes on local natural assets by local media, which strengthen the relationship between people and their closer natural surrounding

## **PART 1 – CEPA ACTIVITIES AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS**

### *Component 1 – EDUCATION*

#### ***Suggested activities:***

- Introduce integrated knowledge systems in education from kindergartens to universities, which integrates the currently separated structure of subjects and which is able to deal with the three objectives of the Convention. Link the various fields of knowledge (both academic and common knowledge) with each other (biology - health and lifestyle, language - traditional farming practices, etc.) in primary and secondary education, as well as develop environmental interpretation skills of education practitioners.

Base the education system as much as appropriate on empirical studies, which provides for gathering own experiences (e.g. education sessions in the nature, practical classes in the schools).

Develop the content and methodology of an education that is based on holistic approach and the system of values, which take into account the needs to:

- develop problem solving skills complementary to lexical knowledge, which can also tackle the complex problems and cause-effect relationships behind biodiversity loss
- support the development of priorities in decision-making in everyday life and profession (based on ethics and values)
- provide continuous monitoring of these priorities, and give confirmation and feed-back from various aspects.
- develop cooperation and communication skills.
- build stronger relationship of individuals to their environment and the neighbouring countryside.

Draw attention to the values of the local natural surroundings, traditional knowledge through the local media, local cultural exhibitions, etc.