

*NGO message to the Roundtable II*  
*Protected Areas, Ecological Networks and Poverty Reduction in the Surrounding Communities*

**HIGH LEVEL PAN EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON BIODIVERSITY**

**7 July 2010**

***Biological Diversity and the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals***

*The message was prepared by Pan-European NGOs at the NGO preparatory meeting preceding the Conference on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2010. It targets participants if the HIGH LEVEL PAN EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON BIODIVERSITY which took place on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2010 in Gabala, Azerbaijan.*

**Protected Areas and ecological networks must be coherent and their connectivity should be maintained in order to fulfil their role in biodiversity conservation. We, as Pan-European NGOs wish to emphasize the role Protected Areas and Ecological Networks play in poverty reduction. However, we warn that it's best, in terms of poverty reduction, to focus on those areas where human interventions are allowed. Therefore, only on these areas sustainable and traditional land use practices should be promoted and legalized in order to avoid the overexploitation of natural resources.**

We support protected areas and ecological networks to ensure the well-being of everyone, especially the poor and vulnerable who are directly dependent on ecosystems and the essential services they provide. It must be remembered that:

- Basic survival commodities, such as clean water, food, timber can be obtained only if they are managed in a sustainable way.

We support tackling the cultural drivers, such as the loss of traditional identity through:

- maintaining cultural diversity and its links to natural surroundings

We support multifunctional protected landscapes on which sustainable land use practices can be developed and maintained, so that:

- local livelihoods thrive and local economies can flourish
- local, sustainable, traditional products can be eco-labelled, marketed, and promoted.
- MDG goal 3, Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women, could potentially be achieved

We support protected areas without human access, through which:

- essential ecosystem services, such as clean water and local climate stability can indirectly contribute to human well-being as well as to the effective conservation of biodiversity
- the following MDGs can potentially be achieved
  - Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality
  - Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health
  - Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases

We support only those practices through which both local communities and nature benefit, and encourage the avoidance of those ones which potentially contribute to nature degradation

- Ecotourism could be a good start but if it becomes popular at that area, it can easily become unsustainable.
- Adequate zoning and planning of protected areas should be applied, including assessing the carrying capacity of the impacted area and introducing limits.

We support the use genetic resources as an opportunity to connect Protected Areas and poverty reduction through:

- increasing resilience of ecosystems
- involving traditional knowledge of local communities
- sharing the profits of genetic resources usage for scientific and for health care purposes
- maintaining wild varieties of cultivated plants for future human use
- potentially achieving the following MDGs:
  - Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality
  - Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health
  - Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases