

*NGO message to the Roundtable III
Post 2010 biodiversity targets and the Strategic Plan of the
Convention on Biological Diversity: Priorities for the Pan-European region*

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 July 2010. It targets participants of the HIGH LEVEL PAN EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON BIODIVERSITY that took place on 7th July 2010 in Gabala, Azerbaijan.

To make the slogan for Nagoya, "Life in Harmony, into the future", a reality, immediate changes in the development paradigm are necessary. We must begin to tackle the underlying causes of biodiversity loss in Pan-Europe and globally. Humanity depends on biodiversity for our continued survival, making biodiversity conservation and climate stability matters of global security.

All aspects of our economy and society are built on the foundations of ecosystems - economic growth is limited by the exhaustible resource base. So long as economic growth is based upon unlimited use of resources, we face the loss of biodiversity and opportunities for future development. We insist that the economy must serve our environment and protect biodiversity. We should focus on the value of ecosystem services, recognizing that these services are too expensive or almost impossible to replace. Indicators of development should incorporate measures of resource use and not be based on production and consumption only.

We support the development of binding targets for the ecological footprint at both the national and sectoral level. In addition, we support the adoption of resource use targets at the global level. These targets could be met gradually, however should be kept according to a strict schedule.

Paradigm change also means that political leaders should accept these measures as a precondition of stopping biodiversity loss and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) alike. The loss of biodiversity, poverty, land degradation, climate change, and health are interconnected, and they can be addressed with common solutions. For example, maintaining natural vegetation will help not only with climate change and biodiversity loss, but also with alleviating poverty and promoting health by providing access to resources on a long-term basis for local communities. Throughout Pan-Europe, these connections to local communities are crucial. Political leaders should recognize that achieving the MDGs or biodiversity targets requires action directed at the same underlying causes, such as the current societal values (favouring unlimited consumption and material wealth versus environment), belief in constant economic growth, or the loss of identity and traditional lifestyles.

To ensure that real change is achieved, it is necessary to strengthen the institutions under the CBD, especially PEBLDS, as well as to improve cooperation with civil society organisations and establish monitoring systems to track progress.

We urge cooperation between CBD parties, United Nations bodies and the OECD to monitor and prevent biodiversity loss in conflict zones, which is still a sensitive issue for many regions.

Finally, we urge the reinforcement of the CBD through liability mechanisms to encourage government responsibility with regard to biodiversity resources, human rights, and a healthy environment and also urge governments to decrease paper making that renders the CBD less understandable and concentrate efforts on implementation. For example we urge governments to fulfill their agreements on Protected Areas and to create protected areas and ecological networks by providing appropriate national environmental funding.