



OUTCOMES FROM THE WORKSHOPS

Integrating biodiversity into European development cooperation

From the participants of the Conference on Biodiversity in European Development Cooperation Paris, 19-21 September 2006

From Commitments to Action

Participants endorsed the findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA)¹, in particular the fact that ecosystem services are in decline, thus putting at risk sustainable development and the livelihoods of the poor.

In April 2006², OECD Development and Environment Ministers agreed that eradication of poverty and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals are closely linked to sound management of the environment at local, national and global levels.

The EU already provides over half the world's development funds and has made considerable efforts in supporting action for biodiversity by proposing integration of this issue into different sectors. The most recent indication of the EC commitment to improving integration of biodiversity into European development cooperation can be found in the Communication "*Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond*"³.

Furthermore more, the 2006 European Consensus on Development⁴ highlighted that the EC will support the efforts undertaken by its partner countries to incorporate environmental considerations into development issues, and help increase their capacity to implement multilateral environmental agreements.

Participants, therefore, identified the following set of challenges and activities for common action on integrating biodiversity into EU development cooperation⁵.

¹ Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005.

² Framework for Common Action Around Shared Goals.

³ COM(2006) 216 – Halting the Loss of Biodiversity by 2010 – and Beyond. Sustaining Ecosystem Services for Human Well-being.

⁴ (2006/C 46/01) The European Consensus on Development.

⁵ The proceedings of the conference provide additional recommendations which should ideally be read in conjunction with this message. They can be found at www.countdown2010.net/paris2006

Challenge 1 – Mainstreaming

EU development cooperation with partner countries plays a key role in achieving development goals and environmental sustainability. Efforts to improve the integration of environment and development should aim at strengthening policies and institutions that support rural poverty reduction.

Participants encourage the European Commission and Member States to support their partner countries to:

- Promote sustainable rural development using biodiversity as an asset for rural poverty reduction, thus minimising risk, and improving food security, nutrition and health;
- Develop and support the use of innovative financial mechanisms for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, and poverty reduction, such as payment for ecosystem services, environmental trust funds, tax policy, environmental fiscal reform, debt for nature swaps, carbon markets and pilot projects to avoid deforestation;
- Build capacity so as to evaluate ecosystem services and their relevance in national planning frameworks and policies;
- Improve and/or develop indicators for environmental conditions and trends and of environmental mainstreaming, in order to inform and monitor national policy plans and strategies;
- Strengthen civil society, in particular local communities and indigenous peoples, in order to build domestic constituency for the integration of environment and development;
- Develop knowledge management systems to enhance decision making mechanisms so as to exchange expertise and lessons amongst countries in local languages;
- Build broad political commitment to integrate biodiversity in national development programmes, *inter alia* through environmental concerns in policy dialogues;
- Promote efforts within the United Nations system and International Financial Institutions to mainstream biodiversity into national planning;
- Integrate environmental issues in national planning for poverty reduction and macroeconomic policy instruments, such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and sector strategies, and monitor progress of turning policy into action.

Challenge 2 – Governance

Equitable, transparent and effective governance systems are essential for both poverty reduction and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Governance operates at many levels from international to local. It is particularly important to empower poor people, local communities and indigenous peoples to have control over natural resources and environmental assets.

The government alone cannot and should not set the governance framework. Broader society should participate in governance to ensure equitable sharing of benefits and costs.

Participants encourage the European Commission and Member States to:

- Incorporate effective measures in EC Country Strategy Papers and sector policies to strengthen policies and institutions that support the formal recognition of rural people's rights to manage natural resources and benefit from them;
- Systematically seek inputs and opinions from civil society, in particular the poor and indigenous peoples, as well as government viewpoints, in setting country-level priorities for aid programmes;
- Observe high standards of transparency and disclosure concerning development aid and other state-supported financial flows (e.g. export credit guarantees) to developing countries, including those that impact on natural resource dependent livelihoods and biodiversity;
- Work with national governments to stimulate the establishment and support of multi-stakeholder platforms;
- Prioritize investments that strengthen civil society;
- Assist partner countries to establish and better enforce solid and equitable regulatory frameworks that will support conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;

Challenge 3 – Instruments and Policy Coherence

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005 seeks to better integrate environment in development through strategic environmental assessments at sector and national levels. Mainstreaming of environmental concerns into development policies has yet to be achieved. Success in supporting sustainable development in developing countries will have direct positive impacts on key European domestic issues such as migration and security. Therefore, the EU needs to work for greater policy coherence in these areas.

In addition, there are a number of innovative finance mechanisms such as: payments for ecosystem services, establishment of environmental trust funds, debt for nature swaps, carbon emission trading, fiscal tools and other instruments which, if used effectively, should ensure a more sustainable financing for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

Participants encourage the European Commission and Member States to:

- Make full use of the opportunities offered by instruments such as budget support, sector-wide approaches, etc., to advance the mainstreaming of environmental concerns in development, including through high level policy dialogue;
- Support the systematic use of strategic environmental assessments and similar instruments in order to mainstream biodiversity in sector plans and identify and mitigate potential adverse impacts from other sectors (agriculture, fisheries, tourism, transport and infrastructure), as well as in trade and economic partnership agreements;
- Improve coherence between EU policies and economic partnership agreements in relation to environment and development, trade, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, transport and infrastructure;
- Provide leadership and means to support partner countries in creating a level playing field where sustainable business can be an effective partner in delivering conservation and development;
- Invest part of development aid into a fund for each country so that civil society and governments can draw on to leverage additional funding, for conservation and sustainable development, from the private sector and other institutions;

- Support the development and implementation of innovative financial mechanisms to fulfil environmental and poverty reduction objectives, for example:
 - Leveraging private sector funding through a matching fund;
 - Market based instruments;
 - Endowment funds for long-term funding;
 - Taxes on international tourism and transportation;
- Invest substantially in a global system of protected areas as a foundation for life support as well as cultural and spiritual values;
- Establish principles, as well as binding control mechanisms, to ensure that forests and oceans resources put on the market are managed in a legal and sustainable manner;
- Consider developing, at regional and national level, capacity building and institutional support programmes that match the needs of partner governments and civil society;
- Support knowledge development and participatory research, in particular enhancing productivity in agricultural systems through increased use of biodiversity;
- Act throughout consumer demand, especially by means of legislation, to reduce the ecological footprint of trade and European consumption on the world's forest and ocean resources;
- Improve the environmental capacity of the EC and bilateral cooperation agencies;
- Support the development and implementation of approaches and tools for effective mainstreaming of environment and development in national development planning, for example through:
 - Systematic use of strategic environmental assessments as a critical element for aid distribution;
 - A common framework of indicators, for both donor and recipient countries;
 - Improving data collected by household budget surveys to capture the value of on-farm and off-farm biodiversity use, in order to inform national-level economic planning cycles;
 - Development and use of biodiversity evaluation tools from community to macroeconomic levels;
- Simplify donor administrative rules and procedures, for communities and civil society, to encourage projects that integrate environment and development at both field and policy levels;
- At international level, work with partner countries to reform global governance, revising international and bilateral trade rules, as well as strengthening UNEP, multilateral environmental agreements and their enforcement mechanisms.

Challenge 4 – Recognition of biodiversity in Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs)

While building the spirit of the 2006 OCT-EU Forum in Nuuk, (Greenland) and recognizing the global importance of their biodiversity as well as taking into consideration the special responsibility of the EU for its OCTs, and Outermost Regions (ORs):

Participants encourage the European Commission and Member States to:

- Develop a coherent framework for environment in OCTs, aiming, among others, towards a sustainable management of important biodiversity areas, and allowing joint efforts with Outermost Regions as they are the entities with the most similar stakes within the European Union;
- Ensure that adequate funding is given to environmental and biodiversity issues in the OCTs, including an outsourced small grants facility and improved access to European programmes for local bodies and NGOs in coordination with the local authorities;
- Develop joint research programmes focusing on the biodiversity of OCTs and ORs, and also strengthening joint efforts with regional partner countries;
- Strengthen both the OCTs and the EU positions in the international debate on climate change, by making use of the worldwide and diverse network of OCTs and ORs to evaluate the interactions between ecosystems, climate change and local communities.

The Way Forward

Participants called on future EU Presidencies in 2007 (Germany and Portugal) and 2008 (Slovenia and France) to promote implementation of the recommendations contained in this message.