



Resolution

The Protection of Biodiversity Biodiversity on the Edge – International Youth Conference on Biodiversity, Bonn 13th – 19th May 2008

Preamble:

On the occasion of the 9th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), we, representatives of environmental youth organisations from all over the world, urge the leaders of the world to agree on tangible targets and measures to protect our life-support system, the Earth. The German and Japanese governments, hosts of the current and the upcoming conferences, should provide leadership in this respect.

We, as youth, call upon all decision makers and experts in politics, economy, and civil society to take responsibility for current and future generations. We are willing to come forward with our own efforts to meet today's challenges.

1. The Importance of Biodiversity for Mankind

Each living organism has its own intrinsic value, independent from its relationship to humans and their needs. The diversity of organisms and ecosystems provides the life-support system of mankind by ensuring the provision of air, fresh water, food and natural resources.

For us as future generations, the value of biodiversity is worth more than profit maximization and unsustainable production and consumption. We believe that every human being has the right to live in an intact environment and is thus also responsible for the protection of biodiversity.

Traditional economies, which are adapted to their natural environment, are under threat from the decline of biodiversity. In this respect, biodiversity and cultural diversity are inseparable. If conflicts over protection or traditional use arise, sustainable solutions have to be found together with all stakeholders.

2. Our Contribution to the Protection of Biodiversity

Sustainable Production and Consumption

We want to consciously produce and consume goods that are local, ecologically sound and fairly traded. We prefer to reduce our consumption, reuse and recycle. Furthermore, we support the use of renewable energies.

Knowledge Transfer

We transfer our knowledge through applied conservation and through environmental education. We commit ourselves to contribute to an international information network of young environmentalists for the protection of biodiversity.

Public Awareness

Through press releases, information fairs and online media, we communicate the importance of biodiversity and its protection to the public. We support the International Biodiversity Day and will take an active role in the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010.

Political Participation

We use and support measures of active youth political participation through which they are able to voice their concerns on the protection of biodiversity.

Applied Conservation

Through applied conservation, we contribute practical measures to protect biodiversity through the conservation and re-establishments of habitats.

3. Requirements for Policy Makers

Education and Communication

We demand that governments institutionalise education for sustainable development. Besides schools, governments and non-governmental organizations need to distribute information on the importance of biodiversity and related measures for its protection.

Education and communication should be free from commercial interests and independent to the greatest extent possible.

Governments should provide indigenous people with access to education and political engagement, as well as ensure their right to preserve traditional lifestyles. We demand that every government considers its indigenous populations as repositories of precious knowledge on sustainable use of natural resources.

Binding Responsibilities and Coherent Policies for All Countries

We urge all states to commit themselves to fulfil the three main goals of the CBD - conservation, sustainable use and benefit-sharing - in a balanced way.

All states have to work together to enhance biodiversity conservation and allow all people to lead sustainable lifestyles. Governments should put in place long-term strategies containing tangible and quantifiable targets for the protection of biodiversity. Appropriate instruments for their implementation and mechanisms for independent monitoring are needed. Governments should ensure full and effective

participation of indigenous people, local communities and civil society organisations in policy processes.

Conventional agriculture with monocultures as well as the heavy application of pesticides and fertilizers contributes to a large extent to the loss of species diversity. Stronger incentives for sustainable agriculture need to be provided.

Through the constantly rising land consumption, more and more elements of natural fauna and flora are destroyed. Sealing off land, mining, and deforestation need to be minimized. In industrial countries, the new land sealing needs to be counteracted by the creation of compensation areas.

We insist that governments enhance ecological resilience by preserving natural dynamics and restoring habitat connectivity.

Furthermore, we demand a protocol from the CBD ensuring that countries permanently preserve at least 10 percent of their national area in a natural state and establish a coherent system of Marine Protected Areas.

There is a strong link between poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation. Conflicts between conservation and use of natural resources need to be ended by the integration of protection mechanisms and use agreements. To achieve this, national laws need to be revised, as well as additional measures provided.

To solve conflicts concerning biodiversity issues among states, an independent international dispute settlement and implementation body should be established which can impose effective sanctions. No international agreements and rules should contradict the goals of the biodiversity convention.

Furthermore, we demand the abolishment of the right to patent living organisms. By this we mean an exclusion of all genetic resources from patenting. We demand that the governments adhere to the Precautionary Principle set up during the 1992 Rio Summit and prohibit agro-genetic engineering in all countries. Through technological change and patenting of genetic resources, economic dependencies might develop, which lead to injustice and conflict. Once modified genes are brought into natural ecosystems, they can result in irreversible and uncontrollable damage.

Incentives for a more efficient use of natural resources need to be provided. The commercial use of natural resources should pay for the preservation of ecosystem services. The costs should be calculated based on the measures of precaution and compensation of damages.

Businesses should act according to their social and ecological corporate responsibility. The impact of business activities on biodiversity needs to be communicated transparently. This should also be reflected in the formulation of political guidelines.

The preservation of biodiversity should have the highest priority!

Appendices:

- Contact details
- National perspectives on biodiversity

Contact Details of the Organisers:

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National Perspectives

Belgium

In a densely populated country like Belgium, biodiversity conservation often has to be combined with other kinds of land use, such as agriculture, infrastructure, tourism. Up to now, agricultural reforms aiming at a more sustainable system have been very limited in Belgium. Green elements such as hedges, ponds, bushes,... have disappeared from large parts of our countryside. We have one of the lowest rates of organically cultivated farmland in Europe. Nevertheless, the conversion of our agriculture towards more sustainability holds an enormous potential for restoring our natural values. Therefore we urge policy makers to stimulate measures that improve the biological quality of our farmlands.

Another opportunity for biodiversity conservation in our conservation lies in an ecological management of roadside grasslands. A decree about this has been adopted, but it has never been brought into practice. This is a cheap and easy measure, but it could be of big importance for several endangered species and ecosystems. On the other hand, many of our ecosystems have been fragmented to a large extent by our infrastructural network. This makes it very difficult to preserve viable populations of many endangered species. More efforts should be spend on minimalizing the negative effects of this fragmentation.

Because a large part of the population of our country lives in urban areas, the demand for green areas for relaxation and outdoor activities is very high. Still, several big cities have almost no nature nearby. We want to ask our policy makers to increase substantially land surface dedicated to nature conservation.

Brecht Verhelst
JNM

Bulgaria

Institutional Strengthening of Government Biodiversity Conservation Units

- Establishment of new units where necessary; Capacity building of personnel of the existing units; Material and technical provisions for the new units; Training of the experts in the units on biodiversity conservation.

Expansion and Maintenance of the Protected Area Network

- Re-categorising of protected areas according to the new categories of the Law on Protected Areas and drafting of Management Plans for protected areas and implementation of the main recommendations of the Management Plans.
- Study and of new areas and sites in view of including them in the ecological network and maintenance of ongoing records of Protected Areas taking account of increases/decreases of their areas and changes in their regimes, new categories, statistical records.

Restoration and Maintenance Activities

Restoration and maintenance activities are related to conservation of endangered species and of their genetic resources.

- Provision of legal protection for endangered plant and animal species; Implementation of species conservation actions in compliance with relevant laws and conventions; Maintenance of critical populations of endangered species.
- Drafting of protected species action plans. Carrying out of practical on-site measures on the terrain according to the action plans (restoration of habitats, fencing of a rare plant habitat, artificial nests or islands to attract for nesting endangered birds, etc.)
- Construction of national reserves for domestic plant, animal and fish breeds threatened with extinction;

Strengthening of the Scientific Base for Biodiversity Conservation

- Establishment of a data base of taxonomic groups, geographic areas, anthropogenic threats and impacts, as well as methods for reduction of undesirable impacts;
- Improvement of the essential equipment of the scientific biodiversity units;

Information, Education and Training

Improving promotion of the significance of biodiversity, carrying out of periodical information campaigns through the mass media, in visitor centres; Elaboration and introduction of nature protection programmes for use in the educational system; Providing biodiversity related information and additional training services to new (and former) farmers and landowners.

Increasing the involvement of non-governmental environmental organizations in the implementation of state policy

Lili Deyanova
Ecosouthwest

Germany

Spacious protectorates are essential.

Our goal should be to preserve protectorates and to connect smaller protected ecosystems (especially in industrialized countries), in order to support nature's self regulation.

Lena Mäckelburg

Greece

Greek government has tried to stick to the values of European policy makers by establishing a network of protected areas to conserve and manage the most important Natura sites as implemented by the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) as well as by other conventions, such as Ramsar Convention and CORINE. In this context, maintaining biodiversity through sustainable natural resource use requires national strategies capable of specifying clear goals and effective means of implementation. This is essential for Greece as it is one of the last refuges of many rare and endangered European species with high levels of biodiversity and endemism.

Despite the establishment of some management agencies in Greece, the lack of a national strategy and clear conservation goals has led so far to implementation failure. The current status of Greek organizations for biodiversity conservation has been characterized by absence of conservation policy history, state incapacity, not communicated biological knowledge and lack of public participation (Apostolopoulou & Pantis, *under review*). The fact is actually that conservation policy was never a governmental priority in Greece. Conservation biology knowledge is rarely specifically targeted, people and nature are considered independent variables and interdisciplinary approaches are rare, whereas conservation issues and goals are multidimensional. Besides that, the lack of sociological research and open democratic procedures in Greece has led in the exclusion of individuals and social groups from decisions and their suspicion of, or opposition to, conservation initiatives. Lack of clear goals and divergences between stated and actual goals led to mechanistic interpretations of conservation objectives and allowed distortion of decision process by the need to satisfy economic and development interests, leading to break downs in prescription and implementation.

Greek government should avoid repetition of past failures. It should try and achieve the successful implementation of the Natura 2000 and the 2010 target of halting biodiversity loss (EEA 2007). Given the high degree of Greek biodiversity and failure to confront this policy hiatus, we argue for the establishment of independent institutions staffed by qualified reviewers to evaluate and monitor conservation policies.

*Evangelia Drakou
Giorgos Chatzigiannidis*

Japan

Adding to leadership of German government as host of COP9, leadership of Japanese government as host of COP10 is essential. COP10 will be held in Nagoya, Japan in 2010 which is the international year of biodiversity and also the deadline year of 2010 target; to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth. Japanese government should lead

the discussion toward conservation of Biodiversity and human well-being and must not prevent agreement of parties.

Regarding youth role in conservation of biodiversity; youth have a power to lead regional or local activity of conservation of biodiversity, involving people through generation. Also, youth can think and suggest solution over profit and bond.

Everyone must not forget that conservation of biodiversity means not only to prevent the physical loss of components of biodiversity *per se*, but also to prevent the loss of their ability to provide actual or potential goods and services.

Yuta Hayashi
A SEED JAPAN

Nepal

This short piece captures some of the concerns from a Nepalese civil society perspective on the eve of COP 9 of Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). While Nepal is one of the parties to CBD, its compliance on the ground is weak. There are three major pressing issues: lack of appropriate laws and mechanisms if not inadequate mechanisms; contradictions in existing policy and practice in relation to CBD, and thirdly, issue of equity, rights and participation of local communities and indigenous people in connection to biodiversity conservation and governance of natural resources.

Though there are sector policies concerning biodiversity such as National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, Wetlands Act, Aquatic species Act etc, Nepal do not have a holistic umbrella for bio diversity. *Nepal Bio Diversity Strategy* and its implementation plan were also prepared without full and effective participation of representatives of local communities and indigenous people. National Reports on CBD is also prepared centrally without involving diverse relevant stakeholders. National bill on *Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing* that was formulated some eight years ago is still pending. Genuine participation of forest dependant local communities and indigenous people during drafting of the bill was also missing. Indigenous knowledge, technology and practices relevant to use and management of natural resources and bio diversity faces greatest threat as there are no laws and mechanisms to recognize, safeguard and document these. Nepal does have a general policy on bio safety but still lacks concrete laws to this end. Thus this has accentuated the vulnerability of citizens to bio piracy, loss of intellectual property rights and implications of GMOs. A fair review of implementation of *CBD Program of Work on Protected Areas* – one of the major outcomes of COP 7 in protected areas – also reveals several gaps and non compliance. This is particularly with respect to Element 2: Governance, participation, equity and benefit sharing in protected areas.

Nepal has recently ratified ILO Convention on Tribal and Indigenous People, 169 that secures rights of indigenous people on natural resources, which contradicts existing sectoral laws and polices. Now the biggest challenge at the juncture when Nepal is

undergoing political transition, how are natural resources significant to bio diversity, hitherto centrally controlled, governed and managed in the context of federalism.

Hence it is essential to urge Nepal government to review existing legislations and policies and enact appropriate new legislations with consultations and dialogues at various levels among diverse stakeholders, so as to meet the obligations under CBD and realize the three major goals of CBD.

Sudeep Jana Thing
Community Development Organisation

Philippines

This short piece wishes to draw attention to some issues which have profound effects on the situation of the youth, not only in the Philippines, but in other countries where environment, population, corruption, and poverty have contributed to special challenges and opportunities to promote biodiversity.

Agrobiodiversity: Food Security through Sustainable Livelihood

Filipino farmers are old. The average age for farmers is 67 years old, with poverty and urban or foreign migration taking more and more young people off the land. As this trend continues, the high agrobiodiversity that characterizes traditional farms is fast disappearing, being replaced by dead monocultures, commercial farmlots or other infrastructure. This poses a great danger to a country whose overall biodiversity is already precarious, due to loss of forests and wetlands.

We have no “replacement” farmer population, more so one that carries traditional, biodiversity-reliant knowledge. This comes at a time when rice and commodity prices are skyrocketing, GM crops are making swift entries past a passive government, and climate change is making harvests unpredictable. We are losing, along with our farmers, the continuing evolutionary inputs that come with traditional breeding and wisdom.

We are asking countries to stop unfair trade subsidies that effectively “kill” the future of community-based agriculture and indigenous food security in developing countries. We are asking them to halt the introduction of hybrid seeds and other inputs with intellectual property rights, especially through extensive government programs. Likewise, there are many measures that may be carried out all over the world that can tackle food security, poverty, and environmental issues by working with young farmers. Sustainable agriculture holds an important key in supporting populations, as well as increasing the productive capacity of ecosystems.

Mining Our Future

As a country whose original forest cover has dwindled significantly (estimates range from 7% to 25%) in the past century, the Philippines cannot tolerate any large-scale

extractive industries to further remove from our land fecundity and the organisms that thrive on it. The 23 priority mining projects of the government include 60% declared protected areas, and 53% of lands with ancestral domain claims.

With the remaining forest cover not enough to perform ecosystem services for a growing population, mining poses a serious challenge to a generation of youth determined to build an economy that is biodiversity-dependent and -enhancing. The short-term jobs provided are also no replacement for livelihoods that will outlast extraction or other single processes required by mining.

We call for an end to the promotion by international agencies of relaxation of policies and procedures on extractive industries. We call for governments with sustainability standards to apply these standards further down supply chains.

Youth for Sustainable Development Assembly- Pilipinas
As represented by *Beatrice Misa*

Poland

Poland is a country of great chances and great threats concerning the protection of biodiversity. Due to a long period of poor economical and industrial development it managed to preserve vast areas of relatively unspoilt nature and many various habitats of plants and animals. During last 20 years, though, it entered a period of economical boom, which results in a tendency to create new industrial infrastructure, homing areas, roads etc. Undeniably Poland requires economical increase to solve such problems as high unemployment or low life standard, but most of politics and common people tend to put too much pressure on the rapid development and forget the idea of sustainable development. The fear of unemployment and poverty is so strong, that most of the people not only do not take efficient actions to protect natural environment, but even protest when such actions are taken and try to jeopardize them.

This tendency is combined with common lack of the awareness of the importance of biodiversity and of possible profits (even economical) that our unspoilt environment might provide us with. Education, emphasizing the importance of biodiversity and elucidating the link between peoples actions and the state of environment is a good, certain, but long-term and slow solution. We are afraid that when new generations, aware of the need of protecting the biodiversity, sensible and responsible will take charge of Poland it will be too late for many of the species inhabiting out country.

The staff of departments committed in executing the law is another problem. Officials are often corruptive or simply do not exert themselves in carrying out their tasks sufficiently, nevertheless they bear no responsibility for taking wrong decisions, and no mechanisms of controlling their actions work properly. The fact that a decision on destroying a natural important area often does not come out in the open before the building works are begun.

Leaving too much power in the hands of local governing bodies is also conducive for taking wrong decisions. An official directly engaged in the life of local society of a given area are more plausibly yielding to their neighbors' will and they care about endearing themselves to local electorate by creating new workplaces and ensuring employment than protecting the environment. Such local governing bodies also lack an overview of the situation and a possibility to estimate their actions in the context of the needs of whole country or continent.

This list points out shortly the special problems of environmental protection in our country:

- Non-observance of international conventions and agreements and of the "National Strategy of Protection and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity" by governing bodies.
- Poor representation of the natural protection in civil administration.
- Leniency to local egoism.
- Poor environmental monitoring and cooperation of government with scientific and non-governmental milieu.
- Lack of precisely defined responsibility for the state of the environment and executive bodies.
- Insufficient use of financial means.
- Inappropriate strategies of protection of forests and wetlands.
- Cull, poaching and intensive fishery
- Insufficient staff of national parks and its poor powers.
- Uncontrolled introduction of foreign species.
- Obsolete system of education.
- Anti-environmental informational campaign (environmental protection associated with backwardness and underdevelopment).

*Monika Kotulak
Magdalena Kusek
Dobrosława Krzemien
OA PTTK*

Spain

Spain has between 55 000 and 60 000 species of flora and fauna, 10 000 species are of flora (there are 12 000 species in all Europe) and 25 000 invertebrates. Spain is in the Mediterranean hotspot and is the country in Europe with the highest number of endemic flora species. The number of endemic species in the Iberian Peninsula is estimated around 1700. There is a need to add too to this figure 500 endemic species from the Canary Islands. There are 226 habitat types recognized as a high interest in the European Union (Habitats Directive), 121 (54%) are in Spanish territory. The 37% of vertebrate species is endangered and 7% on the verge of extinction. There is a 15% risk of flora disappearing. The situation in Spain in terms of biodiversity is as follows:

Table 1. *Species in danger of extinction in Spain.*

Species	Species in danger of extinction	Protected
Flora	56	5
Fishes	2	5
Amphibians	1	20
Reptiles	1	40
Birds	11	268
Mammals	4	34
Total	75	372

Spain almost use and produces three times the pollution (2.6) of the bio capacity of their territory (capacity of load of the natural resources). This means that their level of non sustainability is of 260%.

Climate change will have a negative impact in the European diversity if nothing is done to reduce biodiversity loss in Spain. The consequences of the climate change will be focussed in the species distribution, fragmentation and populations deaths. It would have greater impact on alpine habitats, as arctic and alpine flora will have habitat limitations and difficulties of migration due to lack of connectivity between alpine habitats. Even if Spain is one of the countries of the EU that has the biggest number of red Natura 2000, with climate change this protection will not be enough without tackling this problem too.

Requirements for Policy Makers

- Better development planned: like the construction of houses, ports, airports or any other infrastructure especially in sensitive places such as wetlands and coasts. It has been very frequent the bad planning in recent decades and its negative impact is quite remarkable. It also impoverishes the wild harvesting of mature forests and their replacement by fast-growing species, the extent of monoculture and the abandonment of traditional ranchers and agricultural uses.
- Prevention of fires, add more emphasis in looking for the people, who provokes them and included it as a criminal action with prison punishment.
- Reduce the impacts from: illegal wildlife trade, the introduction of alien species, pressure from tourism, pesticide use and pollution also contribute to risking disappearance of a number of species.
- Creation of corridors between protected areas. Lack of planning in the construction of infrastructure like highways and train lines leads to the degradation and fragmentation of the territories.
- Environmental NGO empowerment.

Fatima Diaz Bejar
Alberto Mogio Perez
 YEE

Democratic Republic of Tanzania

First to preserve are the tropical and subtropical ecosystems (areas still having the largest contiguous biodiversity). The combined preparation of a plan to preserve these ecosystems is, as a basis of life, important to all. Goal should be the collaboration or cooperation of local people, the government and environmentalists, also further assistance of so-called Wildlife Management Areas. Native inhabitants should utilize the natural resources in a sustainable way and in alignment with nature. Therefore a sufficient and extensive education is necessary (for the understanding of nature and its sustainable usage). Usage and exploitation of these resources by multi corporate enterprises resulting in progressing impoverishment should be avoided.

David Alex Lwali

Romania

The issue of the preservation of biodiversity is very complex and strongly related to other problems concerning the environment, but the biggest problem of all is the lack of awareness, interest and concern for the environment of the most citizens of Romania. Some simple solutions that would make a difference on the national level are the following:

- Create and promote better-equipped universities having as core subject sustainable development and environmental protection in order to have better and motivated specialists in this field
- Implement ecological education programs in 3 different stages of educational institutions:
 - 1.) *primary school* – the basics of how to live more “green”
 - 2.) *high school* – concrete problems at national and international level that endanger the Earth
 - 3.) *universities in absolutely all domains* – the subsequent professional behaviour that each graduate should perform in his own domain of interest for a sustainable development (environmental issues should not be excluded as it they are now from economical, cultural, social and political development so integrating them in the mentality of future specialists in all fields could lead to a sustainable development of Romania)
- Implement on national level the recycling of waste
- More strict legislation and means of respecting it for deforestation, illegal building on green areas, illegal hunting and fishing
- Promote on national level the idea of using bicycles instead cars and develop a feasible system of bicycle routes
- The government and national media should offer more support and interest for the actions of environmental NGO-s and run their own campaigns to educate citizens to live more sustainable.

Furthermore we should put a special emphasis on two ecosystems: forests and river deltas.

At the beginning of last century, Romania was one of the European countries with almost 50 % of landscape cover with different types of forest.

A lot of forested areas have disappeared in last decades so nowadays we faced with big problems like land movements, desertification process and huge floods.

Disappearing of the forest means disappearing of many species of plants, birds and animals, many of them being threatened.

The Lower Danube River is also very important habitat, providing spawning, feeding and nursery areas for many species. Actually, is the last area in the European Union where sturgeons are still living and spawning naturally.

Damming of the river, poaching and pollution lead to dramatic decreasing of the wild sturgeon stocks. Many experts and scientists in the region have been aware of threatened status of those fish that are considered extremely important for the countries of the region, involving important fishermen communities.

In May 2006, Romania issued a Common Order to ban for 10 year the commercial fishing of the sturgeons and initiate a Supportive Stocking Programme, to recover the wild sturgeons' population.

The success of establishing for the first time a Conservation Program is still endangered because of artificial regulation of Danube River on the Bala Borcea branch and because the black market is still very strong.

So, we ask Romanian politicians to:

- 1.) implement the regulations referred to poaching;
- 2.) avoid the regulation of the Danube River without having impact studies about bottom bed of the river and about flora and fauna;
- 3.) stop the deforestation and to enforce the laws referred to anthrop impact on protected areas.

Marian Paraschiv
Danube Delta National Institute
Laura Cristea
Romeo Cuc
Eco Terra

Our Demands to the CBD

- 1.) We urge states to fulfill the main goals of the CBD, which are
 - Conservation
 - Sustainable use
 - Access and benefit sharing
- 2.) We demand an integration of education for sustainable development into the curricula of all schools.
- 3.) We demand a protocol from the CBD ensuring that countries permanently preserve at least 10 percent of their national area in a natural state and establish a coherent system of marine protected areas.
- 4.) We demand the abolishment of the right to patent living organisms.
- 5.) We demand that the governments adhere to the Precautionary Principle set up at the 1992 Rio Summit and prohibit agro-genetic engineering in all countries.
- 6.) We demand parties should ensure full and effective participation of indigenous people, local communities and civil society organisations in policy processes.
- 7.) We demand parties should put in place long-term-strategies containing tangible, quantifiable targets for the protection of biodiversity. Appropriate instruments for its implementation and mechanisms for independent monitoring are needed.