



Bundesministerium
für Umwelt, Naturschutz
und Reaktorsicherheit



ONE NATURE - ONE WORLD - OUR FUTURE
COP 9 MOP 4 Bonn Germany 2008

The Convention on Biological Diversity Conference of Parties - May 2008

Germany's Business and Biodiversity Initiative



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Background

Imagine a lotus blossom, a shark, a penguin, a gecko. Their materials have inspired new technologies like self-cleaning surfaces, new aerodynamic coatings for airplanes, cars with low-drag coefficients, better engines, and reusable adhesives. These animals have not only given us the opportunity to create higher performance technologies, together with all animals, plants, fungi, and microorganisms -- they clean the air and water and contribute to creating fertile soil and a pleasant climate. Both the economy and society benefit from biological diversity -- in terms of providing food, preserving health, and catalyzing innovation.

But nature suffers from an alarming worldwide loss of biodiversity, species, and ecosystems, which is endangering the livelihood of mankind at a global level.

One of the key questions that we need to address – and soon answer – is how to achieve the optimal combination of both using and protecting biodiversity?

The United Nations identified this dilemma in 1992, during the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, with the result that 190 states signed the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), whose objectives are:

1. Conservation of the diversity of animal and plant species, ecosystems, and genetic diversity
2. Sustainable use of natural resources
3. Fair distribution of advantages and profits resulting from the use of genetic resources.

In 2002, the Convention set an additional worldwide objective to achieve a significant reduction in the current loss of biological diversity by 2010.



Over the past years, several Conferences of the Parties (COPs) have emphasized the importance of the private sector in ensuring the protection and sustainable use of biological diversity, recognizing that the loss of biological diversity -- as well as its protection -- is linked with business activities.

Nevertheless, action by the private sector has been rather limited. In response, the COP 8 Decision VIII/17 a) states:

The private sector is arguably the least engaged of all stakeholders in the implementation of the Convention; yet, the daily activities of business and industry have major impacts on biodiversity. Encouraging business and industry to adopt and promote good practice could make a significant contribution towards the 2010 target and the objectives of the Convention.

The protection of natural resources for future generations can only be accomplished with the active support and involvement of the private sector.

Germany will host the next Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity - COP 9, in 2008. From May 19th to 30th, upwards of 5'000 participants from the signatory states will attend the Conference in Bonn.

The Conference is intended to signal strong interest in cooperating with the private sector and will demonstrate the positive role that companies can play in this domain.

The importance of engaging the business sector in protecting biodiversity is echoed at several levels. For instance, within the EU framework, the 'Business and Biodiversity Initiative' has been incorporated into the activities of the EU Commission and Portugal's presidency, as well as within Germany's national strategy on biodiversity, which was adopted by the German federal government on November 7th 2007.



Objectives of Germany's 'Business and Biodiversity Initiative'

The German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety launched the "Business and Biodiversity Initiative" and commissioned GTZ -- the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit GmbH to carry out its implementation.

This initiative aims to more fully engage the private sector in achieving the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity by encouraging:

- Companies and business associations to actively take part in the Conference
- Companies to commit themselves with specific contributions to the objectives of the Convention
- The presentation of pilot cases and best practices during the Conference.

In signing the Leadership Declaration, companies benefit through:

- Presentation of the company to an international audience
- Participation in CoP 9 discussion panels and side events
- Participation in the 'Leadership Declaration' signing ceremony
- Taking part in an exhibition (booths)
- Public relations activities in the context of the Conference (e. g. press talks)
- Documentation of case studies
- Getting 'first hand' information and direct contact with politicians, experts, media, and representatives of civil society.

Additionally, an international conference on biodiversity and business will take place in Bonn on April 2-3, 2008 organized by GTZ, the Global Nature Fund (GNF), and the Federal Office for Nature Conservation (Bundesamt für Naturschutz - GNF). The implementation of Germany's national strategy on biodiversity – intended to actively integrate enterprises and business associations – will be coordinated by Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) and the Institute for Organizational Communication (Institut für Organisationskommunikation - IFOK).



Leadership Declaration

For the Implementation of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity –

An Initiative of the Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and Leading Companies

Preamble

The 9th UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UN CBD) Conference in May 2008 aims to visibly integrate the business sector -- engaging companies from all sectors in undertaking concrete activities to support and implement the objectives of the UN CBD Convention.

We acknowledge that some companies are more experienced with biodiversity than others. Furthermore, different sectors may require different plans and approaches.

From this standpoint, signatory companies are expected to initiate an internal reflection process and signal their willingness to integrate biodiversity considerations into their business objectives. Signatory companies are expected to present their current and future engagement at the 9th UN CBD Conference.

The Leadership Declaration will be fulfilled through an individualized approach. In this respect, companies will be offered the possibility to determine their own steps and objectives regarding the integration of biodiversity objectives within corporate policy and activities.

The German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety plans to support the Business and Biodiversity Initiative during its CBD presidency until 2010 by establishing a service platform. Although primarily aimed at German companies, the platform will be internationally linked and provide services e.g. consultancy, identification of experts according the needs of signatory companies, organization of annual workshops and roundtables to facilitate the exchange information and experience; provide access to international organizations and non-governmental organizations, etc.



Declaration

All signatory companies acknowledge and support the Convention's three objectives:

- Conservation of biological diversity
- Sustainable use of its components
- Fair and equitable sharing of the benefits that arise out of the utilization of genetic resources.

Signatory companies furthermore commit themselves to:

1. Analyze corporate activities with regard to their impacts on biological diversity.
2. Include the protection of biological diversity within their environmental management system, and develop biodiversity indicators.
3. Appoint a responsible individual within the company to steer all activities in the biodiversity sector and report to the Management Board.
4. Define realistic, measurable objectives that are monitored and adjusted every 2 to 3 years.
5. Publish activities and achievements in the biodiversity sector in the company's annual, environmental, and/or corporate social responsibility report.
6. Inform suppliers about the company's biodiversity objectives and integrate them accordingly.
7. Explore the potential for cooperation with scientific institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and/or governmental institutions with the aim of deepening dialogue and continuously improve the corporate management system vis-à-vis the biodiversity domain.



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