

# The Hague Ministerial Declaration of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity

*We, the Ministers responsible for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, having met in The Hague, The Netherlands, on 17 and 18 April 2002, on the occasion of the sixth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity,*

1. *Acknowledging* the critical importance of biodiversity—the variability among living organisms from all sources and the ecological complexes of which they are a part, including diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems—that has made earth a uniquely habitable place for humans and that is essential to our planet and our well-being;
2. *Acknowledging* further that biological diversity is being destroyed by human activities at unprecedented rates and that the Convention on Biological Diversity is the foremost instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, as well as for the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, and that therefore clear objectives and goals to halt and reverse this trend have to be set;
3. *Noting* the shift in emphasis within the Convention process from policy development to implementation and the need to put equal weight on the three objectives of the Convention;
4. *Recognising* the need for clear targets and timetables as follow-up to the adoption of the Strategic Plan and to put mechanisms in place to reach these targets and review progress in the implementation of the Convention's work programmes;
5. *Recognizing* that biodiversity underpins sustainable development in many ways; poverty eradication, food security, provision of fresh water, soil conservation and human health all depend directly upon maintaining and using the world's biological diversity and therefore sustainable development cannot be achieved without the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;
6. *Reconfirming* our commitment to the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and *underline* the need to guide our actions based on ethical principles of implementation of the Convention towards the broad goal of sustainable development, based on integration of economic, social and environmental matters. We *commit* ourselves to move from dialogue to action;
7. *Emphasizing* the progress made in the last decade in translating the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity into national and international policies and concrete activities, including through:

- National Biodiversity Strategies and Actions Plans in more than one hundred countries;
- The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;
- The Bonn guidelines on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization;
- The development and use with respect to all ecosystems of key concepts, such as the ecosystem approach;
- The work programme on the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;
- Guiding principles on invasive alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species;
- Work programmes on forest biological diversity, on dry and sub-humid land, inland water ecosystems, marine and coastal ecosystems, agrobiodiversity and on cross-cutting issues;
- Increasing awareness that biodiversity is critical for the provision of goods and services;
- Clearing-house mechanisms established at the Secretariat and at national levels to promote technical and scientific cooperation and information exchange.

8. *We stress* the importance of the contribution of the Convention on Biological Diversity to the implementation of Agenda 21 and emphasize that at the same time Agenda 21 is indispensable for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

9. *We reconfirm* our commitment to consider the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, as well as the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources as essential for achieving sustainable development and contributing to poverty eradication. We urge the promotion of synergies between the Convention on Biological Diversity and related conventions and the exchange of experiences and lessons learned between countries and regions and all relevant stakeholders.

10. *We regret*, however, that despite the efforts of governments and relevant stakeholders the Global Biodiversity Outlook indicates that biodiversity continues to be destroyed by human activities. We underline the statement of the Secretary-General of the United Nations: “Therefore we must face up to an inescapable reality: the challenges of sustainability simply overwhelm the adequacy of our responses. With some honourable exceptions, our responses are too few, too little and too late.”

11. *We acknowledge* that life is on the line and therefore resolve to strengthen our efforts to put in place measures to halt biodiversity loss, which is taking place at an alarming rate, at the global, regional, sub-regional and national levels by the year 2010.

12. *We commit* to developing and revising, as appropriate, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans by the time of the seventh Conference of Parties is held.

13. *We reconfirm* the commitment to halting deforestation and the loss of forest biodiversity and ensuring the sustainable use of timber and non-timber resources

and we commit ourselves to the full implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity's expanded action-oriented work programme on all types of forest biological diversity in close cooperation with the United Nations Forum on Forests, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other forest-related processes and conventions, and with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

14. *We resolve* to develop and implement effective and innovative mechanisms that guarantee the equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the sustainable use of genetic resources, including the valuation and economic retribution of global environmental services, acknowledging that the rates of destruction of biological diversity will remain very high unless the countries and their peoples, who are custodians of this natural wealth, benefit from it.

15. *We call upon* the World Summit on Sustainable Development to:

- (a) *Reaffirm that* the Convention on Biological Diversity is the principal international legal instrument for the coordination, consolidation and strengthening of efforts undertaken through the various regional, subregional and international biodiversity-related agreements and programmes;
- (b) *Reaffirm that* States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction;
- (c) *Recognize* the strong links between biodiversity and other policy fields in terms of policy development and implementation and in particular promote:
  - The strong interlinkages between the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and sustainable development, poverty eradication and natural disaster management;
  - The integration of biodiversity objectives into social and economic policies, programmes and actions, in particular when addressing the interface of sustainable development with trade and financial agreements;
  - Synergy and mutual supportiveness between the Convention on Biological Diversity and international trade-related agreements and policies with a view to attaining the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity in a more concrete manner, in particular with the WTO, including the Doha Agreement, and therefore the proper recognition and status of the Convention on Biological Diversity within the relevant WTO bodies;
  - Effective cooperation and coordination among biodiversity-related Conventions and other bodies and processes in areas of mutual interest, in particular with the the United Nations Forum on Forests, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Convention on Migratory Species and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and at regional, sub-regional and global level;

- Enhanced coordination, synergies and partnerships at the national, regional and the sub-regional levels;
  - The ecosystem approach as one of the key concepts for integrated management of land, water and living resources.
- (d) *Reconfirm* the commitment to have instruments in place to stop and reverse the current alarming biodiversity loss at the global, regional, sub-regional and national levels by the year 2010;
  - (e) *Recognize* the need for the intensification of basic surveys and research on biological diversity to enhance our scientific knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystems;
  - (f) *Encourage* governments to take appropriate policy measures to conserve and restore important ecosystems, in particular wetlands including shallow coastal water areas and coral reefs, as well as mountain and arctic ecosystems;
  - (g) *Urge* all States to ratify and fully implement the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the biodiversity-related agreements, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and to promote a coherent approach in their implementation at the national, regional and international levels and welcome and support the results of the process on International Environmental Governance;
  - (h) *Welcome* the positive outcome of the United Nations International Conference on Financing for Development held in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002 as reflected in the Monterrey Consensus, which represents a crucial step towards achieving the goals of poverty eradication, sustained economic growth, and promotion of sustainable development;
  - (i) *Urge* developed countries that have not done so to make concrete efforts towards the target of 0,7 per cent of Gross National Product (GNP) as ODA to developing countries and 0,15 to 0,20 per cent of GNP to least developed countries;
  - (j) *Urge* developed countries to achieve a significant replenishment of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF);
  - (k) *Reaffirm* the need for capacity building, the facilitation of the transfer of environmentally sound technology and the provision of adequate and predictable financial resources and the promotion and protection of knowledge, including traditional knowledge, and sound science for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and the small island developing States amongst them, and countries with economies in transition to fully implement the Convention on Biological Diversity as an essential component for achieving sustainable development;
  - (l) *Create and strengthen* partnerships at different levels with public and private partners in the different regions in all relevant sectors, including the banking and business community, international organisations and institutions to pro-

mote capacity building, the transfer of environmentally sound technology, the provision of adequate financial resources and the provision of knowledge, including provisions for preserving and maintaining traditional knowledge and sound science for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and to promote investments in biodiversity activities, especially in developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and the Small Island Developing States amongst them and the countries with economies in transition. Encourage parties and stakeholders to propose such partnerships as Type II outcome to the WSSD;

- (m) *Urge* governments to strengthen their efforts to develop and implement educational and capacity-building programmes, especially in developing countries, in particular the least developed and the small island developing States amongst them and countries with economies in transition, to increase the level of awareness and technical competencies necessary at all levels of society to achieve sustainable development and to promote the objectives of the Convention in such programmes; Urge countries to ensure coherence between the national strategies for biodiversity and other policies and strategies, in particular for (a) sustainable development and poverty eradication; (b) climate change and desertification and (c) economic activities, such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism;
- (n) *Recognize* the commitment to halting deforestation and the loss of forest biodiversity and ensuring the sustainable use of timber and non-timber resources and the commitment to the full implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity's expanded action-oriented work programme on all types of forest biological diversity in close cooperation with the United Nations Forum on Forests, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other forest-related processes and conventions, and with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders;
- (o) *Encourage and enable* all stakeholders to contribute to the implementation of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and recognize in particular the specific role of youth, women and indigenous and local communities in conserving and using biodiversity in a sustainable way. In particular it is important to recognize the rights of the indigenous and local communities and incorporate, with their prior approval, their unique knowledge, innovations and practices in conserving biodiversity and securing sustainable development and promote their participation in the Convention process;
- (p) *Urge* governments to undertake adequate measures with respect to their international obligations, including through the development of mechanisms for assessment and review of implementation and the establishment of compliance regimes;

16. *We reiterate* our commitment to the success of the Preparatory Conference for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which will be held in Bali, Indonesia on 27 May–7 June 2002 at ministerial level and the Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 26 August–4 September 2002. In this regard, we urge the

Parties to constructively contribute to and actively participate in the process of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in order to ensure the achievement of the objectives of the Convention, particularly those relating to poverty eradication and sustainable development;

17. *We welcome* the outcome of the Youth Conference and the Multi Stakeholder Dialogue, as annexed to this Ministerial Declaration, as valuable contributions to the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity and *resolve* to organise meetings of youth and of involved stakeholders in the framework of future Conferences of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.