

Statement for the Civil G8 Dialogue: “The German G8 Agenda on Biodiversity”

By Dr. Elsa Nickel (Federal Ministry for the Environment)

- As holder of the EU and G8 Presidency - and, in the field of biodiversity, as host of the next Conference of the Parties to the CBD - Germany is in a very special position. I would therefore like to expand my presentation somewhat and address other processes beyond the G8 context.
- In my view, the meeting of environment ministers of the **G8 states** and the five major newly industrialising countries was a great success in a number of ways: we were able to place the issue of biodiversity high on the political agenda and to send a clear signal to the G8 summit in Heligendamm. With the Potsdam Initiative on Biological Diversity 2010 we have laid solid foundations for the conservation of biological diversity. We have launched a dialogue with the “+5” countries. And we have agreed with Japan that we should continue along this chosen path.
- At the meeting, the crucial **prerequisites for the breakthrough in international environmental negotiations** became very clear: fair economic and social development, poverty reduction, promotion of sustainable resource use, economic compensation mechanisms for non-use, creation of favourable trade structures, equitable sharing of benefits for countries of origin for the use of their biological diversity and strengthening of development cooperation. In short: the development policy dimension of biodiversity and its use was highlighted.
- Against this background, the key negotiation points for success at the **9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in 2008 in Germany** in my view include: progress regarding access to genetic resources and equitable benefit sharing (ABS) to enable work on an international ABS regime to be completed by 2010, the elaboration of additional innovative financing mechanisms for global nature conservation and progress regarding technology transfer.
- We are also preparing focal issues for COP9 within the **EU**. In February I presented a **presidency briefing**, outlining the basis for Council conclusions on biodiversity, which I would like to be adopted in the Environment Council at the end of June. In this way we can trigger crucial progress at COP9 on implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity. In addition to the aspects I have already mentioned, elements of this briefing included the

creation of a global interface between science and policy in the field of biodiversity similar to the IPCC (IMoSEB), the establishment of a global protection network, the protection of the world's oceans and forests, the role of international standards and certification for the production of bioenergy, the governance of the Convention, the involvement of the business community and a global study on the economic impacts of the loss of biodiversity.

- But let me get back to the G8. The key outcome at the meeting of environment ministers was the adoption of the “**Potsdam Initiative Biological Diversity 2010**” proposed by Federal Minister Gabriel. This initiative contains joint activities in the areas of industry, science, trade and financing. These activities include:
 - Elaborating a global study on the economic benefits of biodiversity and the costs of its loss
 - Creating a mechanism for an improved interface between science and policy (similar to the IPCC)
 - Establishing a global species information system
 - Strengthening scientific cooperation for protection of the high seas
 - Securing sustainable production, particularly for wood and biomass through a mix of instruments (regulatory measures, certification, public procurement, environmental impact assessments)
 - Linking biodiversity and climate policy
 - Improved financing.
- We have already launched follow-up measures in many of these areas. For example, we are already in a concrete coordination process with the Commission and the G8 +5 countries regarding the elaboration of the global study on the economic benefits of biodiversity. A first coordination meeting on potentially setting up a global species information system has been held in Brussels and, in the framework of the preparations for the CBD COP9, we are trying to launch agreements with the private sector. We have planned a workshop on the issue of the high seas in late autumn.
- The World Bank's proposal to test approaches to giving financial incentives for **reducing emissions from deforestation** in the context of a Forest Carbon Partnership Facility was discussed at an experts' workshop in Berlin (April 10 and 11), where the idea was welcomed

by many G8 partners as well as by developing countries. Some partners have already confirmed their support for the establishment of a Forest Carbon Partnership Facility. Reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries can make a significant contribution towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions, maintaining biodiversity and securing livelihoods. This topic will be discussed in Heiligendamm.

- Federal Minister Gabriel has already forwarded the conclusions from the environment ministers' meeting to Federal Chancellor Merkel. We are striving to have this issue addressed in an appropriate form at the summit in Heiligendamm.
- Conclusion