



Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources
Azerbaijan

HIGH LEVEL PAN EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON BIODIVERSITY
Gabala, Azerbaijan
7 July 2010

**Biodiversity for Development and Poverty Alleviation:
Achieving the Millennium Development Goals**

GABALA DECLARATION

Workshop and Conference organized with assistance from the European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC)

IN SUPPORT OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND THE PAN EUROPEAN BIOLOGICAL AND LANDSCAPE DIVERSITY STRATEGY



GABALA DECLARATION

The Pan European High Level Conference on Biodiversity, generously hosted by the Government of Azerbaijan in the historical city of Gabala in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and organized as a means to mark the International Year of Biodiversity and the Azerbaijan Year of the Environment, gathered together more than 100 representatives from Governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, scientific institutions and the private sector. The objective of the Conference was to prepare a pan European input to the high level event on biodiversity to be held on 22 September 2010 on the eve of the opening of the 65th Session of the General Assembly and parallel to the United Nations High Level Plenary meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG Summit) from 20 to 22 September 2010. The Declaration takes into account the results of the expert and NGO biodiversity meetings carried out in Gabala from 5 to 6 July, 2010.

The participants of the Gabala Conference,

Expressing their grave concern that the 2010 biodiversity target to halt the loss of biodiversity in the pan European region has not been reached and *drawing attention to* the further negative impact of climate change on biodiversity and ecosystem services, and the need to tackle the underlying causes of biodiversity loss,

Noting that the Declaration of the Muskoka 2010 G8 Summit expresses “regrets that the international community is not on track to meeting its 2010 target to significantly reduce the rate of loss of biodiversity globally” and recognizes “that the current rate of loss is a serious threat, since biologically diverse and resilient ecosystems are critical to human well being, sustainable development and poverty eradication,”

Agreeing on the importance of a holistic approach to biodiversity, poverty alleviation and development, and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and *welcoming* the United Nations High Level plenary meeting on MDGs to accelerate progress towards the 2015 deadline,

Taking note of the need to increase collaboration and coherence amongst the biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements at the pan European level by strengthening pan European cooperation on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity through the Pan European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS),

Highlighting that the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity cannot take place without engaging in public awareness raising activities so that citizens are informed and educated about the vital role of biodiversity for human health and wellbeing, as well as economic development,

Understanding the importance of involving a broad spectrum of stakeholders in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including the private sector, non governmental organizations, community based organizations, and scientific research institutions,

Stressing the unique contribution that the pan European region can make to the debate on the Green Economy, biodiversity and MDGs as it comprises countries with direct experience in central and market economies as well as includes countries that both provide access and share benefits of biodiversity,

Recognizing the importance of the third objective of the Convention on Biological Diversity on access to genetic resources and the equitable sharing of benefits to countries in the pan European region in order to adequately conserve biodiversity as called for in the Strategic Plan of the Convention,

And recalling the Chair's conclusions of the *Liege Conference* organized within the framework of the PEBLDS that highlighted, *inter alia*, "the role of regional cooperation in the achievement of a new biodiversity vision and targets as well as the implementation of the CBD strategic plan,"

1. *Acknowledge* that promoting a Green Economy in the pan European region by encouraging a substantial increase in investments in economic sectors that build on and enhance the Earth's natural capital or reduce ecological scarcities and environmental risks, such as renewable energy, low-carbon transport, energy-efficient buildings, clean technologies, improved waste management, improved freshwater provision, sustainable agriculture and forest management, and sustainable fisheries, could lead to a significant reduction in biodiversity loss, increased awareness of the limitations of the Earth's resources, consideration of the value of ecosystem services when measuring human wellbeing, and progress in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

2. *Stress* the importance and value of protected areas as essential components of national and regional conservation policies that provide numerous local, pan European and global benefits including the maintenance of biodiversity and ecosystem services, including cultural services;

3. *Recognize* that protected areas in the pan European region are not only beneficial for the conservation of ecosystems, species, genetic resources and the diversity of landscapes, but are also vital for supporting people's livelihoods; and that those protected areas, taking into account the precautionary principle, and in accordance with the goals for the establishment of those protected areas, could provide opportunities to develop sustainable businesses that benefit biodiversity and the maintenance of ecosystem services;

4. *Consider* that to ensure the long term conservation of the richness of biodiversity and functional ecosystems for human wellbeing in the pan European region, the following key actions are necessary and urgent:

- a) Ensure high priority is given to biodiversity on the pan European political agenda taking into account the post 2010 CBD target;
- b) Ensure viability of ecosystem services and the sustainable use of nature;
- c) Utilize existing and develop new mechanisms and incentives to support the responsible use of biodiversity by business;
- d) Increase involvement and collaboration of stakeholders by integration of biodiversity concerns in land management and all sectors of the economy;
- e) Initiate action of all key stakeholders from relevant sectors to establish a green economy preserving the resilience of biodiversity and ecosystems;
- f) Build and maintain coherent, national and cross boundary ecological networks as well as other green infrastructures;
- g) Include studies on biodiversity and ecosystem services in the curriculum for education;
- h) Increase public awareness of, emotional involvement in, and access to, the experience of nature;
- i) Target financial and human resources on biodiversity priorities and manage them to maximize efficiency and effectiveness;
- j) Ensure capacity building and technical assistance for the sectors and stakeholders involved in biodiversity conservation and management;
- k) Support research and monitoring that is targeted at pan European and national priorities.

5. *Renew and strengthen* their commitment to the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and *highlight* the need to address the challenges and focus on the opportunities to achieve the objectives of the Convention by embracing, at the pan European level, a new 2020 biodiversity target and 2050 biodiversity vision to be adopted at the 10th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya, Japan in October 2010.