



Background Note Biodiversity Stakeholders' Roundtable

The Environment for Europe process

Since its launch in 1991, the 'Environment for Europe' process has been a unique platform for shaping international environmental policy for the 56 countries within the UNECE region. Besides adopting international commitments in various fields related to the environment, the Ministerial Conferences provide opportunities for various stakeholders to exchange views and initiate and strengthen cooperation aiming at improving the environment. As important milestones in biodiversity conservation, the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) was adopted in 1995 at the Sofia Ministerial Conference. And in 2003 in Kyiv the Resolution on Biodiversity was endorsed with the overall target to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010 in the pan European region with nine sub-targets in the areas of forests; agriculture; protected areas and ecological networks; biodiversity monitoring and indicators; invasive alien species; financing, and; communication, education and public awareness.

Why a biodiversity roundtable?

Biological diversity and ecosystems provide the basis for all life on earth and sustain societies by supporting social and economic processes. The link between ecosystems, human activities and human well-being has also been explored in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment launched in 2002. According to the findings, biodiversity decline will continue or even accelerate in the future. With the close connections between biodiversity, ecosystem services and human well-being this trend will result in the deterioration of human well-being.

The 6th Ministerial Conference is the last conference before 2010, the deadline for halting biodiversity loss as committed by the Pan-European Ministers of Environment in Kyiv. Therefore the PEBLDS and European Eco Forum, a Pan-European coalition of environmental citizen organisations, decided to jointly organize a roundtable on biodiversity on 10 October 2007 from 16.30 to 18.30 at Belgrade with the participation of Ministers of Environment, NGOs and other stakeholders.

The aims and structure of the roundtable

The aim of the roundtable is to stimulate Pan-European multi-stakeholder cooperation in biodiversity management and conservation and raise the profile of biodiversity at the international level highlighting its crucial contribution to human well-being.

In the first part of the roundtable, there will be a review and sharing of best practices of the ongoing efforts in the Pan-European region for the implementation of the Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity. The second part of the roundtable will give an opportunity for a meaningful and frank exchange among the various stakeholders, who are all affected by biodiversity loss and could contribute to the achievement of the 2010 target. They will be invited to point out the opportunities and challenges in this cross-sectoral cooperation and share experiences and lessons learned.

The Biodiversity Stakeholders' Roundtable will also host the launch of a multi-stakeholder initiative beyond Belgrade called the "Pan-European Biodiversity Picnic". It will involve various actors of the society into an open door picnic every year on the International Biodiversity Day (22 May), with the aim to draw the attention of the public to the importance of biodiversity and its contribution to livelihoods and human well-being.

The roundtable will be closely followed by a side-event, where the participants will experience the huge diversity within the whole region through local fruits and other delicious food items and ingredients of a truly Pan-European picnic.

Further information on the ***Belgrade Conference***:

UNECE website:

<http://www.unece.org/env/efe/wgso/Belgrade/welcome.html>

Ministry of Environmental Protection of Serbia website:

<http://www.efe-belgrade2007.org/>