

Declaration

Signed by 50 young adults from 18 countries in the International Wilderness Camp, National Park Bavarian Forest; presented at the United Nations Conference of the Parties, Convention on Biological Diversity.



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

Respecting (bio)diversity is respecting life

We, as representatives of the young generation all over the world, want to share with you our thoughts about our future and its dependence on biological and cultural diversity, especially in the face of climate change.

We call for:

New conceptions of development

- We want to reconsider the relationship between humankind and nature, acknowledging that humans are an integral part of the web of life, which encompasses not only terrestrial but also aquatic and marine ecosystems.
- According to the Living Planet Report 2006, 16% of the global population make up 45% of the global ecological footprint, which means that if everybody consumed as many resources as the industrialised nations, we would need three planets. But we only have one!
- Therefore we call for new conceptions of development based on the idea that we are all developing countries. Industrialised nations have to develop ways of reducing their ecological footprint whereas the majority of the world's population should be able to improve their living standards without increasing their impact on our planet.
- These development conceptions should be based on people's needs respecting existing nature conservation values and knowledges.
- We demand integrated, sustainable natural resource management to prevent future conflicts (i.e. water, food, land tenure).
- We want to look beyond monetary values and strive for fair distribution of costs and benefits of biodiversity conservation.
- To do so we need coherent laws and enforcement measures, as well as innovative and long-term financing mechanisms.
- Moreover, we are convinced that in the long term fair terms of trade are better strategies to balance conservation and development interests than compensation mechanisms.

Actions to address root causes and threats

- Since healthy ecosystems and diversity of species and genes leave us with more options to confront (adaptation/mitigation) climate change, we urgently need to address the root causes of biodiversity loss such as poverty, population growth, unsustainable consumption patterns and lack of knowledge.
- Other threats to biodiversity also need to be dealt with, for instance genetically modified organisms (GMOs), patents on life, monocultures, agrofuels, and invasive species.

Environmental education, participation, and communication

- We call for high quality environmental education and communication, ensuring its accessibility (in formal and non-formal spaces) on local, regional, and global levels.
- More participatory approaches are needed for biodiversity conservation such as community conserved areas.
- Different actors and sectors of society (i.e. economics, science, politics, media, and civil society) should work together towards more integrated approaches.
- We need to share information based on unbiased, multidisciplinary research.
- But let us not forget: conservation requires concrete actions on the ground!

Accountability, transparency and commitment

- As part of civil society, we will hold our decision-makers accountable for their words and actions, measuring them for instance by the quality of national reports on the state of biodiversity.
- Governments have to establish binding laws and incentives towards sustainable production, consumption, and end-use.
- Furthermore we urge our governments to actively take part in international processes and to collaborate in an effective and coordinated way.
- Politicians should have the courage to take decisions towards a more sustainable world even though these might be inconvenient.

Unity in diversity

- (Bio)diversity conservation must be the priority for long-term human development.
- Climate change is happening and it is threatening the basis of our life.
Start acting now!
- We want to make a difference, working in unity respecting diversity.

Participants from:

Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, China, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Germany, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Namibia, Philippines, Russia, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam.

Core messages



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We are all developing countries. We need new models of development.

16% of the global population make up 45% of the global ecological footprint, which means that if everybody consumed as many resources as the industrialised nations, we would need three planets. But we only have one! Therefore we call for new models of development based on the idea that we are all developing countries. Industrialised nations have to develop ways of reducing their ecological footprint whereas the majority of the world's population should be able to improve their living standards without increasing their impact on our planet.

Priority to (bio)diversity – working for it in unity

(Bio)diversity conservation must be the priority for long-term human development. Different actors and sectors of society (economics, science, politics) should work together.

As part of civil society, we will hold our decision-makers accountable for their words and actions, urging our governments to actively take part in international processes and to collaborate on different levels. Moreover we, as a part of the civil society, will take responsibility and actively participate in biodiversity conservation and strive for fair distribution of its costs and benefits. We want to make a difference, working in unity respecting diversity.