

NORDIC BIODIVERSITY BEYOND 2010 – CHALLENGES AND EXPERIENCES IN A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Trondheim, Norway 26. – 27.10.2009

In April 2008, the Nordic environment ministers asked the Nordic Council of Ministers to organize a conference on the current status and future perspectives of Nordic biodiversity with eyes set on the 2010 target. The task was given to the Terrestrial Ecosystems working group (TEG), which developed the initiative into a project funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The implementation of the project and the responsibility for the conference was given to the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management.

The conference was organized 26 – 27 October 2009 in Trondheim in Norway, with some 80 participants attending from all Nordic countries. The conference, led by the TEG-chair Stig Johansson, concluded with a set of recommendations – a message from Trondheim. The recommendations were immediately presented to the environmental ministers and the environment committee of the Nordic Council at a meeting in Stockholm on the 28 October. The two page message contained general recommendations on the 2010 target and on setting targets beyond 2010. It also included, specific recommendations both to the Nordic and national institutions, and for Nordic action in a global context. The main message was presented in three points below:

- *The Nordic countries will not reach the 2010 target to halt the loss of biodiversity.*
- *There is a need for a similar, ambitious target beyond 2010, emphasizing the need for healthy ecosystems for human well-being.*
- *Halting the loss of biodiversity must, together with efforts to tackle climate change, be raised to an overarching, high-level political goal, which is continuously monitored and reported by governments across all sectors in society.*

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

- *The Nordic countries will not reach the 2010 target to halt the loss of biodiversity.*
- *There is a need for a similar, ambitious target beyond 2010, emphasizing the need for healthy ecosystems for human well-being.*
- *Halting the loss of biodiversity must, together with efforts to tackle climate change, be raised to an overarching, high-level political goal, which is continuously monitored and reported by governments across all sectors in society.*

PREAMBLE

We all depend on biodiversity, but we must make biodiversity relevant to people. The long-term loss of nature and biodiversity is, however, not as easily translated into clear messages, let alone into economic opportunities, as is the case with measures to tackle climate change. The changes are dispersed, many times slow and subtle. Connecting the economic problems and threats people face due the degradation of our biological resource base is also many times hard to express in facts and figures, as we have seen with the efforts to repeat the review of the economic impacts of climate change.

Yet we all see the impact of degradation and loss of biodiversity in our daily lives when we are out there hiking, fishing, hunting and enjoying nature. We must create a vision and a powerful metaphor, communicated to and understood by ordinary people, that describes our co-existence with and dependence on nature and how the loss of nature reflects on ourselves as Nordic people and societies. The need to stop the loss of biodiversity does not end 2010. What will we call upon now – that is our challenge.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The 2010 target

- The Nordic countries will not reach the 2010 target to halt the loss of biodiversity.
- It has, however, been useful in raising attention and generating important actions for sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity
- The 2010 target has been included in national policies and strategies in the Nordic countries, which have influenced primarily programmes within the environment sector, while in other sectors less has been made to integrate biodiversity concerns so far.
- The 2010 target has stimulated work in monitoring and reporting, recognizing the need for improving our knowledge-base.

Beyond 2010

- The target to halt the loss of biodiversity is still valid and even more urgent than before.
- There is a need for a similar, ambitious overall target beyond 2010, emphasizing the need for healthy ecosystems for human well being.
- The new targets should be relevant to all biodiversity related conventions.
- Halting the loss of biodiversity must, together with measures to combat and adapt to climate change, be raised to an overarching high-level political goal, which are continuously monitored and reported by governments across the sectors in society.
- The target must be described in a powerful message communicating the consequences of the loss of biodiversity beyond the environmental constituency to ordinary people and to other sectors and stakeholders in society.

- Stakeholders and processes in society, such as the business and consumer sectors, must be involved in formulating goals and in taking responsibility for halting the loss of biodiversity.
- Efficient governance of biodiversity and ecosystem services needs instruments to bridge gaps between sectors and scales, and between science and policy, and there is a need for adaptive governance, continuously generating and making use of new ecological knowledge.
- There must be procedures and mechanisms in society to assess, make choices and arbitrate between increasingly conflicting uses of natural resources and ecosystem services.
- There is need for improved and more authoritative scientific knowledge on the status and trends in biodiversity.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS TO:

Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers

- Biodiversity, along with climate change, must be made into a high-level and overarching Nordic political agenda.
- The Nordic countries should develop a strategy, “Biodiversity towards 2020”, as a vehicle for joint international action, action within Europe and at national level. The importance of local actions should be emphasised in this strategy.
- The establishment of a Nordic Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, as a joint Nordic high-level science-policy platform should be explored.
- A joint Nordic effort to develop the work on invasive alien species, such as NOBANIS, into a common EU-level and Pan-European platform should be considered.
- Land use is a major driver in the loss of biodiversity. Better land use planning is the key to counter the negative impacts on biodiversity, and the role of local municipalities should be emphasised in this respect.
- Business and biodiversity, including the role of consumer driven markets in achieving a sustainable use of biodiversity, should be highlighted in the Nordic co-operation.
- A Nordic project to exchange experiences of effective communication strategies regarding the biodiversity challenge should be initiated.

National actions

- Biodiversity, along with the efforts to tackle climate change, should be elevated to the highest political level to ensure that goals related to climate change and biodiversity are integrated into sector goals, plans and programmes.
- There is considerable scope for joint Nordic efforts in e.g. developing indicators and monitoring change, and incorporating these into European level initiatives.
- Establish national biodiversity committees, including all major stakeholders, to ensure that biodiversity issues are addressed in a coherent way in society.
- Improve and restore ecosystems important for biodiversity and ecosystem services.

NORDIC ACTIONS IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

- A common Nordic support to the establishment of an Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, including mechanisms to use Nordic co-operation and experiences to strengthen its role.
- Develop an overarching Nordic strategy and framework agenda for biodiversity and climate change for coherent Nordic actions, including in development assistance.
- Support a major communication initiative to take the results of the “The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity”-study to policy- and decision-makers both in the Nordic countries, as well as in the developing countries as part of the joint Nordic development agenda.
- The Nordic countries should be proactive and provide good examples of how regional collaboration can be used to halt the loss of biodiversity.