



COMMUNIQUÉ

Global alliance of cities and governments to save biodiversity of the Mediterranean region

Montreal, 19 January 2012– For the first time, local authorities and representatives of government met in Montpellier from 17 to 19 January 2012 to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including the 20 Aichi Targets, in the Mediterranean region. Eighteen countries from the Mediterranean region, including 21 participants representing a total of 15 cities, as well as three mayors, assembled in Montpellier at the first subregional workshop on capacity-building on strategies and action plans for biodiversity for the region as a whole. The participants looked at the complementary roles of strategies and action plans, subnational and local implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Strategic Plan.

The Mediterranean Regional Workshop for Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans: Coordinating Local and National Action in the Mediterranean Basin was co-organized by the City of Montpellier, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability and the Japan Fund for Biodiversity.

In addition to national representatives in charge of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) from the region, representatives of local governments from each of the invited Mediterranean countries also participated in the workshop. The meeting provided a unique opportunity to peer-review the draft outlines of the first Global Outlook on Cities and Biodiversity to be presented to Rio+20 Summit to be held in June 2012 and submitted to the Hyderabad Biodiversity Summit in October that year.

The outcomes of the workshop will be presented at the meeting on urban policy and biodiversity, convened on 24-25 January 2012 by the City of Paris in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and Natureparif, a regional agency for nature and biodiversity in l'Ile de France, as well as the Association of French Mayors. They will be also submitted to the Second Summit on Cities and Biodiversity, to be held on 15-16 October 2012 in Hyderabad, India, prior to the ministerial segment of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Ms Kobie Brand, ICLEI Director, said: “This workshop starts a new and exciting phase in the collaboration between ICLEI, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and pioneering cities on biodiversity and ecosystem services, when we develop coherent and specific strategies and plans harmonized from global to regional, national and sub-national to local levels. ICLEI, through its Cities Biodiversity Center, is ready to share experiences and provide support and parameters for a future Mediterranean network of cities with the outstanding participation of one of our most recent Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB) Pioneer projects, the City of Montpellier.”

Hélène Mandroux, Mayor of Montpellier added: “The City of Montpellier feels compelled to offer its example given its model urban development, with an emphasis on the human aspect, and its remarkable history. We want to be a catalyst for the creation of a possible network of cities in the Mediterranean. I am delighted with this initiative and with our chance to host the platform of this network and facilitate exchanges, as biodiversity is the life insurance for life itself.”

The representative of the French Minister of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing, Mme Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, reiterated the full support of the French Government for the initiative on cities and biodiversity.

Monique Barbut, Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility, said: “This workshop is part of a critically important effort to change our understanding of the relationship between cities and the natural environment in the Mediterranean. In this region, we need to have a green-economy perspective; sustainability models will have to be tailored across the spectrum of tourism revenue, fisheries and agriculture, biodiversity and ecosystem services. There is probably no other region where these links are stronger than in the Mediterranean.”

Ahmed Djoghlaif, CBD Executive Secretary, said: “This the sixteenth workshop convened under the Japan Biodiversity Fund but the first one to bring together the representatives of the government and the local authorities of the Mediterranean region as whole for the implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets at national and local levels. It is time for all levels of government to work together to translate the Nagoya biodiversity compact at local, regional and national level based on the ecosystem approach to meet the unprecedented challenges of development and urban expansion.”

Over three days, the regional workshop assisted Mediterranean Parties in reviewing their national biodiversity strategies and action plans and fostering cooperation at the regional level in line with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; encouraged the identification of national and regional targets and identified challenges facing biodiversity and its management in the Mediterranean region; promoted local biodiversity strategies and action plans (LBSAPs) and defined the elements and plan for a Mediterranean network of cities engaged in biodiversity management; and, established links and opportunities for collaboration, active learning and person-to-person exchanges between those responsible for implementing and revising strategies and action plans.

Montpellier, the host of the workshop, is a city firmly invested and actively engaged in implementing the Convention and supporting biodiversity-related activities. In recognition for its involvement at the local, regional and international levels the city in 2011 received two prestigious honours, “French Capital of Biodiversity 2011”, from Natureparif, and “European Capital of Biodiversity”, awarded by the European Commission through the Life + programme. Montpellier is part of the CBD steering committee on the Cities and Biodiversity Initiative, along with the cities of Bonn, Montreal, Mexico City, Curitiba, Nagoya and Hyderabad.

Over the last five years, the efforts of the Convention’s initiative on cities and biodiversity have led to historic breakthroughs for subnational and local authorities, such as the first City Biodiversity Summit, held in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2011 and featuring 650 municipal representatives, including 200 mayors. Participants, in collaboration with many Parties to the Convention and its partners, alerted the international community about the importance of local action for biodiversity, thus contributing to the adoption by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on 29 October 2010 of decision X/22. This decision and its annex, the Plan of Action on subnational governments, cities and other local authorities for biodiversity, established a strategic partnership between policymakers, and municipal authorities.

The Governor of the State of Parana in Brazil will, in March in the City of Curitiba, host a meeting of subnational governments for the preparation of the Summit of Subnational Governments and Biodiversity to be held in Hyderabad, India, in parallel with the Second Summit on Cities and Biodiversity.
