

Green UN Biodiversity Conference setting standards for major international events

Using resources efficiently, avoiding waste as much as possible, enjoying regionally produced and fairly traded products: these are the goals of the ambitious environmental concept for the 9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which was presented today in Bonn by Federal Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel. "This is the first time that we have developed a comprehensive environmental concept for an international event of this size. Our concept can set a standard for future events of this kind". Gerd Billen, Executive Director of the Federation of German Consumer Organisations (vzbv): "Consumers are increasingly prepared to accept their responsibility for climate and resource protection in their daily consumption choices. It is therefore all the more important for the host government to set a good example." Dr. Ahmed Djoghla, Executive Secretary of the Convention, said: "This is the first time of multilateral environmental agreements that the host has demonstrated that hosting a meeting should not contribute to the deterioration of the environment. I pay tribute to Sigmar Gabriel for setting high standards for future international meetings and I am very proud that the Secretariat has contributed to this initiative by planting trees in Kenya and State of Parana in Brazil thus ensuring the greening of its operations in accordance with the Secretary General UN Neutral initiative. "

Some 7000 participants from 190 countries are taking part in COP 9. The environmental concept includes waste avoidance and reduction, the use of certified green electricity and environmentally friendly transport arrangements with free use of Bonn's public transport for participants. The fleet of passenger vehicles available for individual journeys has an average CO₂ emission of only 123 g per kilometre. This corresponds to an average consumption of 4.7 litre per 100 kilometres. The most efficient mid-range vehicles are being used, with the cleanest exhaust technology and particulate filters.

Catering is another element of the environmental concept, providing a culinary experience with the theme "diverse/regional/organic/fair". "In keeping with the COP 9 topics, I feel it is important to also incorporate the issue of diversity into the catering," said Gabriel. Diversity among livestock and crop species is currently in dramatic decline. Specialities of the region highlight the importance of using more regional products. The menu includes environmentally sound and healthy organic produce, and products such as fairly traded coffee are also on offer.

As well as implementing the environmental concept, the Federal Environment Ministry is aiming to certify COP 9 under the European environmental auditing scheme EMAS. COP 9 will thus be the first major event organised by a federal ministry to receive EMAS certification.

A further goal of COP 9 is to reduce its own CO₂ emissions. This means avoiding emissions wherever possible, while the unavoidable emissions caused by the meeting will be offset by an emissions saving project. This covers emissions arising from the arrival and departure of the participants as well as those occurring during their stay and use of transport in Bonn. This offsetting will support a project in Burkina Faso to provide rural areas with access to electricity: diesel generators in villages and small towns will be replaced with biomass gasification plants with an installed capacity of between 20 and 850 kilowatts. Besides saving greenhouse gases

amounting to 10,000 tonnes CO2 per year, the project will assist local sustainable development.

"Major events and conferences are the host's calling card," said Billen. "They offer the opportunity for a high-profile demonstration of sustainable management in practice. I hope that the COP 9 participants will support the environmental concept in their own behaviour."

Further Information:

- www.bmu.de/un-conference2008

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