

Gabriel: Starting signal for biodiversity conservation

"Bonn Mandate" agreed for negotiations to stop biopiracy

Federal Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel sees the decisions of COP 9 as a global starting signal. "In Bonn we have achieved as much as we aimed for and as much as we could. We have reached agreement on the most contentious key issues and overcome the crippling gridlock of the past years. We have moved forward regarding concrete conservation of biodiversity. In Bonn the international community started out on the road towards halting the continuing over-exploitation of nature," said Gabriel at the close of the High-Level Segment on Friday. COP 9 ends on Friday evening with a concluding plenary session.

Gabriel described the agreement on a mandate laying down a clear, ambitious roadmap for the next two years and a text as a basis for the negotiations on an international regime on access to and benefit sharing of genetic resources (ABS) as a "breakthrough". "After 16 years we have now finally succeeded in agreeing a common path which will lead to an internationally binding agreement on the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of biological diversity," said Gabriel.

The "Bonn Mandate" envisages a clear roadmap for the next two years, to enable a so-called international ABS regime to be adopted at COP 10 in Japan. "As President of the Convention, I will do everything in my power to ensure the successful implementation of the Bonn Mandate for the creation of an ABS regime by 2010," said Gabriel. "After 2010, biopiracy must be barred under international law!"

Bonn also saw important decisions taken in other areas:

Illegal logging: Calls for further national and international measures against illegal logging and trade in illegal timber are far more explicit than before.

Marine protected areas: Enormous progress was made in Bonn with the adoption of scientific criteria for the selection of marine protected areas. Although a global network of marine protected areas plays a key role in the conservation of the oceans, to date not even 1 percent of the area is protected, while throughout the world not one area on the high seas is under protection, "I hope that the process of designating protected areas on the high seas will receive new momentum through the adoption of binding selection criteria," said Gabriel. "Ultimately we have committed to establishing a global network of marine protected areas by 2012."

Biofuels: The delegates furthermore agreed on sustainable production and use of biofuels, with a view to biodiversity conservation, and reiterated that the CBD should in future play a key role in this issue.

Genetically modified trees: On this topic it was agreed that without a risk analysis, Parties have the right to forego the use of genetically modified trees.

Climate protection and biodiversity: The cooperation between the CBD and the Framework Convention on Climate Change is to be improved. Corresponding recommendations were adopted.

Fertilisation of marine areas: COP 9 took a clear stance against activities for the artificial fertilisation of marine areas with the goal of carbon capture. The reason: scientists fear very negative impacts on the marine environment. Furthermore, as yet it is still completely unclear whether such activities really have the supposed positive impacts on the climate.

On the margins of the official negotiations, the German delegation presented two initiatives that met with very broad agreement among the Parties: the LifeWeb Initiative and the Business and Biodiversity Initiative.

The LifeWeb Initiative met with a positive response because it facilitates the financing of new or existing protected areas in a swift and unbureaucratic way. With LifeWeb, Germany and other countries will provide additional funding, including for the financing of existing or new forest protected areas. "I am delighted about the very positive reaction to our initiative and I am proud that we have already received proposals for new protected areas whose scale is roughly equivalent to one and a half times the size of Germany," stated Minister Gabriel in his closing speech at the High-Level Segment. Germany will increase its current funding for international nature conservation from 210 million euro this year to a total of 500 million euro between 2009 and 2012, then for the long term to 500 million per year.

In the framework of the Business and Biodiversity Initiative, 34 internationally active companies presented their voluntary commitment to make biodiversity conservation an important component of their future corporate and management policies. The scope of the companies involved ranges from the tourism, timber and construction industries to financial services, the food industry and the natural cosmetics sector.

Further Information:

- [Results of the 9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in Bonn - High Level Segment: Conclusions of Sigmar Gabriel](#) - [High Level Segment: Closing Statement by Sigmar Gabriel as of 30.05.2008](#) - www.bmu.de/un-conference2008