

Federal City of Bonn – Press Service

The “Bonn Call for Action” from the Cities of the World Calls for a Global Partnership

“We, the cities, want to take action!” – Mayor Dieckmann and three of her colleagues from around the world appeal to the plenary session of the ministerial segment of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity

ib Bonn – On Thursday (29 May) the local government representatives of over 100 million city dwellers from all over the world submitted the “Bonn Call for Action” to the plenary session of the ministerial segment of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in Bonn. Mayor Bärbel Dieckmann of Bonn delivered the statement, which had been formulated during the Mayors Conference from 26 to 28 May, with her colleagues from Curitiba, Montreal and Nagoya. “We, the cities, want to take action!” declared Ms. Dieckmann and went on to add that “We want to make the step from commitment and concepts to concrete action and for that we require a global partnership: with non-governmental organizations, science, regions, nations and supranational institutions.” The cities of the world offered the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity a pledge to ensure that all available means would be used to ensure the success of the Convention. “We appeal to the parties of the Convention that have convened here in Bonn to support the idea of a global partnership. With the mandate of the people in our cities, we want to, have to and intend to make a contribution to putting an end to the disappearance of biological diversity.”

150 local government representatives from over 30 different countries accepted Ms. Dieckmann’s invitation to come to Bonn and discuss how the opportunities of the communities to take action and make decisions could be even better used for species and climate protection. More than half of the world’s population already live in cities today and by the year 2050 this fraction will grow to two thirds.

“Biological diversity ensures the survival and quality of life of cities,” said Ms. Dieckmann, speaking in front of the plenary session at the World Conference Center Bonn. “It is therefore in the interests of the cities that urgent action be taken; after all they shall be considerably affected by the disappearance of biological diversity and the impact of climate change.”

Twenty-one cities from around the world have come together in the “Local Action for Biodiversity” project, a pilot project initiated by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability). They shall work together on developing strategies to protect biological diversity and to support communal biological diversity management. Each participating city has pledged to initiate five new initiatives by the year 2009.

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Ms. Dieckmann then used several examples to illustrate some of the contributions that the cities were already making today:

Bonn has been dedicated to nature conservation and environmental protection since the eighties and has results to show, such as the meadows programme or the resolution against genetically manipulated products. In addition, a plan of action for biological diversity in 2009 shall provide new impulses. Be it more diversity in traffic-related green areas or regional open space planning, Bonn's commitment shall continue to grow.

The Brazilian city of Curitiba has launched the "Biocity" programme with which city planning now focuses on creating open spaces to experience nature and conserve the original species.

Johannesburg plans to conserve biological diversity under difficult social conditions through increased awareness and education.

Montreal, as the seat of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), has anchored biological diversity in its master plans and has focussed its attention on networks, cooperation and partnerships, with all societal groups, aimed at conserving nature and habitats.

Nagoya attributes great importance to the harmony between humankind and nature. For example, the city has called for a reduction in waste in order to avoid having to construct a new refuse dump in the species-rich tidal areas on the Japanese coast.

On the occasion of the Mayors Conference in Curitiba during early 2007, these five cities were designated as the "steering committee" and placed in charge of promoting the debate at a local level.

The Mayors Conference in Bonn was organized together with the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability) and the InWEnt Service Agency Communities in One World, and is supported and funded by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN). In addition, it is also supported by the CBD Secretariat, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and the "Stiftung Internationale Begegnung der Sparkasse in Bonn", as well as further international partners.

"Local Action for Biodiversity" is a worldwide initiative for cities set up by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI). The pilot project with 21 cities from all over the world, including Bonn, plays a major role with regard to the regional administrative bodies when it comes to the conservation of biological diversity and the preservation of the relationships between humankind and nature. For further information, please visit: www.iclei.org/lab.