S Seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP7)
(Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 9-20 February 2004)

Communication, education and public awareness
(Agenda item 20.3)

INTRODUCTION

Considering that:

1. The threats to biodiversity are largely caused by human activity in changing the landscape, ecosystem, or by unsustainable use of species.

2. Conserving biodiversity requires actions by people that consider conservation and use of natural resources as a cornerstone of sustainable development.

3. In achieving appropriate action Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) are important instruments recognized by the International Community to achieve the Environmental Conventions objectives.

4. The CBD Strategic Plan recognizes the importance of CEPA and Decision VI/19 is to undertake a programme of work on CEPA.

5. The programme of work established by COP6 provides comprehensive elements for action to support the Parties from the global level, but it does not provide concrete mechanisms to make it operational.

6. The efforts of the Consultative Working Group of Experts on Biological Diversity Education and Public Awareness to provide guidance feedback on the CEPA work program should be acknowledged, since concrete modalities for the further development of the Global Initiative are suggested.

7. The CBD Parties define at the national level their priorities and actions, and that these are guided by social, cultural, economic, historical and environmental considerations.
8. The United Nations General Assembly has declared the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development starting in 2005.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Programme of work

IUCN recommends that the Parties:

- Adopt the COP document “Report of the Fourth meeting of the Consultative Working Group of Experts on Biological Diversity Education and public Awareness” UNEP/CBD/COP/7/INF/10, including Annex I, II, III which defines a strategy to operationalize the implementation of decision VI/19.
- Recognize that the Consultative Working Group of Experts on Biological Diversity Education and Public Awareness should be established as a formal body to ensure that the efforts to advance the Global Initiative are maintained.
- Request the Consultative Working Group to fully integrate the Global Initiative on CEPA into the five thematic CBD work programmes, which address marine and coastal biodiversity, agricultural biodiversity, forest biodiversity, the biodiversity of inland waters, and dry and sub-humid lands.
- Request the Consultative Working Group to fully integrate the Global Initiative on CEPA into the Work Programme on Protected Areas being considered at COP7.
- Request the Consultative Group to develop a proposal to be funded by GEF to support the CEPA Global Initiative and to develop joint efforts between the Global Initiative on CEPA with the Education, Participation and Awareness efforts of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development should be seen as an umbrella to the integrated approaches of the environmental conventions.

- Recognize that in-country CEPA activities are a responsibility of the Parties, which respond to their specific demands as well as their cultures and environmental systems, and could benefit from the use of the Global Initiative elements, integrating CEPA tools to the priorities of National CBD focal points and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. Therefore stakeholders approaches should be promoted for complying with the challenge of mainstreaming biodiversity into other sectors.

Financial Resources

Noting with concern the slow progress on the implementation of the CEPA programme of work, IUCN recommends that the Parties, in collaboration with international agencies, and other organisations:

- Make firm commitments to support the CEPA programme of work.
- Provide core budget to the Secretariat to catalyse the CEPA programme and support the Consultative Working Group.
- Request GEF provide the funding to support the programme implementation especially at regional level.

Support to the Parties in CEPA

This statement was prepared by IUCN Commission on Education and Communication an international network of experts in environmental communication and education, interested to assist the Parties in their work.

The Commission provides communication and education planning and capacity development support. The Commission’s web site aims to provide useful information about planning effective communication and to provide access to many useful resources. The Commission invites you to make use of these resources at www.iucn.org/themes/cec or contact cec@iucn.org, or IUCN address on the front page, if you have difficulties accessing the resources on the internet.