



International Biodiversity Day - Vietnam 2007 -



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Introduction

Politicians and decision makers around the world are becoming increasingly aware of the far-reaching consequences of climate change and biodiversity loss. With its long coast line and low-lying river deltas, Viet Nam is one of the countries to be worst hit by climate change. More than a third of the population and up to 16 per cent of the land area will be affected, if the sea level rose by five meters. As coral reefs decline, salt marshes and mangrove forests diminish and tropical rainforests degrade, hundreds of species will be threatened by extinction. At a global scale, climate change and biodiversity loss will affect the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people and will compromise the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

To raise awareness of these important issues and to celebrate the International Day of Biodiversity, the German Development Agencies GTZ and DED, on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and in close cooperation with the Vietnamese Ministry for Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), and other international partners organized a series of events to highlight the importance of climate change and its impact on biodiversity.

The Biodiversity Action Day (May 19) in Tam Dao National Park invited visitors to experience nature and "wilderness". The 24-hour-program of events was organized around "Biodiversity Stations", which were operated by different groups and gave the more than 700 visitors an insight into the natural diversity of the area. Students, families, foreign visitors, journalists and local farmers alike were given the unique opportunity to explore nature, accompanied by local and scientific guides and shared their findings and experiences with fellow visitors.

A series of cultural and artistic performances complemented the events, creating a unique situation of enriched experiences in the middle of nature.

The Symposium on Biodiversity and Climate Change (May 22 and 23) provided a forum for the exchange of expertise and experiences on biodiversity and climate change in the regional context. More than 200 representatives from Ministries, provincial government agencies, researchers, international donors and NGOs, and concerned citizens discussed international research findings and assessed national and regional climate change scenarios and emerging adaptation strategies. The participants identified priorities of action and formulated recommendations for decision makers, based experiences and case studies from Vietnam and South East Asia. This helped provide a basis for future networking and collaboration among relevant actors.

During the symposium the Countdown 2010 Initiative for Vietnam was launched with a signing ceremony of the Countdown 2010 Declaration.

This document provides a summary of the conference proceedings and at the same time tries to convey some visual impressions from the different events organized to celebrate the International Day of Biodiversity.



Symposium Agenda

May 22 / Day 1			
Session Time	Min	Program Item	Name & Organization
Opening Session 08:00-09:00	10	Opening speech for the celebration of the International Biodiversity Day by MONRE Vice Minister	Mr. Pham Khoi Nguyen/MONRE
	10	Welcome Speech by GTZ Country Director	Dr. Guenter Riethmacher/GTZ
	10	Welcome Video Address by SCBD Executive Secretary	Mr. Ahmed Djoghla/SCBD
	10	Welcome Speech by IUCN Director	Mr. Vu Van Trieu/IUCN
	10	Program Overview by Moderator	Mr. Manfred Oepen
	15	"From Awareness to Action," Video Film	Mr. Suhel al-Janabi/GTZ
Session 1: Challenges of Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss for South East Asian Countries - Links to Poverty and Sustainable Development			
Session 1a 09:00-10:00	20	Linkages between Biodiversity Conservation, Climate Change and Poverty Alleviation	Prof. Dr. Manfred Niekisch/IUCN
	15	Climate Change and Adaptation - Overview on scientific status and international initiatives	Dr. Bernd-Markus Liss/GTZ
	15	Stern Review	Mr. Donal Brown/DFID
	10	Q&A	
10:00-10:30	30	Coffee Break	
Session 1b 10:30-12:00	20	Effects of Sea Level Rise on Critical Natural Habitats in Vietnam	Mr. John Pilgrim /Birdlife
	20	Impacts of ENSO phenomenon on climate and socio-economic situation in Vietnam	Mr. Nguyen Duc Ngu/VUSTA
	50	Panel Discussion I	Panelists
12:00-13:00	60	Lunch Break	
Session 2: Impacts of Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss on Different Economic Sectors			
Session 2a 13:15-14:30	10	Conclusions on Session 1	Scientific Reporters
	15	Current status of Biodiversity Conservation in Vietnam-linkages to Sustainable Development and Climate Change	Mr. Nguyen Huy Dung/Vice Director of Centre for Natural Resources and Environment, FIPI
	20	Climate Change and biodiversity modeling with linkages to poverty alleviation	Mr. Tonnie Tekelenburg,MNP
	15	Climate Change impacts on fishery and aquaculture	Representative of MoFi
	15	Q&A	
14:30-15:00	30	Coffee Break	
Session 2b 15:00-16:30	15	Sustainable management and development of Water Resources	Prof. Ngo Dinh Tuan/ Water Resource University
	15	Impacts of Climate Change on infrastructure in Vietnam	Mr. Tran Viet Lien , Mr. Pham Ngoc Dang/ Association of Construction Environment
	15	Green House Emissions of Industries	Mr. Ngo Duc Lam/Institute for Environmental Studies - Vietnam Association of Chemistry
	45	Panel discussion II	Panelists
IUCN Session 16:30-17:00	15	IUCN Countdown 2010	Prof. Dr. Manfred Niekisch/IUCN Mr. Vu Van Trieu/Director IUCN
	15	Signing Ceremony	
17:00-17:30	30	Information Exchange with the Press	MONRE and GTZ
Reception 17:30-19:00	90	Dinner Reception (sponsored by IUCN)	

May 23 / Day 2			
Session 3: Regional and Local Approaches on Climate Change Adaptation and Biodiversity Conservation			
Session 3a 08:30-10:30	15	Conclusions on Session 2	Scientific Reporters
	15	Working Group formation (3 Parallel Working Groups) A- Approaches in Forestry, B- Approaches in Coastal and Marine Area Management, C- Other Approaches	Working Group A, B, C
	90	Case Study presentations:	
	A-	Reducing greenhouse gases through reforestation - Use of CDM in the forestry sector - The Vietnam Experience	Mr. Vu Tan Phuong/Director RCREE, Mr. Vo Nguyen Dai/ Vice Chairman DPC A Luoi
	A-	Buffer zone Management of Protected areas in Northern Lao PDR through payments for avoided deforestation and carbon fixation	Mr. Bernhard Mohns/GTZ
	B-	Decision Support for TT Hue	Ms. Marieke Nieuwaal/ Haskoning Asia Government
	B-	Biodiversity Conservation with regards to CC & SD at coastal alluvial ground - Kim Son District, Ninh Binh	Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Quynh/ Vice Director Ninh Binh DOST
	C-	Models on eco-village in semi-arid areas - Contribution to poverty reduction	Prof. Nguyen Van Truong/VKTST
	C-	Climate Change in Vietnam and the region - Adaptation strategies	Mr. Nguyen Trong Hieu/ VUSTA
	C-	The MRC-GTZ Watershed Management Program - Integrated Watershed Management as Tool for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Biodiversity Preservation	Dr. Simonetta Siligato/DED
10:30-11:00	30	Coffee Break	
Session 3b 11:00-12:00	60	Plenary presentation and discussion of the 3 working groups results	Each Working Group
12:00-13:00	30	Lunch Break	
Session 4: Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation and Biodiversity Conservation in National, Sectoral and Donor Strategies			
Session 4a 13:00-14:15	15	Mainstreaming Biodiversity and Climate Change into Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategies	Prof. John Soussan/SEI
	15	Significance of Climate Change Adaptation and Biodiversity Conservation in Germany's Development Cooperation	Mr. Suhel al-Janabi/GTZ
	15	Climate Change Adaptation Considerations in Vietnam's Biodiversity Action Plan and Biodiversity Law	Ms Huynh Thi Mai/MONRE, Environment Department
15	Q&A		
14:15-14:45	30	Coffee Break	
Session 4b 14:45-16:30	15	Adaptation to Climate Change - GTZ Initiatives in India	Mr. Michael Glueck/GTZ
	15	Biodiversity Conservation and Poverty Alleviation Aspects in the National Strategy on Climate Change	Ms. Nguyen Thai Phuong SD office/MPI
	15	Preparing for Climate Change Adaptation: the National Strategy and Action Plan for Disaster Mitigation and Management 2001-2020	Mr. Nguyen Chi Quang/MONRE
	45	Final Panel Discussion III	Panelists
15	Closing Remarks:	Mr. Hoang Minh Dao/ Vice Director MONRE, Environment Dept., Dr. Guenter Riethmacher/ Country Director GTZ	
16:30	End of Program		

Opening Speech - Mr. Pham Khoi Nguyen

Vice Minister of Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen!

I am very honoured, on behalf of Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, to participate in the meeting to celebrate International Biodiversity Day and deliver an opening speech for the Symposium on Biodiversity and Climate change: Links with Poverty and Sustainable development.

As you may know, biodiversity is essential to life on the Earth, and it is a crucial element for prosperity and sustainable development of human society. Biodiversity conservation is a crosscutting principle for conservation and utilization of our invaluable natural resources. Therefore, the United Nations and member nations of the Convention on Biodiversity agreed to choose the 22nd May as an International Biodiversity Day and organize series of activities for celebration of this Day every year in order to enhance awareness of people and alert about problems with this regard. This is an opportunity for us to view biodiversity in a fairer and more comprehensive manner.

The year of 2007, with an official theme of "Biodiversity and Climate change", affirms the importance of biodiversity and impacts of biodiversity loss and climate change on the life on our Planet.

This theme is also related to a decision of the United Nations to select the year of 2007 as a Year of Polar and the International Environmental Day of this year, which is highlighted with a theme of "Melting ice - a hot issue". We have clearly known that since the 19th century, the Earth's temperature has been increasing about 0.6°C, affecting the whole world and it is forecasted that by 2100 the Earth's temperature will continue to increase approximately 1.4°C - 5.8°C. If the temperature of the Earth increased 2.5°C, very severe consequences would happen and that means approximately 3 billions of people would suffer from lack of water; 50 millions of people would suffer from hunger and about one millions of wildlife would not be able to adapt to climate change and might go to extinct. Vietnam is a member country of the Convention on Biodiversity and also a member country of the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Therefore, organization of activities for celebration of the International Biodiversity Day has become an annual task of many in-line Ministries, agencies, localities, socio-political organizations, and communities. This year with a message of "Biodiversity and Climate change", activities for celebration of this event in Vietnam will focus on encouraging local communities to get involved in learning and dialoguing the importance of biodiversity and interrelationship between biodiversity and climate change. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has issued a guideline to give in-line Ministries, agencies, mass organizations, and local people some suggestions on how to celebrate the International Biodiversity Day, particularly paying attention to propaganda and dissemination of information and knowledge on the subject of biodiversity and climate change to local communities. Activities to celebrate the International Biodiversity Day will be happening in various forms such as meetings, workshops, dialogues, exhibitions, competitions of drawing pictures, writing articles, or photographing related to the subject of biodiversity. These activities will be followed by a series of activities to celebrate the International Environmental Day on the 5th June.

On the occasion of the International Biodiversity Day in this year, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Vietnam, in collaboration with Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany and other international donors, organizes a Symposium on "Biodiversity and Climate change: Links with Poverty and Sustainable development" in order to share experience and research results on climate change and interrelationship between climate change and biodiversity; introduce national and regional adaptation measures and strategies; as well as discuss priority actions and make recommendations related to biodiversity, climate change, poverty reduction and sustainable development available for policy makers.

On behalf of Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, I would like to urge in-line Ministries, mass organizations, people, national and international NGOs to take necessary, concrete actions, contributing to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity as well as sustaining adaptation of biodiversity to climate change at national, regional, and global levels. At the same time, I would like to announce opening of the Symposium on "Biodiversity and Climate change: Links with Poverty and Sustainable development".

Wish you good health and our successful Symposium.

Opening Remarks - Ms. Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul

The German Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development

Presented by Dr. Günter Riethmacher, GTZ Country Director

This year, the celebration of International Biodiversity Day takes place for the seventh time as a joint action of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH and GEO Magazine. For the first time, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) also participates as a partner.

This year, in addition to biodiversity, the Biodiversity Day takes up another important topic: climate change and its consequences. Although climate change is mainly caused by people in the industrialized countries, it most affects those who are least responsible for it, i.e. people in the developing countries whose life depends to a large extent on the utilization of natural resources. Millions of people are concerned, including those in the densely populated river plains and coastal regions of Asia, but also in other areas where the change in climatic conditions is resulting in extreme weather conditions.

The United Nations has chosen Vietnam to be one of ten countries where adaptation to global warming is to be piloted. Vietnam has more than 3,000 km of coastline, as well as the estuaries of the Red River in the North and the Mekong River in the South, and so is particularly affected. Rising temperatures, salt intrusion into inland rivers and the rising sea level cause water shortages on the one hand and floods and storms on the other hand, affecting half the country's population as well as resulting in the loss of biodiversity. Animals and plants form the basis of many poor people's livelihoods, as they generate their income from the use of forests, from fisheries or from tourism. As in many other parts of the world, biodiversity is the life insurance for many Vietnamese people.

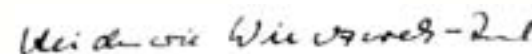
Recently, the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has initiated the action programme "Climate and Development". One element of the action programme concerns measures for the adaptation to climate change. However, for the BMZ and its partner organizations the conservation of biodiversity has been a key to the development of sustainable livelihoods for poor people for a long time: biodiversity helps to reduce poverty and therefore contributes to achievement of the millennium development goals (MDGs). Since 1985, over 450 biodiversity conservation projects have been supported by the BMZ. Currently, the BMZ supports about 150 projects and programmes on this theme. From 2000 to 2005 an average of about Euro 40 million were invested annually for this purpose within the framework of bilateral cooperation. The occasion of the Biodiversity Day on May 22nd represents an investment of only one day in the organization of events, but its effect can be significant. Today, politicians, donor organisations and simple farmers can all have their say. All of them will experience, feel, discuss, and get to grips - in the very sense of the word - with the extraordinary variety of biodiversity.

Decision-makers from the political, economic, and scientific arena and the major donor organizations will sit around a table in Hanoi to consider global climate change and its impact on biodiversity from the local perspective. However, in Tam Dao National Park, not far from the capital, we are forewarned of the significance of the apparently abstract warming of the earth for the fauna and flora right on our doorstep. In the National Park, the experience of the senses combines with the cultural appreciation of historical sites. Similarly to how Vietnamese Buddhism has spread outwards from here, where the Tay Thien pagoda still attracts thousands of pilgrims, over the whole country, so the knowledge of the relationships between biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development could spread. As the message spreads, people will be made more aware of precious resources now under a worldwide threat, regardless of geographical, political, economic or cultural borders: the world as we know it, and its future, are at risk if we are not able to stop the worst consequences of climate change and the loss of biodiversity.

I think that Biodiversity Day is a great initiative to make the idea of biodiversity more tangible, to stir our curiosity and to encourage us to act! We should become actively involved together with the GEO magazine, the CBD, and the BMZ. Children and adults, colleagues from all sectors are involved in Biodiversity Day. Together, let's discover the diversity surrounding us, admire and protect it, and carry this message from the Tam Dao National Park and Hanoi into the world.

I would like to wish success to all the events conducted during Biodiversity Day and I would like to invite you all to get involved in fruitful discussions and to marvel at the diversity of nature - both in Vietnam and in Germany. Help to shape the future: starting today, but continuing beyond today. Let's not compromise our limited natural resources because of a lack of financial resources now! Time, money and dedication invested today are an investment for our lives tomorrow.

Yours faithfully,



Opening Speech - Mr. Ahmed Djoghla

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Executive Secretary

Climate change is real. The United Nations lead scientific authority on climate change, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its most recent report, prepared by 2,500 experts from 130 countries, has indicated that the concentration of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the Earth's atmosphere is at a level not seen for some 650,000 years. The cause: human activities.

Biodiversity loss is real. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the most authoritative statement on the health of the Earth's ecosystems, prepared by 1,395 scientists from 95 countries, has demonstrated the negative impact of human activities on the natural functioning of the planet. As a result, the ability of the planet to provide the goods and services that we, and future generations, need for our well-being is seriously and perhaps irreversibly jeopardized. We are indeed experiencing the greatest wave of extinctions since the disappearance of the dinosaurs. Extinction rates are rising by a factor of 1,000 above background rates. Every hour, three species disappear. Every day, up to 150 species are lost. Every year, between 18,000 and 55,000 species become extinct. The cause: human activities.

Climate change is one of the major driving forces behind the unprecedented loss of biodiversity. The second edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, recently issued by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, demonstrates that before the end of the century, species and ecosystems will struggle to keep pace with changes in temperature and rainfall and extinction rates will increase. This is already evident in the Arctic, the environmental "barometer" of our planet, where reduced sea-ice threatens to lead to the disappearance of the iconic polar bear and other unique species. The consequences of climate change will be distributed unequally around the globe, but will affect the most vulnerable countries. Africa, which contributes the least to climate change, will be the first to suffer. Climate change has already caused the level of Lake Victoria to drop by about 30%. Between 25 and 40 per cent of unique Africa's species could be lost by 2085.

The relationship between biodiversity and climate change runs both ways. Climate change is an important driver of the loss of biodiversity. At the same time, the loss of biodiversity and the deterioration of natural habitats also contribute to climate change. It is said that every human being on Earth owes one breath to forests and a second to the oceans. The loss of coral reefs and the destruction of intact forests and mangroves will exacerbate climate change, biodiversity loss and their impacts.

Maintaining biodiversity will make ecosystems resilient in the face of a changing climate. Forests and peatlands represent an important storage place for carbon dioxide. Intact mangroves are an important protection against sea-level rise. A variety of crops and livestock are important resources against changes to the rhythm of the seasons. Climate change is indeed an energy and a security issue but is also an environmental issue. Biodiversity loss is an environmental issue but it is also an economic, financial, cultural, ethical as well as a security issue. Coinciding with the Polar Year, this year's celebration by the international community of the International Day for Biological Diversity, on 22 May, offers a unique opportunity to acknowledge that climate change and biodiversity are two faces of the same coin of life. Addressing both requires the mutually supportive implementation of the Rio conventions for the benefit of life on Earth. We in the Secretariat of the Convention on life on Earth shall spare no effort to achieve such a strategic objective.

We wish all the countries of the world and their people a successful and memorable celebration.

Opening Speeches - Dr. Vu Van Trieu

Country Representative of IUCN Vietnam

Excellencies, Prof. Manfred Niekisch,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the IUCN- The World Conservation Union, Vietnam Country Office, I warmly welcome all the distinguished delegates and guests to Hanoi to attend this important event that IUCN had the pleasure to co-organize with MONRE and GTZ.

Also, I warmly welcome Prof. Manfred Niekisch who has accepted to be the Ambassador for the Countdown 2010 Initiative in Viet Nam.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Countdown 2010 is a network of active partners working together towards the 2010 biodiversity target. Nearly all countries of the world came together for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 and promised to 'achieve by 2010 a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity'. Since 2002, Countdown 2010 has become a global initiative and each partner all over the world commits additional efforts to tackle the causes of biodiversity loss.

IUCN VN is creating a Countdown 2010 Hub in Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia; this afternoon, after Prof. Niekisch's presentation, we will have a ceremony for the signing of the Countdown 2010 declaration. Such declaration is an important step to show our effort to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010. We strongly invite you all to sign it and become partner to the Countdown 2010 network."

I hope that the participants to the Meeting will find that it is really necessary and useful for biodiversity conservation in Vietnam and I wish the Meeting success.

I wish you, Prof. Niekisch, distinguished delegates and representatives good health, happiness and an enjoyable time in Vietnam.

Thank you for your attention.

Summary of Symposium Discussions and Findings

Vietnam, challenged by climate change

The Symposium on Biodiversity and Climate Change (May 22nd and May 23rd) provided a forum to exchange expertise and experiences among representatives from ministries, international donors and scientists. "Biodiversity is a crucial element for prosperity", said Pham Khoi Nguyen, Vice-Minister of the Vietnamese Ministry for Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) and expressed his concern for "very severe consequences" from global warming.

Until recently, Vietnam was rarely mentioned as a country suffering from the effects of climate change. However, a recent World Bank research paper identifies Vietnam as the country most effected by climate change in South East Asia and one of the worst-hit developing countries worldwide.

"When we prepared this conference, the research findings shocked us", said Herbert Christ, a Technical Advisor for the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ). According to a study by BirdLife, a rise in the sea level of only one meter will lead to the loss of 12,2 % of the land area in Vietnam. Up to 40 million Vietnamese would be affected, mainly those living in the productive low lying river deltas of the Mekong and the Red River. Furthermore, a quarter to a third of all important natural habitats might be impacted by sea level rise. "What is quite scary in this, is the small difference between the rise of one meter or a rise of five meters", said John Pilgrim from BirdLife.

With an extremely long coastline of more than 3,000 kilometers, numerous settlements, infrastructure, wetlands and areas of mangrove-forests are threatened all along the coast. In the past, Vietnam has experienced disastrous consequences from typhoons, draughts or floods. "We face tremendous costs caused by climate change in Vietnam," said Vu Van Trieu, country representative of IUCN.

"Vietnam has done a great deal to recover from poverty, said Manfred Niekisch, professor for international nature conservation at the University of Greifswald and member of the IUCN-World Commission on Protected Areas, "but now we are running into much bigger problems. In fact, the negative effects of climate change might damage all efforts and achieved results in economic development and poverty alleviation achieved during the last decade."

Why biodiversity matters

Vietnam is among the countries with the highest biodiversity worldwide. According to estimations of the Vietnamese Forest Inventory and Planning Institute, biodiversity resources in agriculture, forestry and fishery contribute about USD 2 billion a year to the Vietnamese economy. Poor people are disproportionately dependent on these natural resources: 70 percent of all Vietnamese are still dependent on agricultural or forestry and thus on the products of nature. Biodiversity, in this context, is not just a word, but translates directly into income and livelihoods for local people. "Always keep in mind to ensure maximum benefit for the local communities," insisted Vice-minister Pham Khoi Nguyen.

Natural diversity is a key element to agricultural productivity and acts as a buffer against diseases and other calamities. "Poor people in remote areas often know about the advantages of biodiversity, without being aware of the term itself," said GTZ advisor Nguyen Thi Huyen Linh. People, who live directly from nature, know for example that a certain variety of sweet potato keeps better in winter, another kind can be harvested around the year, and the next one gives you most energy. This is just one example for the practical use of biodiversity.

But biodiversity is not only important for agriculture and as a source for nutrition. It is also important for the stability of ecosystems. "We know that regions with a rich biodiversity recover much faster after periods of stress, such as a typhoon," noted Ms. Pham Minh Thoa, Deputy Director of the Forestry Department in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

"We destroyed the mangrove forest for shrimp-farming and economic productivity", remarked the Vice Director of the Science and Technology Department in Ninh Binh province: "Now some communities are facing serious problems."



International Biodiversity Action Day in Tam Dao National Park

Several events were organized in Tam Dao National Park to raise awareness on biodiversity conservation and to give visitors an opportunity to experience nature and wilderness on a personal level. "Only what we understand will we value and protect" was the main idea behind the B-Day. Text boxes within this document highlight some of the events and give an insight into how the action day worked.



Experience biodiversity

Nature around us is richer than we think, a point specifically addressed during the action day in Tam Dao. Guided by professionals and scientists, participants went bird watching, explored the world of insects, of amphibians - one group even used mirrors! With the mirrors, participants observed the ground and the treetops at the same time - spaces you would rarely notice on a normal walk through the forest.

The forest as the center piece

As the symposium progressed, participants emphasized the need to not only take into account the impacts of a sea-level rise on coastal and low-lying areas when talking about climate change. It is equally important to consider the impacts on forest ecosystems in mountainous areas.

Rising temperatures can change or destroy such eco-systems and start a vicious circle, destroying the forests which act as one of the main natural storage systems for carbon gases. Forests thus provide a natural protection system against further increases in green house gas emissions and global warming. In addition, forests create specific micro climates and protect watersheds. Forest degradation and deforestation lead to reduced water retention, dryer climatic conditions and, on a larger scale, can contribute to desertification and more extreme climatic conditions, as experts illustrated during the conference. Some provinces in Vietnam, such as Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan, already experienced such developments.

Award biodiversity!

Richness in nature and biodiversity should be rewarded, agreed the environmental specialists present at the symposium. "Some countries provide a highly valuable service for the world, because they do not produce carbon emissions, or even absorb green house gases in large forest areas", stated development consultant Bernd-Markus Liss. If this value would be included into the wealth of a country, forested countries would become more aware about the importance of forest.

"More research is needed to determine the monetary value of environmental services provided by the forests in Vietnam," emphasized one Vietnamese scientist at the conference. Forests are also at a disadvantage when it comes to attracting funds for research or conservation: "Protecting the forests is not sexy", said Suhel Al-Janabi, a German biodiversity conservation expert, "You spend a lot of money to see nothing happen."

Economic growth and environmental protection - a contradiction?

Every year, 13 million hectares of forest are lost globally. "Economically, these areas are often seen as worthless. But this is not true. People live from these forests, but since they don't sell the products they consume, their value does not appear in any statistics," stated Mr. Bernd Liss, a development expert for GTZ.

On the other hand, if the forests are destroyed to establish industries, then ostensibly, jobs were created and poverty has been reduced. But in the long run, the environment and the economy both may suffer. Nature has to be given its proper value. "We need a major change in economic assessments of biodiversity," noted a Vietnamese conference member.

The world does not need to choose between averting climate change and promoting economic growth. Indeed, ignoring climate change in the long run will reduce economic growth. Therefore, to separate in a simplistic way between "economy" and "environment" is not only wrong - it is dangerous for both. "We have to stop thinking that the Ministry of Industries is responsible for growth and the Ministry of Environment is responsible for nature", remarked a journalist.



Trees to offset carbon emission

To compensate for the green house gas emissions produced by the participants of the biodiversity day events, the organizers made arrangements to plant 10 000 trees in the buffer zone of Tam Dao National Park. The first 300 trees were planted by the participants of the Action Day in Tam Dao. "It feels good to contribute a small piece to climate protection", said Tuan Anh, smiling, his hands still dirty from the wet earth. "I will now be more careful with trees and plants, for I would not want that somebody, ignorantly, tramples over my newly-planted tree."



Biking for biodiversity

In the early morning hours of May 18, 300 university students gathered in Hanoi and bicycled to the National Park to participate in the Biodiversity Action Day. It was a strenuous ride, and the young people were soaked by rain and scorched by the sun before they reached the National Park in the afternoon. "I would have never done this alone", admits an exhausted 22-year old student. "But in the group, it was a fantastic experience. I never saw cycling this way". With their action, the young Vietnamese wanted to show how you could enjoy nature without causing harm to the environment. This event was of special significance to the observers in Hanoi, where most young people consider motorbikes as a sign of wealth and fashion and only very few still make regular use of their bicycles.

Vietnam has the laws - enforce them

Vietnam was recognized by the conference to have done exemplary work on environmental laws. The country joined several international conventions on climate-protection very early (Rio-Convention in 1992, Agenda 21 since 2004), and has issued some laws which are far ahead of the standard in other parts of the world. In addition, a law on biodiversity is expected to pass the Vietnamese National Assembly at the end of 2007 or early 2008.. Hence, the legal framework is largely in place.

"Just enforce the laws that exist", recommended Professor Niekisch. This would constitute a huge step forward in conserving biodiversity. The protection of biodiversity in Vietnam is, above all, a task of raising awareness about the problem. "Three tons of wildlife meat are consumed every day in Vietnam," claimed a conference member. "But illegally!", responded Ms. Nguyen Thai Phuong, from the Ministry for Planning and Investment: "Vietnam has a very clear legal framework to prohibit trading of wildlife meat." However, the enforcement of the laws remains weak, due to traditional behavior patterns and a lack of awareness about the importance of biodiversity protection.

The local level: Many small solutions

There is no one-size-fits-all-solution. And there are no easy answers on how to cope with the problem of climate change and the biodiversity loss. "We need a bottom-up-approach", Mr. al-Janabi said. Raising awareness among people why climate change is a threat and how they can deal with it. "This can be done, while the top-level is still negotiating with donors about supportive funds", stated al-Janabi. There is one big advantage in this approach: it is not expensive at all. Including climate change into the school-curricular or starting campaigns to raise awareness among locals doesn't cost much money.

The local level has another big advantage: If it is from here, that the international science-community can be provided with more case studies. "The Vietnamese have the cases", agreed several Vietnamese scientists. Mangroves, fresh water or forest - the topics are there, as well as the studies. Scientists concurred with the idea to make use of the big number of case studies to come up with many small solutions.

Don't blame others. It's our fault

If environment protection has still not reached the level of awareness that puts it into the place of a societal imperative, then "stop blaming others. It's our fault," said John Soussan from the Stockholm Environment Institute. The arguments are on the table. Industries have to realize why they must switch from growth at any cost to sustainability and balance. "We have to show them the economic benefit. Nothing speaks better than Dollars - or Dong," said Soussan.

He sent a strong signal to the environmental organizations and to the scientific community: "We don't think pragmatically enough." To convince others of the dire need of biodiversity protection, one must include related topics, such as poverty, finance or economics. "Our task is not to convince the ministries of environment, but the ministries of planning and finance worldwide," he added.

Conclusion: Need for an integrated approach

During the final discussions, the experts at the symposium agreed that although climate change, biodiversity-loss and poverty might be considered different problems, their links and interrelations have to be stressed more than is the case at present. "Ministries, mass organizations, people, national and international NGOs must take concrete actions, contributing to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity", said Vice-Minister Pham Khoi Nguyen, emphasizing the need for concerted action. The protection of biodiversity and the fight against global warming have to start at the local level - but in the end, both are global problems, that cannot be solved without a combined effort by the international community. "Alone, Vietnam would be helpless," stated a conference member.

Most importantly, action has to be initiated now. "The investments that take place in the next 10-20 years will have a profound impact on the climate in the second half of this century," states the Stern-Review. "A few years ago, we thought that global warming will be a threat that we discuss to protect the future of our children or our grandchildren", Professor Niekisch added. "Today we know: We are talking about our own future."

Learn in the forest

The Tam Dao Forest School was inaugurated at the Biodiversity Action Day. This school promotes environment and biodiversity with a new kind of pedagogy: "We did not want a museum where visitors can only see dead animals", said GTZ expert Nguyen Thi Huyen Linh, who assisted the staff of the National Park to establish the school. "The approach we apply here is an interactive concept. If you want to know more about a topic, you can use the materials at hand to explore and learn new things through your curiosity and your observations. You make use of your eyes, ears, hands and other senses to experience nature and biodiversity."



List of References

For more information on Biodiversity Day Celebrations go to:

<http://www.biodiversity-day.info>
<http://www.geo.de>
http://www.geo.de/GEO/natur/oekologie/tag_der_artenvielfalt
http://www.geo.de/GEO/natur/oekologie/tag_der_artenvielfalt/53833.html
<http://www2.gtz.de/biodiv>
<http://www.gtz.de/de/19848.htm>
<http://www.gtz.de/de/aktuell/10064.htm>
<http://www.tamdaonp.com.vn>

For more information on Climate Change go to:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/stem_review_economics_climate_change/stemreview_index.cfm
<http://www.gtz.de/climate>
<http://sgp.undp.org/web/projects/10627>
<http://unfccc.int/2860.php>

For more information on participating organizations go to:

<http://www.aseansec.org>
<http://www.bmz.de>
<http://www.birdlife.org>
<http://www.cbd.int>
<http://www.countdown2010.net>
<http://www.dfid.gov.uk>
<http://www.fipivn.org.vn>
<http://www.fsiv.org.vn>
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WORDS OF WISDOM
 "All things are possible, until they are proved impossible - and even the impossible may only be so at the moment."
 - Philip S. Baro

TOP 5 US BOX OFFICE
 1. The Bourne Supremacy, \$13.7 million
 2. The Bourne Identity, \$13.5 million
 3. The Bourne Ultimatum, \$12.2 million
 4. The Bourne Identity, \$12.2 million
 5. Night at the Museum, \$11.5 million

Vietnamese stilt house grows German roots

Nhan Dan
 Ngày 8-5-2007
 Chủ đề: QUANG CÁO, LỊCH PHÁT SÓNG, LỊCH HÈ, TRỢ GIÚP
 English | Chính trị | Kinh tế | Văn hóa | Thể thao | Khoa học | Xã hội | Thế giới | Nghệ thuật

Biến đổi khí hậu tác động tồi tệ đến Việt Nam
 Các nhà khoa học cảnh báo rằng Việt Nam sẽ phải đối mặt với những tác động nghiêm trọng của biến đổi khí hậu trong những thập kỷ tới.

Biodiversité et changement climatique en discussion
 Débat. "Biodiversité et changement climatique : influences sur la diminution de la pauvreté et le développement durable" est le thème d'un colloque tenu hier et aujourd'hui à Hanoi, en l'honneur de la Journée internationale sur la biodiversité (22 mai).

Việt Nam là một trong hai nước bị tác động nặng nhất
 Nguy cơ giảm đa dạng sinh học và biến đổi khí hậu đang đe dọa nghiêm trọng Việt Nam. Đây là một trong hai nước bị tác động nặng nhất trên thế giới.

Hanoi Mới Online
 Nhiều hoạt động nhân Ngày quốc tế đa dạng sinh học

CÉLÉBRATION DE LA JOURNÉE DE LA BIODIVERSITÉ À TAM DAO
 À l'occasion de la Journée mondiale de la biodiversité (22 mai), des activités spéciales se dérouleront demain au parc national de Tam Dao, à 80 km au nord de Hanoi. Entre autres - plantation de 10.000 arbres, colloque sur le rôle des parcs nationaux dans la préservation de la biodiversité, Encadrement par des scientifiques, des agents du parc et des participants, les visiteurs pourront découvrir les richesses naturelles du parc national de Tam Dao.

Ministry begins countdown to save biodiversity
 (23-05-2007)
 HANOI — Ministry officials, international donors, non-governmental organizations and environmentalists officially launched the Countdown 2010 Initiative for Viet Nam at a ceremony on International Bio-diversity Action Day in the capital yesterday.
 Participants signed the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) declaration, which carries the slogan "No Time To Lose for Biodiversity."

B-Day auf vietnamesisch
 Der 7. internationale Tag der Artenvielfalt in Vietnam stand ganz im Zeichen des Klimawandels.
 Der globale Klimawandel schreitet schneller voran als bisher angenommen. Faktisch keine Region der Erde bleibt vom Wandel des Klimas und den negativen Folgen verschont - auch nicht die Länder Südkostens. Mit seinen 3000 Kilometer Küstenlinie, Korallenriffen, Mangrovenwäldern, Hunderten von Fischerdörfern und tief legenden Flussdeltas scheint Vietnam besonders verwundbar. Die sich verändernden Umweltbedingungen gefährden die Lebensgrundlage von rund einem Drittel der gesamten Bevölkerung. Und bedrohen die Artenvielfalt in allen Ökosystemen des Landes. Mehrere hundert Tier- und Pflanzenarten Vietnams könnten innerhalb der kommenden Jahre aussterben.
 Viele von ihnen leben in 300 km² großen Tam-Dao-Nationalpark mit seinen insgesamt 2000 Tier- und Pflanzenarten. Der Park, rund 80 Kilometer nordwestlich von Hanoi gelegen, war auch der Schauplatz des 7. Biodiversitäts-Aktionstages am

Media Coverage