



**DET KONGELIGE
MILJØVERNDEPARTEMENT**

*Royal Ministry of the Environment
The Minister*

To UN member countries

Your ref

Our ref
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Date **13 DES 2006**

Invitation to the Norway/United Nations Expert Conference on Biodiversity

Safeguarding ecosystems, provide development and security, support the Millennium developments Goals and reduce loss of biodiversity by 2010 and beyond

Trondheim, Norway 29 October till 2 November 2007

Dear Sir/Madam

It is a great pleasure for me to draw your attention to the Norway/United Nations Conference on the above mentioned topics to be held in Trondheim from 29 October till 2 November 2007.

This is the fifth time Norway in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) is arranging this conference, seeking to focus on issues of great importance for implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). One of the main objectives within the CBD is to reach the 2010 target on biodiversity, also agreed upon in the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. The 2007 conference will in particular contribute with input to preparations for the ninth Conference of the Parties to the CBD in Germany in 2008.

I am pleased to invite your country to nominate experts to participate at this conference. The participants will include policy makers and scientists in the field of biological diversity and sustainable development. Focus will be on the critical role of biodiversity and its ecosystems in providing goods and services that are necessary for human well-being and security and for economic development.

The conference aims at a transparent, positive and constructive atmosphere, and key objectives will be to:

- Illustrate and highlight the role of biodiversity in poverty alleviation and in reaching the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDG)
- Consider progress on the goal to achieve by 2010 "a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth"
- Provide insights and inspiration for enhanced implementation of CBD's Strategic Plan

The organisation of the conference is a joint venture between the Norwegian Ministries of Environment, Fisheries and Coastal Affairs, Food and Agriculture, Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion.

An Initial Announcement, containing more detailed information about the Conference, and a registration form is attached to this letter. A copy of this letter is also sent to the national focal points of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Invitations will later be sent to UN entities and key organisations and institutions working on issues relevant to the conference.

Due to the size of the conference facilities, participation will be limited to a maximum of 300 participants. The conference language will be English. Space considerations require us to request that countries limit their delegation to no more than two participants. I encourage you to consider gender aspects when appointing delegation members. The Norwegian government is prepared to provide travel support for one participant from each country eligible for such support.

A registration form is attached, and please be informed that the deadline for registration is 1 June 2007 and that all registration forms should be accompanied by a confirmation letter from your country's CBD National Focal Point

The main organiser of the Conference will be the Directorate for nature management, and further information can be obtained from their home page at www.dirnat.no or by contacting the Conference Secretariat at trondheim.conference@dirnat.no.

Accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest considerations,

Yours sincerely,


Helen Bjørnøy



TRONDHEIM
CONFERENCES ON
BIODIVERSITY

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Safeguarding ecosystems

- reduce loss of biodiversity by 2010 and beyond
- provide development and security
- support the Millennium Development Goals

Trondheim, Norway, 29 October – 2 November 2007

The Trondheim Conferences on Biodiversity provide an opportunity for policy makers, managers and scientists to have an open and constructive dialogue and to provide a transparent and scientifically sound basis for key decisions to be taken under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The fifth Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity will be held 29 October – 2 November 2007, hosted by the Norwegian Government in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The conference will, in particular, provide input to the CBD and its preparations for the ninth Conference of the Parties (COP-9) in Germany in 2008. Focus will be on the critical role of biodiversity and ecosystems in providing goods and services that are necessary for human well-being and security and for economic development. The conference aims at a transparent, positive and constructive atmosphere, and key objectives will be to:

- Illustrate and highlight the role of biodiversity in poverty alleviation and in reaching the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDG)
- Consider progress on the goal to achieve by 2010 "a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth"
- Provide insights and inspiration for enhanced implementation of CBD's Strategic Plan

Focusing on the importance of biodiversity and ecosystems for development and well-being

Biodiversity is the living foundation of sustainable development. However, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) states that biodiversity is being lost at rates unprecedented in human history. The loss of biodiversity and decline of ecosystem services constitute a major concern for human well-being, especially for the well-being of the poorest. In his recent 2006 Report on the Work of the Organisation, the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has asked the UN General Assembly to incorporate the 2010 biodiversity target into the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The eighth Conference of Parties (COP-8) to the CBD in March 2006 in Brazil noted in its decision VIII/9 that the MA "finds that the degradation of ecosystems could significantly increase in the first half of this century, and that this is a key barrier to achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, and that, at the same time, many of the actions being undertaken to promote economic development and reduce hunger and poverty could contribute to the loss of biodiversity" and emphasized "that the MDGs, the 2010 target of significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss, and other internationally agreed targets related to biodiversity, environmental sustainability and development need to be pursued in an integrated manner".

The 2007 Trondheim Conference will provide illustrative examples of the linkages between biodiversity and the MDGs and possible policy trade-offs, and will introduce ways and means of overcoming identified obstacles to the Strategic Plan. Scientific studies, policy presentations and practical case studies will provide participants with examples and models that will provide insights and inspiration for enhanced efforts.

Contributing to the Convention on biological diversity (CBD)

Progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and follow-up on progress towards the 2010 target and relevant MDGs will be discussed as a key strategic issue for the CBD at COP-9 in Germany in 2008. COP-9 will also consider the need to review and update targets as part of the process of revising the Strategic Plan beyond 2010.

A key objective of the Trondheim conference will be to contribute to further progress on these issues at COP-9. This will be done through providing useful input to the thirteenth meeting of CBD's Subsidiary body on scientific, technical and technological affairs (SBSTTA-13), scheduled to be held 18 - 22 February 2008 in Rome, which will present recommendations for decisions to be made on these issues at COP-9.

Expected outputs include (1) Proceedings of the Conference in the form of an un-refereed technical report, (2) a shorter summary report aimed as input to SBSTTA-13 and (3) other relevant material to be made available to the participants and on the Internet.

Participation and information

Participation will be by invitation only, and invitation letters will in due course be sent by the Norwegian Ministry of the Environment to all members of the United Nations, CBD Focal Points, as well as relevant UN agencies. In addition, a number of organisations and institutions working on issues related to the theme will be invited to attend, including key financial institutions, the private sector and non-governmental organisations.

The 2007 Trondheim Conference will take place at the Royal Garden Hotel in the centre of the City of Trondheim, with all necessary facilities and attractions within walking distance. Due to the size of the conference facilities, participation will be limited to a maximum of 300 participants, and countries and organisations/institutions will have to limit their delegations. The conference language will be English.

The Norwegian government is prepared to provide travel support for a limited number of participants from countries eligible for such support according to criteria under the CBD.

Information on the conference will be made available on the home page of the Directorate for Nature Management at www.dirnat.no, and you may also contact the Directorate by email through postmottak@dirnat.no.

Organising and preparing the conference

This will be the fifth Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity, and is being hosted by the Norwegian Government in collaboration with UNEP. The organisation and sponsoring of the conference is a joint venture between the Ministry of Environment (MD), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (UD) and relevant sector ministries in Norway.

An international advisory group is being established for the conference, and will include UNEP, the CBD secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), the World Bank and the International Conservation Union (IUCN).

The conference will be organised by the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management (DN), which is the executive and advisory agency on biodiversity management under the Ministry of the Environment. This will be done in cooperation with the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA), the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and the City of Trondheim.

Chairman of the conference will be Peter Johan Schei, Director of the Fridtjof Nansen Institute (FNI), who has a significant track record with the CBD and the Trondheim Conferences. Project manager and Conference Director will be Finn Katerås of DN, who will be assisted by a Conference Secretariat. The programme for the conference will be developed by a Conference Programme Committee, chaired by Dr Odd Terje Sandlund of NINA.

Earlier Trondheim Conferences on Biodiversity

The first Trondheim Conferences on Biodiversity in 1993 provided input to the first Intergovernmental Committee meeting of the signatories to the CBD later that year. The second Conference in 1996 focused on problems related to alien invasive species, and provided input to the SBSTTA meeting in 1996 and to the development of the Global Invasive Species Program (GISP). In 1999, the third Conference discussed the ecosystem approach for sustainable use of biological diversity, and provided input to SBSTTA and to the later adoption of the Principles for Ecosystem Approach at COP-6 in 2002. The fourth conference in 2003 focused on technology transfer and capacity building, and provided input to the SBSTTA meeting in November 2003 and to UNEP and its inter-governmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity building to developing countries. In 1997 a workshop was held on biodiversity in freshwater, providing scientific input to the SBSTTA meeting in 1997.