

Report of German activities held to commemorate the International Year of Biodiversity

Launch ceremony in Berlin

On 11 January 2010 Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, Federal Environment Minister Norbert Röttgen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme Achim Steiner and other prominent guests launched the International Year of Biodiversity at the Berlin Museum of Natural History. As Presidency of the CBD, Germany organised this opening event to mark the global launch of the International Year of Biodiversity.

"We must do everything possible both nationally and internationally to stop the loss of habitats and species. In Germany we have achieved a number of successes in recent years, largely due to meeting our obligations under the Natura 2000 directives. Nevertheless, substantial further efforts are needed, especially in the fields of agriculture, fishery, land sealing and transport, which still represent a major threat to biological diversity," said Federal Environment Minister Röttgen. He announced that a Federal Biological Diversity Programme would be set up to implement the National Strategy on Biodiversity which was adopted during the previous legislative period.

Since the 9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in Bonn in May 2008, the German CBD Presidency has injected momentum into the international debate on nature conservation. For instance, negotiations on an agreement to combat biopiracy, and those on setting up an international nature conservation council have made considerable progress. The German Presidency aims to bring both processes to a successful conclusion before the end of 2010. In 2009, Germany also invested 250 million euro in the conservation of forests and other ecosystems throughout the world. This is to be further developed in future.

Following the celebration, Federal Environment Minister Norbert Röttgen opened the exhibition in Berlin's Museum of Natural History "Ohne Vielfalt der Nature, keine Vielfalt der Wirtschaft" (no business diversity without biodiversity). This exhibition was part of the Business and Biodiversity Initiative which was launched by the Federal Environment Ministry in 2007, with the aim of actively involving the business sector in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. (www.business-and-biodiversity.de).

Calendar of events celebrating the International Year of Biodiversity

In 2010 the German Ministry for Environment (BMU) established a web-based interactive calendar of events celebrating the International Year of Biodiversity throughout Germany: excursions, workshops, lectures, seminars, expert talks, wilderness camps and many more. For more information please see www.cbd.int/2010/country/?country=de

All together 1.500 events realised by more than 300 different organisers addressed practitioners, politicians, nature lovers, families, children – something for everyone.

Global Biodiversity Action Days

The German Ministries for Environment (BMU) and for Development (BMZ) had launched Global Biodiversity Action Days in 38 countries together with GEO International reportage magazine (www.biodiversity-day.info) Strategic support came from UNEP and SCBD.

Groups of up to 3,000 people in each country - composed of scientists, politicians, communities, schools, NGOs and the media - came together to study a previously defined ecosystem and discuss the relevance of the vital services that biodiversity provides to humans. The objective was to raise public awareness, at the national and international levels, of how functioning ecosystems enable human well-being and development.

Each event started off with a so-called 'biomonitoring': Participants were asked to identify as many species as possible, and to discuss how the respective ecosystem produces services for human well-being. Beyond these core activities, all local organizers put impressive creativity into designing the most diverse scientific and cultural programs to attract experts, politicians, the public and the media.

The overall approach was inspired by the good experiences that Germany and individual partner countries had made with similar events in previous years. 2010 saw a major scaling-up of the original format, in geographic and thematic terms.

The result is a remarkable mosaic of world-wide ecosystems and their services. It is also an example of a global approach to educate the public about the value of nature. This way, it underpins and illustrates the outcomes of the study "The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity" (TEEB) in a hands-on way that everyone can understand.

At the CEPA Fair at COP 10 some of the impressive outcomes were presented during a Side Event.

Nation-wide nature field day to explore Germany's biological diversity

On 22 Mai 2010 Federal Environment Minister Norbert Röttgen and the President of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation Beate Jessel opened the nation-wide field day for biological diversity by leading a tour through the Siebengebirge. With this nature field day Germany wanted to canvass support to step up efforts in biodiversity conservation. This joint activity, initiated as part of the International Year of Biodiversity, was met with a tremendous response: Thousands of participants took part in approximately 1000 hiking tours which were organised from the Baltic Sea down to the Alps. The tours were guided by experts and organised by environmental NGOs, Federal State administrations, National Park administrations, associations of farmers and other users and scientific institutions.

Minister Röttgen was impressed by the widespread interest in the excursions taking place under the motto "Hike together - experience Germany's diversity". "Hiking is a splendid means to get to know the diversity of landscapes and species we have in Germany. It is one of the biggest challenges of our time next to climate protection to reconcile nature conservation and the use of our natural environment," Minister Röttgen said.

Ministerial Lunch Event on Biodiversity and Development, 22 September 2010 (UNGA Special session on Biodiversity), Hosted by UK and Germany

On the occasion of the High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly Celebrating the International Year of Biodiversity the Environment Ministers of Germany and the United Kingdom hosted a Ministerial Lunch Event on Biodiversity and Development. This event brought together about 20 Environment Ministers as well as the ES of the CBD, a Worldbank director and TEEB study leader Pavan Sukhdev to discuss the interdependency between the biodiversity and development agendas, in particular the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services to the economy, and to bring together initiatives and ideas for embedding the valuation of biodiversity and ecosystems into decision making across government.