

Framework concept for 7th Asia-Europe Environment Roundtable on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, 27-30 June 2009 in Hayama, Japan

Concept

Asia and Europe present two of the richest regions in terms of biodiversity (species, genes as well as ecosystems). In Asia, a significant number of people, especially from developing countries, depend heavily on the goods and services provided by ecosystems for their daily survival. While the link in the more developed parts of Asia and Europe might not seem that obvious at first sight, in fact even highly urbanised and over-developed communities are dependent from the functioning provision of ecosystem services to maintain their living standard. Traditional lifestyles in Asia and Europe have been very much in harmony with nature and the surrounding systems. Mega-capitalism and unsustainable lifestyle developed in the last decades have led to an increasing loss of biodiversity and global degradation of ecosystems. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA) report released in 2005 warned the international community that human kind has caused unprecedented losses in biodiversity and declines in ecosystem services. Efforts to achieve the 2010 biodiversity target of achieving a substantial reduction in biodiversity loss and initiatives to halt the degradation of ecosystem have yet to prove successful and will be reviewed at the 10th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Japan in 2010. Thus it is a vital task for the two regions to bolster actions to reverse the trend of biodiversity loss and rehabilitate ecosystem services in order to tackle global challenges such as sustainable development and climate change.

Stakeholders from both Asia and Europe have a vital role to play in sharing knowledge and promoting good practice for effective biodiversity conservation and successful ecosystem services management.

Objectives and Structure

The Asia-Europe Environment Forum (ENVforum) 7th Roundtable is intended to facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue from both Asia and Europe and to provide useful inputs to relevant policy processes in the domain of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

It seeks to identify opportunities for bi-regional cooperation in the area of biodiversity and ecosystem services by first discussing the global policy frameworks and market mechanisms that have been developed until today under the UNCBD and other international frameworks and identifying policy and institutional gaps that need to be filled in order to achieve substantial change.

The second part of the roundtable will then focus on 2-3 key ecosystems (marine & coastal, freshwater, forests) and their significance for different stakeholders and sectors in Asia and Europe.

The subsequent session will examine potential opportunities for private sector in the ecosystems, followed by a presentation on voluntary payment schemes for ecosystem services, which will be thoroughly evaluated. This part can also incorporate a presentation on the proposed “green new deal”, identifying strategies and challenges for the evaluation of ecosystem services.

Building on the discussions, the last part will be a summary of recommendations for Asian and European countries derived from the previous sessions combined with an outlook towards to the next UNCBD COP in Japan in 2010 as well as the biodiversity 2010 target.