



To: Mr Anders Turesson  
 Chief Climate Negotiator for EU  
 Ministry of the Environment  
 103 33 Stockholm  
 Sweden

## **Copenhagen: Climate change, biodiversity and ecosystems - The Need to Recognise the Links and Achieve Co-Benefits**

Dear Mr Turesson,

We are writing on behalf of 13 European voluntary conservation organisations who are working together to promote the implementation and further development of EU biodiversity policy. We are writing to you in advance of the Copenhagen summit on climate change action, to emphasise that we cannot solve the climate crisis without supporting the recovery of biodiversity and ensuring resilient ecosystems at the same time. This needs to go hand in hand with significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The essential role of ecosystems in climate change mitigation and adaptation should be clearly recognised in the Copenhagen outcomes – in the Shared Vision as well as in specific sections on mitigation and adaptation. It is not enough to leave this to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems currently absorb around half of anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions. The carbon capture and storage capacity of oceans, forests, grasslands, wetlands and peatlands is essential for mitigating climate change. If degradation or destruction of these ecosystems continues, this will lead to the release of significant amounts of greenhouse gases. The EU 27 is already the world's second largest emitter of CO<sub>2</sub> from drained peatland. If biodiversity tipping points are reached there could be drastic and irreversible runaway effects on the global climate and ecosystems.

In addition, these ecosystems are essential for the overall goals of the UNFCCC because of their key role in adapting to climate change, while also providing a wide range of ecosystem services that are essential for human well-being and development. Urban and peri-urban protected green spaces cool cities, reducing the urban heat island effect, as well as improving air quality. Sustainable management of wetlands and floodplains maintains water flow and quality, helping to reduce flooding. Coastal ecosystems, such as salt marshes and barrier beaches provide natural shoreline protection from storms and flooding, reducing the adverse impacts of global warming.

Ecosystem approaches to land and water use and management provide multiple benefits, are cost effective, ready now and accessible to rural and poor communities. The Copenhagen outcomes should recognise these significant opportunities and ensure that the door is open for cost-effective, integrated approaches to emission reductions and ecosystem based adaptation.

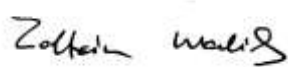
We therefore call upon you, as the European Union's chief climate negotiator at the Copenhagen summit to argue strongly for:

- 1) An effective and comprehensive Shared Vision that recognises the importance of biodiversity and healthy ecosystems for addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation.

- 2) 'Place-markers' in the adaptation outcomes that recognise and incorporate the need to build and maintain ecosystem resilience. This needs to encompass taking an ecosystem approach to all adaptation, appropriately refer to the direct use of ecosystems, their functions and services to help people adapt to the adverse effects of climate change (often termed Ecosystem-based Adaptation, EbA), and make provisions for particularly vulnerable ecosystems
- 3) Under REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation), prioritise action to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and stabilise, conserve and maintain forest ecosystems. It must be recognised that the high carbon density of natural forests is largely a result of their biodiversity, and that biodiversity is not therefore a 'co-benefit' but an integral part of the high carbon value of a natural tropical forest.
- 4) Mandatory accounting for all land use activities under the land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) negotiations. LULUCF activities should not prevail over or affect ecosystem integrity and LULUCF climate rules should not endanger biodiversity or other environmental, social and cultural values. Accounting for carbon losses from peatlands and forest management activities will incentivise reductions in these emitting activities and help preserve forest and peatlands as valuable wildlife habitats as well as carbon stores.

If we are to prevent dangerous climate change and effectively support the poorest and most vulnerable people and places deal with the impacts they are already facing, this must be recognised as a vital component to a successful Copenhagen outcome. We urge you, as we fast approach the International Year of Biodiversity, to show leadership and foresight in this.

Yours sincerely



Zoltan Waliczky  
BirdLife International

Sue Collins  
Butterfly Conservation Europe

On behalf of

ARocha, BirdLife International, Buglife, Butterfly Conservation Europe, CEEweb, Euronatur, Europarc, European Environmental Bureau, Federnatur, International Mire Conservation Group, Planta Europa, Societas Europaea Herpetologica and WWF.

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