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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials  
“Environment for Europe”  
Executive Committee

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Item 2 of the provisional agenda

**SIXTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE “ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE”**

Draft Category I document for information

**DRAFT BELGRADE STATEMENT  
BY MINISTERS PARTICIPATING IN THE PEBLDS PROCESS**

Prepared under the auspices of the PEBLDS<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy.

*We, the European Ministers and High Representatives* of the states participating in the PEBLDS process, gathered in Belgrade from 10-12 October 2007 for the Sixth Ministerial Conference *Environment for Europe*,

*Reaffirming* our commitment to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Johannesburg Declaration and Plan of Implementation on Sustainable Development, and the Millennium Development Goals, with its recently adopted biodiversity target,

*Recalling* that the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and the Environment recommends that countries should consider integrating implementation needs of multilateral environmental agreements into their national sustainable development strategies,

*Reaffirming* our commitment to the implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, as a tool to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity at the regional level, endorsed in 1995 at the Third Ministerial Conference Environment for Europe in Sofia, Bulgaria, and has been reconfirmed by successive Environment for Europe conferences,

*Reiterating* our commitment to the 2010 biodiversity target as expressed in the Strategic Plan to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity and the European Council Declaration by the European Union adopted in 2001 in Gothenburg,

*Reaffirming* our commitment to the implementation of the Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity, which was adopted in 2003 at the Fifth Ministerial Conference Environment for Europe in Kyiv, Ukraine and highlighted as key issues for Europe: forests and biodiversity, agriculture and biodiversity, the Pan-European Ecological Network, invasive alien species, financing of biodiversity, biodiversity monitoring and indicators, and public participation and awareness,

*Underlining* that the Environment for Europe process is an important platform for Pan-European cooperation with regard to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity,

*Noting* that the Sixth Ministerial Conference Environment for Europe offers the opportunity to assess and evaluate the Kyiv commitments given that halting the loss of biodiversity is a priority for the Pan-European region,

*Express the following:*

### **Achievements**

*We note with satisfaction* that since 2003, regional, sub-regional and national activities have been ongoing in Western Europe, South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia to address the 2010 biodiversity target,

*We recognize* the strategic framework endorsed in 2006 by the Environment Council of the European Union *Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond: Sustaining ecosystem services for human well-being* with an annexed action plan, which aims to pull together actors and resources at EU and Member State levels to implement the actions that can make the greatest contribution towards achieving the 2010 biodiversity target;

*We recognize* the initiatives and activities carried out at the Pan-European level in order to assist in the achievement of the Kyiv targets, which include *inter alia*:

- The cooperation between the PEBLDS and the Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) on issues such as sustainable forest management and the ecosystem approach; illegal logging and related trade; and afforestation and reforestation guidelines,

- The progress on raising awareness and understanding of the importance of High Nature Value farmland, and activities related to its identification and conservation in the Pan-European region, as a result of the efforts of the PEBLDS, the EEA and ECO-Forum,
- The technical and political progress for the Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN), under the PEBLDS framework, which has increasing relevance within adaptation to climate change, biodiversity conservation and protected areas programmes at the pan-European, national, regional and local levels, and which is underpinned by the Natura 2000 and Emerald networks,
- The implementation of the European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species adopted in 2003 under the Bern Convention, and the ongoing activities implemented by the Bern Convention as the European forum for IAS, as well as activities at the national and regional level to address the threats posed by IAS,
- The progress in Biodiversity Financing in the framework of the European Task Force for Banking, Business and Biodiversity under PEBLDS, resulting in increased practical partnerships with the finance and business sector, pilot projects and the development of a Biodiversity Finance Technical Facility.
- The Streamlining European 2010 Biodiversity Indicators project led by the European Environment Agency, in collaboration with the PEBLDS, the European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC) and other partners, to review, test, refine, document and help produce specific biodiversity indicators,
- The accomplishments of the 2010 Countdown Initiative with 150 international and national non-governmental and governmental partner organizations including local and regional governments and the private sector from the entire pan-European region, to raise awareness and achieve implementation of the pan-European and global biodiversity commitments,
- The continued efforts by governmental and non-governmental organisations at all levels to support the implementation of the programmes of work of the Convention on Biological Diversity and their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans.

## **Challenges**

*We are aware* that the Pan-European region represents a living environment and provides livelihoods for millions of people, having a rich natural heritage and enormous economic potential, but facing rapid environmental, social and economic changes with different development patterns in Western Europe, South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia;

*We note with concern* the finding of the Belgrade Assessment by the European Environment Agency that the 2010 biodiversity target will be difficult to attain unless considerable additional efforts are made. Habitat destruction, fragmentation and degradation as well as the rapid spread of invasive alien species is increasing in Europe and affecting particularly farmland, mountain regions and coastal zones. Furthermore, European hotspots of endemic species are at risk because of the effects of climate change and the lack of space between habitats to allow for adaptation; and pollinators such as butterflies, honeybees and bumblebees are declining in parts of Europe. The current and future economic costs of all of these losses could reach billions of Euros,

*We also note with concern* the implications on global biodiversity conservation of the rapidly increasing ecological footprint of Europe.

*We emphasise* that biodiversity and human well-being are inextricably linked, because biodiversity benefits people in a variety of ways including through its contribution to material welfare and livelihoods, security, resilience to climate change, social relations, health, food, recreation and fuels as well as freedom of choices and actions, as it is pointed out by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment;

*We stress* that for the conservation of the rich natural heritage of the Pan-European region and for the improvement of human well-being it is necessary to reconcile land use and development needs with the conservation of biodiversity and maintenance of ecosystem services,

*We are aware* that important drivers of biodiversity loss worldwide include governance failures, and the failure of conventional economics to recognise the economic values of natural capital and ecosystem services and therefore *note the need* to engage all economic sectors in biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use.

## **Cooperation and Partnerships**

*We will reinforce* our efforts to implement the Kyiv Biodiversity targets and to enhance the full support and participation of all Pan-European countries in PEBLDS, which is an important framework for regional cooperation and a unique forum for realising global biodiversity commitments at the Pan-European level,

*We emphasise* that all stakeholders have an important role to play, including landowners and land users, the private sector, financial institutions and the public as a whole, as well as intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organisations, in the efforts to achieve the 2010 biodiversity target; and that we should promote partnerships involving government, international organisations, development agencies and civil society, multi-stakeholder partnerships should be used extensively,

*We appreciate* the support of UNEP and the Council of Europe for the conservation and sustainable use of the Pan-European natural heritage through hosting the Joint Secretariat of PEBLDS,

*We appreciate* the contribution of the European Environment Agency, UNEP-WCMC, ECNC, ECO-Forum and IUCN and many other partners for their assistance for the achievement of the Kyiv targets at the Pan-European level,

*We continue to support* the implementation of the Pan-European Ecological Network as an important means for protecting biodiversity in Europe, fostering programmes for the development or restoration of ecological connectivity between core areas of European importance and applying at the European regional level the global programme of work on protected areas of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity,

*We encourage* the further cooperation between PEBLDS and the Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) on joint pan European priorities concerning forest biological diversity,

*We emphasise the need* for governments to specify their biodiversity priorities in their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans to meet 2010, the need to improve the institutional and social infrastructure and capacity building; the need to engage in information dissemination and effective use of practical tools, including awareness-raising, education, training, media and advertising,

*We welcome* the *GreenForce* initiative launched by the European Commission in co-operation with its Member States encouraging cooperation among implementing institutions and practitioners facilitating exchange of experience, capacity building and cooperation for implementation of environmental legislation,

*We encourage* the sharing of best practices for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity amongst countries, the use of the UNEP Issue Based Modules for the coherent implementation of biodiversity conventions, and information sharing through the Biodiversity Clearing-House Mechanism systems,

*We express our conviction* that the cooperation and support from the European Community and its Member States is crucial to address the challenges of the conservation of biodiversity and the reconciliation of development and the use of biodiversity in the Pan-European region while taking into account the special needs and conditions in the EECCA countries.