

MESSAGE FROM GUADELOUPE

Considering the Council Decision 2013/755/EU on the association of the overseas countries and territories with the European Union;

Considering the European Commission Communication COM(2012) 287: The outermost regions of the European Union: towards a partnership for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth,

Recalling Outermost Regions policies and actions,

Recalling Overseas Countries and Territories policies and actions,

Recalling the recommendations of the Message of La Reunion, in 2008,

Recalling the declaration of the international Conference in 2014 in La Réunion,

Recalling the declaration of the UNSIDS Conference in 2014,

Recalling the Strategic Plan and its Aichi Targets CBD X 2 in particular Aichi Target 10, CBD X 33 , CBD XI 15 , CBD XII, Decision on Ecosystem Conservation and Restoration, Decision on Biodiversity and Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction

Recalling the conclusions of the IPCC and UNFCCC and LULUCF decisions,

Recalling the EU Environmental and Climate framework and more particularly, the EU Biodiversity strategy, the EU adaptation strategy and the EU IAS Regulation,

Recalling member States' policies and efforts,

Recalling the Cotonou agreements,

Taking into account that the ORs and OCTs are part of Biodiversity hotspots of international importance with their regions and that they share common challenges in terms of biodiversity and climate change;

Acknowledging the critical value the ORs and OCTs add to European environmental wealth with their unique and diverse ecosystems providing fundamental and vital ecological services to the local populations, as well as to the local, national, regional and European economies;

Alerted by the unprecedented loss of biodiversity and hence natural capital, the threat of invasive species, the impact of climate change and human related activities on the natural environment and the sustainable development and economies of the ORs and OCTs;

Convinced that the promotion of actions in the field of sustainable management of ecosystems and ecological goods and services, sustainable energy, sustainable management and conservation of biodiversity, disaster risk reduction, would contribute to adaptation and mitigation of climate change in the OCTs and ORs;

Taking into account the characteristics of each territory, national development priorities and individual government's circumstances and legislation of OCTs and ORs, recommend the following plan of actions;

The CBD Executive Secretary, the French Minister for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy and the French Minister of Overseas territories, the French Ambassador for the protection of the planet, the President of the Guadeloupe regional council, the high-level OR representatives, the high-level OCT representatives, the high-level ACP representatives, the Director General of IUCN,

And the participants to the International Conference on Biodiversity and Climate Change held in Guadeloupe from 22-25 October 2014,

have collectively and in a participatory way agreed on the following five strategic priorities and cross-cutting actions:

Building resilience:

It is critical for OCTs and ORs to build their resilience to global changes and achieve a 'low carbon' economy in 2050 by:

Strategic orientations:

- Support the energy transition in the ORs and OCTs and in their regions;
- Identifying and adopting no-regret measures through *inter alia*, enhancing energy efficiency, improving public transport, and protecting and restoring ecosystems, regardless of the remaining uncertainties of specific local climate change impacts;

Operational actions:

- Defining strategies and allocating adequate time and resources for the identification and engagement of stakeholders;
 - Developing greater awareness of and information on climate change impacts in the ORs and OCTs, with an emphasis on explaining exposure to risks and vulnerability among local populations, and increasing the understanding of ecosystem resilience and the cost efficiency of nature-based-solutions;
 - Supporting labelling, awareness raising and materials certification across ORs and OCTs in order to shift consumption to a more sustainable level;
- Reflecting EU targets on emission reductions and renewable energy in OCTs/ORs including by:
 - Aiming to contribute to the collective target of CO₂ reduction adopted by the European Council on 23 October 2014 (Conclusion on 2030 Climate and Energy Policy Framework) and,
 - Establishing the framework for collaboration in the establishment and achievement of individual emission reduction and energy targets as a contribution to the whole,
- Pursuing an energy transition through achieving energy savings, transitioning to renewable energy sources, and increasing energy autonomy in the ORs, OCTs and encouraging cooperation with their neighbouring countries including by:
 - Developing clean transport systems and public transit in order to reduce emissions and private car use, and avoid new road infrastructure;
 - Supporting the adoption of innovative renewable energy technologies;
 - Ensuring that use and sourcing of biofuel and biomass energy is sustainable
- Considering an 'Islands adapt and mitigate initiative' that would include nature based solutions and that capitalises on and further strengthens existing initiatives such as the Pact of Isles, BEST, GLISPA and the Samoa Pathway;
 - Developing integrated management approaches for biodiversity vis-à-vis climate change in the ORs, the OCTs and their regions;
 - Developing strategies to address the projected impact of climate change on water resources and the availability of fresh water for people and biodiversity;
 - Assessing key species and ecosystems to identify those that can be used as specific indicators for ORs and OCTs vulnerable to climate change;
- Enhancing collaboration between ORs and OCTs and their regions with regards to the application of tools for the valuation of ecosystem services, assessing vulnerability, and the transfer of renewable energy and waste management technologies;
- Providing capacity building on the development of clear messages targeting communities and other stakeholders on research findings related to the key drivers of vulnerability to climate changes among biodiversity at the local level;

Tackling biodiversity loss:

Strategic orientations:

- Better connecting the efforts of ORs, OCTs and regions by facilitating regional projects, i.e. lionfish in the Caribbean;
- Ensuring treatment of the ORs and OCTs situation in the existing databases and analysis, such as the EEA (European Environmental Agency), and analysis with dedicated datasets and reports.

Operational actions:

- Develop common indicators for the ORs/OCTs based on Environment Action Plan indicators, building on local initiatives, indicators, and available data, ensuring the necessary resources to collect any additional data, and establishing a reporting system for the EU on ORs/OCT biodiversity status;
- Develop more data and indicators of the status of habitats and taxa of high ecological value;
- Take into account effectiveness of some best practice examples in management of fisheries and identification of key habitats in ORs/OCTs and international/regional cooperation, cooperation in the control of invasive species, and reintroduction of key species that have disappeared;
- Support the strengthening of the protected area systems in the ORs and OCTs with the aim of i) increasing their representativeness of the diversity of ecosystems, ii) networking at regional level, iii) fostering ecological connectivity when possible and iv) improving their management effectiveness taking into account prerogatives of managers, the competences of local governments, the role of civil society;
- Assess habitats and species to stop/prevent their destruction; identify and share best practices on protected areas and conservation of taxa including wild species, domesticated varieties/cultivars/races (agrodiversity), and species of cultural importance (ethnodiversity), in order to:
 - Establish a list of regionally ecologically important and threatened areas and taxa including wild species, domesticated varieties/cultivars/races (agrodiversity), and species of cultural importance (ethnodiversity);
 - Develop action/management plans for the most endangered, or with high ecological/conservation values, species and areas and those with legal status as protected species (areas). List should be prioritized based on accepted methodologies involving all stakeholders taking into account traditional knowledge;
 - Put in place effective legal compliance mechanisms;
 - Mobilize expertise for less known taxa (fungi, mosses, etc.);
- Stop overexploitation of marine and terrestrial resources;
 - OCT/ORs should actively engage in and members states should accede to relevant international/regional agreements/protocols and partnerships on biodiversity,
 - Support the decision for WECAFC (Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission) to become a management body instead of advisory body;
- Promote programs/projects on “ecosystem connectivity” through regional and international cooperation, involving all stakeholders, by developing or supporting networks for managers in the ORs and OCTs;
- Extend European tools, platforms, databases and observatories to the ORs, OCTs such as the JRC’s (John Research Center) European Alien Species Information Network (EASIN) in order to better monitor the status of biodiversity and threats;
- Implement/develop IAS (invasive alien species) strategies at the local and regional level including the elaboration of IAS alert lists, control methods (including “eradication”, communication and outreach...);

- Develop early warning systems at the local and regional level to prevent introduction and spread (= improving biosecurity);
- Support restoration of degraded/contaminated areas in the ORs, OCTs and their regions, with an emphasis on the principle of ecological compensation/offset and on innovative solutions (e.g. planting resilient indigenous species, creating artificial reefs, ...);
- Prioritize species to be restored based on scientific (e.g. key roles in ecosystem functioning, “umbrella” species) or other criteria (“charismatic”) involving all stakeholders.

Developing the green and blue economy:

Strategic orientations:

- Urgently prioritise and finance environmental sustainability of ORs’ and OCTs’ economic sectors (e.g. tourism, agriculture, forestry, aquaculture, fisheries, mining, energy, construction...) through innovation and diversification.
- Develop a vision and international support for the ORs/OCTs combined global marine domain by promoting ecologically sustainable uses of the marine environment, fostering local governance and supporting spatial planning in the ORs and OCTs.
- Promote access to resources and equitable benefit sharing for ORs’ and OCTs’ populations.

Operational actions:

- Develop nature-based solutions and ecosystem services approaches (e.g. assessment, valuation, and certification) as tools supporting public policies e.g. for awareness, decision support
- Develop sustainable financing mechanisms and incentives such as payment for ecosystem services while favouring the convergence of methods.
- Foster ecological transition, via circular economy, enabling small and medium enterprises to create jobs, generate wellbeing and increase self-sufficiency.
- Supporting marine spatial planning in the ORs, OCTs and neighbouring countries.

Advancing research:

Research challenges and solutions for Overseas on biodiversity and natural resource facing climatic changes

Strategic orientations:

- Make the ORs and OCTs one of the key areas of European research investment to develop research of global relevance while motivated by local needs recognizing i) overseas’ assets as natural models for research on biodiversity and climate change (diversity of scales and settings allowing innovative large scale comparison and analysis); ii) existing local scientific expertise; iii) added value of connection to European Research Area (ERA);
- Ensuring long term and broad scale collection of relevant data for evidence-based decision on climate change and biodiversity;

Operation actions:

- Develop specific research and contextualize the existing activities to identify and tackle socio-ecological issues of ORs and OCTs related to biodiversity and climate change:
 - Develop, test, adapt and validate alternative management approaches and measures;

- Make co-production of knowledge and transdisciplinarity the driving way for the design of relevant research questions and project implementation, dissemination and transfer for societal impacts;
- Sustain, improve and enlarge existing research networks (NetBiome, CaribVet)
- Better involve regions and local authorities in research conducted to the benefit of the local populations, with local capacity building and knowledge-sharing as a prerequisite;
- Capitalise on the NETBIOME experience for creating a dedicated platform to connect and raise the profile of research actors in the ORs and OCTs, inform on the key research challenges, and to host a database of biodiversity and climate change research, providing an interface making knowledge available for action to decision-makers;
- Place knowledge exchange and outreach at the heart of research through stakeholders and end-users consultation as well as general public engagement at the onset of research.
- Harness local knowledge, insights and perspectives to ensure societal relevance of research and hence take up for actions for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

Mobilising and easing access to resources:

Strategic orientation:

- Urge stakeholders at every level to maximise the use of all existing funding opportunities to advance the biodiversity and climate change agenda.

Operational actions:

- Dedicate technical assistance to the ORs and OCTs to ensure all programmes and instruments are fully utilised and the long-term capacity of OCTs and ORs is increased
- Acknowledge the legal eligibility of OCTs to Life+ funding, to ensure the effective participation of all of them
- Ensure bottom-up approaches, networking and local capacity-building
- Develop a tool for supporting: trans-overseas call for research proposals supported by the Overseas collectivities, the national agencies and the EC in the next 2 years

Strategic orientation:

- Ensure the coherence and synergy of funding and public investments impacting the environment in the ORs, OCTs and ACPs

Operational actions:

- implement concrete actions (such as green public procurement, cost benefit analysis, and life cycle analysis) that reinforce mainstreaming biodiversity and climate change across all investment processes particularly European funds (EDF, ERDF, Horizon2020, DCI)
- Ease trans-overseas call for research proposals supported by the Overseas collectivities, the national agencies and the EC in the next 2 years
- conduct prior environmental impact assessment of public investments and projects so as to minimise impacts and further environmental protection (EDF & ERDF)

Strategic orientation:

- Build on the BEST preparatory action by setting up a sustainable partnership dedicated to biodiversity, ecosystem services and climate change in the OCTs and ORs. This partnership shall be committed to the establishment of an inclusive and representative management structure and shall:

Operational actions:

- secure support from various donors, financial instruments and programmes, exploring in particular the development and use of trust funds
- have a special but not exclusive focus on small entities and non-governmental organisations
- support regional collaboration
- act in a inclusive and flexible manner

A group should be convened utilising the support of the political leaders of the ORs and OCTs with the mandate to set up this voluntary partnership, including representatives of ORs, OCTS, Member States, the European Commission, European Parliament, European investment and development banks and civil society.

Additional Cross-cutting actions:

- Fostering regional co-operation in ORs and OCTs geographical regions, as well as co-operation among the EU ORs and OCTs through providing appropriate and adapted financial, political and technical means, in order to efficiently tackle common challenges related to biodiversity and climate change;
- Ensuring better coherence and more synergies, between the different and respective political and financial frameworks dedicated to the ORs, OCTs and ACP countries in order to facilitate leverage effect of the different existing supports;
- Learning from the fruitful Global Island Partnership willing to catalyse and raise the profile of actions of islands with no regard of their political status;
- Completing reflection and work on the European global footprint with analysis related to ORs, OCTs and ACP countries;
- Mirroring and translating the international importance of the ORs and the OCTs and neighbouring countries' biodiversity with appropriated measures and attention into European Environmental programmes, initiatives and policies taking into account their specific needs.
- Raising the profile of the key role of OCTs and ORs and involving them in biodiversity and climate change related events in the EU, regionally and internationally.
- Developing and creating cross-cutting skills and capacities in sustainable agriculture, including strengthening the capacity of local institutions, in order to alleviate threats to sensitive and vulnerable ecosystems
- Facilitating the extension of relevant EU legislation and best practices for environmental protection and ecosystem resilience to the OCTs and ORs, in consultation with the territories

Monitoring

Putting in place a monitoring system for the implementation of the Message from Guadeloupe with at least a mid-term review.

Statements:

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