



MESSAGE FROM GUADELOUPE

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 (ORs) policies and actions;

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

Recalling Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) policies and actions;

Recalling the recommendations of the Message from Reunion Island in 2008;

Recalling the Islands Declaration on Climate Change of the International Conference in La Réunion in 2014;

Recalling the declaration of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in Samoa in 2014;

Recalling the UN Strategic Plan on Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Targets adopted by decision X/2 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), in particular Aichi Target 10, as well as decisions X/33 and XI/15, and decisions of CBD COP 12 on Ecosystem Conservation and Restoration and on Biodiversity and Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction;

Recalling the conclusions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) decisions;

Recalling the EU Environmental and Climate framework and more particularly, the EU Biodiversity strategy (COM(2011) 244), the EU adaptation strategy (COM(2013) 216) and the EU Invasive Alien Species regulation (PE-CONS 70/14);

Recalling member states' policies and efforts;

Recalling the Cotonou agreements from 2000;

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 ORs and OCTs;

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

The CBD Executive Secretary, the French Minister for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy and the French Minister of Overseas territories, special envoy of the French President for the protection of the planet, the President of the Regional Council of Guadeloupe, the Deputy Premier and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour of the British Virgin Islands Government, the high-

level OR representatives, the high-level OCT representatives, the high-level ACP representatives, the Director General of IUCN, with the contribution of representatives of the European Commission

And the participants of 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:

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

Strategic orientations:

- Support the energy transition in the ORs and OCTs and in their regions;
- Identify and adopt 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:

- Define strategies and allocate adequate time and resources for the identification and engagement of stakeholders;
 - o Develop 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;
 - o Support labelling, awareness raising and materials certification across ORs and OCTs in order to shift consumption to a more sustainable level;
- Reflect EU targets on emission reductions and renewable energy in ORs and OCTs including by:
 - o 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 (SN 79/14)) and;
 - o Building the framework for collaboration in the establishment and achievement of individual emission reduction and energy targets as a contribution to the whole;
- Pursue an energy transition through achieving energy savings, transitioning to renewable energy sources, and increasing energy autonomy in the ORs and OCTs and encouraging cooperation with their neighbouring countries including by:
 - o Developing clean transport systems and public transport in order to reduce emissions and private car use;
 - o Supporting the adoption of innovative renewable energy technologies;
 - o Ensuring that use and sourcing of biofuel and biomass energy is sustainable;

- Consider 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 (voluntary scheme for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of European Overseas), GLISPA (Global Island Partnership) and the Samoa Pathway by :
 - o Developing integrated management approaches for biodiversity vis-à-vis climate change in the ORs, the OCTs and in their regions;
 - o Elaborating strategies to address the projected impact of climate change on water resources and the availability of fresh water for people and biodiversity;
 - o Assessing key species and ecosystems to identify those that can be used as specific indicators for ORs and OCTs vulnerable to climate change;
- Enhance 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;
- Build capacity to support 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 connect the efforts of ORs, OCTs and their regions by facilitating regional projects,(i.e. lionfish in the Caribbean);
- Ensure incorporation of the ORs and OCTs information in the existing databases and analysis at all levels - including the European Environment Agency (EEA) -, with dedicated datasets and reports.

Operational actions:

- Develop common indicators for the ORs and OCTs to increase the knowledge base (as recognized in the 7th EU Environment Action Programme) by building on local initiatives, already existing indicators, ensuring the necessary resources to collect any additional data, and establishing a reporting system for the EU on the biodiversity status of the ORs and OCTs;
- Take into account the effectiveness of some best management practice examples such as for fisheries, key habitats identification, invasive species control, key species translocation or reintroduction, and habitat restoration in ORs and OCTs, and promote international and regional cooperation in the implementation of management measures;
- Support the strengthening of the protected area systems in the ORs and OCTs with the aim of i) increasing their ecological representativeness, ii) networking at regional level, iii) fostering ecological connectivity and iv) improving their management effectiveness, taking into account prerogatives of managers, the competences of local governments, the role of civil society;
- Assess the status of 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:

- o Establish lists of regionally ecologically important and threatened habitats and taxa and prioritise based on accepted methodologies involving all stakeholders, taking into account traditional knowledge and ethnobiodiversity;
- o Develop action/management plans for the species and habitats that are most endangered, or have high ecological/conservation values, and provide them with legally protected status;
- o Put in place effective legal compliance mechanisms;
- o Mobilize expertise for less known taxa (fungi, mosses, etc.);
- Stop overexploitation of marine and terrestrial resources;
 - o ORs and OCTs should actively engage in, and member states should accede to, relevant international/regional agreements/protocols and partnerships on biodiversity;
 - o Support the creation of fisheries management bodies where they do not yet exist, such as 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 and OCTs 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, early warning systems at the local and regional level to prevent introduction and spread;
- Support restoration of degraded/contaminated areas in the ORs, OCTs and in their regions, with an emphasis on the principle of ecological compensation/offset and innovative solutions, and highly prioritize the use of indigenous species;
- Prioritise species to be restored based on scientific or societal criteria involving all stakeholders.

Developing the green and blue economy:

Strategic orientations:

- Urgently prioritise and finance environmental sustainability of the 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 and OCTs combined marine domain, of international importance, 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;
- Support marine spatial planning, monitoring and surveillance in the ORs, OCTs and neighbouring countries.

Advancing research:

Strategic orientations:

- Make the ORs and OCTs one of the key areas of European research investment to develop research of global relevance 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);
- Ensure long term and broad scale collection of relevant data for evidence-based decision on climate change and biodiversity.

Operational 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:
 - o Develop, test, adapt and validate alternative management approaches and measures;
 - o 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 based on relevant and motivated research actions and other joint activities (NetBiome, CaribVet);
- Better involve regions and local authorities in research, with capacity building and knowledge-sharing as a prerequisite, and an aim to address local needs and benefit local populations;
- Capitalise on the NETBIOME experience for creating a dedicated platform to connect local decision-makers to produce and share knowledge available for action;
- Place knowledge exchange and outreach at the heart of research through stakeholders, general public and end-users involvement from the very beginning

(identification of research questions) to the dissemination of results, and generate impact to society via policy improvements;

- Harness local knowledge, insights and perspectives to ensure societal relevance of research and hence take up 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 ORs and OCTs to LIFE+ funding, to ensure the effective participation of all of them;
- Ensure bottom-up approaches, networking and local capacity-building;
- Support trans-overseas call for research proposal supported by the ORs and OCTs local authorities, 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:

- Encourage 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);
- Support the conduction of prior environmental impact assessment of public investments and projects so as to minimise impacts and further environmental protection (EDF & ERDF) where appropriate.

Strategic orientation:

- Build on the BEST preparatory action by setting up a sustainable partnership dedicated to biodiversity, ecosystem services and climate change in the ORs and OCTs. 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 an 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:

- Foster 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;
- Ensure 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;
- Learn from the fruitful Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) willing to catalyse and raise the profile of actions of islands with no regard of their political status;
- Complete reflection and work on the European global footprint with analysis related to ORs, OCTs and ACP countries;
- Mirror and translate 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.
- Raise the profile of the key role of ORs and OCTs and involve them in biodiversity and climate change related events in the EU, regionally and internationally;
- Develop and create 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;
- Facilitate the extension of relevant EU legislation and best practices for environmental protection and ecosystem resilience in consultation with the territories and with respect of the competences of the ORs and OCTs.

Monitoring

Put in place a monitoring system for the implementation of the Message from Guadeloupe.