



Message from Reunion Island

Message from the Conference “The European Union and its Overseas Entities: Strategies to counter Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss”, Reunion Island, 7-11 July 2008



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INTRODUCTION

The conference “**The European Union and its Overseas Entities: Strategies to counter Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss**” took place in Reunion island from 7 to 11 July 2008. It was an official event organized under the aegis of the French Presidency of the European Union.

In light of the increasing challenges presented by climate change and biodiversity loss, for the first time the conference brought together representatives from the EU’s 7 Outermost Regions (ORs) and 21 Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs). They were joined by delegates from EU Member States, European institutions, selected Small Island Developing States (SIDS), international and regional organizations, research institutes, civil society and the private sector.

The objectives of the conference were two-fold. On the one hand, the conference sought to raise awareness of the ecological wealth of the EU’s overseas entities and of the threats facing them; and on the other hand, it sought to propose a European political strategy to respond to these threats through concrete action including adaptation to climate change, development of sustainable energy solutions, biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management.

The Message, adopted by conference participants, contains **21 proposals** aimed at the ORs, the OCTs, and their regions of the world. It is strengthened by a **portfolio of recommended actions and measures resulting from the 11 roundtables and workshops**, in which more than 400 people participated.

Conference organised by:

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
National Observatory on the Effects of Global Warming (ONERC)
Regional Council of Reunion Island
Ministry of Internal Affairs and Overseas and Territorial Collectives, France

Supported by:

Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, France
Ministry of Environment, Energy, Sustainable Development and Spatial Planning, France



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Considering the exceptional importance of the biodiversity of the European Union's 7 Outermost Regions (ORs) and 21 Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) in comparison with continental Europe, and their vulnerability to climate change;

Considering also the importance of the social and cultural diversity of the 28 ORs and OCTs, and the fact that biodiversity provides many goods and services representing key assets for their sustainable economic development and the well-being of their populations;

Considering further the high degree of endemism and the fragility of the biodiversity found in the ORs and OCTs, in particular the threat posed by climate change and other, often interrelated, environmental factors such as invasive alien species (IAS), overexploitation of resources, pollution and habitat destruction;

Taking account also the socio-economic consequences and risks of these threats, and the need to provide environmental security to the human populations, especially but not exclusively, with regard to their food supply, health, well-being and protection against extreme weather events;

Considering that the maritime areas of the ORs and OCTs if taken together are the largest in the world;

Noting that the European Union and its Member States, who face many similar environmental threats, have an historic window of opportunity to value the unique assets and experience of the ORs and OCTs and make an important and positive impact on their biodiversity and sustainable development.

Taking into account:

- The European Commission's Communications of 26 May 2005 "A stronger partnership for the Outermost Regions", and of 12 September 2007 "Strategy for the Outermost Regions: achievements and future perspectives";
- The Blue Book "An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union" and its Action Plan, adopted by the European Commission on 10 October 2007;
- The Green Paper "Adapting to climate change in Europe – options for EU action", adopted by the European Commission in June 2007;
- The European Commission's Communication of 22 May 2006 entitled "Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond", as well as the Council's Conclusions on the same subject of 18 December 2006;
- The final declaration of the OCTs at the OCT-EU Forum in Nuuk in 2006, at which they requested strengthened cooperation with the European Union in efforts to adapt to climate change and manage oceans and biodiversity;
- The "overseas territories" element of the "Message from Paris" on "Integrating Biodiversity into European Development Cooperation" approved by the "EU General Affairs and External Relations Council" on the proposal of the EU Finnish Presidency in December 2006;
- The Resolution on "European policy and biodiversity in overseas territories" adopted at the Third IUCN World Conservation Congress in Bangkok in 2004;
- The Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) launched under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at the 8th meeting of the Conference of Parties in Curitiba in 2006 and whose Strategy was adopted at the 9th CBD meeting in Bonn in May 2008, as well as the CBD Programmes of Work on Island Biodiversity, Marine and Coastal Biodiversity, and Protected Areas;
- Other recent decisions taken by the CBD Conference of Parties, such as those relating to climate change, invasive alien species, and protected areas.

The participants in the conference “The European Union and its Overseas Entities: Strategies to Counter Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss”, held on Reunion Island from 7-11 July 2008:

Express their deep gratitude to the government authorities and the people of Reunion Island for their generous hospitality during the Conference. Moreover, they pay tribute to the pioneering efforts of Reunion Island in addressing the twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, in particular through the creation of the Reunion Island National Park and by setting challenging targets in the fields of sustainable energy and clean transport;

Express their gratitude to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Regional Council of Reunion Island, and the National Observatory on the Effects of Global Warming (ONERC) who have collaborated closely and effectively to deliver this first ground-breaking Conference bringing together all the EU ORs and OCTs, other island representatives, as well as EU Member States, European institutions, scientists, regional and international organizations, and civil society;

Express moreover their gratitude to the French Presidency of the European Union for its generous support of the Conference and for including it in its official agenda;

Recognize that biological and cultural diversity are essential for sustainable development at the global level;

Recognize moreover the unique character of the natural heritage of the EU's ORs and OCTs, as well as the threats facing this heritage and the sustainable development opportunities it offers;

Agree therefore on a set of recommendations, detailed in the Annex to this Message, and invite all OR and OCT stakeholders (the European institutions, all EU Member States and in particular the French, British, Dutch, Danish, Spanish and Portuguese governments, the OR and OCT authorities and other concerned organizations) to implement them, noting particularly that:

1. There is a need to continue raising awareness about the ORs and OCTs, especially at the European level, in relation to their particular situations, the risks they face and the opportunities they present.
2. Biodiversity loss and climate change cannot be addressed effectively unless the link between people, biodiversity and climate change is recognized. This requires the involvement of policy-makers, civil society, scientists, private sector and the general public. Targeted capacity-building tailored to the needs of the ORs and OCTs, in addition to significantly improved communication between the scientific community, civil society as well as policy and decision-makers are essential to develop appropriate responses. The challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss should be adequately integrated in the European Commission's "Strategy for the Outermost Regions" and the forthcoming Green Paper, "Future relations between the EU and the Overseas Countries and Territories".
3. The involvement of civil society in environmental decision-making in the ORs and OCTs requires a philosophical shift and new approaches, reflected in policy and practice at the European, regional, national and local levels. The technical capacity of local organizations must be enhanced and advocacy strengthened, and they should be given access to specially-designed funding mechanisms. Moreover public consultations should be made more transparent and accessible.
4. The ORs and OCTs should be used as out-posted observatories for global change phenomena and their impacts, including on biodiversity, as well as to research, pioneer and assess solutions in the context of sustainable development, including on ecosystem management, invasive alien species, energy, climate change adaptation and so forth.
5. More multi-disciplinary research in the ORs and OCTs should be promoted and funded with a particular focus on the linkages between climate change and human well-being and the role that biodiversity can play in the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. A greater exchange of

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research between European countries and the ORs and OCTs should be facilitated, and the ORs and OCTs should be more effectively incorporated into EU Research Framework Programmes.

6. The ORs and OCTs should identify from within their own experience innovative actions aimed at tackling the related challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, and should share their experience and best practice with the rest of the EU and with their regional neighbours.
7. The Member States concerned and the European Union should pay more attention to the specific challenges facing ORs and OCTs in international negotiations on climate change and biodiversity.
8. The EU, the ORs and OCTs, ACP countries and Small Island Developing States should unite in the face of climate change and biodiversity loss, by actively participating in international initiatives, such as the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) and the CBD Programmes of Work on Island Biodiversity, Marine and Coastal Biodiversity, and Protected Areas.
9. Specific climate scenarios for each OR and OCT need to be developed, which should be supported by regional modelling; subsequently climate change vulnerability assessments need to be conducted and adaptation plans developed in all the ORs and OCTs, considering and involving the variety of relevant sectors, and adapting existing tools and methodologies. Finally, the proposed adaptation measures need to be implemented and monitored.
10. The EU and Member States should make stronger reference to the ORs and OCTs in the forthcoming European Commission's White Paper, "Adapting to climate change in Europe", and to the OCTs in the Global Climate Change Alliance, particularly considering the impacts on biodiversity and socio-economies as well as the risk of environmental migrations.
11. All development projects should be assessed with regard to their social and environmental impacts, at the identification and evaluation stages, and incorporate mitigation and compensation schemes where necessary; funding should be conditional on compliance with this rule. Economic valuation is one (but not the only) important tool for influencing development strategies and decision-making. The profile of economic valuation needs to be raised and effective processes for the communication of results need to be developed. Tools should be appropriate for the specific situation of ORs and OCTs.
12. The quality and overall area of protected areas in the ORs and OCTs need to be increased to accommodate climate change impacts. The ecosystem approach should be applied outside protected areas, and the degree of threat from other direct drivers of biodiversity loss needs to be reduced.
13. There is an urgent need for EU Member States and the European Commission, together with the ORs and OCTs, to establish a voluntary scheme for the protection of species and habitats, inspired by the Natura 2000 approach. This scheme should be easily accessible, flexible, adapted to the local situation, balance conservation and development needs, as well as take into account existing mechanisms and tools. The implementation of the scheme should be based on local commitment and shared financing.
14. There is an urgent need to highlight the importance of species conservation, including outside protected areas. The priority should be given to globally threatened species, however locally threatened and/or endemic taxa should also receive due attention to reflect the particular vulnerability of island flora and fauna. The elaboration of restoration or management plans is only a first step in the process; it must be followed by effective implementation.
15. Networking among existing national parks and other protected areas is essential in order to harmonize monitoring, build capacity, exchange best practices and share data.
16. Currently, environmental funds earmarked for biodiversity conservation are insufficient. A specific fund for biodiversity should therefore be established to finance conservation action, field survey and monitoring work, as well as research

on the economic value of biodiversity. Trust funds are needed to secure conservation measures in the long-term.

- 17.** The environmental impact of invasive alien species tends to be much greater in the EU's ORs and OCTs than in continental Europe, resulting in substantial socio-economic risks and a disproportionately high impact on wider European biodiversity. Campaigns to change awareness and attitudes of public and private decision-makers at all levels are fundamental to improving prevention and management policies. The ORs and OCTs should be fully integrated into the future EU Strategy on Invasive Alien Species, and the consistency of other Community policies and actions enhanced. IAS strategies that build on IAS inventories, monitoring and early warning systems should be developed in each OR and OCT.
- 18.** The vast marine and coastal areas of the ORs and OCTs provide the EU and its Member States with an array of remarkable and sometimes unique ecosystems, fisheries resources and emblematic species. They deserve to be part of a long-term strategic vision that integrates biogeographic aspects, requiring special attention in EU funding mechanisms and policies, in particular the Maritime Policy, in order to address the manifold anthropogenic stresses such as over-exploitation and pollution. Suitable monitoring of the marine environment on the basis of a coherent European-wide database is essential for the sustainable management of natural resources and the development of climate change adaptation strategies. The listing and protection of key marine sites, regionally mainstreamed Integrated Coastal Zone Management, fisheries stock assessments, as well as enhanced control and management of legal and illegal fishing activities are further critical elements.
- 19.** The EU and its Member States should consider energy policies as a major component in the fight against climate change in the ORs and OCTs as well as in their neighbouring regions. Taking into account differences in population levels and socio-economic activities, strategies for energy autonomy should be developed for each territory based on sustainable energy consumption, significantly reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and zero direct negative impact on biodiversity. Each territory should seek to develop an energy mix which includes energy management, development of renewable energies and their storage, and mainstreaming of sustainable energy into urban planning. Specific tools should be deployed to build capacity and mobilize stakeholders in the ORs and OCTs, most importantly through energy agencies, private sector companies, training and R&D facilities, as well as specially adapted legal and fiscal tools. In this context, intra-regional networking to share best practices and conduct joint activities is critical.
- 20.** Regional cooperation is now recognized by all actors as both an opportunity and a responsibility. Many of the issues related to biodiversity and climate change are more effectively treated at a regional level; regional cooperation can create many opportunities (co-development, exchange of best practice, sharing of skills and resources, economies of scale, synergies, etc.) while also increasing the voice of ORs and OCTs at a global level. The EU, including as appropriate, the Member States, the ORs and OCTs, and relevant international organizations should therefore continue to strengthen their involvement in regional cooperation efforts. Policies and practices should facilitate and support such cooperation between the ORs, the OCTs and their neighbours through appropriate legal frameworks, by improving information exchange as well as enhancing the role of existing regional structures and global institutions.
- 21.** Action should be taken urgently towards the development of a network of stakeholders, in order to reinforce the linkages and offer opportunities for exchange between the different actors working on the ORs and OCTs. Moreover, the creation of such a network would allow the promotion of knowledge about already existing policies and financial mechanisms, the fostering of thematic initiatives at the scale of all ORs and OCTs, and the implementation of the Message from Reunion Island. As several successful platforms exist, a value-added mechanism must be identified that optimizes overall effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

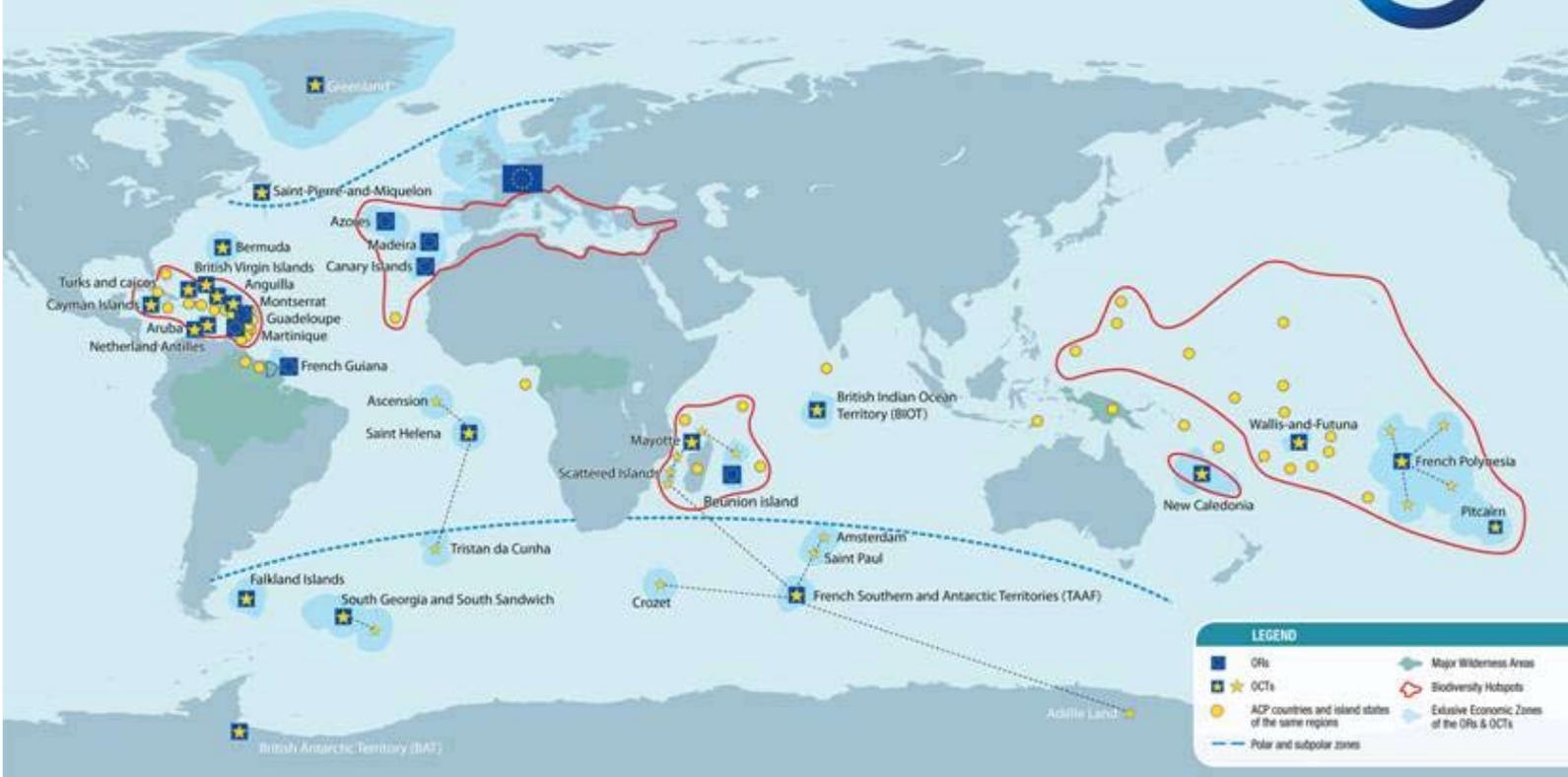
A How should we adapt to climate change, increase the resilience of ecosystems and reduce the vulnerability of human cultures and activities?

Cross-cutting issues

1. Develop specific climate scenarios for each OR and OCT, supported by regional modelling and building on EU-backed research programmes where appropriate. These should identify the threats posed by climate change and allow for appropriate adaptation measures.
2. Improve representation of ORs and OCTs in relevant international and regional fora (e.g. UNFCCC and other MEAs, including regional preparatory meetings) and enhance access to global, EU and/or regional financing mechanisms.
3. Raise awareness about the ORs and OCTs, where applicable and appropriate.
4. Strengthen science-to-policy communication and build awareness among decision-makers, the private sector and the general public.
5. Promote “win-win-win” solutions (that achieve simultaneously mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity conservation).
6. Consider establishing specific funding streams at the European Commission to address environmental challenges in the OCTs, to avoid them having to use limited development funding (i.e. under the European Development Fund) for this purpose.

The EU 28 Overseas Entities

A unique network in regions of global ecological importance



Adaptation planning and related policy recommendations

1. Enhance the capacity of OR and OCT governments, particularly in relation to personnel and financial means, to recognize and respond firmly to the challenge of climate change.
2. Conduct climate change vulnerability assessments and adaptation plans in all the ORs and OCTs, considering and involving the variety of relevant sectors; adapting existing tools and methodologies such as those of the UNFCCC (e.g. National Communications on Climate Change, National Action Plans for Adaptation; with the possible inclusion as special annexes to the reports of the respective Member States); subsequently implement and monitor these adaptation measures.
3. Take into account the impact on biodiversity and ecosystem services of all mitigation and adaptation planning and interventions, using cost/benefit analyses, longer-term environmental impact assessments (20-50 years), and holistic approaches that integrate and balance environmental, social and economic/development aspects.
4. Promote voluntary coastal-zone management programmes for adaptation to climate change as a tool to build ecosystem resilience, protect ecosystem services and secure local livelihoods.
5. Promote a stronger reference to, or inclusion of, the ORs and OCTs in the European Commission's White Paper on Climate Change Adaptation (DG Environment), and of the OCTs in the Global Climate Change Alliance (DG Development); given that the latter currently focuses on climate change adaptation in Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries, and in view of the limited resources allocated, increase the financial resources by an order of magnitude to allow their inclusion.

6. Place greater and more numerous areas (including more environmentally diverse protected areas and altitudinal gradients) under conservation regimes to achieve the same level of biodiversity conservation over the long term; apply the ecosystem approach outside protected areas and reduce the degree of threat from other direct drivers (pollution, over exploitation, habitat loss, invasive alien species [IAS]).

Research and monitoring

1. Enhance and coordinate high-quality research across institutions, and monitor the impact of climate change on the ORs and OCTs, avoiding duplication and improving cataloguing systems, promoting the open sharing of data and resources, and the availability of long-term data sets (e.g. via the EU-Joint Research Centre); consider the establishment of an ambitious research and knowledge facility and local and regional programmes on climate change and biodiversity.
2. Improve integration of sectoral information sources for climate research including data from offshore monitoring stations and satellites, and expanding island-based pilot projects.
3. Expedite research and ensure effective dissemination and implementation of research findings.
4. Integrate traditional and local knowledge with scientific research and promote community participation and engagement in local monitoring.

Regional cooperation

1. Promote long-term strategic planning and alignment of priorities between and within regions, building on the work of existing regional organizations where possible.
2. Prioritize improved coordination in the following areas: biodiversity, forestry, tourism, coastal management (including sea-level rise), marine and coral reef management, fisheries, sustainable energy, food security and disease control.

**B Economic assessment of ecosystem biodiversity and services:
what role does it play in development strategies?**

Recommendations

1. Integrate the economic valuation of biodiversity and ecosystem services into the assessment of all development projects, programmes and policies affecting the ORs and OCTs.
2. Use pragmatic, practical techniques appropriate to OR and OCT conditions for economic valuation and assessment at project and programme levels.
3. Contribute to international environmental economics exercises (e.g. the second stage of the study on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity [TEEB]).
4. Improve communication to, and among, stakeholders and decision-makers, highlighting the linkages between poverty, biodiversity, ecosystem services and climate change, including the need to integrate biodiversity considerations into the development-aid process and, where appropriate, National Poverty Reduction Strategies and Plans (NPRS).
5. Ensure good scientific research data are collected, including by governments, and integrated into geo-referenced databases that link socio-economic data and ecological data.
6. Offer training and networking opportunities tailored to the needs of the ORs and OCTs, in particular for those islands and other countries with limited capacity; networking should be predominantly promoted among ORs and OCTs and other islands and territories within their regions, which share similar challenges.
7. Coordinate with other partners, in particular international financial institutions (such as the World Bank and other Regional Development Banks) to ensure the inclusion of biodiversity considerations in projects and programmes funded for the benefit of small islands.

Specific projects

1. Evaluate options for compensating losses of biodiversity and ecosystem services resulting from development projects. Outputs of the study may be used as material to support the development of a new EU regulation.
2. Establish regional pilot projects in ORs and OCTs to build capacity in the use of economic valuation and assessment, and their incorporation in natural resource and biodiversity policy and decision-making. In particular, pilot projects should involve economic valuation of watersheds, coral reefs, mangroves, forests and other ecosystems, as well as assessment of the economic impact of invasive species and unsustainable natural resource management practices. The pilot projects will develop methodologies and training activities and enable transfer of lessons learnt to other islands and regions. The projects will also assess the feasibility of using benefit-transfer techniques as part of the development of best practices in economic valuation and assessment.



C Which strategies should be adopted to deal with invasive alien species (IAS)?

Recommendations to all stakeholders

1. Raising awareness and changing attitudes of decision-makers at EU, national and local levels, industry and commercial stakeholders, and the public is fundamental to tackling IAS problems in the ORs and OCTs. Targeted communication campaigns need to demonstrate how IAS prevention and control are integral parts of biodiversity conservation and bring lasting benefits to communities and the economy by safeguarding ecosystem services and functions.
2. Strengthening inter-regional and intra-regional cooperation and capacity is essential for timely and cost-effective action. Where possible, this should build on existing regional mechanisms and practical tools such as those developed by the Global Invasive Species Programme. Information sharing to anticipate new threats, alert neighbouring territories of new incursions and provide technical support should be seen as a key element of EU and regional solidarity.
3. Comprehensive prevention policies for ORs and OCTs should be aligned with legislation on external trade and internal market regulations, and cover imports, exports, management of introduction pathways (including trade, shipping and aviation) and internal introductions (including inter-island and mainland-island movements).

Specific recommendations addressed to the European Commission

1. Fully integrate the ORs and OCTs in the future EU Strategy on Invasive Alien Species and ensure coordination and consistency across all applicable Community policies and actions.
2. For the ORs, urgently develop strict legal measures consistent with Article 30 of the Treaty to prevent IAS introductions damaging to island biodiversity (e.g. through use of adapted species-listing techniques).
3. Support the development of interlinked IAS inventories, monitoring and early warning systems in all ORs and OCTs, building on precedents such as DAISIE (Developing Alien

Invasive Species Inventories for Europe) and covering terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems.

4. Support coordinated research to inform planning and decision-making (e.g. risk analysis that includes consideration of climate change, application of environmental economic analysis to activities involving risk of introduction or spread of IAS, cost-benefit analysis to identify IAS control programmes that deliver maximum conservation benefit for minimum cost).
5. Mainstream IAS considerations into all relevant funding mechanisms: in particular, strengthen financial support for IAS prevention, rapid response and longer-term control and restoration programmes, and enable funding of programmes covering whole bio-geographic regions (which could include non-EU countries or territories).

Specific recommendations addressed to Member States and local administrations

1. Develop an IAS strategy for each OR and OCT, supported by cross-sectoral coordination arrangements and full stakeholder involvement.
2. Strengthen the legal framework, human resources and associated equipment and infrastructure necessary to ensure effective border control, including taxonomic capacity.
3. Integrate measures to enhance ecosystem resilience into sectoral plans and instruments that impact on terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, avoiding the use in landscaping and other land-management programmes of species known to be invasive in similar environments.
4. Prioritize the amendment or development of legislation to provide a strong legal basis for eradication or control of existing IAS, including feral animal populations and stray animals, and develop collaborative procedures and information materials to address conflicts of interest.
5. Take urgent steps to (re)create sanctuaries for threatened species in small islands where it is still considered feasible to eradicate introduced animals and plants to safeguard globally unique biodiversity.

D How should the role of civil society in environmental issues in the ORs and OCTs be strengthened?

Recommendations to the EU and national agencies

1. Strengthen and expand the participation of civil society in European policy and decision-making processes.
2. Design EU funding mechanisms and information strategies that are accessible to a wider range of civil society organizations in the ORs, OCTs and SIDS and respond better to the need for long-term action to address the major environmental and climate change issues; such mechanisms and strategies should include:
 - improved dissemination of information about funding opportunities
 - introduction of small-grant funding
 - simplified application, administrative and reporting procedures
 - provision of better support for operational and administrative costs
 - introduction of long-term financing mechanisms
 - broadened eligibility criteria to include traditional and indigenous forms of civil society organisation.

Recommendations to national agencies

1. Facilitate the implementation of EU policy and funding mechanisms in a manner that supports civil society involvement through effective communication, technical support and fair and transparent allocation procedures.
2. Improve, where appropriate, the transparency and effectiveness of public consultations in the ORs and OCTs through:
 - more systematic processes for identifying and communicating with stakeholders,
 - more effective facilitation of civil society inputs, including those of individuals not associated with a formal organisation,
 - widespread dissemination of the findings of public consultations, and
 - full consideration of the outcomes of the consultations;

3. Ensure that civil society organizations have access to the information they need to perform their role effectively, such as regular information about the processes and outcomes of international and intergovernmental meetings and agendas.

Recommendations to civil society organizations in the ORs and OCTs

1. Enhance technical capacity and strengthen advocacy through:
 - development and enhancement of networks of civil society organizations at the local, regional, national and European levels
 - development of strategic alliances and partnerships between:
 - non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and research institutions
 - civil society organizations and the private sector
 - local civil society and international organizations
 - continuously upgrading technical skills within civil society organizations to enable effective advocacy and partnership for implementation
 - ensuring that systematic efforts are made to integrate and communicate with the full range of environmental stakeholders..

Recommendations to all actors

1. Design, provide funding for and implement projects aimed at drawing on and disseminating lessons and good practice related to the participation of civil society, at all levels.



E Which strategies should be adopted for sustainable development research in the ORs and OCTs?

The overarching recommendation is to significantly increase the amount and scope of research conducted on biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation and sustainable development in the ORs and OCTs. Further, more detailed recommendations include:

General

1. Develop a comprehensive approach towards the research challenges in the ORs and OCTs to ensure that activities implemented at the local and regional scales are consistent.
2. Promote the mobilization of civil society representatives by involving them in the development of research programmes.
3. Communicate research findings more effectively to policy-makers and civil society, not limiting these to publication in scientific journals; create appropriate funding mechanisms in support of this goal.
4. Translate the research results into policy, particularly in relation to spatial planning and economic development.
5. Ensure that supra-regional policies (States, EU, international conventions) reflect the needs of local populations and do not have negative consequences on local ecosystems.
6. Optimize research conducted in the ORs and OCTs by fostering synergies and complementarities, in order to overcome the disadvantages arising from their isolation, fragmentation and often small size.
7. Ensure that public policies generate the research means and resources necessary to fight and adapt to the impact of global environmental change in the ORs and OCTs.

Institutional, financial and toolbox needs

1. Establish long-term monitoring programmes as well as biological and socio-economic indicators adapted to the constraints specific to the ORs and OCTs, to measure, model and predict the impact of global change on ecosystems and socio-economic development. Make this data widely accessible and usable (compatible databases and collaborative internet portals).
2. Organize coordinated research into the impact of climate change on biodiversity in the ORs and OCTs.
3. Promote and fund dialogue and collaboration between OR and OCT research programmes (e.g. NetBiome) and similar initiatives designed to establish research priorities at the international and regional level (e.g. SIDS University Consortium).
4. Secure accommodation facilities and administrative support (harmonized legislative frameworks to facilitate work permits, visas where necessary, etc.) to facilitate exchanges between researchers, in particular between the ORs and OCTs, and between these and European countries.
5. Develop common protocols for conducting research and communicating research findings to the territories and communities studied
6. Develop the human resources required for research programmes and the fight against and adaptation to climate change.
7. Improve cooperation and exchange with all relevant stakeholders active in the field (local populations, naturalists, NGOs, students, protected area managers, etc.).
8. Incorporate ORs and OCTs more effectively into EU framework programmes and ensure that EU funding streams can be effectively accessed to implement priority research in the ORs and OCTs (determine regional contact points for ORs and OCTs, representation in programme committees, specific funds, etc.).



Specific research needs

1. Undertake in-depth studies into the impacts of global change on the biodiversity and local development of each OR and OCT.
2. Urgently undertake research and conservation actions on the most vulnerable ecosystems (insular mountains, coasts and reefs, Arctic and sub Antarctic).
3. Develop common methodologies for monitoring climate change and biodiversity in ORs and OCTs.
4. Conduct interdisciplinary research into the role of biodiversity as an indicator of and adaptation factor to global change.
5. Conduct research to develop tools and methods for biodiversity conservation and management.
6. Conduct long-term multidisciplinary research into the interactions between human societies, natural ecosystems and exploited lands exposed to climate change.
7. Develop a large-scale research programme mobilizing all the stakeholders concerned by ORs and OCTs, taking into account the characteristics of the different territories, to propose global answers to environmental change.

F Which partnership between ORs, OCTs, Member States and the European Commission should be adopted to promote the protection of habitats and species?

Recommendations for the creation of a voluntary scheme for the conservation of habitats and species

1. The first approach should look at a higher bio-geographical level, subsequently to be adapted to local conditions.
2. The scheme should allow for contract tools as well as for regulatory approaches; existing tools should be utilized (e.g. IUCN or CBD approaches).
3. Natura 2000 should be used for inspiration, but not necessarily viewed as a model for direct application.
4. The scheme should be based on selecting sites of particular interest rather than specific protected areas (but those already existing may be part of the scheme) and be based on scientific, and if appropriate, ethical criteria; criteria for selection of sites should take into account the high level of endemism as well as representativeness of habitats and species; site selection should use proven methodologies such as BirdLife's Important Bird Areas (IBA) or Conservation International's Key Biodiversity Areas.
5. The scheme should take into account relevance to islands and specifically small islands.
6. Any financial scheme should be easy to access (via knowledge-based information systems); accessible, clearly identified contact points in Brussels are needed.
7. Local authorities play a major role both in entering the scheme and in its local implementation; voluntary commitment by local authorities is key to success.
8. Civil society should participate in the scheme.
9. There is a need for capacity building.
10. The scheme should allow for broader regional collaboration (outside of ORs and OCTs).
11. It must take into account the lack of data; this should not prevent its implementation.
12. The scheme would benefit from the existence of a coordination body or mechanism.

Species Conservation

1. Coherent use of Red Lists at different scales is important to define priorities, and the regular updating of Red Lists is a key issue.
2. Funding is key to implementation.
3. Better use of existing studies and methods (IUCN and others) is vital.
4. IAS management is an important part of the strategy.
5. A special approach is needed for migratory species.
6. Along with defining protection plans, there is a strong need for environmental education accompanied by the necessary controls.
7. Species and their distribution can be used as indicators of climate change impacts and for identifying potential future refuges.
8. The species approach is also a way to reinforce cooperation between ORs and OCTs.
9. The EU and Member States should not only represent the ORs but also the OCTs in international fora for species protection (CITES, CMS, etc.).

Networking among existing national parks and other protected areas

1. All protected areas should be given an opportunity to join the network, not only national parks.
2. Special attention should be given to small islands.
3. The network must be sustainable (hence not too ambitious).
4. Capacity building for managers is a key issue (especially in small islands).
5. Networking should be thematically rather than geographically oriented.
6. Networking could be integrated in the voluntary scheme.
7. Networking could allow monitoring of climate change impacts on biodiversity.
8. More attention should be given to the development of a legal framework for National Parks, where appropriate.

G How should an energy revolution be achieved in the ORs and OCTs?

Recommendations

1. Undertake assessments of the environmental, social and economic impacts of all proposed OR and OCT energy strategies. Global warming is an element that should be considered. Other issues include the development of energy solutions appropriate to the population and income level of ORs and OCTs, access to electricity (development of island grids), securing the needs of the population, job creation and environmental costs.
2. Involve local electric companies or relevant energy providers in an ambitious policy of developing renewable energies with zero greenhouse gas emissions (e.g. covering, where technically feasible, 50% of electricity needs by clean energy by 2020) and no negative overall impact on biodiversity, while simultaneously addressing electricity consumption (including domestic, business, and tourism usage) in order to achieve energy efficiency.
3. Adapt local regulations and urban planning projects to take account of energy challenges: for example, thermal regulation in buildings to afford better energy-efficiency by using measures such as solar water heating, wall-insulation, loft-lagging and triple glazing. Establish eco-neighbourhoods and/or industrial eco-zones that use integrated approaches that take into account the energy dimension together with land transport needs.
4. Put in place long-term financial schemes involving governments and local financial institutions (development agencies), as well as European financial institutions (European Investment Bank) with soft loans adapted to needs, and investment funds for reinforcing locally sourced funds (private equity). Regarding the populations, subsidies or fiscal mechanisms can assist in sharing good practice. There will be large impacts on the building sector (both new and restored) and transport sector (promotion of sustainable public transport). Lowering the costs of energy-efficient solutions will require economies of scale.
5. Select an institutional framework capable of responding to the challenges posed by climate change and energy consumption using working groups mobilized with a longer-term perspective as well as for action in the medium term (2010 – 2015), giving priority to the transfer of best practices and technologies; specialized agencies (“energy efficiency units”) dedicated to the implementation of actions in the field of energy efficiency and the management of energy consumption must be established within ministries or electricity suppliers. Connecting these agencies may provide a solution in the search for maximum effectiveness (sharing of experience).
6. Facilitate networking in island regions (e.g. cooperation programmes in the Indian Ocean) to share best practices and conduct joint activities (e.g. training of senior management, research facilities). Energy observatories also offer possibilities for collaboration (development of tools, monitoring of action plans).



H How should overseas marine environmental challenges be integrated into EU policies?

Recommendations

1. Define a long-term strategic vision that integrates bio-geographic aspects, via key EU funding mechanisms and policies such as the OR Strategy, the OCT Association clause and the EU Maritime Policy, that reflects the great importance of the maritime areas in the ORs and OCTs and the ecosystem services they provide.
2. Establish and financially support an eco-regional approach to prioritize conservation actions (research and management) in the ORs and OCTs that will actively engage local communities, fishermen, and NGOs (e.g. by reinforcing the POSEI Fisheries Programme with another on Marine Biodiversity).
3. Design a specific instrument or tool to build, manage and protect a representative network of key coastal and marine sites in the ORs and OCTs, complementing the existing Marine Directive. Support the conservation work of local NGOs.
4. Fully incorporate Integrated Coastal Zone Management as a fundamental aspect of regional policy in island entities.
5. Establish a specific programme on the integrated management of coastal zones and marine areas for the ORs and OCTs, by creating a joint forum to share best practices, develop tools and pilot projects on integrated planning.
6. Increase resilience of marine ecosystems by addressing anthropogenic stresses that will reduce pollution, organic matter input, and extraction to limit effects of climate change.
7. Reach out more strongly to the wider public, in order to raise awareness about the importance of the ORs' and OCTs' marine areas. Communicate the values and challenges inherent to the conservation of overseas territories and small island states. Raise awareness through education, training, and by working with NGOs.
8. Reinforce regional cooperation through development and regional policies.
9. Promote the establishment of a governance mechanism that enhances the involvement of local civil society and the private sector; establish regional mechanisms for dialogue among different sectors and stakeholder groups to enhance the coherence of maritime and coastal development (e.g. tourism, aquaculture, shipping, fisheries, energy, etc.).
10. Ensure appropriate consideration in the Red Lists of emblematic marine species in the ORs and OCTs, recognizing that migratory marine species in particular are also present in other jurisdictions and will require the EU to work in a broader context.
11. Enhance coordination and coherence of the different EU budget lines at the political level, with clear definitions of objectives.
12. In view of the proliferation of different certification and eco-labelling schemes, foster greater intra-regional and inter-regional cooperation in order to negotiate and adopt a common approach.

I How should regional cooperation in ecological challenges be strengthened?

EU Common Fisheries Policy, and the sustainable management of fisheries resources

1. Conduct stock assessments, as a key element in sustainable fisheries, focusing on deep sea species as well as on migratory, exotic, demersal and pelagic species. Research and data collection should be coordinated at the regional level.
2. Adopt a bio-geographic approach to fisheries resources management.
3. Undertake environmental impact assessment for all new fisheries and aquaculture operations.
4. Increase participation of ORs and OCTs in the EU decision-making processes on fisheries.
5. Strengthen capacity building in the ORs and OCTs for enhanced negotiation and participation in the RFMOs (Regional Fisheries Management Organizations) and similar mechanisms.
6. Raise awareness of civil society of the challenges of fisheries management.
7. Consider the creation of one central or several Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) for ORs, and explore options to integrate representation from and/or issues of relevance to the OCTs.
8. Reinforce or establish a multilateral approach for control of illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fisheries and regional cooperation for surveillance and control; consider extending the very effective EU-funded programme for control of fishing activities in the Indian Ocean to other regions.
9. Extend the recently adopted EU ban on landings of illegally caught fisheries products to those ORs and OCTs where it does not yet apply.
10. Establish political and financial support for local small-scale fisheries.

Recommendations

1. The EU and its Member States should facilitate networking and collaboration by:
 - promoting or creating appropriate legal frameworks that allow for the participation of ORs and OCTs in regional programmes
 - providing opportunities for exchange of information and experience on a regular basis, including low-cost communication systems
 - working with and strengthening existing institutions and processes within regions.
2. The EU and its Member States should ensure that their tools and competencies (centres of excellence, financial mechanisms and others) are made available to their partners within regions by communicating more effectively.
3. Processes of regional cooperation should use and build existing expertise and facilitate the exchange of experiences, skills and resources.
4. Regional cooperation should be based on the formulation of regional priorities, and actors should communicate these to potential sources of support.
5. Research and academic institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector should play a full role in regional cooperation by building and promoting partnership.
6. All actors should take advantage of the opportunities offered by global institutions and initiatives, such as GLISPA and IUCN, that have demonstrated their capacity to create new synergies and linkages.

J Which sustainable financial mechanisms can help address the ecological challenges facing the EU's ORs and OCTs?

Request the EU to work closely with Member States as well as with OR and OCT stakeholders to achieve the following:

1. Establishment of a dedicated fund for biodiversity conservation to offer additional financial support for conservation measures, field surveys and monitoring of biodiversity, as well as for research on the economics of ecosystem services for public benefit in order to persuade decision-makers of its importance.
2. Review of existing funding streams available for the ORs and the OCTs and their allocation criteria, with the aim of increasing their environmental sustainability.
3. Environmental and social impact assessments of all development projects and programmes at the identification and evaluation stages (condition of funding) so that they take full account of environmental and social considerations, and incorporate mitigation and compensation schemes where necessary.
4. Establishment of financial instruments for small projects; the selection process of the projects eligible for funding should be delegated to the local decision-making level.
5. Raised awareness of the economic value of biodiversity and ecosystem services to different levels of civil society and governments.
6. Strengthened effectiveness of public consultation by improving local processes.
7. Creation of a support unit in the ORs and OCTs for the preparation of project and programme proposals for submission to funding organizations.
8. Creation of trust funds to ensure protected area management and further conservation measures over the long term.

K Moving towards a working platform on ecological challenges in ORs and OCTs

In the face of climate change and biodiversity loss in ORs and OCTs, the participants recognize the urgent need for a flexible and open network, aiming in particular at the following:

1. Contributing to increasing awareness among all stakeholders about the unique challenges faced by ORs and OCTs.
2. Supporting and strengthening relations, exchanges and initiatives between stakeholders including politicians, scientists, businesses, civil society, and the numerous and valuable networks already existing at the local, regional, national and European levels.
3. Identifying key challenges and establishing thematic initiatives at the scale of all ORs and OCTs, taking into account those which already exist at the local, regional, national and European levels.
4. Facilitating dialogue between all concerned stakeholders in order to build consensus on policies to be developed at the European level and securing their funding.
5. Following-up on the implementation of the Message from Reunion Island and organizing future work in collaboration with all concerned stakeholders; possibly organizing a new event/conference.
6. As several successful platforms already exist, a light value-added coordination mechanism must be identified that optimizes overall effectiveness.

THE MESSAGE FROM REUNION ISLAND

