United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Linking Biological and Cultural Diversity UNESCO-SCBD Programme

Convention on Biological Diversity

**UNESCO – CBD Joint Program between biological and cultural diversity**

# FLORENCE DECLARATION ON THE LINKS BETWEEN BIOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

**Florence (Italy), 11 April 2014**

We, the participants of the First European Conference for the Implementation of the UNESCO-SCBD Joint Programme on Biological and Cultural Diversity, held from 8 to 11 April 2014 in Florence, Italy:

Recognizing the vital importance of cultural and biological diversity for present and future generations and the well-being of contemporary societies in urban and rural areas;

Recognizing furtherthe importance of the links between cultural and biological diversity, and in this context noting the concept of **Biocultural Diversity** and the relevance of cultural services provided by ecosystems;

Acknowledging the important progress made in building the knowledge base on the links between biological and cultural diversity and its implications for policy and decision making in the area of sustainable development;

Taking into account the Convention on Biological Diversity's relevant provisions in the text of the convention and the many decisions which have flowed from them, the UNESCO Culture related Conventions and other relevant instruments, programmes and initiatives, and related International decisions on Human Rights and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and pertinent regional arrangements and agreements in the European context (Annex 1);

Highlighting the need to further strengthen the cooperation between the relevant international agreements and bodies in the field of bio-cultural diversity, and, in this context noting the importance of the Joint Programme between UNESCO and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity on the links between biological and cultural diversity;

1. Agreethat the following conclusions are of special relevance in the European context:

    a. Rural and urban livelihoods and wellbeing are closely connected to the status and trends in biological and cultural diversity;
    b. The current state of biological and cultural diversity in Europe results from the combination of historical and on-going environmental and land use processes and cultural heritage;
    c. As it assimilates economic, social, cultural and environmental processes in time and space, the European landscape is predominantly a biocultural multifunctional landscape. As such, it provides a crucial and effective space for integration of biological and cultural diversity for human wellbeing, including in the context of rural territories;

d. Temporary, semi-permanent and permanent migratory human movements and associated exchange of skills, knowledge and goods between town and countryside have in many cases shaped the local biological and cultural diversity and still provide ample opportunities for their enhancement;
e. Landscapes rich in biocultural diversity are often those managed by small-scale or peasant farmers, traditional livestock keepers/pastoralists, and small-scale/artisanal fishermen;
f. The involvement of local communities, and recognition of and respect for their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, innovations and practices can assist in more effective management and governance of multifunctional biocultural landscapes,and contribute to their resilience and adaptability;
g. To better understand the dynamic interplay between biological and cultural diversity at the landscape level and its implications for livelihoods and wellbeing, there is need for enhanced interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research of the links between biological and cultural diversity at the national and sub-national levels, including their historical background;
h. Public awareness of the links between biological and cultural diversity and political action that considers these links in policy and decision making processes are needed to effectively implement international and national commitments dealing with environmental, social and economic sustainability and human wellbeing at different scales.

2. Invite Governmentsand relevant bodies, including the European Union and the Council of Europe to initiate and undertake the following actions at the appropriate levels:

*Regional level:*

Noting the Common Agricultural Policy and the European Environmental Policies and legislation(s) and their relevance for strengthening the links between biological and cultural diversity

a. Promote action at the regional level, especially in the context of the European Union, to enhance the implementation of international and regional agreements mentioned in Annex 1;
b. Take specific actions for the valorisation and promotion of both cultural and biological diversity by, *inter alia*:
    - Promoting the inclusion of bioculturaldiversity into national and local planning for nature conservation and landscape management, including protected areas,agricultural and forest landscapes;
    - Designing and implementingprocedures for the participation of different stakeholders, including local communities, in the implementation of policies relevant for linking biological and cultural diversity;
    - Promoting the incorporation of the links between biological and cultural diversity in sustainable forest management, including through the development of appropriate criteria and indicators;
    - Promoting the recognition of positive interactions between biological and cultural diversity through appropriate certification processes and effective product labelling;

- Promoting the use of the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) for the promotion and valorisation of the links between biological and cultural diversity for scientists, policy makers and other stakeholders.

*National level:*

a. Adopt an integrated and trans-disciplinary approach when implementing relevant international and regional agreements at the national level;
b. Take action in the framework of current rural and environmental policies to incorporate biological and cultural diversity and the links between them;
c. Make available funding such as research grants for trans-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research on biological and cultural diversity and the links between them;
d. Establish cross-sectorial and/or cross-departmental approaches to biological and cultural diversity;
e. Recognise the existence of collective commons, traditional tenure and resource rights, customary laws and management useful for promoting and conserving biological and cultural diversity, including agricultural diversity in traditional crops and livestock breeds;
f. Use bottom-up legislative development processes, inclusive of local communities, including both women and men;
g. Recognise and ensure that legal regulatory arrangements do not run counter to sustainable local livelihoods dependent on biological and cultural diversity;
h. Recognise and protect sacred natural sites noting they play an important role in local ecosystem regeneration and culture;
i. Provide small grants and incentives for local biological and cultural diversity initiatives, including community knowledge exchanges;
j. Provide mechanism for the review of relevant European and national policies and to take into account the links between biological and cultural diversity;
k. Recognise and promote local production practices as good practices for the conservation and promotion of interlinked biological and cultural diversity and provide resources for up-scaling and replication, where appropriate;
l. Promote, through marketing techniques, biological and cultural diversity as underlying the competitiveness of rural landscapes which generate local productions and tourism;
m. Support cultural, educational and recreational initiatives for the promotion of the links between biological and cultural diversity;
n. Ensure subsidies are available to small scale and diverse agricultural farmers, and farmers promoting and preserving agricultural biodiversity in crops, livestock breeds and landscapes, on an equal basis to large scale farmers.

*Local level*:

a. Encourage partnerships such as participatory research opportunities between researchers and local communities;

b. Encourage bottom-up inclusive development of policy and legislation relevant to biological and cultural diversity;
c. Recognise, promote and where appropriate scale up and replicate good local practices for maintaining biological and cultural diversity;
d. Encourage and empower local communities and their organizations to continue, transmit, and innovate traditional practices compatible with the sustainable use of bioculturaldiversity;
e. Support local community organisations to develop initiatives for the conservation of biocultural diversity as the basis for resilient farming systems and local economies;
f. Promote urban biological and cultural diversity through community grants, creation of public green spaces, community gardens and greening of cities.

3. Request that this Declaration is brought to the attention of Member States of the United Nations and presented for consideration at the relevant intergovernmental bodies of the Convention on Biological Diversity and UNESCO, as well as the governing bodies of the European Union, the Council of Europe,and in meetings and deliberations of expert communities.