

# *Biodiversity Today for Tomorrow – 1<sup>st</sup> International BION Conference* **CONFERENCE DECLARATION**

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## ***Preamble***

The international conference ‘Biodiversity Today for Tomorrow’ was convened by BION, the Bonn Biodiversity Network, and was held in Bonn, Germany, during 17-19 September 2014. The conference brought together more than 250 experts, representing over 100 organizations and institutions from around 40 countries.

BION is built upon a unique range of local, federal state, national, and international stakeholders that are based in or near Bonn and that are involved in the study, the conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity. BION, the Bonn Biodiversity Network, aims at increasing mutual knowledge and understanding and fostering synergies among this range of institutions and organizations. This includes academia, private corporations, NGOs, United Nations entities, funding organizations and relevant federal and federal state ministries and agencies, and the recently established Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) as well as the Global Crop Diversity Trust (GDCT).

## ***Declaration***

We, the attendees of the First International BION Conference ‘Biodiversity Today for Tomorrow’,

*EMPHASIZING* that biodiversity – the variety of all forms of life on Earth, both on land and in water – sustains our lives and livelihoods, and that humankind is not only part of it, but essentially depends on it for survival;

*NOTING* with deep concern that

- although some progress has been made since the Convention on Biological Diversity entered into force in 1993, the global biodiversity crisis continues unabated and species of plants, animals and other organisms are being lost at an unprecedented rate,
- as the loss of biodiversity equally affects agrobiodiversity, we also face a dramatic loss of mankind’s heritage,
- the loss of biodiversity is closely, and often causally, linked to the loss of vital ecosystem services and vital resources for the current and future wellbeing of mankind,
- although the loss of biodiversity affects all countries, the poorest people in the world are often the most vulnerable and biological resources are often the direct basis of their livelihoods and the only economic capital at their disposal;

*RECOGNIZING* that

- there have been successes in the conservation of species and ecosystems by the creation of protected areas, enforcement of conventions, capacity building, sustainable use, and other direct action, while overall those actions and policies to halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems have had only limited and in many cases unsatisfactory effects,

- the reasons for this failure are manifold and complex, including real or perceived conflicts and tradeoffs between the immediate interests and needs of mankind, and insufficient data to document losses and to analyze causes;

*FURTHER RECOGNIZING* with appreciation that

- Bonn provides the unique possibility of a direct interaction between a wide range of stakeholders active at various levels with an equally wide range of diverse types of expertise, experiences and expectations with regard to biodiversity,
- BION, the Bonn Biodiversity Network, is an initiative that can address the challenges at hand and try to leverage opportunities for better cooperation and exchange of experiences and good practices among its partners,
- BION partners accept a common responsibility for joint action in order to contribute to overcoming the global biodiversity crisis and promote the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;

*STRESS* the importance of urgent, concerted, multidisciplinary, cross-cutting action in order to contribute to stalling or reversing the global loss of biodiversity; and therefore

*CALL UPON* BION, the Bonn Biodiversity Network, and its partners to

- pool their knowledge and expertise to support the implementation of national and international strategies such as the German National Strategy on Biological Diversity, the EU Biodiversity Strategy, and the United Nations' Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and specifically its Strategic Plan and the Aichi Targets, the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC), the Ecosystem Approach as well as the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing,
- look at biodiversity from a holistic point of view, bringing various academic disciplines together,
- provide an information hub and think tank for a wide range of topics related to biodiversity,
- contribute to cutting edge national and international research in major domains of biodiversity,
- develop specific biodiversity-related projects at local, national and international levels *inter alia* to promote mainstreaming of biodiversity and ecosystem services into development decisions at all levels,
- contribute to raising public awareness on all aspects of biodiversity and associated issues - launch education and capacity building initiatives in the area of biodiversity at local, national and international levels,
- support decision making processes of German governmental authorities in biodiversity matters.