

## Community Taba Declaration

*Recommendations to the Convention on Biological Diversity*

We, the Community Taba participants, from Latin America, Asia Pacific, Africa, Europe and North America, have spent the past two weeks sharing community experiences in biodiversity conservation; championing success and informing policy.

We believe that if we are all to succeed at sustainably using our resources, then we - the representatives of the global Community Taba - must be invited to effectively and genuinely participate true and equal partners in both policy making and implementation. We come to you not with complaints but with solutions - ways in which we can partner to achieve our collective goals.

These are our six key messages to delegates of the Convention on Biological Diversity:

### **Message 1: Recognize traditional knowledge and expertises of local communities**

The CBD and its partners must recognize the deep and diverse range of traditional knowledge and expertise that already exists at a community level with respect to natural resources management. Through sustainable approaches to agriculture, fisheries, pastoralism, island biodiversity management, protected area management and local enterprise development, communities are implementing integrated strategies that are delivering both the 2010 Biodiversity Target and the Millennium Development Goals. These community-based approaches should underpin the development of National Biodiversity Strategy Programs, and national MDG-based development strategies. Community action plans should be integrated in national and international biodiversity and development programs. This needs to be complimented by up-scaled efforts to bridge “traditional” and “modern” knowledge and innovations to address both local challenges and opportunities.

### **Message 2: “Sector-based” policies do not support integrated “ecosystem-based” approaches at the local level.**

As local communities, we are adopting holistic, integrated approaches to biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction. These approaches transcend political boundaries, and conservation and poverty reduction. These approaches transcend political boundaries, and sectors. However, national and international policies need to increasingly support our holistic approaches. Our efforts are contravened and diluted by sectors-based targets - for example, separate targets and frameworks for 2010 Biodiversity Target and the Millennium Development Goals. We also need national and international policy frameworks to promote and protect traditional/local knowledge and practices, especially the conservation of traditional agricultural practices, crop and livestock diversity.

### **Message 3: Local communities need to be increasingly engaged in the decisions and work of the CBD**

We recognize and support the opportunities provided by the CBD to enable the participation of grassroots and indigenous communities. However, while these are valuable, they are not sufficient. Community voices must be amplified and strengthened. Community expertise must be increasingly recognised and integrated. Opportunity to respond to draft texts is not sufficient. Community expertise should be increasingly enabled to inform and contribute to **each** of the CBD Programs of Work. This is especially important for decision making on Access and Benefit sharing and protected area management. Communities should also play a leading role in the development and implementation of national biodiversity, and national policies to deliver COP objectives. This could be achieved by

creating **community task forces** at the national and grassroots levels to plan, review and monitor progress towards the 2010 target and CBD Programs of Work.

**Message 4: Invest in building upon the capacity of local communities**

The CBD and partners must invest in building upon the expertise and capacity of local communities and indigenous peoples to manage their natural resources. We need support to implement our own, community-led capacity development programs, and to monitor the impacts of our work on the livelihoods of our people and on our biodiversity.

We believe that community-community knowledge exchange processes represent an effective and efficient way for communities to develop their capacity. The CBD and partners should invest in opportunities presented by the Community Taba to develop a global, peer-peer knowledge exchange service for communities around the world. This is a process that has been evolving over the past four years, through a series of Community dialogue spaces.

**Message 5: Need for sustainable financial mechanisms to support community action.**

Sustainable funding mechanism must be established that are easily accessible and responsive to the needs of local communities. We request that CBD and partners explore decentralized financing mechanism, enabling communities to establish and manage their own trust/core funds - and thus sustainably support the diverse range of local-level initiatives already delivering the 2010 Biodiversity target and the MDGs.

Further incentives are required to support ecologically friendly enterprise development, for example the sustainable harvesting of medicinal plants, biodiversity-friendly organic cacao production, etc. Companies need to embrace the principle of corporate and social accountability - and be encouraged to pay user fees for the use of natural resources, ensuring money is re-invested in conservation and poverty alleviation strategies.

**Message 6: Multi-stakeholder partnerships**

To deliver on all of the above, we call upon the commitments of national governments, international agencies, academic institutions, NGOs and the private sector to work in equitable and genuine partnership with communities. These partnerships should be equal and genuine, based on trust and respect for the local and indigenous communities' rights, and their expertise.

Curitiba, March 31 2006