



SUMMARY REPORT

Promoting Partnerships in the European Overseas

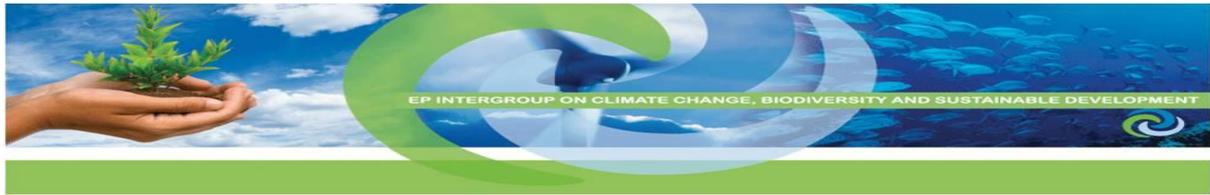
*From the "Guadeloupe Roadmap"
To the UNFCCC COP 21*

20 October 2015
European Parliament, Brussels

Policy-makers and stakeholders were brought together on 20 October by MEP Maurice Ponga to discuss the pivotal role of European Overseas and the significance they play in protecting biodiversity, and how EU-European Overseas partnerships are essential as nature-based solutions have been proven to be cost-efficient and should be promoted at COP21.

Maurice Ponga MEP and Chair of the "Islands & Overseas Entities" working group of the European Parliament Intergroup on "Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development" welcomed the participants by highlighting that ahead of UNFCCC COP21 in Paris it is important that European Outermost Regions (ORs) and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) make a significant contribution to the thinking process and commitments by sharing their experiences of the principles highlighted at the Conference on Biodiversity and Climate Change, which was held last year in Guadeloupe. It was stressed that the European Overseas are home to incredible biodiversity and are the main hotspots for global diversity. It was also said that the ultramarine environment is strongly impacted by the effects of climate change, which are already being felt today.

George Pau-Langevin, French Minister of Overseas reiterated that one year after Guadeloupe and weeks before COP21 it is important to look at the progress made and identify the actions that need to be adopted. The need to promote and highlight the initiatives taken by the European Overseas was stressed. The biodiversity found in the Overseas was pointed out as rich but fragile, and it was stated as essential to examine the anthropogenic threats. Concrete and ambitious actions are required in order to protect the natural heritage. The Guadeloupe Roadmap was underscored as excellent and France has since the conference initiated many actions. It was outlined that France has launched a network of observations on climate change with the aim to share and distribute data. New developments are also taking place with regards to protecting marine biodiversity. It was stated that France must mobilise the scientific community to better measure the process and the impacts on biodiversity in EU Overseas. It was stressed that COP21 will provide a great opportunity to highlight local initiatives in the fight against climate change. As the Overseas are directly impacted of the effects stakeholders have been mobilised to develop innovative technologies, renewable energy, and measures to protect the marine environment. One major challenge highlighted was funding for such initiatives. Further, it



was said that the momentum given in Guadeloupe will be essential to trigger new initiatives to achieve objectives to be defined at COP21.

H.E. Dr. Bernard Whiteman, Prime Minister of Curaçao, Chair of the Overseas Countries and Territories Association highlighted that OCTA represents the common voice, concerns and interest of 22 territories and aims to improve the policy dialogue and promote partnerships for sustainable development in OCTs. It was stressed that the European Overseas are linked to the EU through their political and historical relationships and that the EU and OCTA jointly work towards meeting common interests. It was highlighted that OCTs contribute significantly to the extension of the European exclusive economic zone, which includes both polar ecosystems and fish stocks. It was stressed that from the poles to the tropics the Overseas are home to more and diverse biodiversity than continental Europe. It was highlighted that these areas continuously seek for innovative ways to protect the environment and ensure that climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies are adopted. It was stressed that the EU must assist the Overseas in doing so through synergetic relationships. It was emphasised that the OCTs provide the EU with scientific knowledge and by continuing and expanding cooperation the OCTs play a vital role in aiding the EU to achieve its goals. It was stressed that the awareness of the global ecological importance of OCTs and the challenges they face is growing. Further, the OCTs believe that there is a need to review existing funding schemes and their allocation criteria so that OCTs can benefit. It was stressed that OCTs recognise the importance of sustainably managing biodiversity and adopting energy policies that support their situation. The OCTs have signed an energy map outlining the OCTs goals and it is currently being discussed to sign a joint EU Declaration in the context of the upcoming COP21. Finally, it was said that functional and regional cooperation among OCTs, Ors and ACPs must be strengthened in order to develop a stronger voice.

Theodore Saramandis, Head of Task Force - Overseas Countries and Territories, European Commission reiterated the timeliness of the meeting as it offers the opportunity to measure the progress made since the Guadeloupe Conference in October 2014, and an occasion to discuss and exchange on possible actions in the field of climate change and the preservation of biodiversity, especially in relation to the important discussions and decisions expected on the occasion of the COP21 meetings in Paris. It was stated that work has already been started at the European level mentioning the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, the Regulation on Invasive Alien Species, Communication on the Outermost Regions, and the Overseas Association Decision of 25 November 2013 (which devotes for the first time a chapter to these issues as domain of privileged cooperation and political dialogue). It was explained that these actions may be supported through the mobilisation of financial resources allocated under different EU financial instruments and programmes, such as the European Fund for Development (EDF), LIFE+ programme and Horizon 2020, just to mention a few. Since the conference in Guadeloupe in October 2014, the Commission, the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs), the Member States to which OCTs are linked, and other regional partners have engaged in constructive discussions that have allowed OCTs to define the focal sectors for the various programmes to be funded under the 11th European

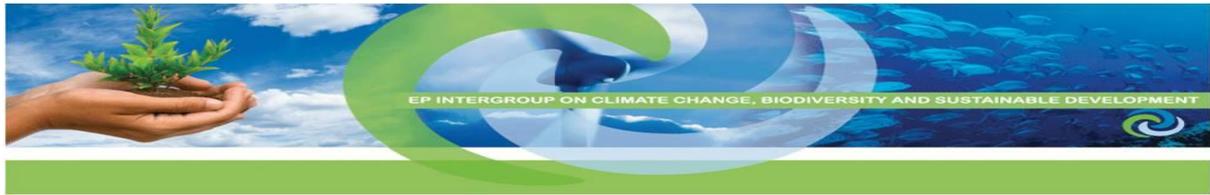


Development Fund. While the programming process for the 11th EDF-OCT is currently ongoing, it is clear that the proposals submitted by OCTs reflect their will to combat climate change and sustainably manage natural resources, as well as to promote renewable energy. Furthermore, it was recalled that two calls for proposals for funding opportunities for projects in the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) have been launched in September 2015 under the BEST 2.0 program, which aims at promoting the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of natural resources, climate change adaptation and mitigation. It was highlighted that the Commission will continue to assist all overseas partners in their efforts to develop their own strategies and actions for the protection of biodiversity, mitigation and adaptation to climate change. The need for partners to work together was also emphasised and that due consideration should be given to past experiences and the lessons learnt in order to maximise the impact of the actions.

Carole Martinez, Senior coordinator of the IUCN EU Overseas and regional Seas programme moderated the meeting and presented the first roundtable, which addressed the strong link between biodiversity and climate change and how combating biodiversity loss in the EU Overseas is a critical component of any climate change strategy.

Stefan Leiner, Acting Director “Natural Capital” & Head of Unit “Biodiversity”, DG Environment, European Commission highlighted the Mid-term Review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, which shows that progress has been made but also the need to double the efforts in order to achieve the set targets. It was stressed that investing in biodiversity is the most cost-effective way to implement climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as achieving other sustainability goals and objectives. It was stated that it has been estimated that the management cost for the Natura 2000 Network is approximately 6 billion per year with a value of ecosystem services generating 200-300 billion per year. It was pointed out that if the same calculations were made in EU Overseas taking into account the high importance of biodiversity found in these areas the value would most likely be much higher. It was stressed that the EU is committed to the follow-up and implementation of the Messages from Guadeloupe and a key element is to develop a sustainable partnership to maintain the cooperation that has been set up through the BEST project. It was also announced that in the first part of 2016 a first meeting of the various partners will be held with the aim to set up the sustainable partnerships.

Philippe Joseph, University of Antilles, Martinique outlined the vulnerability of islands as well as the biodiversity richness with a specific focus on Martinique. It was stressed that islands systems are vulnerable but also valuable to biodiversity and are important laboratories for the study of biodiversity and the impact by humans. It was highlighted that there are many aspects of biodiversity that need to be taken into account such as the number of species, plants, animals, ecosystems and landscapes. It was underlined that biodiversity must be seen as a complex web of interactions. It was stated that it is for islands important to establish and strike a balance between ecosystems and society. The example of Martinique was presented highlighting that the main problem is that the human demand is going beyond the capacities of ecosystems. There is an environmental deficit, which is



impacting biodiversity and societies. It was explained that islands are also more sensitive to the various introductions of invasive species, which is being exasperated by climate change. It was pointed out that the impact is also felt more strongly in tropical areas and the sensitiveness of microclimates to weather variability and temperature changes. The need for protected areas was stressed as well as biological corridors. The need to protect the genetic heritage was emphasised in order to safeguard and maintain the capacities of ecosystems. It was also stressed that many species are still unstudied and many are still unknown.

Maina Sage, Member of the French Parliament, French Polynesia stressed that the economic, social and environmental impacts of climate change is much more visible in the islands. The importance of the ocean was stressed and confirming that it is a climate regulator that absorbs 25% of CO₂ emissions. This fact was pointed out as often being forgotten or underestimated and should be a main focus at COP21. It was also emphasised that the importance of the rich diversity found in the Overseas must be taken into account in future international and national strategies. Furthermore, it was pointed out that the EU Overseas are in the frontline of climate change impacts. As temperature rises, it was highlighted that the ocean surface is warming which leads to coral bleaching and ocean acidification. This in turn increases the fragility of coral reefs. It was also emphasised that coral reefs are important because they act as a natural barrier towards extreme weather. It was pointed out that intense cyclones will impact the water reserve and lead to an increase in salt levels. It was stressed that inhabitants cannot run away from the disaster and EU needs to understand that climate change poses a major threat not only to lives but to the local economy as well. It was underlined that some populations will have to leave their islands not because of rising sea levels, but because of the social crisis triggered by climate change. It was underscored that in preparation for COP21 the [PACT](#) (Polynesian Against Climate Threats) declaration was signed earlier this year with the hope to provide Pacific Islands with a voice at COP21. It was stressed that OCTs and ORs are rich in traditions and common sense for solutions and that the EU must focus their specific attention to these areas. It was finally concluded that Europe must be encouraged to shelter the Overseas, by launching the challenge for Islands and Oceans during COP21 in Paris as proposed by the Polynesian President M. [Edouard FRITCH](#).

Louis-Joseph Manscour MEP stressed that fighting climate change while protecting biodiversity is a major challenge for us and the future of the planet. It was stressed as pivotal that the EU Overseas have a voice. It was also emphasised as essential to show that the management of energy and resources is important and is not incompatible with growth. It was reiterated that the Overseas are home to immense biodiversity of global significance. It was also stated that many actions are adopted in many areas and the efficiency of the LIFE programme was underlined as it enables experimental actions. It was stressed that territories are rich in know-how and have demonstrated that biodiversity can be protected through smart and intelligent programmes. The need for more funding was raised as innovation and entrepreneurship needs to be maintained in the Overseas. It was also pointed out that France excludes Overseas from the scope of EU directives such as the birds

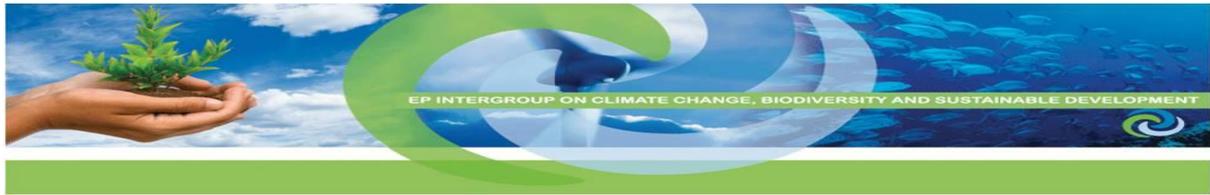


and habitat directive. Further, it was stated that leaders need to be pioneers when it comes to the protection of biodiversity and that it must be recognised that tools and mechanism developed in Overseas can be a good source of inspiration at COP21.

Carole Martinez, Senior coordinator of the IUCN EU Overseas and regional Seas programme reiterated the “Paris Challenge” and the interesting synergistic partnership affect and what the political mobilisation of this could be. The second roundtable was introduced, which focused on reinforcing and building resilience, particularly on initiatives and commitments from the EU overseas in view of COP21. It was pointed out that the Message from Guadeloupe set up to two strategic orientations with regards to resilience. Firstly, the energy transition must be supported in OCTs and ORs, and secondly, no-regret measures need to be adopted through inter alia.

Humberto Delgado Rosa, Director “Mainstreaming Adaptation and Low Carbon Technology”, DG Climate Action, European Commission underscored that a comprehensive agreement is needed in Paris, which takes into account mitigation, adaptation and a component of climate finance. It was stressed that the EU must improve its own resilience as well as to ensure that support is there for those who need it. The vulnerability of Overseas was reiterated highlighting that they share many characteristics with SIDS. The main message stressed was the important role that OCTs and ORs can play in demonstrating sustainability in large through mitigation and sustainable energy, as well as to show that local climate action towards increasing resilience including through ecosystem-based approaches delivers. It was stressed that there are good solutions to deal with under uncertainty as ecosystem-based approaches often lead to win-win situations. It was underlined that if OCTs and ORs can tap and foster ecosystem services in a cost effective way they can influence countries outside the EU as well as within the EU to help bridge the gap between these two set of players in an international context. The EU is aware that adaptation is essential and its Member States have begun to prepare national adaptation strategies but more work and knowledge is needed, as well as the importance of bringing in the private sector. The need for Member States to reflect and bring in the needs and specificities of EU Overseas was also raised. The need to make infrastructure more resilient was pointed out, particularly on the coasts. It was stated that for COP21 EU Overseas can be pivotal in showing that resilience and adaption must and can be built successfully.

Frédéric Blanchard, Director of Biodiversity Projects, French Guiana outlined the case of French Guiana as it provides a door to one of the best tropical forests in Europe. It was pointed out that it contributes to half of the carbon that is being absorbed in France. It was stressed that French Guiana would like to be more involved in how this carbon is sold as well as more involved in the international debates. It was outlined that the landscape varies and that part of the country are only accessible by boats. It was explained that in order to know more about certain areas and how to manage them satellites are used. In French Guiana it is estimated that the population will double in the next 15 years and 40% of the population do not have access to drinking water. The need for more public funding was stressed in order to protect biodiversity as well as address problems of education and



migration flows. It was pointed out that the national level sets the decisions but these practices are often not integrated with indigenous management. The importance of integrating culture and local traditions was stressed as well as breaking the bridge between oral and written culture. It was pointed out that in a few hectares of forest 350 new species have been found in the course of a few months. It was stressed that regional and local levels must be involved in the decision-making process as they are equipped and dedicated to protecting biodiversity. Another issue stressed is the need to work more on the protection of genetic resources and it was pointed out that a new office of biodiversity is underway in French Guiana to observe, monitor and raise awareness of biodiversity loss. The need for funding was stressed as very few funding resources are allocated to biodiversity.

Michel Porcher, IFRECOR, France explained that IFRECOR work to protect and promote the sustainable management of coral reefs and associated ecosystems such as mangroves. The impact of climate change was reiterated mentioning the effects of ocean acidification, the amplification of extreme weather, the increase of temperature on surface water, invasive species, sea level rise, and the whitening of coral colonies, all threatening coral reefs. It was underlined that IFRECOR work on combating climate on two dimensions. Firstly, through a monitoring centre that observes coral reefs and related actions. The health status of coral reefs and associated ecosystems is followed closely with the help of eight indicators, which include: ocean temperature, health of reefs, ocean acidification, sea level, extreme weather, coastal vegetation, and salty bevel. The data is collected at a single portal on the website of the University of New Caledonia making it accessible to all. The system is operational and it was stated that it is adapted and adjusted to the environment and parameters defined. The second dimension of IFRECOR involves adaptation where a guide has been published on the impacts of climate change on tropical and marine areas with regards to infrastructure. It was underlined that the guide describes different types of infrastructure and the likely impacts generated on sensitive environments. The example of airports was mentioned and the negative impacts they have being built so close to coral reefs. The guide provides technical recommendations of what actions should be taken for different types of infrastructure considering the various characteristics. It was stressed that work is being set up to assist policy-makers on these issues.

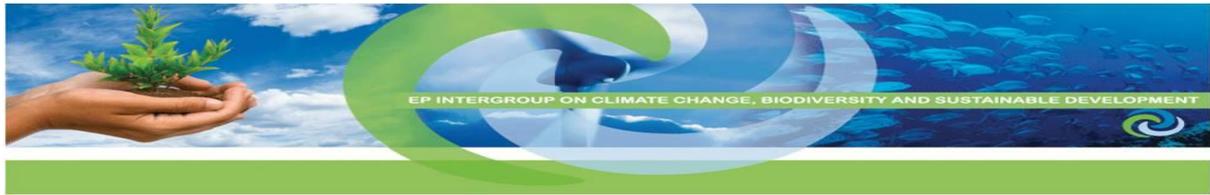
Carole Martinez, Senior coordinator of the IUCN EU Overseas and regional Seas programme reiterated the importance of adaptation and that EU Overseas can be real demonstrators and leaders of solutions with regards to ecosystem-based approaches. It was stressed that it may be useful to foresee a more comprehensive Overseas-EU declaration and action plan. The third roundtable was introduced focusing on examples of the Green and Blue Economy for inclusive and sustainable growth in the EU Overseas. The Lifou Declaration, which was adopted last year by Pacific countries and territories at Oceania 21 calls upon a new global economic model based on blue and green economy. It was also pointed out that The Message from Guadeloupe also set up two strategic orientations in this regard. Firstly, it is essential to prioritise and finance environmental sustainability in EU overseas economic sectors. Secondly, it calls for the need to develop a vision and international support for EU Overseas combined marine domain, of international



importance, by promoting ecologically sustainable uses of the marine environment, fostering local governance and supporting spatial planning.

Armand Beuf, Policy Officer Science, Technology and Innovation cooperation with Pacific countries, DG Research & Innovation, European Commission stressed the importance of highlighting the strategic position of EU Overseas in the growth of blue and green economy at EU and global level. The geographical location of Overseas is a major asset and will facilitate the role of EU as a global stakeholder. The green and blue economy provide an opportunity to develop the value chain of many marine and submarine products, the development of many services related to maritime spaces and areas, as well as the conservation of global public goods. It was outlined that there are many political opportunities to promote the blue and green economy under President Juncker's Commission Agenda as well as Commissioner Moedas priorities on "*Open Innovation, Open Science, Open to the World*". The "*Netbiome*" Era net was mentioned, which has provided the opportunity to call for proposals and the development of research projects promoting biodiversity in islands and marine environments. The initiatives "*Pacenet*" (2010-2013) and "*Pacenet plus*" (2013-2016) were also highlighted as they include Overseas Countries and Territories as well as Australia, New Zealand and Pacific ACPs. These networks aim to reinforce the bi regional policy dialogue in Science & Technology and Innovation between the EU and Pacific as well as encourage EU Pacific research partnerships. It was outlined that the outcome of the two networks enabled the Commission to take stock of the existing research capacity at regional level, contributed to reflect on how to enhance the global partnership between the EU and Pacific mobilising regional and state authorities, and involving EU and UN institutions, as well as formulating policy recommendations in terms of research and innovation for years to come. The need to build regions capacity for research in order to better inform decision-makers and increase the opportunities for global change was stressed. The importance of involving citizens was also emphasised as they are essential players in the actions to be adopted. It was concluded by stating that there is a new activity 2.5 under Horizon 2020 focusing on "*cross-cutting marine and maritime research*" that allows research communities from Overseas Countries and Territories and Outermost Regions to work in close cooperation with other research teams on cross-cutting marine and maritime research projects.

Cedrick Tilma, Representative of the Government of Aruba to the European Union provided the example of Aruba as they are transforming into a green economy. It was stated that Aruba is a tourist destination welcoming over 1.5 million visitors yearly, which puts unwanted pressures on the environment and inhabitants. It was outlined that the economic success was not translating into the well-being of the people. In 2010 Aruba set out to address this challenge by delivering a lasting prosperity and chose the road of green and sustainable initiatives. Energy was branded as a driver of the sustainable development agenda. The Aruba Green Conference kick-started the greening of Aruba, which is a yearly conference with the aim to exchange information and celebrate goals achieved. The 2015 edition will focus on sharing sustainability and identify solutions moving forward. It was emphasised that Aruba relies on strategic partners to be part of its transformation in order

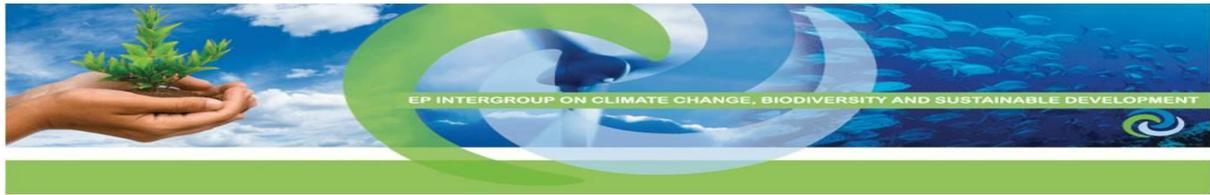


to become a sustainable society. It was mentioned that Aruba collaborates with TNO, which are working to transform Aruba to become 100% renewable. The Carbon War Room, Columbia and Harvard University were also pointed out as pivotal partners. Aruba has invested in wind mills, solar parks, a waste to energy plant, as well as smaller products such as installing solar panels on school roofs. The importance for innovation and facilitating new technologies was stressed. One of the main challenges is energy storage as cooling represent 50% of the energy demands. Education and awareness were also highlighted as important ongoing initiatives as well as the need to engage citizens. The importance of partnerships was stressed and the need to work closely with colleagues of EU Overseas and the EU.

A video message from **Ricardo Serrão Santos MEP** highlighted that Overseas are facing daunting challenges with regards to managing the transformation of their economies using research more wisely. The importance of marine protected areas was stressed and the example of the Azores was provided, which have established MPAs in consultation and agreement with fishermen leading to an overall profit for the whole community in terms of biodiversity, job creation and economic growth. The importance of the ocean was reiterated and the potential contribution to blue economy. The contribution of the maritime dimension of Europe was highlighted as well as the biological diversity and environmental stability for the strategic position of the EU. The establishment of cooperation between levels was reaffirmed and the need for specific policy tools and funding through time was stressed.

The discussion with the audience further highlighted the importance of oceans and the need to move towards renewable energy. The project “*NetBiome*” was further emphasised as it promotes research for biodiversity in support of sustainable development. It was explained that this partnership is maintained by a CSA and the project will end in April with the partnership ending with it. It was called upon the EU to sign a memorandum of understanding in order to maintain this partnership outside the current funding by the EU. The importance of maintaining partnerships that already exists was stressed as they help generate local knowledge of biodiversity.

Carole Martinez, Senior coordinator of the IUCN EU Overseas and regional Seas programme provided a short summary of the meeting highlighting that biodiversity of EU Overseas is at risk jeopardising local development and livelihoods. It was reiterated that Overseas can showcase low cost and win-win solutions, but this potential still needs to be unlocked for promoting traditional knowledge and the capacity of innovation to name a few. The SWAC example in French Polynesia was mentioned where deep cold water is used in order to produce low cost energy. Funding was stated as essential and the BEST initiative has illustrated a partnership approach and a successful demonstrator regarding the number of projects funded and the high quality of proposals submitted. It was stressed that the Message from Guadeloupe continue to build momentum and that COP21 is just the beginning for more cooperation and action to be set out.



Daniel Calleja Crespo, Director-General for the Environment, European Commission stressed the importance of EU Overseas and the obligation that the EU must take into account when dealing with the specificity of these regions. The need for partnerships was also stressed as well as the link between biodiversity and climate change. It was reiterated that ecosystems are our strongest ally in mitigating climate change and adapting to its consequences. It was underlined that terrestrial and marine ecosystems absorb half of the CO₂ emissions, and that healthy ecosystems are among the most cost effective means in reducing climate change effects. It was stressed that investing in nature makes economic sense and is the best insurance strategy. It was pointed out that the EU Overseas have been important players calling on the attention of climate change and biodiversity linkages. It was stressed that they are important regional ambassadors for the EU moving forward with international commitments. The issue of financing was raised pointing out that many financing instruments exist in the EU and provide opportunities to make good things happen. The BEST initiative was highlighted and that the Commission wishes to see it evolve into a sustainable partnership. It was concluded by stating that it is hoped that the outcome of this meeting galvanises action to implement the Message from Guadeloupe as it is essential to improve the synergies between biodiversity and climate change actions for sustainable development.

Maurice Ponga MEP concluded the meeting by stating that the BEST initiative has a major stimulus and the hope that more industrialised countries will support various programmes on fighting climate change. It was stressed that the messages put forward today must be echoed at COP21 and that the work on combating climate change and biodiversity loss continues in the future.

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