



**European Committee
of the Regions**

CBD COP 14 CITY SUMMIT – SESSION 4

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION LOCAL AND SUBNATIONAL
AUTHORITIES TOWARDS THE POST-2020 BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK**

VENUE: ROOM ST-CATHARINE, BUILDING 2, SHARM EL SHEIKH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS CENTRE

DATE: 24/11/2018; 9 A.M. -10 A.M. (10 MINS MAX.)

Speaker 1: Mr Roby Biwer, First Vice-Chair, Commission for Environment, Climate change and Energy,
European Committee of Regions and Member of the Bettembourg Municipal Council, LU

*PRESENTATION TITLE: THE CONTRIBUTION OF EU CITIES AND REGIONS TO THE CBD COP14 AND THE POST-2020
EU BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY*

Dear Kobie,

Dear fellow members of the panel,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my greatest pleasure to start the conversation on the contribution of the European Union local and subnational authorities towards the post-2020 Biodiversity Framework.

For those who are not familiar with the institution I represent today; the European Committee of the Regions (or CoR) assembles representatives of local and regional authorities across the European Union. They are major players in the implementation of policies and actions that enable to act against the loss of biodiversity.

The CoR adopts what we call "Opinions". An official piece of legislation through which an appointed "rapporteur" expresses the point of view on EU legislation that directly affect regions and cities.

In the EU, such institutional system is in place because three quarters of EU legislation is implemented at local or regional level. Local and regional representatives need, therefore, to have a say in the development of EU laws.

Furthermore, cities and regions are the closest level of government to the citizens. Who better than us - mayors, councillors and presidents of regions - to make sure that citizens in our constituencies live in harmony with biodiversity.

I have been rapporteur of an opinion recently adopted by the CoR on the contribution of European cities and regions to the CBD COP14, and the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

The opinion advocates for an increased effort in achieving the Biodiversity Aichi Targets, and calls on a very ambitious post-2020 policy framework both at global and European level.

Parties should also recognise explicitly the indispensable role of local and regional authorities in achieving a successful implementation of the current and future global policies on biodiversity.

A very good starting point was adoption of the "Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and other Local Authorities for Biodiversity" at COP10. It has been a great success towards the recognition of local and regional authorities' role. All parties to the CBD, including the EU and the 28 Member States, would commit to engage with and support local and regional authorities in achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

Yet, we still face important challenges, both in terms of formally recognise the role of subnational authorities in biodiversity preservation and conversation addressing

biodiversity loss. That is why we need sub-national players to engage in the post-2020 strategy and play a greater role to CBD COP14. We should:

1. address the state of emergency and increase mobilisation to take urgent, bolder actions building on partnerships with subnational authorities;
2. strengthen dialogue and formal inter-institutional cooperation with sub-national authorities; implement Monitoring, Reporting and Verification mechanisms;
3. foster stronger coherence among the biodiversity, SDGs and climate action agendas;
4. further develop access to existing financing mechanisms, instruments and funds;
5. enhance multilevel governance and synergies to support efforts for SDG 11; working with private funding, NGO's, and enhancing subsidiarity;
6. make the resource mobilisation strategy an integral part of the new plan;
7. promote and strengthen the CBD Communication Education and Public Awareness work program with particular attention to subnational authorities' needs; mainstream their SMART tools and good practices;
8. take into consideration the development of Locally Determined Contributions in the preparation of Nationally Determined Contributions for biodiversity.

In order to meet the Aichi targets, we have a tremendous responsibility until 2020 and beyond. We need to formulate today, at the CBD, clear goals that we all need to work on.

We need to listen to scientists, who give us important information on biodiversity. We need to eliminate every single subsidy affecting negatively biodiversity.

We need to fight illegal trade, address invasive species and define specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic and time-related goals. It is also important that this “together” include our citizens, the daily life of our villages, towns and regions. The targets need, therefore, to be easily communicable to citizens.

Towards an effective and operational post 2020 Strategy, we have to increase our political commitment. There is no more choice here.

Many policy fields depend on biodiversity, and many social questions hang on our ecosystems.

When we will renew the Aichi targets, when we will proceed in peer-to-peer learning, when we will decide on inclusive indicators; we will be encouraged to go forward.

Our goal today is not only to evaluate the results of our past work, but also to build on what has already been done successfully and build from there towards further future success.

The EU policy makers have the possibility to lead the way in the post-2020 biodiversity policy framework, and European cities and regions are ready to implement, we are ready to act, and I hope all you members of the audience are ready, too.

I will stop here because I look forward the discussion with the other panellists and the audience, so I rather be quick now and talk more later.

Thank you for your attention.

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Responsible desk office: Roberto RINALDI/ Louis Henrot

Committee of Regions Directorate/Unit: B2

Tel desk officer in charge of file: 003222822028