Position for CBD COP17

Climate Action Network Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia

1. From commitments to accountable implementation

COP17 should not only record the gaps but also agree concrete measures to accelerate delivery of the global targets by 2030. CAN EECCA calls on the governments of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia to embed measurable indicators in their national biodiversity strategies and action plans, with annual progress reporting rather than a single final report at the end of the cycle. Monitoring results should be made publicly available, and independent expertise from NGOs, the scientific community and local communities should be built into the preparation and revision of strategies on a regular basis, not only as a one-off at the consultation stage. Biodiversity policy should be grounded in the integrity of ecosystems and in coherent implementation of the three Rio Conventions, on climate, biodiversity and desertification.

To strengthen national biodiversity monitoring systems, universities, research institutions and civil society organisations should be more actively involved, and citizen science, digital data collection systems and open databases on the state of ecosystems should be developed. Particular attention should be paid to training young researchers and specialists in biodiversity monitoring and ecosystem restoration.

2. Without civic freedoms, there is no effective biodiversity policy

In a number of EECCA countries, civic space is shrinking through specific measures: refusal or suspension of registration, freezing of environmental organisations' bank accounts, "foreign agent" designations, and denial of NGO accreditation to negotiations. Together with formal or selective consultations, these practices undermine public oversight and run directly counter to Target 22 of the Global Biodiversity Framework. We call on Parties, the governments of EECCA countries and Armenia as the host country to guarantee safe, non-discriminatory and meaningful NGO participation at every stage: from the preparation of national positions and the inclusion of NGO representatives in delegations to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of COP17 decisions. This requires a permanent multi-stakeholder mechanism for NGO participation at the national and regional levels, rather than one-off consultations ahead of each COP. It must include access to information and justice, and protection for environmental defenders. NGOs must be full partners, not decorative observers.

3. Fair finance and shared responsibility

Biodiversity finance must be adequate, predictable, transparent and directly accessible to local and grassroots NGOs, women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, not only through state intermediaries. CAN EECCA calls for a dedicated share of direct funding for these groups to be set within national and international funding mechanisms, with annual reporting on its delivery. At the national level, a set percentage of payments for the use of natural resources (ecosystem services) could serve as a source of funding. All financial flows should be accompanied by open data, independent public monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

Without freedom of participation, transparency and public oversight, there can be neither sustainable finance nor real protection of biodiversity.

4. Central Asia's mountain ecosystems and water resources as biodiversity priorities

For the Kyrgyz Republic and other Central Asian countries, biodiversity conservation is inseparable from the resilience of mountain ecosystems, glaciers, river basins, pastures and other natural areas that underpin the water, food and environmental security of millions of people.

CAN EECCA calls for particular attention to the conservation and restoration of mountain ecosystems and degraded lands, the sustainable management of pastures and catchment areas, and the protection of ecosystems of transboundary importance. Science-based nature-based solutions (NbS) and ecosystem-based approaches should be applied more widely, while their actual impact on biodiversity and on the resilience of local communities is monitored.

For Central Asia's transboundary ecosystems, regional cooperation, the exchange of environmental data, joint monitoring and the implementation of transboundary programmes for biodiversity conservation and restoration need to be strengthened.