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Forwarded from TAXACOM. Although not specific to PA, this may be of general interest.

Here's the link to (<http://www.recherche.gouv.fr/biodiv2005paris/en/appelparisbiodiv.htm>) the Paris declaration and attached a statement from the "Biodiversity: Science and Governance" conference in Paris last week.

It was a big meeting with over 1,000 participants initiated by the French president Chirac and the director General of UNESCO, Koichiro Matsuura, including among others the president of Madagascar and various ministers.

At least in one way, this was a quiet unusual meeting. This time, real data played an important part. And it was not the North who made the case, but the President of Madagascar and Mexico who actually, following their top politicians, are now using taxonomy based data to make political decisions.

It was a clear demonstration of the yield of sharing globally data, modern technological advances, and the importance of single scientists who actually have the vision to build up such infrastructures and do it.

It was also a clear sign of the importance of institutions like GBIF and with it the drive to develop, or help to develop such tools as digir and other protocols which at the end help to go back to single specimen rather than getting lost somewhere in expert opinions, and to make each single, open access collecting an important part in this global endeavour.

Statement from the International Conference on "Biodiversity: Science and Governance" This statement is based on the presentations and discussions during the conference and the "Appeal" by the Scientific Committee of the conference. Recalling the commitment of governments to the global target of significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010 as a fundamental condition for sustainable development.

Recognizing that:

Biodiversity is a vital and poorly appreciated resource for all of humankind that underpins the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

Biodiversity is being irreversibly destroyed by human activities at an unprecedented rate, and this demands urgent and significant action to conserve, sustainably use and equitably share the benefits of biodiversity;

Unless the rate of loss of biodiversity and the resulting degradation of ecosystem services are significantly reduced, efforts to combat poverty, reduce hunger and provide clean water and a healthy environment will be undermined;

A major effort is still needed to fill the gaps in knowledge, but there is already sufficient information available for improved management of ecosystems.

Therefore the participants of the international conference on "Biodiversity: Science and Governance" urge:

Governments to take all necessary actions, including capacity building, needed to realize the 2010 biodiversity target, consistent with their sustainable development goals;

Civil society, including local and indigenous communities and the private sector, to take actions consistent with the 2010 biodiversity target;

The scientific community to develop greater national and international coordination;

That the necessary public and private resources be mobilized for the inter-disciplinary scientific research and monitoring required to improve our current understanding and to address the cost of >conserving biodiversity;
Improved communications and partnerships among the scientific community, decision makers and civil society, including local and indigenous communities;
Parties and Secretariats to the multilateral environmental agreements to built greater cooperation and synergy.

And recommend, in response to the call for action made by President Chirac at this Conference, the launch of an international multi-stakeholder consultative process guided by a balanced multi-stakeholder steering committee. This process would assess the need for an international mechanism which would:
provide a critical assessment of the scientific information and policy options required for decision-making;
build on existing bodies, current and recent activities.

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A public-private partnership to conserve biodiversity statewide

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