

BUFFET OF IDEAS AND FIELD VISITS

BUFFET OF IDEAS

On Thursday, 10 April 2008, delegates participated in informal networking sessions called the “Buffet of Ideas.” An innovative addition to the 8th Conference, the Buffet of Ideas provided participants an opportunity create their own workshops and break into small groups over lunch to informally meet other delegates and discuss issues of common concern. Environmental compliance and enforcement experts participating in the Conference led informal discussions in the following eleven self-identified topic sessions:

1. The International Network of Environmental Compliance Training Professionals

During this discussion, delegates formalized their commitment to participating in a network to share information concerning training best practices and lessons learned and to exchange training programs and materials.

2. The Seaports Initiative Kickoff

During this discussion, participants shared ideas on specific follow-up actions that could be considered for the seaport environmental security network. The network will seek to build capacity, raise awareness, and facilitate collaboration among government officials on ways to detect and stop illegal and dangerous international shipments of environmentally-regulated goods.

3. Combating Environmental Crime with Interpol’s Ecomessage

This discussion provided a forum for participants to learn about Ecomessage, which is a database system for governments to report all major environmental crimes including: illegal transborder movements and illegal dumping of wastes; illegal transborder activities involving radioactive substances; and illegal traffic in species of wild flora and fauna.

4. Making Aid Effective

At the Making Aid Effective table, participants discussed coordination between donors and implementing organizations, the need for project plans to come “from the ground up,” and the types of operations management strategies that can be used to help ensure donor support goes to its intended purposes of building capacity for environmental protection.

5. A Regional Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network for Sub-Saharan Africa

Participants built on conversations held during the Regional Conference for Sub-Saharan Africa, and went further to outline the scope, vision, mission, goals, and initial activities of a regional network for strengthening capacity for environmental compliance and enforcement.

6. Marine Enforcement

During this session, an expert from Table Mountain National Park's Marine Protected Area led a discussion on the challenges of protecting valuable marine species, such as abalone, from poachers.

7. Environmental Compliance Assurance in China

Asian delegates to the Conference hosted an opportunity during this discussion for participants to learn about the challenges to and opportunities for environmental compliance activities in China.

8. Non-governmental Organizations

This table provided representatives from non-governmental organizations an opportunity to share experiences regarding the unique contribution that civil society groups can make to strengthen environmental compliance and enforcement.

9. Sustaining Network Secretariats

During this conversation, participants from existing regional enforcement networks shared strategies and advise on fundraising for and management of network secretariats with participants from emerging regional networks.

10. Francophone Networks

The participation in the 8th Conference of delegates from Francophone countries was recognized during this discussion, which reviewed the advances of the Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement in the Maghreb Region (NECEMA), since its launch at INECE's 7th International Conference in Marrakesh, Morocco.

11. Members of the Judiciary

Judges participating in the INECE Conference convened this discussion to share their views and experiences on the role of the judiciary in environmental compliance and enforcement, the impact of specialized environmental tribunals,

and the activities that INECE can take to raise awareness of the importance of environment compliance among the judiciary.

FIELD VISITS

On Wednesday, 9 April 2008, delegates at the 8th International Conference selected one of four site visits to observe innovative environmental compliance and enforcement programs to protect its biodiversity and marine resources, manage hazardous wastes, and limit pollution in the host city. During the site visits which intersected thematically with the Conference program, delegates heard background presentations and participated in a facilitated discussion lead by local experts to better understand compliance challenges and opportunities in South Africa and to share their insight and experiences from their home countries.

During many of the site visits, delegates planted native tree species to offset carbon emissions, in gratitude to Cape Town as the Conference host city and in recognition of Dr. Wangari Maathai's vision of trees as the "the seeds of peace and the seeds of hope."

1. Cape Point Nature Reserve and Table Mountain National Park Marine Protected Area

Delegates visited a selection of famous areas of Table Mountain National Park, beginning with the Groote Schuur Estate and the Mount Pleasant Complex, for a tour of the medicinal garden designed to give the indigenous communities a legitimate source of traditional medicines to reduce illegal harvesting within the park. Delegates then traveled south to the Cape Point Nature Reserve, over Chapman's Peak Drive, a spectacular road, hugging the near-vertical face of the mountain from Hout Bay to Noordhoek.

Cape Point Nature Reserve is perhaps the most scenically spectacular park in South Africa. The narrow finger of land with its beautiful valleys, bays and beaches is surrounded by the waters of the Atlantic Ocean and False Bay and has within its boundaries two world-renowned landmarks, - majestic Table Mountain and the legendary Cape of Good Hope. The Park is recognized globally for its extraordinarily diverse and unique fauna and flora. With rugged cliffs, steep slopes and sandy flats, the Park is a remarkable natural, scenic, historical, cultural and recreational asset both locally and internationally. Nowhere else in the world does an area of such spectacular beauty and such rich biodiversity exist almost entirely within a metropolitan area.

The reserve protects many endangered animal and plant species, including four whale species, three dolphin species, four tortoise species, 250 bird species, and a selection of big game: eland and bontebok antelope, baboons, and ostriches can be seen on a drive through the pristine bush. One thousand sixteen species of plants have been recorded in the Park, but this is a mere 11% of the 9,000 plant species

that make up the fynbos - 'fine bush' - found in the Cape, which forms the smallest but most diverse of the world's six floral kingdoms.

Delegates participated in a discussion led by Robin Adams of Table Mountain National Park Marine Section on the challenges and solutions in the fight against environmental marine crime in the Table Mountain National Park Marine Protected Area (MPA). A major focus of their effort is on abalone poaching. Abalone, a marine shellfish found mainly in cold waters, is considered a delicacy and an aphrodisiac in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, and is valued at more than \$200/pound in Asian retail markets, according to a study by the Wall Street Journal. In an attempt to limit abalone poaching, South Africa listed abalone as endangered under Appendix III of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 2007; established stringent restrictions on abalone extraction and trade; and has undertaken a number of joint enforcement and investigation operations among the country's Police Service, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism: Branch Marine and Coastal Management, and the South African National Defense Force.

2. Blaauwberg Conservation Area

During the Blaauwberg Conversation Area trip, delegates observed the north-western sector of Cape Town, which is one of the fastest growing urban corridors in Cape Town, but also home to some of the most endangered plant communities and species in the world. The north-western sector has a magnificent but sensitive coastline highly desired for its classic view of Table Mountain and Table Bay. Further, it is along this coast that the Koeberg Nuclear Power Station is located, the only nuclear power station in the Western Cape, providing a significant portion of the electricity requirements to Cape Town.

Delegates began the site visit at Milnerton Lagoon and Woodbridge Island. Illegally constructed dwellings on primary dune systems (flouting Environmental Impact Assessment legislation) have led to an extended litigation process to halt development. Several other cases along the beachfront demonstrate poor environmental practices, with buildings constructed too close to the dunes. Illegal release of effluent from industry and waste treatment works into the lagoon led to catastrophic eutrophication, killing most of the fauna in the estuary.

Delegates then traveled northwards towards Blaauwberg Conservation Area (BCA), passing by the Chevron Caltex Oil Refinery onto the N7 to Frankdale Road and Vissershok Landfill Site, classified to receive hazardous waste. BCA is an area of globally significant biodiversity and cultural heritage, implemented with strong civil society involvement. Delegates learned about the "good news" story of the successful intervention to curb previous 4x4 vehicle destruction on the beach and on Blaauwberg Hill. Current challenges include low flying tourist helicopters, illegal dumping and development pressures.

3. Edith Stephens Wetland Park

During this site visit, delegates explored the challenges of conserving critical biodiversity in fragmented natural habitats in an urban setting where poverty is widespread.

Delegates traveled to the Edith Stephens Wetland Park (ESWP). Established in 1955, the Park is a leading example of how the City works in partnership with communities on the Cape Flats to take care of Cape Town's precious natural heritage in a way that is beneficial to all.

Cape Flats Nature, a partnership project initiated by the City of Cape Town, the Botanical Society of South Africa, South African National Biodiversity Institute, and the Table Mountain Fund, has grown since its formation in 2002. The Park stewards have transformed the area from a dangerous garbage dumping grounds to a thriving natural reserve, while maintaining a focus on helping communities reconcile conservation with the needs of the urban poor and marginalized communities. Major problems are faced in trying to conserve tiny fragments of biodiversity in a growing city, but extensive support from the local community has been a boon for the protection of the unique flora and fauna found in the Park. Innovative community outreach programs at ESWP include the "Useful Plants Garden," conservation and health education programs, and environmental education programs for youth.

4. Rondevlei Nature Reserve

During this set of site visits, delegates visited the False Bay Ecology Park (FBEP), a wastewater treatment works, and a landfill site, located just 20 minutes from the city centre. The FBEP boasts some of the most important wetlands for birds in the Western Cape and Southern Africa. A well-regulated urban park can significantly enhance the lives of the surrounding mixed-income communities. Law enforcement, however, is a critical element of the on-the-ground management of the area, and is hampered by serious resource constraints and conflicting jurisdictional areas. Problems include illegal dumping, water pollution, poaching, safety and security and the challenge of planning and managing natural areas under pressure from impacts of rapid urbanization.

Delegates traveled to the Coastal Park Landfill Site, in Strandfontein/Muizenberg, along the False Bay coastline. Operating since 1976, this is the most researched landfill site in South Africa. Law enforcement and illegal dumping issues were discussed. Subsequently, delegates traveled to Zeekoevlei, the largest freshwater lake in Cape Town, situated on the Cape Flats, where they discussed the challenges of managing the lake for the purposes of while ensuring a sustainable ecosystem. At Zeekoevlei, experts discussed the compliance challenges associated with managing the nature reserve and water quality, as well as catchment management issues relating to the lake.

After Zeekoevlei, delegates observed the cooperative management practices at Cape Flats Waste Water Treatment Works, which is one of the top birding sites in South Africa and an example of co-operative management. The site visit concluded at Rondevlei Nature Reserve, with a discussion on methods to ensure compliance with laws to protect a biodiversity in conservation areas, and an exploration of the co-benefit of protected areas generating income from ecotourism in the surrounding communities.

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