

Überschrift/Titel:	Making the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation Fit for the Future
Untertitel:	Signing of a Letter of Intent "Moving ahead with the 2008 Joint Declaration" at COP 9
Redner/in:	Federal Minister Gabriel
Anlass:	9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Bonn, 19 to 30 May 2008)
Ort:	Foyer BMU/Bonn, 27 May 2008, 8.15 to 9.00 pm

Ms Verburg,  
Ms Pilsgaard,  
Mr Birkner,  
Mr Enemark,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all here on the eve of the High-Level Segment of COP 9 to this small ceremony to mark the signing of our Letter of Intent. The theme of our meeting here in Bonn - "One Nature - One World - Our Future" - is clear: if we protect biological diversity, we are not only safeguarding the beauty and treasures of nature - we are securing the foundations for our survival and the survival of our children and grandchildren.

One thing is certain: the greater the number of species and the range of genetic diversity in an ecosystem, the greater its capacities for adapting to changes. This applies to the influences of anthropogenic use, but also to major changes we must all expect as a result of climate change.

These changes and influences, just as the ecosystems themselves and their biodiversity and functionality - do not recognise borders. This is

why it is hugely important to work together beyond administrative and political borders, and beyond traditional areas of interest - in order to conserve our valuable ecosystems.

This remains a difficult goal. Many structures and ways of thinking are outdated - many mechanisms are slow and cumbersome. This makes it all the more impressive that the trilateral Wadden Sea cooperation has been successful for 30 years in achieving precisely this: transboundary cooperation with the common goal of protecting the Wadden Sea as a coherent ecosystem and structuring its use in a sustainable way. The ecosystem approach of the Convention on Biological Diversity - whose facets we have been discussing so much in recent days - has been implemented in an exemplary way in the Wadden Sea cooperation by the Netherlands, Denmark and the German government and Länder.

It therefore gives me particular pleasure - especially in the framework of this CBD meeting - to expressly support a process, together with Ministers Verburg and Poulsen – who is represented by Deputy Director-General Ms Pilsgaard, that will lead to the trilateral Wadden Sea cooperation working even more efficiently and effectively in future. The beautiful pictures and impressions surrounding us clearly show us that these efforts are worthwhile.

It is undoubtedly not least thanks to the very long, close and constructive partnership between our three countries that we were willing to subject this cooperation to an evaluation. After all, any review

and assessment poses the risk of receiving a less than flattering verdict. But in fact the opposite is the case: both experts - Mike Moser and Andy Brown - concluded in their evaluation report around a year ago that the Wadden Sea cooperation was and is a pioneering model for the conservation and management of internationally significant transboundary ecosystems. Furthermore, they considered many aspects of our joint work to be of a world class standard.

However, there is a saying: Better is the enemy of good! This is why we have to make improvements in some areas.

We are giving our cooperation a clearer and more strategic orientation: we are developing a vision and a strategy for trilateral cooperation, thus giving it new momentum. EU Directives that did not exist 30 years ago - the Habitats and Birds Directives, the Water Framework Directive - can be well implemented in a harmonised way within the cooperation. The challenges such as the continued major loss of biodiversity and the looming impacts of climate change demand a powerful and modern cooperation. The Letter of Intent we will sign shortly describes the road ahead for the trilateral Wadden Sea cooperation in future. We are reaffirming the joint declaration and with it the organisational and administrative structures.

I am proud that we are jointly performing this demanding work under Germany's Chair and I assure you of my continued and full support.

Before I hand over to my colleague Minister Verburg, I would like to warmly thank you, Mr Enemark, and your team at the Wadden Sea Secretariat, Mr Moser and Mr Brown, and all those involved from ministries and associations - for your commitment and dedication to the Wadden Sea and our trilateral cooperation. Thank you!