

European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity

In 2007, Norway worked with the European Sustainable Use Specialist Group of IUCN Species Survival Commission (ESUSG) on a European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity for the Bern Convention. The Charter is based on two important agreements of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). These CBD documents are the 'Ecosystem Approach' (or Malawi Principles) (<https://www.cbd.int/ecosystem/principles.shtml>) and the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for Sustainable Use of Biodiversity (<https://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/addis-gdl-en.pdf>). The Ecosystem Approach and AAPG are intended not to be prescriptive but advisory, and to give equal consideration to social, economic and ecological issues. A total of 26 principles are condensed to 12 simple recommendations in the Hunting Charter, as follows:

1. Favour multi-level governance that maximises benefit for conservation and society.
2. Ensure that regulations are understandable and respected.
3. Ensure that harvest is ecologically sustainable.
4. Maintain wild populations of indigenous species with adaptive gene pools.
5. Maintain environments that support healthy and robust populations of harvestable species.
6. Encourage use to provide economic incentives for conservation.
7. Ensure that harvest is properly utilised and wastage avoided.
8. Empower local stakeholders and hold them accountable.
9. Competence and responsibility are desirable among wild resource users.
10. Minimise avoidable suffering by animals.
11. Encourage cooperation between all stakeholders in management of harvested species, associated species and their habitats.
12. Encourage acceptance of sustainable and consumptive use as a conservation tool by the public and other conservation interests.

In the full text (<https://rm.coe.int/168074649f>), under each principle is advice that conservation will be enhanced if a set of guidelines are followed. A charter is a document that agrees responsibility of government towards citizens, effectively conferring rights as well as responsibility for citizens. Thus, the Bern Charter for Hunting and Biodiversity not only has guidelines for hunters, but also for regulators so that they too can help hunters to benefit conservation of biodiversity. Moreover, although the guidelines developed by IUCN's ESUSG started for hunting, the 12 Principles above do not mention hunting specifically. They therefore embrace (with suitable guidelines) all aspects of conservation through use of wild resources.

The Ecosystem Approach and Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for Sustainable Use were relatively easy to combine because both originated in the Sustainable Use Initiative of IUCN. In 2008, IUCN passed Resolution 4.26 that appreciated adoption of the Charter, requested members to promote it and invited governments and NGOs more widely to develop similar trust-building tools. IUCN-ESUSG then developed two further Charters that the Bern Convention adopted, on Recreational Fishing and Biodiversity (<https://rm.coe.int/090000168074699d>) in 2010 and on Fungi-Gathering and Biodiversity (<https://rm.coe.int/0900001680746764>) in 2013.