



**GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR**  
**Ministry for Environment**  
**Joshua Hassan House**  
**Secretary's Lane**  
**Gibraltar**

**PRESS RELEASE**

No. 152/2006

Date: 26 May 2006

The Government is pleased to announce the signing of the Environment Charter, which is a Manifesto Commitment. Last year the Ministry for the Environment undertook a wide-ranging process of consultation with NGO's, and other organisations and officials in various Government Departments in relation to the preparation of. The Charter provides a series of broad guiding principles, which form the core basis on which Gibraltar will aim to achieve sustainable development. It will provide the footprint by which environmental policies and management will be administered and developed.

The guiding principles that constitute the Environment Charter are the following:

1. To recognise that all people need a healthy living environment for their well-being and livelihood and that all can help to conserve and sustain it.
2. To use our natural resources sensibly, with regard to the needs of present and future generations.
3. To identify environmental opportunities, costs and risks in all policies and strategies.
4. To seek expert advice and consult with relevant parties on decisions affecting the environment.
5. To aim for solutions which benefit both the environment and development.
6. To contribute towards the protection and improvement of the global environment.
7. To safeguard and restore native species, habitats and landscape features, and control or eradicate invasive species.
8. To encourage activities and technologies that benefit the living environment.
9. To control pollution, with the polluter paying for prevention and remedies.
10. To study and celebrate our environmental heritage as a treasure to share with our children.

The Charter is not solely an official document for Government use but also serves to remind the community of our responsibilities towards the environment in every activity of our

personal and professional lives. It illustrates Government's commitment to the environment and the importance of environmental protection whilst taking into account the objectives of sustainable development, from ecological, economic and social perspectives.

The Charter is only the beginning of the commitment since it needs to be followed by an Environmental Action and management Plan (EAMP). The Plan will include objectives and indications of the methods to be applied to achieve these. The objectives will need to be set at realistic, achievable levels. A wide spectrum of organisations and different measures will have to be involved, the base information, the legal framework and the practical elements, etc, in order to be successful. The Plan will require substantial and varying effort in respect of the different objectives, so the time factor in attaining the objectives will also vary, the Charter will always continue to be the aim.

The Plan will cover a number of issues such as environment/development interface, habitat management, pollution, energy and technology, natural disasters, environmental heritage and development and planning.

The Chief Minister and Minister for the Environment will be signing the Environment Charter on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2006 at a reception to be held at the Mount. All those persons involved in the consultation process have been invited to the event.

Another event that will be celebrated by the Ministry of the Environment is that of World Environment Day on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2006 at John Mackintosh Hall. The celebration of this day is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment. Every year the United Nations selects a theme – this year's theme is Desert and Desertification – locally Biodiversity has been chosen as a more relevant theme.

The day will be divided into two sessions, a morning and an afternoon session.

The morning session will involve the schools and will be aimed at making children more aware of our environment. There will be different types of presentations by the different school ages, the primary schools will present a song or poem lasting approximately two minutes, the middle schools a play lasting between five to ten minutes and the Comprehensives will produce a calendar.

A short presentational film on local biodiversity will be shown and presented by Dr. John Cortes, GONHS and Dr. M Smith, guest speaker from the Open University, will address the children.

The afternoon session is directed at the industry and a 'green business' initiative to promote an environmentally conscientious approach to their activities will be introduced by the Hon. J.J. Netto.

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Attached is a copy of the list of commitments that forms part of the guiding principles of the Environment Charter and the Environmental Action and Management Plan.

# **Guiding principles for Environment Charter**

The signing of the Environment Charter, which the government says is a Manifesto commitment, takes place today.

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The Plan will cover a number of issues such as environment/development interface, habitat management, pollution, energy and technology, natural disasters, environmental heritage and development and planning, a government statement adds.

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## **Commitments**

The Government of Gibraltar will:

1. Help build the capacity to support and implement an integrated environmental management system, which is consistent with Gibraltar's plans for sustainable development.

2. Involve different government departments, representatives of local industry and commerce, environment and heritage organisations, environmental campaigners and other community representatives to share their views on environmental issues in Gibraltar and take their opinions into consideration when formulating a detailed strategy for action.
3. Seek to ensure that all current and forthcoming environmental legislation is reviewed periodically and updated/transposed in a timely fashion.
4. Aim to ensure the protection and restoration of key habitats, species and landscape features through legislation and appropriate management structures and mechanisms, including a protected areas policy, and attempt the control and eradication of invasive species.
5. Where possible and reasonably practicable, ensure the extension of Multilateral Environmental Agreements to benefit Gibraltar's environment with due consideration to where and when Gibraltar has the reasonable capacity to implement such agreements.
6. Aim to ensure that environmental considerations are integrated with social and economic planning processes, promote sustainable patterns of production and consumption within Gibraltar through published government literature, advertising campaigns and school education programmes.
7. Upgrade and maintain the systems to ensure that Gibraltar has the legislation, institutional capacity (technology, equipment, procedures) and mechanisms it needs to meet international, community and local environmental obligations.
8. Commit to consultative decision-making on developments and plans which may affect the environment.
9. Promote better co-operation and the sharing of experience and expertise between Gibraltar and other countries that face similar environmental problems.
10. Implement effectively obligations under the Multilateral Environmental Agreements already extended to Gibraltar and work towards the extension of other relevant agreements.
11. Use local and international expertise to give advice and improve knowledge of technical and scientific issues. This includes consultation with interested nongovernmental organisations and networks.
12. Review the range, quality and availability of baseline data for natural resources and biodiversity and where such data is unavailable, if possible, attempt to implement systems to cater for and allow the consistent generation of such data.
13. Commit local and EU/International funds to promote and implement projects of lasting benefit to Gibraltar's environment.
14. Ensure that legislation and policies reflect the principle that the polluter should pay for prevention or remedies; establish effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.
15. Help identify further funding partners for environmental projects, such as donors, the private sector or non-governmental organisations.
16. Encourage teaching within schools to promote value of our local living environment and to explain its role within the regional and global environment.
17. Recognise the diversity of socio-economic and environmental challenges facing Gibraltar and use these challenges to benefit the development and management of the living environment.
18. Promote publications that spread awareness of the special features of the environment in Gibraltar; promoting the guiding principles set out above.
19. Abide by the principles set out in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and work towards meeting Local, EU and International Development Targets on the environment.