

Speech at the opening of The Centre for *Economics and Ecosystem Management*
By Ilke Tilders – FOS representative for Europe
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I risk sounding like Martin Luther King, but seriously, last night I had a dream. The famous movie director Steven Spielberg waved a blank cheque at me – unlimited funding to develop a movie that would change world. He asked me to make a movie about the *Economic Woman*.

It started off as a dream, but soon I woke up screaming, sweating, panicking. Who was this woman? What should she do to change the world? What was economic about her? Her Hair? Her watch?

After a while, exhausted by my own thoughts, I sank back into a restless sleep and got a vision of a woman. She did not preach but instead lived the example. She ruled the world in earnest – under her wings we all understood that our human world is just a subset of the bigger total. And that without the total we are nothing.

In this dream we had much less of much, but more of what we really need. She had the ability – by her sheer being- to ask questions in such a way that wisdom unfolded even in the most eco-corrupt areas of the world (like Holland, the U.K. and Germany). Questions about what we NEED as opposed to what we WANT. Questions hard to answer for those disconnected from the total...

Her concepts were so clear, so wise that all the others became irrelevant.

Most surprising about her was her ability to do all that without getting a burn-out. Also, she did not use deodorant. She was completely thermo-efficient.

And then suddenly the vision of her started fading. Where was she going? How could I find her again? Stop! Don't go! I have so many question!.....I woke up screaming again, sweating and realised how utterly thermo-inefficient I am in every sense of the word.

Dear Pierre, dear Peter and dear talented PhD, MSc, Bachelor students; with the establishment of 'The centre of Economics & Ecosystem Management' – I hope you can help find the economic woman and help her rule the world.

Your jointly published CBD technical series have shown us what your collective wisdom is capable of. Your call for a radical approach to ecosystem management, the launch of economics as key concept for conservation, your quest to combine different types of knowledge –and non-knowledge – all illustrate a deep commitment to changing the way we think about the world we live in.

My hopes are high and I congratulate all of you with the establishment of this centre. I am also honoured to be invited to contribute to this centre. Thank you for that.

Some of you might know me, my name is Ilke Tilders, I lead FOS work in Europe. FOS is a small NGO, that works around the world with conservationists to improve conservation impact by figuring out what works and what doesn't. One of the most valuable secret weapons for this are the CMP Open Standards. This is a methodology for conservation management – developed by practitioners. It is not a theoretical framework –instead it is a tried and tested practical approach. The global “clearing house” for its continuously improving content is the Conservation Measures Partnership. This partnership now includes various members such as TNC, WWF, FOS, IUCN etc.

We in FOS help build capacity of teams and facilitate strategic planning processes, around the world. An important part of our work includes TRAINING. Most of the training is targeted at practitioners; teams that are working in the field. But we also invest in setting up curricula in universities. We do this because we are convinced that it definitely pays off for young conservationists to be equipped with solid knowledge and skills of this management method.

Specifically under this banner, FOS in Europe and ‘The Centre of Economics and Ecosystem Management’ are affiliated. I hope that we will jointly build a high quality programme on Adaptive Management for students that are interested in a career in conservation. I dream of such a programme being visited by students from all over Europe. I dream of a community of young conservationists that start-off their work equipped with this secret weapon, well versed in these open standards. Some even with additional coaching skills, meaning the skills needed to guide and train and support others in the application of these standards .

In Europe a network of coaches is emerging. It is called the European Conservation Coaches Network (ECNET). A subset of this professional network is the network of student coaches. Among these student coaches are some of your fellow students present here today – such talent! Amazing....

The student-coaches of today guide fellow students and support the teaching of the method.

Tomorrow, these student coaches will have become professional coaches – coaching professional teams.

Next week, these professional coaches might have become the leaders of the network or better yet: leaders of conservation efforts that really make the difference.

This shared dream is what binds The Centre of Economics and Ecosystem Management, the European Coaches Network and FOS in Europe. Together, I hope that we will keep searching for the Econic Woman and if we find her I hope we'll help her rule the world!

Once again: congratulations!