



CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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Press Release

Protected Areas and Technology Transfer focus of Biodiversity Meeting *Body on Scientific Technical and Technological Advice meets in Montreal*

Montreal, November 9, 2003 – The ninth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-9) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) opens in Montreal on Monday 10 November.

More than 500 representatives of Parties to the Convention, other governments, international organizations and NGOs, indigenous and local communities, academic and scientific communities, civil society and business will meet for the next five days. Delegates will review progress in implementation of the Convention's extensive work programmes and cross-cutting issues, and consider proposals for two new programmes of work.

Recommendations coming from this key meeting will be submitted to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to be held in February in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The main focus of the deliberations of the delegates will be on proposed programmes of work for Protected Areas and Technology Transfer & Cooperation

The CBD as the lead instrument for protecting biodiversity

The Convention's key strategies for achieving the conservation of biodiversity are protected areas, sustainable use and the ecosystem approach. A comprehensive and well-managed system of protected areas has been recognised as an essential basis for maintaining biological diversity and ecosystem services.

As the Convention moves into the implementation phase of thematic work programmes and related cross-cutting issues, "clearly, a transfer of technologies is needed to enable most countries to make significant progress towards the conservation of biodiversity and – towards reaching our 2010 target of a significant reduction in the rate of loss of biodiversity", said Hamdallah Zedan, Executive Secretary of the Convention.

The Strategic Plan of the Convention adopted by the Conference of the Parties in 2002 includes a target to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth.

"Much has been accomplished in the implementation of the Convention's programmes of work. Much still remains to be done to reach full implementation by 2010. Success in reaching the targets requires the adoption of indicators to measure and monitor biodiversity - one of the principal topics of the meeting", stated the Chairman of SBSTTA-9, Alfred Oteng-Yeboah.

Additional information for Journalists

- (1) The Convention on Biological Diversity was adopted at the Earth Summit in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. It is the first global agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Since the recent accession of Thailand, there are 188 Parties to the Convention, including the European Community.
- (2) The three objectives of the Convention are: *the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of the components of biodiversity, and sharing the benefits* arising from the commercial and other utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way.
- (3) The primary framework for action under the Convention is the ecosystem approach. It is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. It is based on the application of appropriate scientific methodologies focused on levels of biological organization that encompass the essential processes, functions and interactions among organisms and their environment. When biodiversity declines within a habitat or geographic area, the ecosystem tends to become less stable, making the system vulnerable to extreme conditions and catastrophic events. Conversely, the richer the biodiversity in an ecosystem, the greater the ecosystem's stability and resilience.
- (4) There are five CBD thematic work programmes: marine and coastal biodiversity; agricultural biodiversity; forest biodiversity; biodiversity of inland waters; and biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands. Issues of relevance to all thematic areas are termed cross-cutting issues and are integrated into thematic work programmes. They include: biosafety; access to genetic resources; traditional knowledge, innovations and practices (Article 8(j)); intellectual property rights; indicators; taxonomy; public education and awareness; incentives; and alien species.
- (5) In 2002, the international community adopted the far-reaching goal of significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by the year 2010. During the same year, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) recognised that biodiversity plays a critical role in achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication. The UN Secretary General's WEHAB initiative placed biodiversity concerns at the top of the sustainable development agenda. Together with water, energy, health and agriculture, biodiversity was recognised as a basic necessity for life, leading to widespread acceptance of the importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. This provides the basis for linking the 2010 target to the wider human development agenda.
- (6) SBSTTA, a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP) reports regularly to the COP on all aspects of its work. SBSTTA functions include: providing assessments of the status of biological diversity; assessments of the types of measures taken in accordance with the provisions of the Convention; and responding to questions that the COP may put to the body. The previous 8 meetings of SBSTTA have produced a total of 78 recommendations to the Conference of the Parties, some of which have been endorsed in full by the latter. Endorsement makes these recommendations *de facto* decisions of the Conference of the Parties.
- (7) More information about the ninth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-9) is available at the following Web sites:

CBD Web site: <http://www.biodiv.org>

CBD Press room: <http://www.biodiv.org/press/>

SBSTTA Meeting documents <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.asp?mtg=SBSTTA-09>

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