



**CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL
DIVERSITY**

PRESS RELEASE

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**Inter-Governmental Working Group meeting will discuss ways to
strengthen protected area systems around the globe.**

*Delegates to look at options for establishing protected areas
outside of national jurisdiction, financing for protected areas and toolkits.*

Montecatini, 13 June 2005. Protected areas are great tools for protecting biological diversity, but to accomplish this, their reach must be extended, more money will be needed for their maintenance, and their coverage and management effectiveness will need to be improved. Delegates representing the 188 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, nongovernmental organizations, civil society and other stakeholders will meet in Montecatini, Italy this week to explore these and other issues.

“Protected areas are a vital contribution to the conservation of the world’s natural and cultural resources,” said Hamdallah Zedan, Executive Secretary to the Convention on Biological Diversity. “Protected areas are globally faced with major threats to their viability and integrity through various pressures, both direct and indirect.”

Worldwide, there are more than 100,000 protected area sites which cover almost 12% of the Earth’s land surface. These areas are an important tool for the conservation and sustainable use of the genetic diversity on the planet, but their continued relevance and effectiveness requires careful planning. Are they being established in the most appropriate bio-geographic regions? Are they part of a wider network that serves the needs of migratory species? Are the needs of local communities also served along with the goals of conservation? The need to improve coverage and representativeness of ecosystems in these Protected Areas as well as ensuring their effective management are key issues for the meeting.

Establishing and managing protected areas, whether on land or sea, requires money – to ensure that protected areas are effectively protected, that local communities benefit from them, and that the value of protected areas may be maintained for the present and future generations in perpetuity.

“There is no one-size-fits-all solution” cautioned Hamdallah Zedan, “ we need to be open-minded, pragmatic and flexible.” The meeting will consider a variety of tools and options for mobilizing such financial resources, and the advice will be taken up by a meeting of donor agencies, scheduled to take place following the Working Group meeting.

Marine and coastal ecosystems are among the most under-represented in protected area systems. Although 71% of the earth is covered in oceans and seas, only about 0.5% of the world's marine environment is protected. Halting the loss of marine biodiversity as a result of human activities such as over-fishing requires extending protection to the 64% of the oceans that are located beyond national jurisdiction.

“The protection of high seas ecosystems can only be achieved through international and regional cooperation” indicated Executive Secretary Hamdallah Zedan. “We need to evaluate the role of different legal instruments as tools for establishing marine protected areas beyond national jurisdiction.”

The meeting will also consider the tools needed to identify, designate, manage and monitor protected areas and promote a number of existing toolkits. The state of implementation of the programme of work on protected areas of the Convention on Biological Diversity will also be discussed.

A several publications are scheduled to be released during the meeting. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity prepared a special edition of CBD News entitled: “Protected areas for achieving biodiversity targets” to share recent developments on the status and trends of protected areas and plans and achievements towards the 2010 biodiversity target. The Secretariat also prepared, in collaboration with IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and the Nature Conservancy, “Towards Effective Protected Area Systems : An action guide to Implement the programme of work on protected areas”, which elucidates potential steps, case studies and available tools for the implementation of the programme of work.

The meeting is taking place with financial assistance of the governments of Italy and Germany.

Information for journalists:

1. **What:** Inter-governmental meeting on Protected Areas under the aegis of the Convention on Biological Diversity
2. **Where:** Palazzo dei Congressi Mostre ed Esposizioni, Montecatini Terme, Italy
3. **When:** 13 to 17 June 2005
4. **Accreditation:** Media accreditation forms are available at: <http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/outreach/press/acreditations.asp> Send your completed form to the CBD Secretariat by fax (+1 514 288 6588) or e-mail (secretariat@biodiv.org)
5. **More information:** Official meeting documents and information for participants can be found at: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=PAWG-01>
6. **The Convention on Biological Diversity** is the most broadly-subscribed international environmental treaty in the world. Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio De Janeiro Brazil in 1992, it currently has 187 state parties and the European Community who have committed themselves to its three main goals: the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of its components and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. The Secretariat is located in Montreal, Canada.
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