



CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

PRESS RELEASE

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Heads of the World Trade Organization and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity meet for the first time to discuss mutual supportiveness of the international trade and biodiversity regimes

Montreal, 31 May 2006

Pascal Lamy, Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), met on Monday, 29 May, at the Geneva headquarters of WTO to discuss how the international trade regime and the Convention on Biological Diversity, the principal global treaty to protect and better use life on Earth, can be mutually supportive, and how the two organizations can work together to fulfil their respective mandates and achieve their common goal of sustainable development. They also discussed enhanced cooperation on capacity-building and training.

It is widely recognized that there are various interlinkages between the international trade and biodiversity regimes and, in particular, that completely unregulated trade can be harmful for biodiversity. Trade liberalization must be accompanied by the appropriate set of domestic policies—environmental and otherwise—to deliver its promised benefits. WTO has repeatedly emphasized that its rules are not to be interpreted in isolation from other bodies of law, including the Convention on Biological Diversity. Overcoming isolated interpretations and achieving mutual supportiveness in practical terms is therefore of paramount importance.

Mr. Djoghlaif noted that: “Today’s meeting with the head of WTO has opened new avenues of collaboration between our two institutions, while fully recognizing our respective roles and responsibilities.”

Indeed, this demonstration of collaboration comes at a time when the Convention on Biological Diversity is entering a new and exciting enhanced phase of the implementation of its three interrelated objectives: conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits obtained from its use. It also coincides with the finalization of the current trade talks under the Doha Development Round and provides a unique opportunity to reaffirm the need for mutual supportiveness and to agree on practical measures to that end.

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