



# Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

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**Biodiversity and Climate Change**

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### **STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN PORTUGAL AND AFRICA FOR PROMOTING BIODIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT LAUNCHED IN NAIROBI**

*Montreal – 7 February 2007*

A Memorandum of Cooperation to enhance human and institutional capacities in Africa for the effective implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety was signed in Nairobi at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) by His Excellency Mr. Francisco Nunes Correia, the Minister of Environment, Spatial Planning and Regional Development of the Government of Portugal, Professor Firmino Mucavale, the Chief Executive Officer of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and Mr. Ahmed Djoghla, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

This strategic partnership will promote capacity-building through training and exchange of experiences and best practices among the national focal points for the Convention, its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the focal points of the Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of NEPAD and other senior policy makers. A series of training workshops will be organized jointly by the partners on issues of critical importance to the implementation phase of the Convention and its Protocol in the context of the environment component of the NEPAD initiative. It will also provide an opportunity to share Portuguese experience regarding the implementation of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

The signatories will, in the context of South-South cooperation, facilitate the exchange of experts, study tours and fellowships between Portugal and selected African countries; establish information networks and databases to facilitate the exchange of information on best practices and lessons learned; and disseminate this information to all interested regions, with a view to promoting similar initiatives with other regions and Parties to the Convention and the Protocol.

In launching this partnership, His Excellency Mr. Francisco Nunes Correia said, "Portugal is very pleased to be associated with this initiative and make its biodiversity experience at the service of the African countries at a critical juncture of the implementation of their biodiversity agenda".

Prof. Mucavele stated, "Africa's biodiversity is critical for its sustainable development and we applaud Portugal leadership and invites other development partners to the same to assist African countries to protect their unique biodiversity at the service of their legitimate development needs and aspirations".

Mr. Sekou Toure, the UNEP Regional Director for Africa, said, "I am very pleased that this initiative will also enhance the current implementation of the work programme of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment by enhancing the human and institutional capacity at national and regional level of the African countries".



Mr. Bakary Kante, Director of the UNEP Division of Environmental Conventions stated, “I am very pleased that the launch of this initiative is taking place at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme and hosted by the Division of Environment Conventions, which aims at ensuring synergy and complementarities between biodiversity related Conventions and build capacity of major stakeholders, particularly that of African Countries. This initiative will enhance and complement the UNEP Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building.”

Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif stated, “This partnership is a unique mechanism to assist African countries enhance the implementation of the objectives of the Convention and to adequately respond to the unprecedented challenges of conserving their unique biodiversity capital for combating poverty and promoting the social and economic development of African peoples as envisaged by the NEPAD initiative.”

### **Information for Journalists:**

#### **New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD)**

The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) is a vision and strategic framework for Africa’s renewal. The NEPAD strategic framework document arises from a mandate given to the five initiating Heads of State (Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa) by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to develop an integrated socio-economic development framework for Africa. The 37th Summit of the OAU in July 2001 formally adopted the strategic framework document. NEPAD aims to: eradicate poverty, to place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development; to halt the marginalization of Africa in the globalization process and enhance its full and beneficial integration into the global economy; and to accelerate the empowerment of women. <http://www.nepad.org/2005/files/inbrief.php>

#### **The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**

The Convention on Biological Diversity is one of the most broadly subscribed international environmental treaties in the world. Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, it currently has 190 Parties—189 States 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 out of the utilization of genetic resources. The Secretariat of the Convention is located in Montreal.

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