

Communiqué

Establishment of a vibrant partnership between the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the civil society of its host country: Signature of an MOU with the Canadian Environmental Network

Montreal, 10 November 2009 – A strong partnership has been established between the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD), which has been located in Montreal since 1996, and civil society in its host country. To promote greater awareness of the Convention amongst civil-society organizations in Canada and abroad and to support the Convention's implementation, the Secretariat today signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Canadian Environmental Network (RCEN).

RCEN is an initiative comprising a network of more than 600 Canada-based civil-society organizations from coast to coast dedicated to improving environmental quality, including the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. For more than 30 years, RCEN has been facilitating networking between environmental organizations and others who share its mandate. RCEN works directly with concerned citizens and organizations striving to protect, preserve and restore the environment, and to affect how society thinks about environmental issues. www.cen-rce.org/eng/index.html

The objective of the Memorandum is to establish a collaborative framework between the SCBD and RCEN. Cooperation between the two will take place in the following areas:

- RCEN will act as the host of the Canadian “Friends of the CBD” association for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and will support the SCBD in encouraging the establishment of similar organisations and promoting twinning arrangements;
- Communication and outreach on biodiversity including the International Year of Biodiversity, International Day for Biological Diversity and *The Green Wave*;
- RCEN's mobilization of its Biodiversity Caucus to work with Canadians in reaching the objectives of the Convention within the context of current domestic needs and priorities;
- Ensure RCEN participation as an observer in relevant CBD meetings including the meetings of the Conference of the Parties;
- The SCBD will facilitate RCEN networking on biodiversity-related issues with civil society networks (e.g. youth, health, business and municipalities) and organizations located in other countries;
- Collaboration between SCBD and the RCEN Biodiversity Caucus through knowledge and capacity-building activities.

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention, said that “the signing of this Memorandum between the Convention and the representatives of Canadian civil society is of a high political significance. This agreement comes at time when the international community is engaged in the preparation of the International Year of Biodiversity aimed at establishing a universal global alliance for life on Earth. The establishment of the Canadian Friends of the CBD is an idea whose time has come and deserves to be emulated by other partners.”

“We hope that the signature of this Memorandum will enhance civil society's awareness of the Convention within Canada and will ultimately help support the implementation of the Convention,” said Susan Tanner, RCEN Executive Director.