

Ref.: SCBD/I&O/CHM/MS/39159

9 October 2003

Dear Madam/Sir,

Subject: New Clearing-House Mechanism Toolkit

I am writing in connection with paragraph 3 of decision VI/18 of the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) which recommended that the Executive Secretary update and further develop the Clearing-House Mechanism Toolkit referred to in decision IV/2 of the Conference of the Parties, incorporating the use of guidelines, best practices and new information formats, protocols and standards to assist Parties in the establishment or improvement of national, subregional or regional focal points for the CHM.

I am pleased to inform you that the new CHM Toolkit is available on the Convention's website at: <http://www.biodiv.org/chm/toolkit>

The CHM Toolkit was developed in cooperation with the European Community Clearing-House Mechanism (EC CHM), the Government of The Netherlands, the Government of Belgium and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) with the aim to assist Parties and Governments to establish national CHMs and websites by:

- Offering guidance in the establishment of national CHMs by discussing potential activities, functions and responsibilities;
- Assisting in the development of tools to foster electronic dialogue and communication to synergize new collaborative initiatives and promote exchange of ideas and knowledge;
- Providing information on developing and structuring national CHM websites, with a focus on establishing partnerships with existing national CHMs;
- Offering information on existing technical toolkits, to facilitate the technical implementation of national CHM websites;
- Providing information on partnerships and funding;

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- Providing information on the use of and adherence to formats, protocols and standards, particularly metadata and controlled vocabularies, to foster the development of a worldwide biodiversity information network;
- Providing links to expertise, partners, literature and resources.

The CHM toolkit is designed as a work in progress taking note of major new initiatives related to technical and scientific cooperation and new information formats, protocols and standards. Subject to the availability of resources, the CHM Toolkit will be available in CD-ROM and hard copy.

Yours sincerely,

[Signed]

Hamdallah Zedan
Executive Secretary