



**Convention on
Biological
Diversity**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 1, 2003

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH EFFECTIVE NETWORKING
**LARGEST-EVER BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION MEETING TO DEVELOP BLUEPRINT FOR
TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGE**

More than eighty stakeholders and biodiversity information experts from the Americas will attend the joint meeting of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN) and the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Cancun, Mexico, August 12-14, 2003.

Recognizing that scientific knowledge and technological know-how have a vital role to play in the conservation of biological diversity, participants will prepare the blueprint for exchange throughout the hemisphere of biodiversity technical and scientific information through the Clearing-House Mechanism of the Convention and the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network.

This meeting constitutes the Third IABIN Council Meeting and the CHM Regional Meeting for the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC). Said to be the largest biodiversity informatics conference in history, it brings together a wide range of key stakeholders in the area of biodiversity information in the Americas. In addition to the officially-designated national Focal Points for the CHM and IABIN from 34 countries, participants include: the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) Node Managers from the GBIF member countries in the Americas; representatives from NatureServe's Conservation Data Centers; representatives of international and national NGOs; academic institutions; state, local, governments and indigenous organizations; and the private sector.

The purpose of the meeting is to harmonize the visions and ensure the complementarity of the objectives of the IABIN, CHM, and GBIF initiatives in the Americas. Topics will include the IABIN Global Environment Facility (GEF) project process and implementation plan; a joint IABIN-CHM work plan for cooperation in biodiversity-related themes of common concern; GBIF objectives and how network development can meet them; biodiversity data standards and protocols for the hemisphere; and a financial sustainability strategy for IABIN. Institutions indicating an interest in serving as the IABIN Hub (a small secretariat for IABIN) will make brief presentations. A brief IABIN Invasives Information Network side meeting will be convened one evening.

For further meeting information, including the agenda, registration information, and lodging facilities, see the IABIN international Web site www.iabin.net, the IABIN U.S. Node Web site www.iabin-us.org, and/or the CBD Web site at www.biodiv.org.

The CHM and IABIN gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the Government of Belgium and the Global Environment Facility www.gefweb.org for this meeting.



Notes for Journalists

About the Convention of Biological Diversity and the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM)
www.biodiv.org/chm

Recognizing the importance of biodiversity to our daily lives and the pressure that human activities are placing on our living world, governments adopted the **Convention on Biological Diversity** in 1992 as a framework for action. From the start it was understood that scientific knowledge and technological know-how would have a vital role to play in the conservation of biological diversity. However, as expertise in managing information and technology varies enormously from country to country, the Convention has established a "Clearing-House Mechanism" (CHM) to ensure that all governments have access to the information and technologies they need for their work on biodiversity and to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation. The Clearing-House is based on the premise that broad participation and easy access must be a top priority. Special efforts are made to ensure the participation of indigenous communities, whose unique knowledge and expertise are so important.

About IABIN
www.iabin.net or www.iabin-us.org

IABIN was created in 1996 as an initiative of the Santa Cruz Summit of the Americas meeting of Heads of State. Steadily gaining momentum, there are now 34 countries in the Americas that have officially named IABIN focal points. Although endorsed by governments, NGOs, universities, museums, and the private sector all belong to and play important roles in IABIN.

IABIN will provide the networking information infrastructure (such as standards and protocols) and biodiversity information content required by the countries of the Americas to improve decision-making, particularly for issues at the interface of human development and biodiversity conservation. It is developing an Internet-based platform to give access to scientifically credible biodiversity information that is currently scattered throughout the world in different institutions, such as government organizations, museums, botanical gardens, universities, and NGOs.

A small staff dedicated to the implementation of IABIN will support a technical standards development process, coordinate catalogues and directories (either centralized or distributed), manage communications including electronic mailing lists and Web sites, coordinate efforts with other networks, support training for member countries and organizations, and support the efforts of IABIN project networks.