



**CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL
DIVERSITY**

PRESS RELEASE

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*Brainstorming session on South-South cooperation and the Convention on
Biological Diversity: Working together to protect life on Earth*

Montreal – 6 November 2006 – Under the leadership of South Africa, the group of 131 developing countries, known as the Group of 77 and China, is launching the first initiative in the history of multilateral environmental agreements aimed at preparing a multi-year plan of action on South-South cooperation for the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), also known as the convention for all life on earth.

A brainstorming session convened by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in partnership with the secretariat of the Group of 77, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will be held in Montreal from 6 to 8 November 2006 with the participation of twenty-one experts. The session offers a unique opportunity for the countries of the South to exchange their experiences and ensure that biodiversity will continue to contribute to their individual and collective long-term development. It will help set the table for the open-ended experts meeting to be held next year for the finalization of a plan of action which will be submitted to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in Bonn, Germany, in May 2008.

“The Group of 77 and China attaches the highest importance to the speedy and balanced implementation in a mutually supportive manner of the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity,” said Ambassador Dumisani S. Kumalo, Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, and the Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations, in his opening statement. “Indeed, conservation of biological diversity cannot be achieved without the sustainable use and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefit arising from genetic resources.”

Ambassador Kumalo added: “Biodiversity is the key to development of developing countries. The Group of 77 and China expresses its full support to the recommendation addressed to the sixty-first session of the General Assembly to declare 2010 the International Biodiversity Year.” He went on to suggest that “achievements in the sphere of South-South cooperation and biodiversity will further enable developing countries to achieve the Millennium Goals”.

Poor hit hardest by biodiversity loss

The consequences of biodiversity loss and ecosystem disruption are often harshest for the poor, as they depend on local ecosystem services for their livelihoods.

"The reality remains that poor people face limited access to services and if they are deprived of the services of the natural environment surrounding them, they will struggle to find substitutes, most often unsuccessfully," said Ambassador Kumalo. "We are meeting today to discuss South-South cooperation as one of the modalities to mitigate the risks of biodiversity loss on the livelihoods of the poor citizens of our member States."

Ambassador Kumalo believes this meeting could be of historic significance as it may help pave the way for concrete implementation of South-South cooperation through the strengthening of existing partnerships with the North.

The meeting also provides an opportunity for an exchange of views between the participants and the Secretariat on matters related to forest biodiversity in the Congo Basin, the Amazon and South-East Asia.

"I am very pleased to note that countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia can get together to exchange experiences on issues related to sustainable management of forests and, in my capacity as the President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, I would like to express my gratitude to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity for having responded positively and promptly to this African initiative," said Mr. Henri Djombo, Minister of Forest Economy and Environment of the Republic of the Congo.

Ms. Rosalia Arteaga Serrano, Secretary-General of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, said: "We are very happy to see that the CBD is bringing together countries of the South to share experiences and learn from each other."

In a statement read on her behalf, Ms. Georgette Koko, Vice Prime Minister of the Republic of Gabon, and Minister in charge of the Environment, Nature Protection, Research and Technologies, suggested "South-South cooperation in terms of biodiversity is a key mechanism for the sharing of experiences, solidarity and the reinforcement of the cohesion linking developing countries."

Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention, said: "A multi-year plan of action on South-South cooperation will be a major tool to the success of the new enhanced phase of the Convention as well as a major instrument for achieving the Millennium Development Goals."

Information for Journalists:

South-South cooperation (SSC)

The South-South cooperation is a broad framework for collaboration among countries of the South, in the political, economic, social, environmental and technical domains. Involving three or more developing countries, South-South cooperation takes place on bilateral, regional, subregional and interregional bases. Recent developments in South-South cooperation have taken the form of increased volumes of South-South trade,

movements toward regional integration, South-South flows of foreign direct investment and various forms of development assistance.

The Group of 77 (G-77)

The Group of 77 was established on 15 June 1964 by seventy-seven developing countries signatories of the "Joint Declaration of the Seventy-Seven Countries" issued at the end of the first session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva. As the largest coalition of developing countries in the United Nations, the Group of 77 provides the means for the developing world to articulate and promote its collective economic interests and enhance its joint negotiating capacity on all major international economic issues in the United Nations system, and promote economic and technical cooperation among developing countries. Although the membership of the Group has increased to over 131 countries, the original name was retained because of its historical significance

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 Brazil in 1992, it currently has 189 Parties—188 States and the European Community— who have committed themselves to its three main objectives: 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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