



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

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Biodiversity and Climate Change

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INDIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS VISIT THE CBD SECRETARIAT

Montreal – 5 February 2007

A delegation of officials from the Indian Government paid a visit to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity on 1-2 February. Led by Mr. G. Balachandhran, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Environment and Forests, the delegation included Dr. Manoranjan Hota Additional Director, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Prof. K.R. Koundal, Joint Director, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, and Dr. Gurinder Jit Randhawa, Senior Scientist, National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources.

Discussions with staff of the Secretariat focused on exploring areas of collaboration, particularly in the field of biosafety.

The delegation was briefed on the key processes under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, including the activities of the Secretariat in assisting Parties to implement the Protocol with respect to the maintenance of the Biosafety Clearing-House and the provision of capacity-building coordination support.

In his statement to all staff of the Secretariat, Mr. Balachandhran noted that, “One of the major constraints currently faced by India, and many developing countries, is the lack of capacity for the effective implementation of the Protocol. In particular the operationalization of the decisions taken at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as meeting of the Parties to the Protocol with regard to handling, transport, packaging and identification of living modified organisms, and especially those destined for direct use as food, feed or processing, is a major challenge.”

The delegation and the Secretariat identified a number of potential areas of collaboration in the context of deepening South-South cooperation. These included training in risk assessment and risk management, development of infrastructure for detection of living modified organisms, information sharing, improved biosafety data collection and management, and exchange of experts. The delegation expressed its interest in playing a major role in such an initiative, especially in areas where India has considerable expertise.

Touching on the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity in relation to India, Mr. Balachandhran noted that India, as a megadiverse country rich in biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge, has developed a stable organizational structure for environment protection. He said that “Strategies and plans for conservation and sustainable use of biological resources based on local knowledge systems and practices are ingrained in the Indian ethos and way of life.”

On behalf of the delegation, Mr. Balachandhran, expressed his appreciation to the Executive Secretary of the Convention, Mr. Ahmed Djoghla, for his support and help



during the International Conference on Biosafety in November 2006, held in India, and to the Secretariat for its continuous support to India and all other nations in “our resolve and struggle to make this globe a better place for her citizens and to enhance the living standards of our future generations, especially those who are vulnerable and weak but have the potential to become strong and contribute”.

Information for Journalists:

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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