



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

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Biodiversity and Climate Change

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TOP OFFICIALS FROM AUSTRALIA VISIT THE SECRETARIAT—AUSTRALIA TO REVIEW ITS NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

Montreal – 20 March 2007. In the context of the enhanced dialogue initiated between the Secretariat and its partners, a delegation from Australia paid a visit to the offices of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Montreal on 16 March.

The visit provided an opportunity for Dr. David Dutton, Director of the Environment Section of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Mr. Dave Gorge, Executive Officer, Environment Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, to share with the Secretariat staff Australia's experiences in implementing the objectives of the Convention and its work programmes.

The National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity, endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments in 1996, is set to undergo a review by the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council (NRMMC). Aiming to ensure Australia's biodiversity is protected into the future with flexible and adaptive management, a key component of the review will be consultation with the community and key stakeholders, including scientists and industry, and to design the revised Strategy so it is accessible to a general audience. The goal is to have a revised Strategy approved by the NRMMC in 2008, with a draft Strategy document likely to be available on the Internet for broad public comment in 2007.

Implementation of Australia's *2004–2007 National Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan* is being overseen by a multi-jurisdictional working group. Developed as a joint document by the Australian Government and all state and territory governments, the Action Plan identifies five main objectives, including an improved understanding of the impact of climate change on biodiversity and increased awareness of climate change impacts and the capacity to respond.

Much of the work under the Action Plan is undertaken through existing programmes, with the Australian Government recently committing \$1.6 million from the Natural Heritage Trust for high priority projects to better understand and manage the impacts of climate change on natural resource management.

The visit was also an opportunity to discuss preparations for the forthcoming intergovernmental meetings under the Convention, including those of the working groups on access and benefit-sharing and on Article 8(j) and related provisions of the Convention, which addresses traditional knowledge of indigenous people and local communities.

The elements of a possible long-term strategic partnership between the Secretariat and Australia were also discussed. "This mission offered us an excellent opportunity to consult with the Secretariat on the implementation of the agreed work programme and the preparation of the major events leading up to the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties to be held in 2008," said Mr. Dutton.

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention, stated: "The visit of the Australian delegation to Montreal takes place while the Secretariat is actively engaged in preparations for the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, which will take place in Bonn in May 2008. This is less than two years before the deadline agreed by 110 Heads of State at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, to substantially reduce the loss of biodiversity by 2010."

Mr. Djoghlaif concluded that: "Visits to the Secretariat by Parties are important tools to foster a better understanding of the needs and expectations of government representations in meeting the three objectives of the Convention, including the Johannesburg commitments."



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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