



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



PRESS RELEASE

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MOBILIZING SCIENCE FOR ACHIEVING THE 2010 BIODIVERSITY TARGETS

Rome – 18 February 2008. The scientific body of the Convention on Biological Diversity is meeting this week for the first time in Rome, at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to review the implementation of the Convention's work programmes on agricultural and forest biodiversity, as well as the impacts of climate change. The opening session of this thirteenth meeting of the Convention's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) was attended by the Minister of the Environment of Italy with the participation of 386 experts representing 125 governments, 66 non-governmental organizations and 23 international governmental organizations.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Alfonso Pecoraro Scanio, Minister for the Environment, Land and Sea of Italy, stated, "I believe that the relation between biodiversity and climate change cannot be taken aside of the debate on food security and forests." He added that, "The need of a 'Stern-like' report on biodiversity as approved by the G8 Environmental Ministers in Potsdam last year, seems to be a strategic tool for such strategy."

In his opening statement, SBSTTA Chair, Mr. Ashgar M. Fazel, stated, "Providing more timely yet profound scientific advice to decision-makers in rapidly changing world in our main challenge."

Ahmed Djoghlaif, the Convention's Executive Secretary, stated, "The threats to biodiversity are also threats to food security. Feeding in the near future, 9 billion people while protecting biodiversity including forest biodiversity, constitutes one of the major challenges facing mankind. The challenges are being compounded by the negative impact of climate change and accelerated urbanization."

At the opening ceremony the representative of the City of Rome signed the "Countdown 2010 project", which is aimed at reducing the loss of biodiversity by 2010, and announced that the Rome will join the Cities and Biodiversity programme, aimed at creating a network of biodiversity capitals throughout the world.

Speaking on behalf of FAO, Mr. Butler, the Deputy Director General of FAO stated, "Biodiversity is vital for human survival and livelihoods. We need to conserve it for future generations. At the same time, the unacceptable scale of hunger and rural poverty calls for urgent remedial action".

Over the course of the week, the experts will focus on the extent to which the Convention's programmes of work on forest biodiversity and agricultural biodiversity have been put into practice by the 190 Parties to the Convention. They will also discuss scientific and technical issues of relevance to the implementation of the 2010 target of significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss, including: (i) Marine and coastal biodiversity: options for preventing and mitigating the impact of some activities to selected seabed habitats, and ecological criteria and biogeographical classification systems of marine areas in need of protection; (ii) Biological diversity of inland water ecosystems: recent developments on Ramsar site designation criteria, streamlining the work and harmonization of national reporting frameworks between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention; (iii) Invasive alien species: report on consultations regarding international standards; (iv) Climate change: options for



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mutually supportive actions addressing climate change within the three Rio conventions; and (v) New and emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

A poster session will be running parallel to the meeting under the theme “Mainstreaming Biodiversity Issues into Forestry and Agriculture.”

The meeting was preceded over the weekend by two training workshops on:

1. The programmes of work on protected areas and on agricultural and forest biodiversity. The purpose of the training workshops is to provide the participants with additional background information on the main items under consideration in the respective meetings. Presentations covered overviews of the two programmes of work, and some more topical presentations, including on the relation between the ecosystem approach and sustainable forest management.
2. Experiences on the development of national/regional biodiversity-related targets and indicators and their integration into national biodiversity strategic action plans (NBSAPs).

“Implementation of the NBSAPs constitute the deeds, the actions, that not only substantiate the Convention but which ensure that in 100 years’ time we will still have the many species of animals and plants essential to the healthy function of ecosystem services that support all life—our lives—on Earth. Indeed, building capacity on how we set goals in the form of targets and measure progress through indicators is key to meeting the objectives of the Convention,” said Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention.

BACKGROUND

Established under Article 25 of the Convention, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) is an open-ended intergovernmental scientific advisory body that reports regularly to the Conference of the Parties (COP) on all aspects of its work. Its functions include: providing assessments of the status of biological diversity; assessments of the types of measures taken in accordance with the provisions of the Convention; and respond to questions that the COP may put to it.

To date SBSSTA has produced a total of 129 recommendations to the Conference of the Parties, some of which have been endorsed in full by the latter. Such endorsement makes these recommendations de facto decisions of the Conference of the Parties. Parts of other recommendations have also been endorsed, and many others have been taken up in modified form

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the Convention on Biological Diversity is the international framework for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of its benefits. With 190 Parties, the CBD has near-universal participation among countries who have committed themselves to preserving life on Earth. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The headquarters of the Secretariat of the Convention is located in Montreal.

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