



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



PRESS RELEASE

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UN Biodiversity Convention Secretariat teams up with Europe's Bern Convention to stop the loss of biodiversity in Europe

Bonn - 23 May 2008—To support efforts to meet the 2010 global goal to reverse and stop the loss of biodiversity, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity today signed a strategic partnership with the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, known as the Bern Convention.

The agreement will allow the Bern Convention, which comprises 47 members including some African countries to serve a regional nod for the implementation of the three objectives of the most subscribed international legal instrument aimed to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity resources as well as to share the benefits of biodiversity fairly among all people and nations. The UN Convention on Biological Diversity is one of the three Conventions adopted at the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 and has 191 members.

The partnership signing comes as all 191 members of the Convention are meeting in Bonn, Germany, for a two-week conference of the Parties aimed at finding agreement on new measures that can be taken to reduce the loss of biodiversity and enhance the development agenda of the convention which include also the access and benefit sharing of the world's genetic resources. . There are estimates that species are becoming extinct at a rate of 10-100 times the natural rate of extinction and, when compounded by a 1.5-2.5°C rise in global average temperatures due to climate change. As a result, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts that approximately 20-30 per cent of known plant and animal species may be extinct by the end of the 21st century.

“This agreement is of high political significance as it shows the way ahead in ensuring coherence at international and regional levels on biodiversity in one of the region of the world that has demonstrated leadership and vision in promoting the biodiversity agenda.” said Dr Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

“It is also significant that has we meet here at the 9th UN Convention on Biological Diversity , hosted by Germany , a country that has demonstrated its commitment to Europe, that European leadership is being displayed in accordance with the spirit and the letter of the motto of the meeting, *One nature , one world our future.*” Mr. Djoghlaif added that it was also agreed that twining arrangements will be finalized in the near future with the other sister regional convention known as the African Convention on Nature and Conservation of Natural Resources, administered by the African Union, when it will enter into force.

Mr. Eladio Fernandez-Galiano representing the Council of Europe, the host organization of the Bern Convention, said the new agreement will help conserve biodiversity at the global and regional levels. "Implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity at the regional level is a fundamental way to achieve the objectives of the Convention," he said. "We in Europe have been working a long time to develop specific European instruments on protected areas, invasive alien species, on adaptation to climate



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change, and threatened flora and fauna. We hope that through this agreement, the Council of Europe and the Bern Convention will help Parties to better implement the CBD and meet the 2010 target."

Jochen Flasbarth, General Director, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety in Germany, speaking on behalf of the country president of the Bonn meeting said the new agreement would streamline implementation efforts to conserve biodiversity. "Conserving biodiversity is such a critical issue that we must mobilize all possible partners in our global effort. This agreement is a step in that direction and I am very pleased to see that this first step has been initiated by an European regional convention here in Bonn, the UN sustainable development city."

Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitat (Bern Convention)

The Bern Convention is a binding international legal instrument in the field of nature conservation, which covers the natural heritage of the European continent and extends to some States of Africa. Its aims are to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats and to promote European co-operation in that field. Adopted and signed in Bern, Switzerland, in September 1979, it came into force on 1 June 1982. It counts among its Contracting Parties 47 member States of the Council of Europe, as well as Burkina Faso, Morocco, Senegal, Tunisia and the European Community. The Bern Convention co-ordinates the action of European States in adopting common standards and policies for the sustainable use of biological diversity, thus contributing to the improvement of the quality of life of Europeans and the promotion of sustainable development. The Convention is a fundamental treaty at European level for biological diversity. For more information, please contact Carolina Lasén Diaz at +33 (0)3 90 21 56 79; email: carolina.lasen-diaz@coe.int

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 to preserving life on Earth. The CBD 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. For additional information, please contact Marie Aminata Khan at +1 514 287 8701; email: marie.khan@cbd.int