



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



PRESS RELEASE

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GERMANY AND THE UNITED NATIONS BIODIVERSITY SECRETARIAT ANNOUNCE A “GREEN COP”

Bonn, 22 May— On the occasion of the celebration of the International Day for Biological Diversity, Mr. Sigmar Gabriel, Minister of Environment of Germany and President of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, announced the measures taken to ensure that the meeting will have the smallest possible environmental impact.

The measures are the most extensive taken by the host of a meeting of a multilateral environmental agreement. They include: waste avoidance and reduction, the use of certified green electricity and environmentally friendly transport arrangements with free use of Bonn's public transport for participants.

“After hosting a green Cup in 2006, Germany is now hosting a green COP,” said Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity. “Germany has set a very high standard that any country hosting a conference in the future will have a hard time matching.”

These measures coincide with a groundbreaking initiative of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, aimed at greening its operations.

“The Convention on Biological Diversity is also taking a leading role and is the first multilateral environmental agreement that has created and implemented an integrated plan to minimize the environmental impacts of its operations,” said Mr. Djoghlaif.

A report on greening the Secretariat, submitted to the 7,000 participants attending the meeting, includes the results of research by a secretariat task force set up to monitor the electricity, paper consumption, CO₂ emissions resulting from staff travel and commuting to the office.

The 575 tonnes of CO₂ emitted in 2006-2007 will be offset by the Green Belt Movement planting 3,000 indigenous trees in Nairobi's Ngong Forest next October, at the onset of the rainy season. In November 2006, the Secretariat signed a memorandum of understanding with Nobel Peace Prize Winner Professor Wangari Maathai, to help offset the environmental impact of its operations.

Mr. Djoghlaif also announced an agreement with Mr. Roberto Requiao, the Governor of the State of Parana, in Brazil, to plant in the forthcoming two years 400,000 trees covering an area slightly larger than one hectare per staff member.

“As we work to conserve the world's biodiversity, we as Parties and Secretariat must do everything we can to minimize the impact of any of our actions, including meetings, that may compound the environmental crisis that we are mandated to address.”



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He added that, “We, the staff of the CBD Secretariat are honoured to be the first United Nations agency to translate into concrete action, the climate-neutral initiative announced last June by United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon.”

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 an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits from utilization of genetic resources. With 191 Parties, the CBD has near-universal participation among countries 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 are located in Montreal.

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Information for journalists

The report on the greening of the Convention is available at:

<http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/cop/cop-09/information/cop-09-inf-42-en.doc>

To access the live webcast, please visit the home page of the CBD website, www.cbd.int, and follow the links indicated.

For information on the ninth meeting of the conference of the Parties go to:

<http://www.cbd.int/cop9/>