



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



PRESS RELEASE

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Biodiversity Convention Secretariat Signs Historic Agreement with Brazilian State of Paraná to Offset Emissions

Bonn, 27 May — To meet its pledge to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and work toward carbon neutrality, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity entered into a partnership today with the Brazilian State of Paraná to replant native trees and contribute to the regeneration of the Atlantic rainforest.

In the new partnership, signed today between Paraná Governor Mr. Roberto Requiao, and Convention's Executive Secretary Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, the State Environment Secretariat of Paraná commits to plant around 100,000 trees covering approximately 120 hectares with local species of trees over the next two years, more than one hectare of future rainforest per staff member. The new partnership builds on an award-winning Riparian Forest reforestation programme of the State of Paraná.

"The Convention on Biological Diversity is 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.

Mr. Djoghlaif added, "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, and to lead the way in biodiversity-friendly offsets."

"Besides reaffirming our environmental policy, that has tree plantation one of its major axes, we are also honoring the women and men of the Secretariat that turn biodiversity preservation into a reason to live," said Governor Roberto Requiao. "I also honour the Executive Secretary of the Convention, Ahmed Djoghlaif, who strongly supports our forest preservation programme and who, back in 2006, participated in this massive effort by planting a tree himself in our Paraná lands."

In 2007, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued directive to all members of the UN system to green their operations and strive for a carbon-neutral UN. In response, the Secretariat of the Convention set up a task force on "Greening the SCBD Operations" to focus on assessing and reducing the environmental footprint of its operations, while building awareness and capacity within the organization to carry out the mandate.



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It is estimated that the carbon emissions for the Secretariat between May 2008 and October 2010 (foreseen as the date for next Biodiversity Conference, COP 10 in Nagoya, Japan), is the equivalent of 10,100 tons of carbon dioxide. A report on greening the Secretariat, submitted to the 7,000 participants attending the Bonn 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.

At the Biodiversity Conference COP 8, held in Curitiba, Brazil, in March 2006, Governor Requião planted several thousand trees with Dr. Djoghla in a symbolic ceremony and as a contribution to the Convention. This partnership now evolved into a commitment to offset the totality of carbon emissions of the operations of the Secretariat from COP 9 to COP 10 in a biodiversity-friendly way.

The partnership involves one of the most biodiverse forest ecosystems of the world, the Atlantic rainforest, where more than 450 species of plants can be found per hectare. By replanting endemic riparian species, the partnership is not only offsetting carbon emissions, but re-creating an ecological niche precisely in a region where the original genebank is richest (the State of Paraná has 25 per cent of the remaining Atlantic rainforest, whose current cover is less than 5 per cent of its original size). Rivers are natural conservation corridors, so this partnership is strategic and could serve as a model that allows carbon emissions to be offset in a biodiversity-friendly manner.

Through this agreement, Paraná will plant about 100,000 trees in the Riverine Forest reforestation programme. The programme involves four cities: Diamante do Oeste, Cafelândia, Ivaiporã and Goioerê, and aims to riverine forests of the São Francisco River, which in turn feeds the Iguacu Falls National Park. The Riverine Reforestation programme, which was launched in 2004, has planted 80,103,214 native and endemic trees in 70,000 hectares that, up to now, run along rivers and in the buffer zone of protected areas. With this, 988,271 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent have been taken out of the atmosphere.

The reforestation programme involves 1,800 people, among State and Municipality government staff, NGOs and the private sector. The production of saplings is decentralized, and the State has invested more than \$7 million in acquiring 422 incubators, distributed to each of the 399 Paraná municipalities, agricultural schools, parents and teachers associations and even prisons.

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