Secretariat of the
Convention on Biological Diversity

COMMUNIQUÉ

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
22 MAY 2009
INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

SOUTH-SOUTH-EXCHANGE MEETING ON THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF FOREST BIODIVERSITY

Montreal, 16 July 2009 – The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD), in collaboration with the German Development Cooperation (GTZ), and with generous support from the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), facilitated a meeting from 8 to 10 July on South-South Cooperation and sustainable forest management, with a focus on forest biodiversity, between the three major regional organizations of the world's tropical forest regions: the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the Central Africa Forests Commission (COMIFAC).

The purpose of this three-day cross-regional meeting, held at the Secretariat's headquarters in Montreal, was to share knowledge, strategies and experiences in order to promote mutual learning on forest policy coordination and cooperation, and to improve the impact of regional organizations.

The meeting was attended by 25 experts from the regional organizations, international partners of the Convention on Biological Diversity, such as the Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests, representatives of Parties to the Convention, and resource persons. Participants agreed to further strengthen South-South Cooperation between the three regions, which together contain about 80 per cent of the world's tropical forests and more than half of all terrestrial species.

"This meeting has been a great success in bringing together the expertise and experience of the three regional bodies, and to initiate a process of learning from each other," said Raman Letchumanan from the ASEAN Secretariat, who co-chaired the meeting together with his counterparts Mr. Raymond Mbitikon, Executive Secretary of COMIFAC, and Mr. Flavio Sottomayor from the Permanent Secretariat of ACTO. Mr. Raymond Mbitikon added that, "We are looking forward to further developing South-South Cooperation, which will be of mutual benefit to all our organizations, so we can better support the countries in our regions, in the important area of sustainable forest management."

The secretariats of the three organizations are financially and technically supported by Germany. Mr. Dietmar Schorlemer, director of the GTZ advisory project to COMIFAC, said that, "Sustainable forest management is a key objective of all three regional organizations - building on different sets of experiences and approaches." To enhance exchange on lessons learned and best practices the three GTZ projects – conjointly with headquarters - will continue to support the cooperation among the secretariats. Mr. Schorlemer's colleague, Mr. Günter Simon, Director of the OTCA–DGIS–GTZ Amazon Regional Programme, added, "We see a technical meeting of regional organizations at the World Forest Congress in Buenos Aires in October as a first concrete step of a longer-term roadmap."

The meeting was convened in the context of the implementation of the Bonn mandate on South-South Cooperation and a similar meeting on the overarching theme of South-South cooperation was held at the premises of the Convention Secretariat in 2006. The results of the meeting will be considered by the G-77 Parties when developing, in collaboration with the Convention Secretariat, a multi-year plan of South-South Cooperation on biodiversity for development, to be submitted to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in Nagoya, Japan, from 18 to 29 October, and to the South-South Forum convened on 18 October by G-77 as a parallel event. The report of the meeting will be posted on the Convention website shortly.

"The Secretariat is looking forward to further supporting this process, and we are pleased that the result of the meeting is a concrete example of South-South Cooperation on an important and urgent issue: the conservation and sustainable use of the world's forest biodiversity," said Ahmed Djoghlaf, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

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