

PRESS RELEASE

MAJOR ADVANCES TOWARD THE NAGOYA INTERNATIONAL REGIME ON ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING

Montreal, 16 November 2009 – Substantial progress was made toward an International regime on access and benefit-sharing last week by the 527 participants representing the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and partner institutions. An international regime resulting in a protocol to the Convention is due to be finalized in October 2010 at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (COP 10) in Nagoya, Japan.

The Co-Chairs of the Working Group, Tim Hodges and Fernando Casas, stated: “The good spirit and positive attitude that prevailed during the proceedings of this eighth meeting of your Working Group have made it possible to turn the corner, and significant advances have been recorded in the way we deal with each other.”

For the first time in this difficult process, the Parties have agreed on a single negotiating text, which will be the focus of their work at the ninth meeting of the Working Group, to be held in Colombia in March 2010 – the last meeting of the Working Group before the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in October.

“The decisions that you have just adopted are a historical development of far reaching positive implications. The understanding of the Co-Chairs on the nature of the international regime as agreed by you is indeed a historical development in our common journey to Nagoya and the adoption, less than one year from now, of a legally binding instrument on access and benefit sharing,” stated Ahmed Djoghlaf, Executive Secretary of the Convention.

One key highlight of the meeting was the formation of a new informal cross-regional grouping called the “Like-Minded-in-Spirit Group of Women”. Janet Lowe, the Deputy Director of the Environment Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand, said: “This group is a platform to ensure that women’s voices are heard and their contribution is fully recognized in this Working Group and other CBD processes.” This group, which was welcomed by all Parties present, arose from the need to ensure that there is full participation by women in the two meetings planned for the inter-sessional period.

The representative of the Swedish presidency of the European Union asked the Parties present to recall that: “Negotiations are just as much about listening as it is to express your own view. It is a very tall order we have before us. But it is an achievable task.” He also noted that the good spirit of this meeting will provide an excellent starting point for future negotiations.

Jochen Flasbarth, representing the President of the Conference of the Parties said in his closing remarks: “Although we have achieved a lot this week, we must not relax our efforts if we are to reach the journey’s end in Nagoya.”

The good spirit and positive attitude that signified a sea change in the traditional-knowledge process during the previous week's meeting of the Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention paved the way for the successful negotiations of the most important meeting in the history of the working group. After seven years of negotiation, the 193 Parties to the Convention finalized a code of ethical conduct to ensure respect for the cultural and intellectual heritage of the world's indigenous and local communities.

For more information:

ABS: www.cbd.int/abs,

COP decisions: www.cbd.int/abs/decisions.shtml

International regime: www.cbd.int/abs/ir.shtml,

Bonn Guidelines: www.cbd.int/abs/bonn.shtml

Article 8(j) www.cbd.int/traditional

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 193 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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