

PRESS RELEASE

The Draft Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing is born in Cali

Cali, Colombia, 28 March 2010 – Participants to a United Nations meeting on genetic resources agreed to a draft protocol on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from their use as basis for further negotiation, setting the stage for its adoption at the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit to be held in October 2010, in Japan.

Meeting in Cali, Colombia, over the last week, over 500 participants from governments, indigenous and local communities, civil society, research institutions and business, tackled difficult issues relating to the use of genetic resources for commercial and non-commercial purposes. Using novel styles of negotiation that facilitated open, inclusive and flexible representation of views by Parties, governments and their partners, delegates discussed the national bodies required for the functioning of an international regime, compliance, and the role of traditional knowledge held by indigenous and local communities.

“For its first United Nations meeting, Cali has fulfilled its mandate and entered history as the birthplace of the draft Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit sharing” said Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. “Parties and their partners have agreed on a draft Nagoya protocol as well as on the road map from Cali to Nagoya and beyond.”

Thanks to the generous financial contribution of the government of Japan, the resumed session of the ninth meeting of the working group on access and benefit sharing will take place in Montreal, Canada, where delegates will continue the negotiations and address pending issues before the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

“The willingness of the regions to enter into a frank dialogue, to try out new modes of discussion, and to work with the draft protocol, shows that we are striding purposefully down the road to Nagoya,” said the Co-Chairs of the Working Group, Tim Hodges of Canada and Fernando Casas of Colombia. “We call upon all the Parties to keep up their commitment in this journey and we look forward to fruitful discussions in the months to come.”

Jochen Flasbarth, President of the German Environment Agency and current President of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, said, “Cali marks a major breakthrough to fully implement the Convention on Biological Diversity. 18 years after the Earth Summit we have opened the opportunity for the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits provided by the biodiversity of our one planet. Germany remains committed to the process and will work hard to have the Protocol adopted in Nagoya.”

The Vice Minister of Business Development, Ricardo Duarte, speaking for the Government of Colombia, said “the result of this ninth meeting is a working document that will help to establish the basis for agreement on a comprehensive and balanced instrument that represents the interest of all the Parties.” He added that “we have moved to a light text, easy to understand, that will open the way to the culmination of the negotiation of the Protocol.”

Note to Editors:

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, 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 Convention has near universal participation among countries committed to preserving life on Earth. The Convention 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 Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety a supplementary treaty to the Convention seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 156 countries and the European Community are party to the Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal. www.cbd.int/

Access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of their utilization. The Convention on Biological Diversity recognizes the sovereign rights of States over their natural resources in areas within their jurisdiction. Parties to the Convention therefore have the authority to determine access to genetic resources in areas within their jurisdiction. Parties also have the obligation to take appropriate measures with the aim of sharing the benefits derived from their use. Genetic resources, whether from plants, animals or micro-organisms, may be used for different purposes. Users of genetic resources can include research institutes, universities and private companies operating in various sectors such as pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, agriculture, horticulture and biotechnology. Benefits derived from genetic resources may include the result of research and development carried out on genetic resources, the transfer of technologies which make use of those resources, participation in biotechnological research activities, or monetary benefits arising from the commercialization of products based on genetic resources. www.cbd.int/abs

The documents under discussion at the meeting, including the draft protocol text are available at:

<https://www.cbd.int/wgabs9/>

2010 International Year of Biodiversity The United Nations declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) to raise awareness about the crucial importance of biodiversity, to communicate the human costs of biodiversity loss, and to engage people, particularly youth, throughout the world in the fight to protect all life on Earth. Initiatives will be organized throughout the year to disseminate information, promote the protection of biodiversity and encourage countries, organizations, and individuals to take direct action to reduce biodiversity loss. The focal point for the year is the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. www.cbd.int/2010/welcome/

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