

PRESS RELEASE

Faced with biodiversity crisis, a new vision is urgently required.

Montreal, 25 May 2010. In the wake of the release of the United Nations Global Biodiversity report on the status of biodiversity in 2010, which highlighted the grave state of the variety of life around the world, representatives of world Governments are meeting this week in the United Nations Office in Nairobi to design ways to implement a new vision for global biodiversity policy.

The third meeting of the Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is taking place from 24 to 28 May 2010. It follows the very successful outcomes of the meeting of the Convention's scientific body, held in Nairobi from 10 to 21 May, and the global celebrations of the International Day for Biological Diversity on 22 May.

The Chair of the meeting, Jochen Flasbarth of Germany, said: "The ongoing loss of biodiversity, the still widespread unsustainable use of natural resources and the lack of an international mechanism for access to and the sharing of benefits from genetic resources are no longer acceptable. We need urgent and joint action on the part of the entire world community. We need a United Nations-wide global biodiversity strategy that ensures a swift passage from the destruction of nature to the prevention of the further degradation of the natural resources and ecosystem services that underpin all life on Earth. This is an investment for our children. And this will support United Nations efforts to fight poverty."

Angela Cropper, Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and former Executive Secretary of the Convention, urged all Parties "to rise to the unprecedented challenges of the continued loss of biodiversity by enhancing efforts to achieve the objectives of the Convention."

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention said that: "The conclusions of Global Biodiversity Outlook pointed that we have not achieved our global biodiversity targets. With business as usual, there is a grave danger of reaching irreversible tipping points for biodiversity." He added that: "This meeting of the Working Group needs to provide support to the new Strategic Plan and global vision, and needs to build consensus to accelerated implementation of the Convention."

The representative of the incoming President of the Conference of the Parties, Mr. Masayoshi Mizuno of Japan, said "the Working Group's discussion on the new Strategic Plan is expected to be sound basis for all Parties, as well as for all stakeholders, to prepare for its adoption at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Aichi-Nagoya".

The meeting, attended by 770 delegates representing 145 Parties will assess progress achieved to date and will shape the new Strategic Plan of the Convention for the period 2011-2020, which will be submitted for the consideration of Heads of State and Government at their meeting on biodiversity in New York on 22 September and to the Nagoya biodiversity summit to be held in October.

The Working Group will assess the extent to which the Convention is fulfilling its leadership role with regard to international biodiversity issues, including through the engagement of key stakeholders and the establishment of a better understanding of the importance of biodiversity and of the Convention.

Delegates will also review the outcomes of recent meetings on a science-policy interface on biodiversity, ecosystem services and human well-being. Similar to the existing Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the concept of the proposed body, referred to now as the “Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services” or “IPBES”, enjoys strong support as an essential piece of the post-2010 architecture for the Convention.

Notes 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 of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 193 Parties, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. 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, 157 countries and the European Union are party to the Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal.

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The Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention

In 2002, Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted the Strategic Plan, committing themselves to more effective and coherent implementation of the objectives of the Convention to achieve, by 2010, a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss. The 2010 target was subsequently endorsed later in 2002 by the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development in paragraph 44 of its Plan of Implementation. Recognizing that, to achieve this target, more effective processes for evaluation, reporting and reviewing implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan were needed, the Conference of the Parties in 2004 adopted decision VII/30, paragraph 23 of which established the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention (WGRI).

The first meeting of the Working Group was held in Montreal in September 2005 (see <http://www.cbd.int/wgri/first.shtml>). The second meeting was held in Paris from 9 to 13 July 2007 at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (see <http://www.cbd.int/wgri2>).

The 2010 International Year of Biodiversity

The United Nations proclaimed 2010 to be the International Year of Biodiversity, and people all over the world are working to safeguard this irreplaceable natural wealth and reduce biodiversity loss. This is vital for current and future human well-being. The International Year of Biodiversity is a unique opportunity to increase understanding of the vital role that biodiversity plays in sustaining life on Earth. Visit www.cbd.int/2010 to find out more. Also visit the Facebook page: www.facebook.com/iyb2010.

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