

## PRESS RELEASE

### Governments make major advances on global agreement on planet's genetic resources

*Montreal, 16 July 2010* – Following seven days of intense and complex negotiations, and with the financial support of Japan, the world's governments have made major breakthroughs on a text of a legally binding protocol on access to, and sharing of, the benefits from the use of the rich genetic resources of our planet. The draft Aichi Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) is now in place, and will be finalized and adopted on 29 October 2010 at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

“History will recall that the Aichi Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing was born here in Montreal. Once again, the Montreal magic has worked for delivering one of the most important legal instruments in the history of the environment movement,” said Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention.

The two Co-Chairs of the Working Group, Timothy Hodges of Canada and Fernando Casas of Colombia said: “In Montreal, we witnessed a major breakthrough in the negotiations. Progress on key issues is a giant leap toward the objective of finalizing the Protocol. While much remains to be done, we are more confident than ever that the ABS Protocol will be adopted in Nagoya, next October.”

Discussions during the week focused on the draft protocol text that was tabled at the beginning of the ninth meeting of the working group, which took place in Cali, Colombia, in March this year. Following this week's negotiations in Montreal, the structure of this text remains intact and consensus was reached on important elements including compliance, and user measures.

Access and benefit-sharing refers to the way genetic resources—whether plant, animal or microorganism—are accessed in countries of origin, and how the benefits that result from their use by various research institutes, universities or private companies are shared with the people or countries that provide them. Ensuring the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources is one of the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

In 2002, at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development, world leaders agreed on the need for an international regime on access and benefit-sharing. The 4,000 participants attending the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, held in March 2006, agreed to finalize negotiations as soon as possible and no later than 2010 at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD.

Over 10,000 participants are expected to attend the Biodiversity Summit. The high-level segment of this historic meeting will be held from 27 to 29 October 2010 and will be preceded by a high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly exclusively devoted to biodiversity, to be held in New York in September 2010 in conjunction with the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly and with the participation of Heads of State and Government.

The high level event of the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly, to be held in New York on 22 September 2010, will be an important event to accelerate the political momentum. The President-elect of the General Assembly, Mr. Joseph Deiss was briefed on the status of negotiations by the Co-Chairs during his visit on 7 July 2010 to the headquarters of the Secretariat on the preparation of the New York summit.

Governments agreed to use the inter-sessional period before Nagoya to advance the negotiations.

**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 Union are party to the Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal. [www.cbd.int/](http://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](http://www.cbd.int/abs) The documents under discussion at the ninth meeting of the working Group, are available at: [www.cbd.int/wgabs9/](http://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/](http://www.cbd.int/2010/welcome/)

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