

COMMUNIQUÉ

Iraq Submits First National Report to SCBD

Montreal, 27 July 2010 – Iraq today issued its first National Report to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The report, which examines and reports on the status of biodiversity within Iraq, attempts to lay the groundwork for the development of a national biodiversity strategy and action plan (NBSAP) that Iraq can implement.

Iraq became the 192nd Party to the Convention on 26 October 2009, after first depositing its instrument of accession with the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 28 July 2009.

“As the latest Party to join the CBD, Iraq has submitted its first National Report on time before COP 10,” said Ahmed Djoghlaif, CBD Executive Secretary.

“I call on all Parties that have not yet done so to submit their fourth National Report as soon as possible before the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit.”

While environmental issues have played a relatively small role in the recent public discourse in Iraq, environmental concerns represent a huge challenge within Iraq that are greatly complicating the development of the country. These issues pertain to water resource management; declines in biodiversity; waste management; oil development and industrial pollution, and environmental impacts caused by decades of war and conflict.

As a new Party to the Convention, Iraq is in the process of establishing the institutional and legal framework for CBD implementation. Thus the country’s first national report does not cover all the content as suggested in the guidelines for the fourth National Report, but it is likely that a significant baseline can be established. Hence as much information as possible has been pooled together in this report, and an initial set of indicators for biodiversity has been elaborated for assessing gaps in information.

It is especially fitting that Iraq has prepared and issued its first comprehensive report on the biological diversity of the country in this, the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB).

On 20 May 2010, Iraq’s Ministry of Environment organized a national celebration in honour of IYB. The event featured the Minister of Environment and many high-ranking Iraqi officials. As

part of the IYB celebrations, the Ministry of Culture created a drawing contest for children; and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities organized various events. In addition, the IYB logo was circulated to various institutions throughout the country.

Additional activities performed by Iraq following its accession to the CBD include: forming a national committee, headed by the CBD national focal point and including representatives from relevant ministries, to follow-up and implement the Convention inside Iraq; drafting of national legislation on protected areas; forming a subcommittee for studying accession to the Cartagena Protocol and to draft national legislations on biosafety; finalizing ratification to the Global Environment Facility; cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme through implementation of studies on biodiversity in the Iraqi Marshlands and application of environmentally-friendly technologies; preparation of a program for protected areas; partnering with the environmental authority in the United Arab Emirates to protect biodiversity and launch a protection programme of the bird Houbara in Iraq, and another programme to protect the Arabian Oryx; organizing training courses on biodiversity; as well as organizing side events for COP 10 in Nagoya.

Notes

In December 2010, the Secretariat, in partnership with the GEF, is organizing a familiarization workshop on the CBD for senior Iraqi officials.

For more on the National Report from Iraq, and the reports of other countries, please see: www.cbd.int/reports/