



## PRESS RELEASE

### Mexico signs Nagoya Protocol on genetic resources: Megadiverse country is the fifth signatory to the historic treaty

Montreal, 25 February 2011 – Mexico became the fifth country to sign the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization.

The Nagoya Protocol, a landmark treaty that links conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity with development, was agreed by the 193 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at the Aichi-Nagoya Biodiversity Summit in October 2010.

Speaking on the occasion of the signature, the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, said, “I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Government of Mexico for its leadership during the negotiation of this important legal instrument as evidenced once again today by its commitment to be one of the first countries to sign the Nagoya Protocol.”

Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, the Executive Secretary to the Convention on Biological Diversity, attending the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) said, “The Nagoya Protocol is a twenty-first century legal instrument that complements the suite of tools needed for humanity to have sustainable development – development that is characterized by equity and a harmonious relationship between humanity and the planet.”

Mr. Juan Rafael Elvira Quesada, the Mexican Secretary of the Environment and Natural Resources, speaking at the press conference following the signing ceremony said that:

“Mexico can be proud of achieving the main objectives of the Biodiversity Summit in Japan. As a megadiverse country, Mexico has taken several measures and public policies that raise the importance of the sustainable use of biodiversity and the services that it provides as essential elements of human well-being.

“This year alone, Mexico has incorporated three and a half million hectares of land as natural protected areas within our territory, equivalent to 1.2 times the surface of Switzerland, which is beyond the goal of what we wanted to achieve in 2012. Today, nearly 25.4 million of hectares, that is, nearly 13 per cent of all Mexican territory, are considered to be natural protected areas, and we are working to achieve the goal proposed by Japan to make 17 per cent of the national land territory natural protected areas and 10 per cent marine protected areas.

“Mexico has managed to reduce the rate of deforestation in the country. According to FAO, between 2000 and 2005 we had a net loss of 235 thousand hectares of forests per year; it is now about 155 thousand hectares. During the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Mexico actively promoted the negotiations of the Protocol. What is more, since 2002, through the Like-minded Group of Megadiverse Countries and at the initiative of Mexico, we encouraged the development of an international regime to promote and effectively ensure the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of biological diversity and its components. The Nagoya Protocol on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing ensures that the countries of origin and providers of genetic resources enjoy in a fair and equitable way the benefits that result from the use of such resources.”

The Nagoya Protocol was opened for signature on 2 February 2011 during a signing ceremony held at the United Nations Headquarters. That day, the Protocol was signed by Colombia, Yemen, Algeria and Brazil.

The Nagoya Protocol will enter into force 90 days after the deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval, or accession.

## **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 is a subsidiary agreement to the Convention. It seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 159 countries plus the European Union have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal, Canada. For more information visit [www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int).

### **The Nagoya Protocol**

Heads of State and Government at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, September 2002) first recognized the need for an international regime to promote and safeguard the fair and equitable sharing of benefits and called for negotiations to be carried out within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention responded at its seventh meeting, in 2004, by mandating its Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing to elaborate and negotiate an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing to effectively implement Articles 15 (Access to Genetic Resources) and 8(j) (Traditional Knowledge) of the Convention and its three objectives.

The Nagoya Protocol significantly advances the objective of the Convention on the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources by providing greater legal certainty and transparency for both providers and users of genetic resources. Specific obligations to support compliance with domestic legislation or regulatory requirements of the Party providing genetic resources and contractual obligations reflected in mutually agreed terms are a significant innovation of the Nagoya Protocol. These compliance provisions as well as provisions establishing more predictable conditions for access to genetic resources will contribute to ensuring the sharing of benefits when genetic resources leave a Party providing genetic resources. Also, the Protocol's provisions on access to traditional knowledge held by indigenous and local communities when it is associated with genetic resources will strengthen the ability of these communities to benefit from the use of their knowledge, innovations and practices.

By promoting the use of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, and by strengthening the opportunities for fair and equitable sharing of benefits from their use, the Protocol will create incentives to conserve biodiversity, sustainably use its components, and further enhance the contribution of biodiversity to sustainable development and human well-being. The Nagoya Protocol is available at:

<http://treaties.un.org/doc/source/signature/2010/Ch-XXVII-8-b.pdf>

For additional information, please contact: David Ainsworth on +1 514 287 7025 or at [david.ainsworth@cbd.int](mailto:david.ainsworth@cbd.int); or Johan Hedlund on +1 514 287 6670 or at [johan.hedlund@cbd.int](mailto:johan.hedlund@cbd.int).

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