



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Rwanda Sixth Country to Sign International Protocol on Genetic Resources**

*Montreal, 28 February 2011* – Building momentum towards entry into force, Rwanda today became the sixth country to sign the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization.

This latest signature follows the signing of the Protocol by Mexico on Thursday, 24 February 2011.

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, United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon, said, “I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Government of Rwanda for 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, said, “At the end of his visit to Rwanda earlier this month, Mr. Edward Norton, the United Nations Goodwill Ambassador for Biodiversity, declared that Rwanda’s sustainable management of its natural resources is a model. The signing today by Rwanda of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing is yet another demonstration of Rwanda’s commitment to protect its natural capital at the service of its present and future generations.”

The Rwandese Minister of the Environment and Lands, Ambassador Stanislas Kamanzi, said, “The sustainable use of natural resources is Rwanda’s highest development priority. The Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing is a major instrument to achieving the sustainable development agenda. Rwanda is very proud to be the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to sign the Nagoya Protocol and is determined to expedite its ratification so as to ensure its early entry into force.”

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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