



COMMUNIQUÉ

Engaging the Canadian business community in support of the Nagoya biodiversity compact

Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat co-hosts biodiversity workshop for Quebec-based companies

Montreal, 22 March 2011 – Representatives from 30 companies and institutions representing the major economic sectors of Quebec joined the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) for a workshop on biodiversity for Quebec-based enterprises.

Co-sponsored by the Canadian Business and Biodiversity Council, the Conseil patronal de l'environnement du Québec (CPEQ), the Quebec Ministry of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks, and the Quebec Centre for Biodiversity Science (CSBQ), the workshop engaged participants in the needs, interests and challenges of industry with respect to mainstreaming biodiversity concerns into their business models. The session was moderated by Ms. Hélène Lauzon, President, CPEQ.

“The Nagoya biodiversity compact which includes a comprehensive Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 with 20 ambitious targets calls for a strong partnership between the 193 Parties to the Convention and the business community. I am very pleased to note that the Quebec business community is ready to provide leadership and to lead by example,” stated Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention. He added that the Secretariat is pleased to work with Canadian partners to inform and encourage the business community in Quebec to adopt commitments in support of the implementation of the 2020 Aichi biodiversity targets.

The workshop was opened by the Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee of the City of Montreal, Mr. Alan DeSousa, who stated: “We are taking concrete measures to make our city a leader in protecting our biodiversity, including our efforts to protect our natural spaces and our wetlands, our efforts to plant more trees and green our community, and by increasing our canopy cover on the island of Montreal. But in order to make this a success, we must have partners which include the business community.”

A presentation on the risks and opportunities related to biodiversity and ecological services was given by Ms. Lorraine Rouisse Vice-President of Sustainable Development, Aluminum Association of Canada, and Mr. Benoît Limoges, Biologist, Quebec Ministry of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks. The presentation highlighted various risks that companies are exposed to *vis-à-vis* biodiversity loss and the opportunities that are present for companies to make a positive impact. A striking feature of the presentation was a demonstration of the total value of ecological services (if they are monetized), which is seen as roughly \$33 trillion and which are being lost at a rate of more than \$50 billion per year. The presenters also noted that the monetizing ecosystem services does not take into account the vital esthetic and socio-cultural aspects that, if lost, will greatly diminish the quality of life for everyone. They highlighted, however, the vast range of opportunities that exist for companies to make positive changes and help reduce, or even restore, the damage that has been done.

There followed a presentation of the Canadian Business and Biodiversity Council's *A Guide to Biodiversity Conservation for Canadian Business*, given by Ms. Brenda McAfee, Environment Canada. This guide outlines the case for companies to mainstream biodiversity concerns and, more importantly, provides steps and guidance for how businesses can achieve this important goal. The guide makes it clear from the advice and case studies that mainstreaming biodiversity is not only desirable, but it is also achievable.

The final presentation, delivered by Mr. Andrew Gonzalez, Director, CSBQ, concerned the Project of Developing Guidelines on Biodiversity for Companies, in this case with a focus on Quebec. Mr. Gonzalez's presentation focused on the scientific evidence of the impact of biodiversity loss and the need to create fact-based guidelines for



companies. Of the many facets of his presentation, one of the most noteworthy was the fact that actions by companies have not only direct impacts on biodiversity, but also harder-to-measure indirect impacts. Mr. Gonzalez's organization has networked researchers and students from a wide range of Quebec institutions who are working on addressing these issues and helping companies to understand and reduce their impact.

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, being situated in Montreal, considers it important to be engaged with the local community, and looks forward to continuing its cooperation with the Canadian Business and Biodiversity Council and Quebec businesses.

For more information visit: www.cbd.int.

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