



PRESS RELEASE

Momentum gained for the early entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol on Genetic Resources

Montreal, 7 April 2011 – Ecuador and the Central African Republic became the latest countries to sign the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization. Ecuador signed on 1 April 2011 and the Central African Republic signed on 6 April 2011.

These latest signatures follow the signing of the Protocol by Colombia, Yemen, Algeria, Brazil, Mexico and Rwanda.

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. It was opened for signature on 2 February 2011 in New York.

Genetic resources, whether from plant, animal or micro-organisms, are used for various purposes, ranging from basic research to the development of products. Users of genetic resources include research institutes, universities and private companies operating in various sectors such as pharmaceuticals, agriculture, horticulture, cosmetics and biotechnology.

Benefits derived from genetic resources may include the sharing of the results of research and development carried out on genetic resources, the transfer of technologies that make use of those resources, participation in biotechnological research activities, or monetary benefits arising from the commercialization of products based on genetic resources, such as pharmaceuticals.

The entry into force of the Protocol will make a distinct contribution in promoting shared prosperity by alleviating poverty. It is for this reason that the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, called on all Parties to expedite the early entry into force of this new legal instrument at the service of sustainable development and to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary to the Convention on Biological Diversity, said: “We are gaining momentum on our way to make history by setting a record for the entry into force of this important legal instrument in the service of sustainable development.”

The Nagoya protocol will enter into force 90 days after the ratification by 50 parties. The Office of Legal affairs will organize another signing ceremony at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, on 11 May 2011, in conjunction with the Ministerial Segment of the 19th session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

“An impressive number of Parties from all the regions of the world have informed the Secretariat of their intention to sign the Protocol at this occasion. I look forward to our ceremony to mark its entry into force at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity to be held in India in October 2012,” added Mr. Djoghlaif.

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.

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 text of the Nagoya Protocol is available at:

<http://www.cbd.int/abs/text/>

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