



COMMUNIQUÉ

Convention Secretariat briefs Parliament of Botswana on the role parliamentarians should play in biodiversity management

Montreal, 8 April 2011 – The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) hosted a briefing for the Parliament of Botswana on 22 March 2011, highlighting the role parliamentarians should play in national and global biodiversity management, specifically in regard to the outcomes of the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit, held in October 2010.

While the national focal points for the Convention will be the main drivers of national implementation of the Nagoya Outcomes, other stakeholders will be important for supporting such implementation. Parliamentarians are important actors in the development and oversight of policy, legislation and as such will be relevant and integral for the domestication of the Nagoya Outcomes. Hence it is necessary to develop awareness-raising activities targeted specifically towards them, in order to secure their support for national implementation.

In his introductory remarks, Hon. Mr. Onkokame Kitso Mokaila, Botswana's Minister of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism, emphasized the importance of a coordinated approach to environmental management, and that biodiversity management was a core element in broader efforts to implement sustainable development. He underscored the role biodiversity plays in development and poverty alleviation and the importance of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization for Africa and Botswana, and the need to expedite ratification.

The briefing, made to the Portfolio Committee on Natural Resources and the Portfolio Committee on Climate Change, was attended by the Minister and Honourable Members of Parliament, as well as by Ms Rapelang Mojaphoko, Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism (MEWT). The Convention Secretariat was represented by Atsuhiko Yoshinaka, Global Coordinator, David Duthie, Senior Programme Officer, and Sakhile Koketso, Programme Officer.

Speaking on behalf of the Secretariat, Mr. Yoshinaka highlighted the role that parliamentarians should play in national and global biodiversity management. Mr. Duthie discussed the Nagoya Outcomes, focusing on the main findings of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Targets, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization, the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity.

In response, one Member of Parliament encouraged the Ministry to reach out to local communities with information on the importance of biodiversity and the need to conserve and use it sustainably. The MPs also requested more information on the protocols and their implications for Botswana. They pledged their support for the early ratification and promised to engage with the Ministry following the briefing.
