



PRESS RELEASE

Building capacity and strategies in Asia to save biodiversity

Montreal, 9 May 2011 – Twenty-one Asian countries are meeting in Xi'an from 9 to 16 May 2011 to develop the way forward in creating and implementing the national strategies needed to save biodiversity, and to ensure that these form part of the ten-year global effort towards building a sustainable future.

The meeting is organized under the Japan Biodiversity Fund by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), with the assistance of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of China, Shaanxi Province, the City of Xi'an and the Executive Committee for the 2011 Xi'an International Horticultural Expo, and thanks to the generous financial assistance of the Government of Japan through its Japan Biodiversity Fund.

The six-day interactive workshop will bring together participants from ministries of planning, environment and others in a capacity-development exercise designed to ensure not only that biodiversity is placed at the heart of national development processes, but that strategies for its integration include the active participation of a variety of relevant actors. The Ministry of Environmental Protection of China also uses this workshop as an opportunity to promote the United Nations Decade of Biodiversity and the development of local biodiversity strategies and action plans.

The programme will also provide guidance to Governments on ways their policies can contribute to the achievement of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its focal areas.

Economic approaches and tools have an important role to play in achieving this. In cooperation with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and with financial support provided by the Mercuria Energy Group, the workshop will also provide training on how the economic value of biodiversity and ecosystem services can be used to communicate and mainstream biodiversity conservation to such economic sectors as agriculture, forestry, mining, transport, and energy. A presentation on the work carried out in China will illustrate how spatially explicit valuation can inform management and land-use planning.

The economic value of biodiversity will also be addressed in the meeting through a module on the needs for implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Nagoya Protocol, when it enters into force, will facilitate the creation of a transparent legal framework to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

The Xi'an meeting is the latest in a series of regional and subregional capacity-building workshops to strengthen national capacities for the development, implementation, reviewing, updating, and communication of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs). Regional meetings have been organized for the Southern Africa Development and Educational Centre in Kasane, Botswana, from 14 to 20 March 2011; for European countries on the Isle of Vilm, Germany, from 15 to 19 April 2011; and in Beirut, Lebanon, from 2 to 7 May 2011, for members of the Economic and Social Commission for

Western Asia. More meetings are planned throughout 2011 and 2012 as part of the overall process for revising NBSAPs that will be reported to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in India in 2012. The schedule for regional workshops being held in 2011 and 2012 can be accessed at: www.cbd.int/nbsap/workshops2/schedule/.

NBSAPs are one of the core tools that Parties to the CBD use to ensure implementation of the provisions of the Convention. While many countries have created these, few of them have been updated to reflect new biodiversity challenges and the latest tools in biodiversity management and engagement of the broader public.

The capacity-development programme for NBSAP is one of the main planks of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, that was approved by Governments of the world last year at the Aichi-Nagoya biodiversity summit.

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 sets out a ten-year programme of goals, targets and instruments designed to ensure that human activity, including economic development, does not harm the ability of the planet's ecosystems to deliver crucial services that are needed by human society and indeed life itself.

Notes for 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. For more information visit: www.cbd.int.

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