



PRESS RELEASE

GEF establishes the Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund

Washington, D.C., 3 June, 2011 – The Global Environment Facility (GEF), the world's largest public financier of global environment issues, will operate a new landmark fund to help developing countries to ratify and implement a key international agreement to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity.

On 26 May, the council of the GEF approved the role of the Secretariat as the operator of the fund, with the Government of Japan reaffirming its pioneer contribution of 1 billion Yen (about US\$ 12 million). Japan's commitment was joined by additional declarations of financial support to the fund of 1 million Euros (about US\$1.4 million) from the Government of France, with additional contributions from the Governments of Norway and Switzerland.

The establishment of the fund comes less than four months after the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization was opened for signature at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The GEF, as the financial mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and other international environment agreements, will manage the new fund and encourage additional contributions. The World Bank will serve as the trustee of the fund.

Last fall in Nagoya, Japan, at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, 193 countries approved, after years of negotiations, a global agreement called the Nagoya Protocol. The Protocol establishes the ground rules for how nations should cooperate to access and to share the many benefits that come from the sustainable utilization of genetic resources of all living organisms. The Conference of the Parties also determined that the GEF will be the financial mechanism of the Protocol.

The Government of Japan, acting as the President of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, last year proposed the establishment of a new voluntary fund at the GEF to help developing countries build their capacity to engage in both the ratification and implementation of the Protocol.

“We see this as a groundbreaking opportunity to add economic and social value to biodiversity and genetic resources, in particular to local and indigenous communities who have in the past not benefited as they should,” said Mrs. Monique Barbut, CEO and Chairperson of the GEF. “With the leadership of Japan, the GEF is proud to host this new fund, and provide timely support to the developing countries to ratify and implement the Nagoya Protocol.”

The fund is specifically designed to support countries looking to build enabling activities to ratify the protocol as well as finance projects at the national and regional levels that will promote technology transfer, private sector engagement, and the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources. The fund will also help Parties build capacity to ensure appropriate access and use of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources. Resources will also be used to heighten awareness for the Protocol, including through the use of new knowledge management tools.

“Japan appreciates GEF’s support to jump-start a new fund that will rapidly bring developing countries to build their capacity to ratify as well as conserve and utilize their valuable genetic resources,” said the Japanese Environment Minister, Mr. Ryu Matsumoto, who played a key role in facilitating the signing of the agreement in Nagoya. “We also expect that the private sector will become a key partner and funder to this mechanism”.

The framework under the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing holds the promise to ultimately create a level playing field between the biodiversity-rich developing countries and those that hold technological advantages in adding economic value to genetic resources.

Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, CBD Executive Secretary, added: “We applaud Japan not only for their outstanding leadership in bringing international stakeholders together around the new Protocol agreed in Nagoya, but also for providing the needed seed funding for its implementation.”

“As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the GEF, this new fund represents another historical moment for the financial mechanism of the CBD, which is demonstrating continued responsiveness to COP guidance as well as revealing its ability to incorporate new instruments within the realm of global environmental financing. I call on other donors to provide additional financial contributions to ensure the early entry into force and speedy implementation of this historical new legal instrument at the service of sustainable development”.

Notes to Editors

Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization

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: www.cbd.int/abs/

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

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