



Press Release

Collaborating to build capacity for two new treaties on genetic resources

Montreal 5 June 2011. The secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture will collaborate to deliver a two-day capacity-building workshop that will help Governments identify the priorities and needs for capacity-building in the implementation of their obligations under the Nagoya Protocol.

200 participants from Governments around the world have already registered to participate in the workshop.

“The International Treaty on PGRFA facilitates the access to plant genetic material for food and agriculture since January 2007 and supports benefit-sharing projects on *in-situ* conservation and adaptation to climate change since 2009”, said Dr. Bhatti, Secretary of the ITPGRFA during his presentation on the experience accumulated during these years.

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, said “the success of the Nagoya Protocol rests on a strategic approach to capacity-development that builds on the experiences of our partners. This workshop demonstrates the power of our network of financial, policy and implementation partners who are responding to the real needs of the Parties.”

After six years of negotiations, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, at its tenth meeting, adopted the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization, on 29 October 2010, in Nagoya, Japan. The Protocol builds on the Convention and supports the further implementation of one of its three objectives: the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. It is expected to enter into force at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in India, in 2012.

Genetic resources, whether from plant, animal or micro-organisms, are used for a variety of purposes, ranging from basic research to the development of products in a variety of sectors, such as pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, horticulture and biotechnology. In order to implement the Protocol, Governments will be expected to implement legislative, administrative and policy measures with a view to regulate access to genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge and ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their use. The building of capacity will be key to support the implementation of the obligations under the Nagoya Protocol.

Through the International Treaty, countries agree to establish an efficient, effective and transparent Multilateral System to facilitate access to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, and to share the benefits in a fair and equitable way. The Multilateral System applies

to over 64 major crops and forages. The Governing Body of the Treaty, which is composed of the 127 contracting Parties that have ratified it, has set out the conditions for access and benefit-sharing in a user-friendly "Standard Material Transfer Agreement".

This workshop has been possible thanks to a recent memorandum of collaboration concluded between the Secretaries of the two instruments. In the course of the workshop, participants will be able to take advantage of the experience and lessons learned under the ITPGRFA. In particular, a capacity-building programme was launched in 2008 and since then successful capacity development activities at regional and national levels have been carried out, including through legal and technical assistance with the operation of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing.

Since 2007, more than 1.6 million of samples of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture have been transferred with the rules of such Multilateral System. Approximately 84 % of those samples were sent to developing countries or countries with economies in transition. The benefits generated by the System started to flow to developing countries already in 2009 through the System's Benefit-sharing Fund, which is funding conservation and sustainable use projects for crop genetic resources that benefit farmers in developing countries, and the number and the scale of the project has been increasing since then. Capacity development activities have significantly contributed to operationalizing both the facilitated access and the benefit-sharing parts of this system.

The experience accumulated by the International Treaty will be of value to devising practical and effective capacity development initiatives for the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol, as countries are demanding a coherent implementation of both agreements.