



COMMUNIQUE

Mayor of Montpellier, France, visits Convention Secretariat

Montreal, 8 June 2011- Serving as a reminder of the importance of translating international policy into local action, the Mayor of Montpellier, France, Madame H el ene Mandroux, paid a two-day visit to the seat of the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Montreal.

Her visit was in her capacity as a member of the last meeting of the steering committee of the CBD initiative on Cities and Biodiversity and as the host of the first meeting, held in Montpellier in January 2011, on the preparation of the road map to the second city summit on biodiversity, to be held in Hyderabad, India, in conjunction with the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 11) in October 2012. She was also speaking in her capacity as the Vice-President of the Association of Mayors of Large French Cities (*Association des Maires de Grandes Villes de France*).

During her visit, Mayor Mandroux addressed the opening of the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Nagoya Protocol, spoke at the official reception of the intergovernmental meeting, and met with staff at the Secretariat. She also addressed the 2000 participants of the 17th International Economic Forum of the Americas.

Mayor Mandroux described biodiversity as life insurance for life itself. "Everyone benefits from biodiversity. Therefore, halting biodiversity loss concerns everyone: national Governments, businesses, citizens and local governments. Everyone must get together to cooperate and change the behaviour of individuals and society as a whole, and make the necessary adjustments."

The ambition of Montpellier is to make a modest contribution to address global change by altering the behavior of its inhabitants to be more sensitive to nature in the city and to promote consumer lifestyles that have less impact on the immediate environment of that which is farther away. In the face of global changes each individual or collective gesture counts."

During Madame Mandroux's tenure as mayor, the City of Montpellier has made an exceptional contribution to advance and implement the Convention on Biological Diversity, not only at the local level but also at the national and international levels. As a contribution to the celebration of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, Mayor Mandroux led the development of a local strategy and action plan for biodiversity for the period 2010-2014. As part of the action plan adopted by the municipal council in 2010, citizens are regularly invited to take part in awareness raising activities, including biodiversity photo contests, expert roundtables and the International Day for Biological Diversity. The City of Montpellier is also a key partner of the Convention's *The Green Wave* initiative.

The City of Montpellier made a distinct contribution during the development of the Plan of Action on Sub-National Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity that was endorsed by the Conference of the Parties at its tenth meeting, held in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010. In January 2011, Montpellier hosted the first meeting on the implementation of the Plan of Action, at which representatives of Parties to the Convention, United Nations, scientific bodies and local authority networks representing over 2,100 cities and authorities worldwide, developed a road map to the second city summit that will take place in the margins of the eleventh meeting of the Parties in Hyderabad. Montpellier now serves on the

Steering Committee of the CBD initiative on Cities and Biodiversity, alongside Curitiba, Montreal, Bonn, Nagoya and Mexico City.

In January 2012, Montpellier will host a meeting of the mayors of the capitals of the Mediterranean region, followed by the CBD Regional Workshop for the Mediterranean Basin on Updating National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. In May 2012, Montpellier plays host, in collaboration with the International Society of Ethnobiology, to the Society's 13th Congress, which that will address such issues as community-conserved areas and food sovereignty.

The City of Montpellier closely supports the work of Agropolis International, an association of research and higher education institutes working in the field of agriculture, food, biodiversity and environment, with the support of government and local authorities.

"The engagement and commitment of local authorities is essential for protecting life on Earth, and the City of Montpellier has demonstrated leadership in promoting the biodiversity agenda at the local, regional and international levels," said Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention.
