



PRESS RELEASE

European Union and 12 Member States sign the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization

Montreal, 23 June 2011 – The number of signatories to a new international treaty on access to and the sharing of benefits from the utilization of genetic resources today jumped to 37 with the signature of the European Union (EU) and 12 of its member states.

At a ceremony in New York, signatures to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) were received from Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom and the European Union.

The Nagoya Protocol on ABS is a supplementary agreement to the CBD. It provides a transparent legal framework for the effective implementation of one of the three objectives of the CBD: the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. The Nagoya Protocol on ABS was adopted on 29 October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan, and will enter into force 90 days after receipt of the fiftieth instrument of ratification.

Genetic resources, whether from plant, animal or micro-organisms, are used for various purposes, ranging from basic research to the development of products. Users of genetic resources include research institutes, universities and private companies operating in various sectors such as pharmaceuticals, agriculture, horticulture, cosmetics and biotechnology.

Benefits derived from genetic resources may include the sharing of the results of research and development carried out on genetic resources, the transfer of technologies that make use of those resources, participation in biotechnological research activities, or monetary benefits arising from the commercialization of products based on genetic resources, such as pharmaceuticals.

Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, signing on behalf of Hungary, which currently holds the presidency of the EU, said, “There is a great task ahead of us to bring the Nagoya Protocol to life and move this new treaty forward on the path to its wise and proper implementation as soon as possible. The signatures taking place today are among the important first steps of this process. The signing of the Protocol clearly shows our commitment to put the third objective of the CBD into practice.”

Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, CBD Executive Secretary, said: “Today’s signatures demonstrate the strong commitment to the Nagoya Protocol from all regions of the world.”

“This is a commitment to not only the planet, but also a sustainable future for our children. I urge others to sign and ratify the Protocol, and look forward to the entry into force of this unique legal instrument by the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in India in 2012.”

The list of signatories to the Protocol is available on the Convention on Biological Diversity website at: www.cbd.int/abs/nagoya-protocol/signatories/ Pictures of the signing ceremony can be found on the website of the United Nations Treaty Collection: <http://treaties.un.org/>

In early June, over 400 participants from more than 140 countries met in Montreal, Canada, at the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Nagoya Protocol, to lay the foundations for implementation. Results of this meeting are available at: www.cbd.int/absicnpl/insession/

Notes for Editors

About the Nagoya Protocol

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 was adopted on 29 October 2010 at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya, Japan.

The Nagoya Protocol is a landmark agreement in the international governance of biodiversity and is relevant for a variety of commercial and non-commercial sectors involved in the use and exchange of genetic resources. The Nagoya Protocol is based on the fundamental principles of access and benefit-sharing enshrined in the CBD. These principles are based on potential users of genetic resources obtaining the prior informed consent (PIC) of the country in which the genetic resource is located before accessing the resource, and negotiating and agreeing on the terms and conditions of access and use of this resource through the establishment of mutually agreed terms (MAT). This agreement includes the sharing of benefits arising from the use of the resource with the provider as a prerequisite for access to the genetic resource and its use. Conversely, countries, when acting as providers of genetic resources, should provide fair and non-arbitrary rules and procedures for access to their genetic resources. For more information on the Protocol, visit 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, 160 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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