



PRESS RELEASE

Intergovernmental forum for biodiversity for food and agriculture and the Convention on Biological Diversity strengthen cooperation for achievement of biodiversity targets.

Montreal/Rome 18 July 2011. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture of the Food and Agriculture Organization and the Convention on Biological Diversity will strengthen their collaboration for achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, through common actions that will preserve biodiversity for food and agriculture around the world.

In his statement, Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary to the Convention on Biological Diversity, said: “With biodiversity continuing to be lost at an unprecedented rate, strengthening collaboration is imperative between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Commission to address complex issues. As you know, the UN General Assembly has declared 2011-2020 the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity to follow up on the success of the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit. Now is the time to capitalize on this momentum.”

Governments at the tenth meeting of Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity recognised the need for urgent action, when they adopted the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010. Given the importance of biodiversity for food and agricultural production, particularly the need to conserve genetic resources for adaptation in light of climate change, and therefore for food security and the fight against poverty, the enhanced collaboration comes at an important time.

The Commission plays a lead role in the cooperation between FAO and the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Commission and the Conference of the Parties to the Convention have regularly recognized the importance of their cooperation, given that the Commission is the international forum to address all components of biodiversity for food and agriculture.

A joint work plan between the Commission and the Convention, is now entering a second phase with collaboration in a number of key areas, including assessments of biodiversity of relevance to food and agriculture; targets and indicators; best practices for the management of agricultural biodiversity and enhancing ecosystem services; and climate change and genetic resources for food and agriculture.

The revised joint work plan also focuses on collaboration in promoting and supporting the entry into force, development and implementation of another major outcome of COP-10: the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization and eventually, if desirable, the development of specialized instruments related to the food and agricultural sector.

Other opportunities for collaboration exist such as collaboration to reduce unsustainable use of bushmeat and investigating ways to find win – win solutions for achieving sustainable agricultural and biodiversity conservation. “By implementing its own programmes of work, FAO continues to contribute to many

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aspects of the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020,” said Linda Collette, Secretary of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

FAO and the Commission have been invited by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to refine targets for agricultural biodiversity, including at the ecosystem and genetic resources levels, and to monitor progress toward them using indicators. The invitation is timely as the Commission is considering targets and indicators in relation to its own work at the current session, including indicators for the implementation of Global Plans of Action on animal and plant genetic resources, and FAO’s work on indicator development, including as a partner in the Biodiversity Indicator Partnership (BIP).

The Convention on Biological Diversity and the Commission will also collaborate on the production of three important publications: The State of the World’s Forest Genetic Resources, the State of the World’s Aquatic Genetic Resources as well as the State of the World’s Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture. These global country-driven assessments will constitute an important data set, and their results and findings will be an important contribution to the Global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity.

Pursuing its series of briefings at relevant meetings and to the staff of United Nations organizations, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in partnership with the government of Japan in its capacity as the president of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, organized a side event on the Nagoya biodiversity compact, focusing on the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing, which has been so far signed by 38 Parties to the Convention.

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, 160 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

The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture was established in 1983 to deal with issues related to plant genetic resources. In 1995, the FAO Conference broadened the Commission’s mandate to cover all components of biodiversity of relevance to food and agriculture. The Commission provides the only permanent forum for Governments to discuss and negotiate matters specifically relevant to biological diversity for food and agriculture and aims to reach international consensus on policies for the sustainable use and conservation of genetic resources for food and agriculture and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use. Since its establishment, the Commission has overseen global assessments of the state of the world’s plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture and negotiated major international instruments, including the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. For More Information visit: <http://www.fao.org/nr/cgrfa/en/>

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