



PRESS RELEASE

Indigenous and local communities meet with governments to discuss traditional knowledge and the implementation of the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020

Montreal, 1 November 2011— Representatives of indigenous and local communities from around the world are meeting side by side with delegates from Governments for this week in Montreal to discuss ways to integrate traditional knowledge related to biodiversity protection into the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 adopted by the Parties to the Convention in Nagoya, Japan, in October last year.

The seventh meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Inter-Sessional Working Group on Article 8(j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) opened yesterday with a greeting and prayer from leaders of the Mohawk, an indigenous people of North America. “The Earth is your mother. . . and you will treat her in a good way”, they exhorted the over 400 participants in the meeting.

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, thanked all the participants in the meeting, stating that: “This gathering represents the global community that has come together to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, including Aichi Biodiversity Target 18, which deals specifically with traditional knowledge.”

The Working Group is one of the subsidiary bodies of Conference of the Parties to the global biodiversity agreement. Its mandate is to look at the role of indigenous and local communities and their traditional knowledge relevant for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The meeting is also unique in that representatives of both national Governments and indigenous and local communities sit side by side.

The main item for this meeting is the launching of a new initiative on customary sustainable use of biodiversity. The models of sustainability that indigenous and local communities have been practising for years if not generations are an important tool for achieving global biodiversity targets agreed by Governments in Nagoya.

The meeting will also consider measures which may further assist in the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits from Their Utilization. This includes the question of prior and informed consent of the holders of traditional knowledge for its use and the prevention of the use of such knowledge without the consent of the communities concerned.

The Working Group is also poised to develop guidelines for national legislation or other mechanisms to implement Article 8(j) as well as guidelines for the repatriation of information and associated cultural property.

Documents and the report of the meeting can be found at: www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=WG8J-07

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, 159 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.

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