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PRESS RELEASE

Gabon becomes the first country to ratify the Nagoya Protocol on genetic resources

Montreal, 14 November 2011 –On 11 November 2011, Gabon, became the first Party to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to ratify the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Nagoya Protocol, which was opened for signature in February 2011, will enter into force 90 days after deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification. It currently has 66 signatories.

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary to the Convention on Biological Diversity said: “Gabon’s historic ratification of the Nagoya Protocol is the first step toward entry into force of this unique legal instrument. I urge all signatories to expedite the ratification process so as to allow the Nagoya Protocol to enter into force in 2012, as a contribution to the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, the Rio+20 meeting and the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which will coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention.”

The entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization will provide greater legal certainty and transparency for both providers and users of genetic resources, creating a framework that promotes the use of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge while strengthening the opportunities for fair and equitable sharing of benefits from their use. Hence, the Protocol will create new incentives to conserve biodiversity, sustainably use its components, and further enhance the contribution of biodiversity to sustainable development and human well-being.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has provided financial support for the early entry into force and effective implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund was established by GEF with an initial financial contribution of US\$ 12.5 million from Japan. In addition, a medium-sized project of US\$ 1 million is providing support to the ratification and early entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol through a series of awareness-raising and capacity-building activities. The project is being executed by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and is now fully operational.

Notes to Editors

Heads of State and Government at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 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 significantly advances the objective of the Convention on the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources by providing greater legal certainty and transparency for both providers and users of genetic resources. Specific obligations to support compliance with domestic legislation or regulatory requirements of the Party providing genetic resources and contractual obligations reflected in mutually agreed terms are a significant innovation of the Nagoya Protocol. These compliance provisions as well as provisions establishing more predictable conditions for access to genetic resources will contribute to ensuring the sharing of benefits when genetic resources leave a Party providing genetic resources. Also, the Protocol's provisions on access to traditional knowledge held by indigenous and local communities when it is associated with genetic resources will strengthen the ability of these communities to benefit from the use of their knowledge, innovations and practices.

By promoting the use of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, and by strengthening the opportunities for fair and equitable sharing of benefits from their use, the Protocol will create incentives to conserve biodiversity, sustainably use its components, and further enhance the contribution of biodiversity to sustainable development and human well-being. The full text of the Nagoya Protocol is available at: <http://www.cbd.int/abs/doc/protocol/nagoya-protocol-en.pdf>.

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.

For additional information, please contact: David Ainsworth on +1 514 287 7025 or at david.ainsworth@cbd.int; or Johan Hedlund on +1 514 287 6670 or at johan.hedlund@cbd.int.
