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PRESS RELEASE

Guiana Shield Action Plan to Facilitate Biodiversity Corridors, Achieve Aichi Targets

Montreal, 30 May 2014 – To avoid landscape fragmentation and loss of species and habitats for biodiversity, participants to a three-day workshop in Kurupukari, Guyana, have agreed on a Regional Action Plan related to biological corridors, connectivity conservation and trans-boundary conservation within the Guiana Shield Ecoregion.

The agreed Regional Action Plan is especially important in light of the fact that wildlife and habitats know no boundaries, that issues in one country can impact another and that connectivity of habitats becomes ever more important the more we learn about the effects of climate change.

“Corridors and connectivity are key to maintaining biodiversity and promoting ecosystem resilience. I congratulate the Guiana Shield countries and partner organizations who are advancing a challenging agenda to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets through the further development of corridors and transboundary conservation.” said Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Guiana Shield, one of the most intact ecosystems in the world, is increasingly under pressure from development and extractive industries.

The twenty-six protected areas management professionals and international biodiversity experts that participated in the ‘Workshop on Biodiversity Corridors in the Guiana Shield to Streamline Support for the Achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets’, held at the Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development in Kurupukari, Guyana, from 21 to 23 May 2014, shared their experience and best practice on biodiversity corridors and developed a Regional Action Plan to facilitate biodiversity corridors and achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.



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The Regional Action Plan calls on governments and partner organisations to:

- Support national efforts to better manage and monitor small and medium-scale gold mining, including promoting best practices for biodiversity conservation and water resources management.
- Encourage the further development of transboundary marine protected areas in the Guiana Shield through ongoing initiatives such as Marine Mammals Conservation network (MAMACOCOSEA)
- Create synergies with existing global and regional platforms in order to take advantage of efficiencies of scales efforts and momentum
- Develop and strengthen linkages with collaborative connectivity projects
- Organize a technical database that allows identifying and prioritizing transboundary corridors
- Strengthen and facilitate academic research (university research cooperation and other research institutions) into connectivity science.

Participants pledged their support to work together to fulfil the actions outlined as initial steps towards developing trans-boundary cooperation and achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in the Guiana Shield.

Guyana's Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment, Robert Persaud, reiterated that the approach taken in Guyana towards conservation is to collaborate with stakeholders and relevant organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme and WWF.

The Minister emphasized that Guyana is making headway towards achieving Aichi Biodiversity Targets 11 and 16. He noted that, "Our economic well-being and prosperity and our peoples livelihood depend on a functioning, sustainable and viable extractive sector."

He also expressed the view that an integrated approach of working with all sectors towards conservation is the best option in order to have them mainstream to contribute to biodiversity conservation.

The workshop benefitted from presentations made by the Coordinator of the CBD's LifeWeb initiative, the Executive Director of Tropical Science Centre, Costa Rica and International Union for Conservation of Nature representative, who highlighted examples of global transboundary conservation efforts and outlined the support systems offered by their respective institutions.

The Guiana Shield includes: Brazil, Colombia, French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname and Venezuela.

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 194 Parties up to now, 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, 166 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.