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Press Release

UN treaty bodies renew partnership to save tropical forests' rich treasure of biological resources

Pyeongchang, 13 October 2014 – The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) – the United Nations treaty-based organization uniquely focused on tropical forests – and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) renewed a partnership agreement to enhance biodiversity conservation in tropical forests and stem the loss of the planet's richest treasure of biological resources.

At a special event titled “Achieving Forest-related Aichi Biodiversity Targets on the Ground: ITTO–CBD Collaborative Joint Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity”, the partners signed a Memorandum of Understanding strengthening their organizations’ commitment to achieving the forest-related Aichi Biodiversity Targets by 2020. The signing ceremony was held at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, on Monday 13 October 2014.

“ITTO is proud of the work carried out under this initiative in collaboration with CBD colleagues to protect the biodiversity of tropical forests and manage forestry equitably and sustainably, ensuring conservation of one of the Earth’s most treasured ecosystems,” said Emmanuel Ze Meka, Executive Director of the International Tropical Timber Organization.

Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity said “the ITTO–CBD collaboration has provided concrete examples of carrying out actions on the ground that contribute significantly toward the achievement of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. Renewing our partnership will further contribute towards concreted action in the sustainable use, restoration and conservation of tropical forest biodiversity.”

An earlier agreement, signed in 2010, gave birth to the ITTO – CBD Joint Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity, and spawned 11 projects to support efforts in sustaining tropical forest biodiversity and improve the livelihoods of the people living in and around tropical forests. The new agreement extends cooperation between the two organizations to 2020.

For more information on the ITTO–CBD Joint Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity visit: <http://www.cbd.int/forest/tropical-forest.shtml> and www.itto.int/cbd

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 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 and Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization are supplementary agreements to the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 167 countries plus the European Union have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies. It entered into force on 12 October 2014 and has been ratified by 54 countries to date. For more information visit: www.cbd.int.

International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)

The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) is an intergovernmental organization promoting the conservation and sustainable management, use and trade of tropical forest resources. It was established in 1986 under the auspices of the United Nations, and has its headquarters in Yokohama, Japan. Its 69 members are signatories of the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) – the only legally binding, UN-based instrument on tropical forests. They represent about 80% of the world's tropical forests and over 90% of the global tropical timber trade. ITTO promotes sustainable forest management and forest conservation and assists tropical member countries to adapt such policies to local circumstances and to implement them in the field through projects.

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