



PRESS RELEASE

Governments and indigenous peoples developing guidelines to strengthen protection and use of traditional knowledge for biodiversity conservation

Montreal, 30 October 2015 – With traditional blessings by the Elders of the local Mohawk Community of Kahnawake setting the scene, governments, indigenous peoples and local communities from around the world will meet in Montreal, Canada, next week to develop guidelines that will assist Parties and governments to develop national measures for the protection, promotion and use of traditional knowledge relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

The ninth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), being held 4 to 7 November 2015 at the headquarters of the International Civil Aviation Organization in Montreal, focuses on key mechanisms needed to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 18 on traditional knowledge, as well as their contribution to the effective implementation of 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 Working Group on Article 8(j), which brings together Parties and representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities, to advance work on traditional knowledge, has two major tasks before it – to develop guidelines for national arrangements to ensure traditional knowledge is respected and promoted and to consider draft guidelines on the repatriation of traditional knowledge to assist knowledge and cultural restoration relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

The Convention on Biological Diversity, the Nagoya Protocol and the Working Group on 8(j) are currently the only United Nations bodies actively working on international laws, standards, guidelines and capacity building of relevance to indigenous peoples.

In keeping with the recent plan to streamline the work of the Convention and its Protocols, delegates will be asked to refer a number of additional items presently at the implementation stage to the upcoming meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, scheduled for May 2016. These items would include such matters as: (a) progress in implementing Article 8(j) and related provisions at the national level; (b) progress in mainstreaming Article 8(j) and related provisions across the areas of work of the Secretariat, including participation of and capacity-building for indigenous peoples and local communities in the work



Convention on
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of the Convention; and (c) implementation of the Global Plan of Action on Customary Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity (Article 10(c)).

The work of this intergovernmental meeting contributes directly to the United Nations Secretary-General's system-wide action plan to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The action plan is in accordance with the mandate set out in the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, held in September 2014 at United Nations Headquarters in New York, in which the Secretariat of the Convention participated.

The Governments of Australia, Finland, Germany, New Zealand, Norway and Sweden provided generous contributions to the voluntary fund to assist representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities in participating in the deliberations of the Working Group. Additionally, Canada, Finland, Germany, Norway and Sweden have made contributions to ensure the participation of representatives of developing countries in this important work.

The matters before the Working Group are of the utmost importance if Parties are to have measures in place by 2020 to achieve Aichi Target 18 so that the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities are respected and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention. All of the discussions taking place at the meeting will be forwarded to the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, being held 4 – 17 December 2016 in Cancun, Mexico, and will inform the next steps forward.

Notes to Editors

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and entered 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 196 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 peoples and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing are supplementary agreements to the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol, which entered into force on 11 September 2003, seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 170 Parties 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 to date has been ratified by 68 Parties. For more information visit: www.cbd.int.

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