



**CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

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STATEMENT BY

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

TO

**THE OPEN-ENDED EXPERT WORKSHOP ON CAPACITY
BUILDING FOR ACCESS AND BENEFIT SHARING**

Montreal, Canada, 2 - 4 December 2002

Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all to the Open-ended Expert Workshop on Capacity-building for access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing.

I also wish to express my appreciation to the Governments of Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the Netherlands for their financial support which made it possible to hold this meeting and support the participation of experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

I need not emphasize the importance of this Workshop as a contribution to the achievement of the third objective of the Convention - that is the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

The past year has seen a number of important developments on the issue of access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing. First, the adoption of the Bonn Guidelines on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising Out of the Utilization of Genetic Resources, was one of the highlights of the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, last April.

Subsequently, the significance of the issue was recognized by the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In its Plan of Implementation, the World Summit pointed to the need to *“take action at all levels to promote the wide implementation of and continued work on the Bonn Guidelines...to assist Parties to the Convention when developing and drafting legislative, administrative or policy measures on access and benefit-sharing.”*

As you will be aware, the Plan of Implementation went a step further by providing for *“the negotiation within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, bearing in mind the Bonn Guidelines, of an international regime to promote and safeguard the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.”*

But, as always, the achievement of international consensus is one thing; securing the means for implementation is another. Here, capacity-building plays an essential role. Indeed, at its fifth meeting, in 2000, the Conference of the Parties had already noted the need to further develop capacities on all aspects of access and benefit-sharing arrangements for all stakeholders, including local governments, academic institutions, and indigenous and local communities.

Capacity-building was also recognized as essential by the Panel of Experts on Access and Benefit-sharing and the *Ad hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing. The latter developed draft elements of an Action Plan that was later

endorsed by the Conference of the Parties in April. It is those elements that this workshop is to further develop.

This meeting therefore provides the opportunity to elaborate an action plan for capacity-building on access and benefit-sharing that can meet the needs and priorities of developing countries.

As a first step, participants may wish to describe their needs and priorities at all levels, from the local to the international. Participants who have been involved in capacity-building activities are invited to provide information about their expertise and ongoing or planned capacity-building initiatives.

Based on these discussions, the Workshop may wish to further develop the draft elements of the Action Plan with a view to matching the identified needs and priorities with the existing expertise and ongoing initiatives.

To assist you in your deliberations, the Secretariat has prepared a background note, which was distributed before the meeting. The document provides a synthesis of submissions provided by Parties and relevant organizations prior to and following the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties on:

- Priority areas requiring capacity-building to assist with the implementation of access and benefit-sharing arrangements;
- Relevant existing expertise; and,
- Capacity-building activities planned or underway.

The document also addresses the potential role of various institutions in the implementation of the Action Plan and proposes additional elements for consideration in the further development of the Action Plan.

In conclusion, I wish to assure you of the full support of the Secretariat during this meeting. My colleagues and I will spare no efforts to assist you in your deliberations.

I wish you the best of luck for a successful meeting.