



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

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22 May 2007
International Day for Biological Diversity



Biodiversity and Climate Change

CBD SECRETARIAT AND THE UNITED NATIONS REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSIONS SIGN MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING TO MAINSTREAM THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CONVENTION AND ENHANCE COOPERATION

New York – 25 October 2007. A memorandum of understanding geared towards enhancing the cooperation and collaboration between the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations regional economic and social commissions for Africa (ECA), Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and Western Asia (ESCWA) was signed today by the executive heads of the respective organizations, at United Nations Headquarters in New York. It is the first time that such an agreement has been signed with a multilateral environmental agreement (MEA) and, as such, will make a significant contribution to the ongoing efforts of Secretary General Ban Ki-moon aimed at enhancing global environmental coherence through the One UN programme.

The signature of the memorandum during the enhanced phase of implementation of the Convention comes at a time when the international community is redoubling its efforts to achieve the 2010 biodiversity target. Thus, four of the operational arms of the United Nations have decided to join forces to mainstream the three objectives of the Convention into their regular programmes in order to integrate biodiversity into regional development cooperation and processes.

Specifically, the Memorandum aims to:

- Support the integration of the objectives of the Convention into relevant regional activities and processes;
- Assist Parties in mainstreaming biodiversity into economic sectors including through poverty reduction strategy papers;
- Provide, as appropriate, technical assistance to the Parties for the implementation of their commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- Cooperate in the preparation of the regional processes towards the sessions of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD);
- Assist in the promotion of public awareness and outreach including the celebration of International Day for Biological Diversity and the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010;
- Provide support for the convening of meetings under the Convention, in particular regional and subregional meetings;



- Develop approaches to promote and facilitate integration of biodiversity considerations into existing sectoral and cross-sectoral policies and programmes;
- Assist in the preparation and implementation of the Convention's programme on South-South cooperation;
- Assess the emerging issues related to the interface between trade, biodiversity and intellectual property rights;
- Facilitate Parties to jointly undertake regional and subregional responses to the goals and mandates of the Convention; and
- Facilitate regional and subregional cooperation to assist developing Parties in improving institutional, scientific and human capacity for the effective implementation of the Convention.

“This memorandum will reinforce the cooperation between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the regional commissions in mainstreaming the objectives of the Convention into relevant regional activities and processes to further the regional approach for achieving sustainable development, and further strengthen collaboration in response to the enhanced implementation phase of the Convention in order to meet the challenges of the 2010 biodiversity target,” said Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and current Coordinator of the Regional Commissions.

Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention, said, “The signature today of this Memorandum is a clear demonstration of the commitment of the United Nations regional commissions to play a leading role in mainstreaming the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity at a regional level, thus making a distinct contribution to integrating the biodiversity agenda into the ongoing efforts aimed at achieving sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals.”

Mr. Djoghlaif further added that, “I am very pleased to note that the signature of this Memorandum also coincides with the start of the secondment to the Convention Secretariat of a senior French government staff member, who will be in charge of the integration of biodiversity into the development sector, as well as the finalization of the negotiations with the Government of Germany, the host of the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties, of a vibrant programme on biodiversity and poverty alleviation for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.”

The United Nations regional commissions

The United Nations economic and social regional commissions fall under the umbrella of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. ECOSOC is a 54-member body, elected by the General Assembly, which assists the General Assembly in promoting international economic and social cooperation and development. The regional commissions provide intergovernmental frameworks for regional cooperation to assist countries in addressing sustainable development issues; have unique convening power in organizing ministerial conferences and high-level meetings to further the implementation of regional and global sustainable development action plans through policy dialogues; identify, document and disseminate good and innovative

practices; assist in building national capacity and promote cooperation to harness the strengths of individual countries or sub-regional and regional organizations. Through such operational activities, the regional commissions add value by testing good practices on the ground and help build capacity in Governments and their partners to replicate them in order to further the implementation of sustainable-development action programmes.

There are five regional commissions: the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) – headquartered in Addis Ababa; the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) – headquartered in Geneva; the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) – headquartered in Santiago; the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) – headquartered in Bangkok; and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) –headquartered in Beirut. For additional information, please contact Nilima Silver at 1-212-963-2348; email: silvern@un.org.

More information may also be found at <http://www.un.org/aboutun/mainbodies.htm>

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

The Convention on Biological Diversity is one of the most broadly subscribed international environmental treaties in the world. Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, it currently has 190 Parties—189 States and the European Community—who have committed themselves to its three main goals: the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of its components and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources. The headquarters of the Secretariat of the Convention is located in Montreal. For additional information, please contact Marie Aminata Khan at +1 514 287 8701; email: marie.khan@cbd.int.