



PRESS RELEASE

21 Parties have now signed the Nagoya Protocol

Montreal, 11 May 2011 – Eight additional Parties today signed 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, bringing the total number of signatories to 21.

The signing ceremony took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York in conjunction with the Ministerial Segment of the 19th session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. It was presided over by Mr. Joseph Deiss, President of the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly, who chaired the High-level Meeting on Biodiversity held in New York on 22 September 2010 as a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity.

At today's signing ceremony, signatures were received from Guatemala, Indonesia, India, Japan, Norway, South Africa, and Switzerland and Tunisia.

These eight signatories join 13 others that have signed the Protocol since it opened for signature on 2 February 2011: Colombia, Yemen, Algeria, Brazil, Mexico, Rwanda, Ecuador, the Central African Republic, the Seychelles, Mali, Sudan, Panama and Peru.

The Nagoya Protocol will enter into force 90 days after deposit of the 50th instrument of ratification. The pace established by today's signatures points to a clear momentum towards the early entry into force of the Protocol by the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 11), scheduled for fall 2012.

In his remarks at the signing ceremony, Mr. Deiss said: "I join you all today in welcoming this historic Protocol. I hope that it will take effect as early as possible through the ratification by at least 50 Parties to the Convention."

"Our efforts do not end here. We must keep the positive momentum of Nagoya into the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties in India and into Rio+20 so that our generation can be remembered for the wisdom of protecting biodiversity, the very basis for the well-being for our posterity."

Mr. Hideki Minamikawa, the Administrative Vice Minister of the Environment, Japan, said: "The collective wisdom and efforts of all participants that gathered at Nagoya, where COP 10 was held, and their willingness to compromise contributed to the adoption last October of the Nagoya Protocol on ABS, which establishes an international framework for achieving the third objective of the Convention."

Mr. Ahmed Djoghla, CBD Executive Secretary, said: "Today's signing ceremony by eight additional parties, including Japan and India in their capacity as presidents of COP 10 and COP 11 respectively, is a major step towards the entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol and a clear demonstration of the partnership embedded in the spirit and letter of this historical treaty."

The Executive Secretary also said "I look forward to the signing of the Nagoya Protocol by the European Union in the near future which will be another major step towards the early entry into force of the Protocol."

A Statement made by Mr Janez Potočnik on behalf of the European Union and its Member States can be found online at: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/speech/2011/sp-2011-05-10-eu-en.pdf>

Mr. T. Chatterjee, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, India, stated: "As a mega diverse country and the incoming President of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of Parties, India welcomes the signing of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing by 21 countries so far. We urge other countries to sign the Nagoya Protocol early so that it can enter into force and the first Meeting of Parties of the Protocol can take place in India in the fall of 2012, when we host COP 11."

Mr. Chatterjee noted that: "India participated actively and contributed substantively to the negotiation and adoption of the Nagoya Protocol. The Protocol will contribute to the meaningful implementation of two objectives of the CBD relating to conservation and sustainable use, since benefits accruing from utilization of genetic resources would act as an incentive for biodiversity-rich countries and their local communities to conserve and sustainably use their biodiversity.

He added that India accounted for 7 to 8% of the recorded species of the world and was also rich in associated traditional knowledge, both in terms of the ancient texts of Indian systems of medicines such as Ayurveda, Unani and Sidha, and also in oral traditions.

"These genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge," he said, "can be used to develop a wide range of products and services for human benefit, such as medicines, agricultural practices, cosmetics etc. It is expected that the ABS Protocol which is a key missing pillar of the CBD, would address the concern of misappropriation or biopiracy of genetic resources."

The entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization will provide greater legal certainty and transparency for both providers and users of genetic resources, creating a framework that promotes the use of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge while strengthening the opportunities for fair and equitable sharing of benefits from their use. Hence, the Protocol will create new incentives to conserve biodiversity, sustainably use its components, and further enhance the contribution of biodiversity to sustainable development and human well-being.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has provided financial support for the early entry into force and effective implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund was established by GEF with an initial financial contribution of US\$ 12.5 million from Japan. The GEF Council at its fortieth meeting will further discuss the operational modalities of this new trust fund. In addition, a medium-sized project of US\$ 2 million is providing support to the ratification and early entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol through a series of awareness-raising and capacity-building activities. The project is executed by the Secretariat and it is now fully operational.

The next signing ceremony will be in New York on 20 September 2011 in conjunction with the High level events of the sixty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Notes to Editors

Heads of State and Government at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, September 2002) first recognized the need for an international regime to promote and safeguard the fair and equitable sharing of benefits and called for negotiations to be carried out within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention responded at its seventh meeting, in 2004, by mandating its Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing to elaborate and negotiate an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing to effectively implement Articles 15 (Access to Genetic Resources) and 8(j) (Traditional Knowledge) of the Convention and its three objectives.

The Nagoya Protocol significantly advances the objective of the Convention on the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources by providing greater legal certainty and transparency for both providers and users of genetic resources. Specific obligations to support compliance with domestic legislation or regulatory requirements of the Party providing genetic resources and contractual obligations reflected in mutually agreed terms are a significant innovation of the Nagoya Protocol. These compliance provisions as well as provisions establishing more predictable conditions for access to genetic resources will contribute to ensuring the sharing of benefits when genetic resources leave a Party providing genetic resources. Also, the Protocol's provisions on access to traditional knowledge held by indigenous and local communities when it is associated with genetic resources will strengthen the ability of these communities to benefit from the use of their knowledge, innovations and practices.

By promoting the use of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, and by strengthening the opportunities for fair and equitable sharing of benefits from their use, the Protocol will create incentives to conserve biodiversity, sustainably use its components, and further enhance the contribution of biodiversity to sustainable development and human well-being. The Nagoya Protocol is available at: www.cbd.int/abs/

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 193 Parties, 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, 159 countries plus the European Union have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal, Canada. For more information visit www.cbd.int

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