



CBD

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Biodiversity and Climate Change

**Opening remarks by Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif
Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity
to the
Ad hoc Technical Expert Group on Technology Transfer and
Scientific and Technological Cooperation
Geneva, 10-12 September 2007**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome all of you to the meeting of the Ad hoc Technical Expert Group on Technology Transfer and Scientific and Technological Cooperation under the Convention on Biological Diversity. I would also like to acknowledge the close cooperation of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in co-hosting the meeting here in Geneva, and to welcome their representatives on this podium: Mr. Mongi Hamdi from UNCTAD's Science and Technology Section, and Mr. Hussein Abaza from UNEP's Economics and Trade Branch.

As you know, the Convention considers the access to, and the transfer of relevant technologies, as being essential for attaining its three objectives. Looking at the range of relevant technologies explains why they are so important, but also why countries find it often challenging to get access and put them to effective use:

- Technologies for the management of ecosystems and populations and the rehabilitation and restoration of degraded areas are key for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, but are not necessarily readily available, as they need to be developed and refined in accordance with local conditions and circumstances;
- Tools related to surveying, mapping and monitoring of biodiversity components are increasingly accessible but require a high level of expertise and institutional stability;
- The same applies to many of the technologies for *ex situ* conservation, such as tissue culture, propagation techniques and cryopreservation;
- The application of biotechnology in the search for and use of genetic resources also requires substantial amounts of hardware and expertise, which are often not available in the countries that have the highest biodiversity. Consequently, there is a large potential for partnerships based on clear and mutually agreed trade-offs between access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from their utilization – the third objective of the Convention.

In 2004, the Conference of the Parties adopted an ambitious programme of work on technology transfer and scientific and technological cooperation. The Secretariat recently concluded an analysis of the information on technology transfer and cooperation provided by Parties to the Convention in their third national reports, including on the implementation of the programme of work. The analysis confirms that, while some progress has been made in particular in the context of bilateral scientific and technological cooperation projects, much more



needs to be done to effectively implement the pertinent provisions of the Convention. For instance, almost half of reporting Parties indicated that they have so far no measures in place to provide or facilitate access to, or transfer of, relevant technologies.

Parties mainly pointed to the lack of human capacity and financial resources as important constraints. Institutional weaknesses including the absence of legislation were mentioned by a number of Parties, as well as the lack of capacity for the adaptation of technology. Some Parties also noted a lack of information and knowledge, in particular with respect to technology needs, to available technologies, and with regard to technology assessments. A number of developing-country Parties mentioned the low level of technology transfer from developed countries and of international technological cooperation, underlining the need for developed-country Parties to adjust their technology transfer policies so that technologies for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are transferred in a preferential manner instead of a commercial manner, and noting the “embryonic nature” of the mechanism on access to and transfer of technology under the Convention.

Against this background, the present meeting comes at a critical juncture of the Convention’s work on technology transfer and cooperation. Your task in the coming three days will be to develop a strategy for the practical implementation of the programme of work, for consideration by the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties – a much-needed and timely endeavour in light of the challenges identified by many Parties to the Convention.

Joining forces in order to more effectively mobilize resources and capacity seems to be one natural element of such a strategy. I was requested by the last meeting of the Conference of the Parties to explore possibilities of developing a Biodiversity Technology Initiative, taking into account the Climate Technology Initiative – an initiative of nine OECD countries which supports technology transfer under the UNFCCC. Our analysis confirms that a similar initiative by committed CBD Parties may play a very useful role in promoting and fostering more effective technology transfer and cooperation under the Convention, and I wish to invite you to consider the draft report that was provided to you, and to further explore the feasibility of such a Biodiversity Technology Initiative. In this connection, I would like to invite the triple presidency of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity - Brazil, Germany and Japan - as well as other interested Parties, to take the lead in translating this idea into reality.

Cooperation with relevant stakeholders and the research community, as well as among relevant Conventions and international organizations and initiatives, will be another key element of an effective implementation strategy, and I am pleased to report that the CBD Secretariat is already engaged in a number of cooperative activities for fostering technology transfer and cooperation:

- (a) The topic has been on the agenda of the Joint Liaison Group (JLG) of Rio conventions and the last meeting of the group, held on 7 June 2007 and based on proposals made by the CBD Secretariat, identified options for mutually supportive activities in a number of different areas, including technology transfer. This week, the JLG will meet again in Madrid to further discuss these options and the report will be made available for the upcoming ninth meeting COP through the thirteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA);
- (b) At the request of the chair of the group of 77, a brainstorming meeting of a group of experts was organized by the Secretariat in November 2006 for the preparation of a four-

year plan of action on South-South cooperation for the implementation of the Convention, and technology transfer was identified as an important element of such an action plan. Indeed, outside cooperation has emerged in the establishment of the G-77 here in Geneva in 1964 as a major tool together with indispensable North/South cooperation through promoting multilateral cooperation for achieving sustainable development;

- (c) I was requested by the last meeting of the Conference of the Parties to carry out activities for enhancing the clearing house mechanism of the Convention as a key mechanism in technology transfer and scientific and technological cooperation. In response, we undertook a complete overhaul of the CBD website in order to enhance its accessibility and user-friendliness and, more specifically, we are currently developing, on a pilot basis, interoperability mechanisms with the technology databases of two partner organizations: the European Innovation Relay Centres Network and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Many relevant technologies, in particular biotechnologies, are privately owned, and forging effective partnerships with the business community will be another critical activity for more effective technological cooperation. At its last meeting, the Conference of the Parties showed its full commitment to such partnerships by adopting its first ever decision focusing exclusively on engagement with the private sector. As part of its outreach activities to the business community, the Secretariat published *Business.2010*, a newsletter on business and biodiversity, and I am very pleased to take the occasion of this meeting to launch the fourth issue of the newsletter, which focuses for technology transfer and cooperation under the Convention. The newsletter provides a range of views on how the technology transfer agenda can be further moved forward under the Convention, and it is my hope that it will kindle interest and enthusiasm among business leaders to deepen their engagement with governments and stakeholders discussing on this important area.

I wish you stimulating and productive discussions in the coming days, and every success in developing a strong strategy for implementing the programme of work on technology transfer and scientific and technological cooperation – a task whose importance cannot be overestimated in light of the essential nature of technology transfer and cooperation under the Convention and the limited progress we made so far, as well as in light of the unprecedented challenges facing the international community for achieving, in less than two years from now, the 2010 Biodiversity Target. I sincerely hope that your proceeding will assist COP-9, which will be held in Bonn in May 2008, to be a landmark event in achieving this strategic target.

Thank you for your kind attention
