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Draft biodiversity accord finalized at UN meeting in Colombia



30 March 2010 – After a week of intensive discussions and six weeks of preparation, a draft international agreement on access to the Earth's genetic resources and the fair and equitable share in benefits from their use has been finalized at a United Nations meeting in Cali, Colombia.

"For its first United Nations meeting, Cali has fulfilled its mandate and entered history as the birthplace of the draft Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit sharing," Ahmed Djoghla, Executive Secretary for the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, said Sunday in a statement.

"Parties and their partners have agreed on a draft Nagoya protocol, as well as on the road map from Cali to Nagoya and beyond," Mr. Djoghla added, noting that the draft will be on the agenda for adoption at the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit to be held in October in Japan.

More than 500 participants from governments, indigenous and local communities, civil society, research institutions and business contributed to this week's document.

The draft protocol, which has not been publicly released, addressed the issue of "access and benefit-sharing" (ABS), which has historically been a source of tension between developing countries and companies in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, agriculture, horticulture and biotechnology.

ABS refers to the way genetic resources – whether plant, animal or microorganism – are accessed, and how the benefits that result from their use by various research

institutes, universities or private companies are shared with the people or countries that provide them.

Prior to the Nagoya Summit, the UN General Assembly will hold a high-level thematic meeting devoted to biodiversity in September, to coincide with the high-level General Debate in New York.

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