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UN Member States endorse plan to halt biodiversity loss and share genetic resources



2 November 2010 – Member States of the United Nations have adopted a new 10-year global strategy designed to halt the loss of the world biological diversity, with countries agreeing to draft national implementation plans to safeguard genetic resources within two years, a senior UN official said today.

Environment ministers from 193 countries attending the two-week conference of parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity ([CBD](#)), which ended in the Japanese city of Nagoya on Saturday, also adopted a new protocol on the sharing the benefits of the planet's genetic resources.

By signing on to the Nagoya Biodiversity Compact, countries agreed on targets to reduce by half the loss of natural habitats and raise nature reserves to 17 per cent of the world's land area and 10 per cent of marine and coastal areas by 2020, Ahmed Djoghlaif, the CBD Executive Secretary, told reporters at the UN headquarters in New York.

The voluntary drawing up of the national biological diversity plans is intended to stop over-fishing, reduce pollution, protect coral reefs and reduce the loss of genetic diversity in agricultural ecosystems.

The strategy includes a resource mobilisation plan which is aimed at raising current levels of development assistance to support projects aimed at conserving biodiversity.

The protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization stipulates the basic rules on how nations will cooperate in obtaining genetic resources.

Mr. Djoghlaif described the protocol as one of the most important legal instruments in the history of the environmental protection, saying it would help achieve sustainable development and facilitate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)), the eight poverty alleviation and social development targets which States and their partners have agreed to achieve by 2015.

“This is for me a one of the most important legal instruments in the history of multilateral cooperation in general, environment in particular, and UN treaties in particular. It is sustainable development at its best, it is MDGs at its best and it is biodiversity convention at its best,” said Mr. Djoghlaif.

“The protocol will allow us now to fully implement the convention,” he said, adding that it had established the foundation of a new international economic and ecological order based on respect of nature in its diversity, including human beings.

The Protocol outlines how benefits – for example, from when a plant’s genetics are turned into a commercial product, such as a pharmaceutical – will be shared with countries and communities who conserved and managed that resource, in some cases for millennia.

It also lays out rules on how substances and compounds derived from genetic resources will be managed and clarifies important issues related to pathogens, including how developed countries could obtain a flu virus to develop a vaccine in order to stave off an immanent epidemic.