

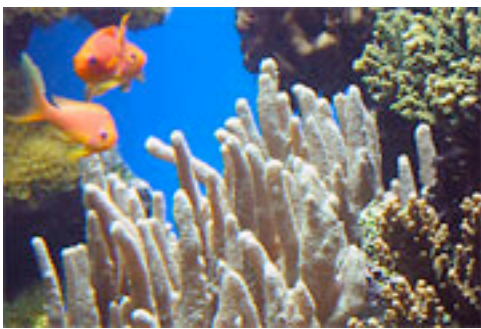


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# UN NEWS CENTRE



## Final push towards biodiversity accord begins at UN meeting in Colombia



22 March 2010 – After six years of intensive discussions, some 500 delegates have gathered at a United Nations [meeting](#) in Cali, Colombia, to hammer out an international agreement on access to the Earth's genetic resources and the fair and equitable share in benefits from their use.

"The time for talk is over. The time for action is now. Cali is the right place to demonstrate the required political will and display the necessary spirit of compromise by all stakeholders," said Ahmed Djoghlaif, the Executive Secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

At issue is "access and benefit-sharing" (ABS), which 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.

The concept of ABS has historically been a source of tension between developing countries and companies in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, agriculture, horticulture and biotechnology.

"Cali is the right place and the right opportunity to offer to the children of the world as a gift to the celebration of this year, the International Year of Biodiversity, the draft Aichi-Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit-sharing," Mr. Djoghlaif added.

The discussions to finalize the ABS documents at the working group meeting in Colombia from 22 to 28 March will be the last formal negotiating session before the

Nagoya Biodiversity Summit in October, where the document is expected to be approved.

"A new spirit of cooperation has emerged and there is a growing appreciation that this regime represents a win-win situation for all countries," said Timothy Hodges of Canada and Fernando Casas of Colombia, co-chairs of the negotiating committee, looking ahead to Japan.

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

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