



PRESS RELEASE

Governments encouraged to use biodiversity and ecosystem services as strategy for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction

Montreal/Paris, 9 December 2015 – Biodiversity and the ecosystem services it underpins can deliver benefits that will increase the resilience of people to the impacts of climate change, said current and former executives of major multilateral environmental agreements, at an event in the margins of the Paris Climate Change Conference.

At a side event held in Le Bourget, Paris, at the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, current and former executives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the Global Environment Facility, along with the Minister of Water and Sanitation of South Africa, urged Governments to consider using ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction to provide communities with safety nets in times of climate shocks and natural disasters.

“Biodiversity and healthy ecosystems are the building blocks that provide natural solutions which build resilience for society to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change”, said the Hon. Nomvula Mokonyane, Minister of Water and Sanitation, South Africa.

As climate change increases the frequency and intensity of extreme weather and climatic events, ecosystems can provide protection from these extremes by stabilizing the movement of water, earth, rocks and snow, serving as a buffer from climatic impacts and hazards. Ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation (EbA) use biodiversity and ecosystem services as part of an overall adaptation strategy to help people adapt to the adverse effects of climate change, while ecosystem-based approaches to disaster risk reduction (Eco-DRR) are defined as “sustainable management, conservation and restoration of ecosystems to reduce disaster risk, with the aim to achieve sustainable and resilient development”.

“Biodiversity is a critical resource, not only for climate change adaptation and mitigation, but also as a tool to make countries more resilient and help reduce the risk and damage associated with natural disasters”, said Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity. “Taking ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation and ecosystem-based approaches to disaster risk reduction enables people to adapt to the impacts of climate change by using opportunities created by sustainably managing, conserving and restoring ecosystems to provide ecosystem goods and services. It is clear that these approaches should be integrated into broader adaptation and development strategies.”



Convention on
Biological Diversity

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Naoko Ishii, CEO and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility, said that “the fight against climate change and biodiversity is intrinsically linked. It is increasingly important to put a value on nature and take an integrated approach to the management of our threatened ecosystems”.

Healthy ecosystems can also reduce socio-economic vulnerability by providing essential goods and services to people, such as supporting income generation and protecting human health. At the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in October 2014, member Parties requested the Executive Secretary to compile and analyse experiences with ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction and ecosystem-based adaptation. In response, the Secretariat is preparing a synthesis report that compiles experiences, planned activities and national targets of Parties, as well as other relevant information related to EbA and Eco-DRR. In addition, a technical workshop was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 28 September to 2 October 2015, with the support of the European Union and the Governments of Germany, South Africa and Sweden. The purpose of the workshop was to review a draft synthesis report on experiences with implementation of EbA and Eco-DRR, to identify gaps and to share further information in order to strengthen the report. The main conclusions from the synthesis report and from the workshop will be presented to the Convention’s Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice for consideration at its twentieth meeting, being held in April 2016.

Note to editors

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 196 Parties up to now, 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 and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing are supplementary agreements to the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol, which entered into force on 11 September 2003, seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 170 Parties have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies. It entered into force on 12 October 2014 and to date has been ratified by 69 Parties. For more information visit: www.cbd.int. For additional information, please contact: David Ainsworth on +1 514 287 7025 or at david.ainsworth@cbd.int; or Johan Hedlund on +1 514 287 6670 or at johan.hedlund@cbd.int.
