



PRESS RELEASE

Governments should consider the use of biodiversity and ecosystem services as strategy for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction

Montreal, 21 October 2015 – Biodiversity and the ecosystem services it underpins can be the basis for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies as they can deliver benefits that will, according to the outcomes of a recent technical workshop on ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, increase the resilience of people to the impacts of climate change.

The key messages from the workshop, recently held in Johannesburg, South Africa, were delivered at a side event in Ankara, Turkey, at the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The focus of the messages is that governments should consider ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction to provide safety nets to communities in times of climate shocks and natural disasters. These findings come in advance of the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (“Paris 2015”).

"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 Barbara Thomson, Deputy Minister, Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa.

As climate change increases the frequency and intensity of extreme weather and climate events, ecosystems can provide protection from these extremes by stabilizing the movement of water, earth, rocks and snow; serving as a buffer from climate 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 as a tool to make countries more resilient and help reduce the risk and damages 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



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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.”

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 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in October 2014, member States requested the Executive Secretary to compile and analyze experiences on 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 on ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction was organized in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 28 September to 2 October 2015, with the support of the European Union, the Government of South Africa, the Government of Sweden and the Government of Germany.

The purpose of the workshop was to review a draft synthesis report on experiences with implementation of EbA and Eco-DRR, identify gaps and share more information to strengthen the report. Workshop participants, which included national experts from key regions, including from small island developing States and least developed countries, representatives from indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as experts from relevant organizations, provided perspectives on implementing EbA and Eco-DRR. 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.

For more information: www.cbd.int/climate/doc/flyer-climate-2015-10-20-en.pdf

Notes to Editors

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and entered 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 peoples 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 68 Parties. For more information visit: www.cbd.int.

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