



## PRESS RELEASE

### Governments and indigenous peoples meet to discuss contribution of traditional knowledge and their collective actions to global biodiversity policy

- *Some 500 delegates from around the world meet in Montreal to discuss indigenous peoples and local communities' contributions to the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020*
- *Discussions also on the contribution of the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*
- *Voluntary Guidelines for the Repatriation of Traditional Knowledge to be reviewed.*

**12 DECEMBER 2017** – Following traditional blessings by Elders of the local Mohawk Community of Kahnawake, delegates to the tenth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity will begin discussions on a number of important topics related to the contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

The meeting, being held 13 - 16 December 2017 in Montreal, Canada, also provides an opportunity to discuss the future of the Convention's programme of work on Article 8(j) - Traditional Knowledge, Innovations and Practices. This includes looking at achievements to date and strategizing for the positioning of indigenous peoples and local communities, proponents of the world's biological and cultural diversity.

The more than 500 delegates from around the world will address the following issues:

#### •**The Rutzolijirisaxik Voluntary Guidelines for the Repatriation of Traditional Knowledge**

The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions will consider the draft Rutzolijirisaxik Voluntary Guidelines for the Repatriation of Traditional Knowledge. The name 'Rutzolijirisaxik', given by the indigenous Maya peoples of the midwestern highlands in Guatemala, means "the significance of returning to the place of origin". Many entities - museums, herbaria, botanical and zoological gardens, databases, registers and gene-banks, among others - hold traditional knowledge. Repatriation of the traditional knowledge these entities hold, including by providing access to traditional knowledge and related and/or complementary information for indigenous peoples and local communities facilitates the recovery of traditional knowledge relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of

biodiversity. The Working Group is expected to complete a draft of the guidelines for consideration for adoption by the Conference of the Parties at the 2018 UN Biodiversity Conference<sup>1</sup> being held in Egypt.

**•Future of the Working Group on Article 8(j)**

To enhance efficiencies, coherence and coordination among bodies of the Convention and its Protocols, the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions is discussing the future of the Working Group. At least two options are being considered – integrating the work on traditional knowledge into other bodies of the Convention and its Protocols, with the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities; or establishing a subsidiary body on Article 8(j) with a mandate to provide advice to the Convention and its Protocol bodies. Future work will also be considered, including unfinished tasks, of the programme of work for Article 8(j), and on customary sustainable use, including possible post-2020 arrangements. The Working Group is expected to prepare recommendations for consideration and adoption by the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation and the 2018 UN Biodiversity Conference.

**•Contribution of the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions will hold an in-depth dialogue with panelist representatives from Parties, indigenous peoples and local communities, the United Nations and scientists who will present their experiences and recommendations for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals with the contribution of traditional knowledge.

**•Glossary of relevant key terms and concepts**

The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions will consider a set of terms and concepts within the context of Article 8(j), including traditional knowledge and indigenous peoples and local communities community conservation areas. The Working Group is expected to complete the glossary of key terms and concepts to be used within the context of Article 8(j), with a view to its consideration and adoption by the Conference of the Parties at the 2018 UN Biodiversity Conference.

**•The contribution of collective actions of indigenous peoples and local communities**

The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions will consider the role of collective action and methodological guidance for identifying, monitoring and assessing the contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities. While indigenous peoples and local communities manage the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity effectively, their contributions are not reflected in official reports. Discussions will thus focus on how and by which methodology the collective actions of indigenous peoples can be identified, monitored and assessed. The Working Group is expected to consider the methodological guidance with a view to it being finalized at the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation and adopting it at the 2018 UN Biodiversity Conference.

**•Safeguards in Biodiversity Financing Mechanisms**

The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions will discuss how Parties, other governments, international and business organizations, and other stakeholders take the Voluntary Guidelines on Safeguards in Biodiversity Financing Mechanism into account when selecting, designing and implementing biodiversity financing mechanisms. The Voluntary Guidelines represent important progress in addressing potential impacts of biodiversity financing mechanisms on biodiversity and on the rights and livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities effectively. The Working Group is expected to make recommendations for further consideration by the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, Third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing, to be held 10-22 November 2018 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

WG8J documents and Policy Brief available at: [www.cbd.int/conferences/sbstta-wg8j](http://www.cbd.int/conferences/sbstta-wg8j)

### **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 so far, 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, 171 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 104 Parties. For more information visit: [www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int). For additional information, please contact: David Ainsworth on +1 514 287 7025 or at [david.ainsworth@cbd.int](mailto:david.ainsworth@cbd.int); or Johan Hedlund on +1 514 287 6670 or at [johan.hedlund@cbd.int](mailto:johan.hedlund@cbd.int).

-----