

South-South Cooperation on Biodiversity

NEWSLETTER

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South-South Cooperation as a tool for the implementation of the new CBD Strategic Plan for 2011–2020

By Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity



AS INDICATED IN THE THIRD edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*, Parties failed to meet the 2010 target of the Convention. Even more, it is

necessary to recognize the steep challenge of meeting the proposed 2011-2020 goals of the Strategic Plan under negotiations, as well as the new Regime on ABS. The CBD targets and its related 2050 vision can only become reality with an increase in innovative forms of partnership, such as South-South cooperation complementing North-South arrangements, particularly with the increased recognition of the contribution of developing countries in areas such as technology, resources and capacity. After all, it must be remembered that the 130 members of the Group of 77 are CBD Parties, and they are the stewards of the majority of our global biodiversity.

Since the first brainstorming meeting on South-South Cooperation in 2006, the process has snowballed and developed into an important partnership. It has led us to the proposed Multi-Year Plan of Action for South-South Cooperation on Biodiversity for Development (posted under UNEP/CBD/COP/10/18/ADD1). This flexible working document is the result of the leadership and coordinated participation of many G-77 chairs, such as South Africa (the Plan started at the initiative of former Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo), as well as Pakistan, Antigua and Barbuda, Sudan and, in 2010, Yemen. I would also like to thank the members of the CBD Steering Committee on South-South cooperation (with representatives of Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Malawi, Philippines, South Africa and Yemen), and I wish Parties, on behalf of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, great success in their negotiations in Nagoya.



I would also like to call attention to the value and significance of the experiences demonstrated in the articles of this newsletter, and I reiterate the commitment of the Secretariat to support Parties in implementing decision IX/25 and the future Plan of Action on South-South Cooperation on biodiversity for development.

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Enhancing South-South Cooperation Essential for Developing Countries

By Mourad Ahmia, Executive Secretary of the Group of 77

THE LAST TWENTY YEARS HAVE

witnessed a major transformation in the way developing countries have been addressing environmental issues in the field of biodiversity. Increasingly, the emphasis of incorporating environmental consideration into economic and developmental priorities within the context of sustainable development constitutes a major concern for the global South. This explains the fundamental importance that developing countries attach to the Convention



on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Today a major challenge for developing countries is to enhance South-South cooperation in order to implement fully the objectives of the Convention and attain critical Millennium Development Goals. In this context, initiatives and projects advanced in the field of South-South cooperation, including triangular cooperation, represent vital tools for developing countries to share strategies for the effective implementation of the Convention.

In this regard, a significant step forward was taken by the Group of 77 in

initiating the elaboration of a Multi-Year Plan of Action (MYPA) for South-South Cooperation on Biodiversity for Development as recognized in decision IX/25 adopted by the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention held in Bonn, Germany, from 19-30 May 2008. The progress was launched in 2006 in partnership with the CBD Secretariat as an important mechanism to facilitate projects and programmes designed to support the achievement of the main objectives of the CBD. The proposed Multi-Year Plan of Action aims to:

- ▶ Enhance the implementation of the threefold objectives of the

South-South Cooperation for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity

Opportunities and Challenges as seen from the German Perspective

By Dirk Niebel, German Minister for Economic Co-operation and Development

IN RECENT YEARS WE HAVE SEEN A RAPID

change in development cooperation. New issues and new players are appearing on the development policy stage. With them come new forms of cooperation, with collaboration between the countries of the South playing an ever greater role. I expressly welcome these instances of South-South cooperation as they are not only a beneficial complement to the already existing North-South cooperation approaches but also go beyond conventional development cooperation, covering areas such as trade, investment and technology exchange. For example, over the years Brazilian experts have built up an exemplary store of knowledge relating to the way that effective monitoring and verification systems can be used to detect illegal logging in the Amazon forest. They are sharing this knowledge with their colleagues in neighbouring countries and also in places such as Indonesia, where they face similar challenges. The advantages are clear: the technology is adapted to the specific requirements of remote sensing applied in the vast expanses of the rainforests, there are cultural similarities between the countries and, not only due to the shorter distances, such exchange is also more efficient.

South-South cooperation means that concrete development experiences can be shared and cross-border projects



implemented. Such cooperation often provides a special added value with regard to disseminating good practices and measures to strengthen institutional and technical capacities. It is often the case that such forms of cooperation are not only more readily accepted by the other country than in the conventional North-South relationship but are also more suitable for evaluating political sensitivities and conditions that are peculiar to the specific region. South-South cooperation can therefore be a very effective addition to the tried and tested instruments of development cooperation. For Germany, combining North-South cooperation with South-South cooperation – an arrangement known as triangular cooperation – is becoming more and more important. Such triangular cooperation arrangements promote joint learning and the exchange of know-how, build bridges between stakeholders and help create the setting for a partnership between equals.

In this context, in the last few years many of Germany's partner countries – or to be more precise, the private sector, civil society and public institutions in those countries – have engaged in cooperation with other countries of the South and in-depth exchanges of experience. In connection with the international Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) we have cooperation on all three of the CBD's main objectives: conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing

of benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources (ABS – access and benefit-sharing). Scientists, administrators and technical experts are included in this cooperation so that they can share their experience of managing biological diversity. At the heart of South-South cooperation is sharing practical experience and lessons learned. This practical cooperation directly helps the participating countries to deal with present challenges such as the conservation of eco-systems.

German development cooperation is involved in supporting a range of different South-South exchanges, making use of the advantages deriving from closer cooperation between South-South and North-South. Germany is the most important donor in this field, together with Spain and Japan. Particularly when it comes to the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity, we have had good experiences with this kind of cooperation:

- 1. SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION AS PART OF A REGIONAL APPROACH.** Germany cooperates with a regional organization and supports specific measures in one or more member countries: one example of such cooperation is the support being given to the Secretariat of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for the elaboration of a regional biodiversity strategy. Germany is advising on capacity building, drawing upon existing regional knowledge and on local experience, which is exchanged and shared among the member states.
- 2. WE ARE SUPPORTING SOUTH-SOUTH EXCHANGE BETWEEN REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS** on biodiversity topics. For example, Germany is promoting the exchange of experiences

Convention and the relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety through South-South cooperation;

- ▶ Provide a solid platform for Parties to exchange experiences and disseminate best practices among developing countries through South-South cooperation and to facilitate access to relevant information on major South-South initiatives on biodiversity;
- ▶ Provide a framework for Parties, development agencies, and various institutions to develop and implement projects, initiatives on South-South and triangular

cooperation under a common approach in order to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention;

- ▶ Mobilize additional resources for South-South and triangular initiatives in the Convention.

In this context, the proposed MYPA will not only provide a solid platform for the exchange of South-South scientific and technical knowledge and best practices, but also support the mainstreaming of biodiversity concerns into regional and sub-regional cooperation agreements as well as inter-regional South-South initiatives.

Today there is a mounting sense within the Group of 77 that MYPA's objectives are

particularly vital to targets envisioned by the Convention. In this context, the Group recognizes that South-South cooperation on biodiversity for development can make a valuable contribution towards the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources taking into account the varied linkages and interactions between biodiversity, climate change and desertification.

In this regard, the forthcoming session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (COP 10) to be held in Nagoya, Japan from 18 to 29 October, will provide a timely opportunity for Parties to showcase major South-South and North-South initiatives in support of biodiversity and renew their commitment towards further strengthening South-South cooperation on biodiversity for development. ❖

between representatives of regional organizations that are engaged in cross-border efforts to conserve tropical forests: the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC). Together with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the GTZ, acting on behalf of the BMZ, has drawn up a joint agenda of issues that are relevant for biodiversity. The issues include exchange on joint legal standards for trading in genetic resources and financing the sustainable use of natural resources. The results show that such cooperation is effective: topics with relevance for forests are increasingly being coordinated on a supranational and supraregional basis, with joint positions being elaborated on matters such

as trading in climate certificates and the certification of sustainable forest management.

3. DEVELOPING SOUTH-SOUTH NETWORKS FOR SPECIFIC TOPICS.

In cooperation with the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark and Canada, Germany is promoting capacity building and technology cooperation as essential aspects for achieving the third objective of the Convention. The ABS Initiative for Africa, hosted by the BMZ, is supporting a dialogue process among ABS experts (administration, science, politics, local communities) and between them and the private sector. The intention is to create a setting in which benefit-sharing in connection with the use of genetic resources can take place. The dialogue forums not only help with determining positions and reaching a

consensus but also prepare national representatives to play an active part in international negotiations. Thus they also pave the way for creating national legislation on ABS.

Apart from making use of the advantages that these kinds of cooperation offer, it is therefore also necessary to work continuously on the formulation of joint standards and criteria. The growth of South-South cooperation also brings with it new challenges: the more players involved, the more important it is to have good coordination. Germany therefore welcomes and supports the inclusion of concrete measures to promote and shape South-South cooperation in the CBD's strategic plan. A good opportunity for this is the first South-South Cooperation Forum on Biodiversity for Development, which will take place during the 10th Conference of the Parties (COP10) of the Convention in Nagoya. ❖

Helping Islands Adapt Workshop, April 2010, Auckland, New Zealand

This workshop focused on replicating lessons learned with the New-Zealand supported Pacific Invasives Initiative (PII) in major island regions (the Caribbean, Coral Triangle, Indian Ocean and Pacific), and included participants from 24 different countries as well as 29 national, regional and international organizations. The purpose of the workshop was to identify and strengthen cooperation mechanisms (including South-South) that enable effective invasive alien species management for island nations. It was designed to allow for the maximum exchange of experience, lessons learned and support between representatives from diverse island regions working in invasive species management. The workshop also built on efforts under the Cooperative Islands Initiative, a partnership launched at the World Summit for Sustainable Development and the CBD 6th Conference of the Parties in 2002. Outcomes included: common themes and lessons from regional collaboration and coordination; actions to strengthen invasive alien species management; networks and resources to facilitate learning and implementation; and key steps within international processes to catalyze and support regional efforts. For more information, please visit www.helpingislandsadapt.org.nz.

THREE MAJOR REGIONAL FOREST LEADERS TO MEET ON SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION IN NAGOYA

During COP-10 in Nagoya, a discussion supported by the SCBD and GTZ will host head representatives of three regional forest organizations, ACTO, COMIFAC and ASEAN, as well as other stakeholders and relevant partners, in light of the upcoming International Year on Forests of 2011.



South-South Cooperation

a Vital Process to Face the Challenges of the South

By **Juan Rafael Elvira Quesada**,
Minister of Environment and Natural
Resources of Mexico.

IN JUNE 2007, AT THE HEILIGENDAMM

Summit, the Group of Eight +5, Mr. Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, President of Mexico amongst his homologues from the G-5, (Brazil, China, India and South Africa) introduced the "Joint Position Paper of Brazil, China, India, Mexico, and South Africa", which, along with other topics, highlights the necessity to build a true global association for development, like it is established in the 8th Objective of the Millennium Development Goals, the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Implementation Plan.

Likewise, it re-affirms the role of South-South cooperation (SSC) in the general context of multilateralism as a vital process to face the challenges of the South, in particular its role as a tool for stimulus and for strengthening the economic independence of developing countries in the quest to achieve a fair global economic order.

The common shared challenges of the developing countries encompass the millennium development goals,



the international cooperation regarding development, financial aid for development, access to the markets in the global trade system, participation in the international financial institutions, the fight against degradation of the environment and climate change, and consolidation of sustainable development.

The Mexican Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources has incorporated, in its Sectoral Program 2006-2012 and in its annual working programs, a strategy for international cooperation in which South-South cooperation has the same level of importance than North-South cooperation.

Therefore we have established a goal for 2012, with solid institutional bases to put ourselves in new scenarios of international cooperation, mainly through:

- ▶ Encouraging the growing participation of Mexico in political negotiations and in activities of international cooperation, under the premise of becoming better able to propose independent initiative;

- ▶ Identifying Mexico as a bridge country between developed and developing countries;
- ▶ Incorporating new cooperation mechanisms like triangular, regional, and South-South cooperation, and the integration of a growing co-participation and co-financing.

One of the major South-South cooperation mechanisms that Mexico promotes in the environmental agenda is the Meso-american Environmental Sustainability Strategy (EMSA, for its acronym in Spanish) in which the Environmental Ministries of Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic participate.

In 2007, the Ministries of Environment from the region jointly agreed to examine and define priorities for the cooperation on environmental matters, with an integral approach that includes transversal aspects, having as a result the approval of the EMSA in June 2008 through the Declaration of Campeche.

The EMSA answers to the objective of concentrating cooperation among the signing countries regarding priorities for a commonly agreed cooperation. In that sense, the decision between the countries resulted in a list of priority issues

List of SSC-related Side Events during COP 10

- ▶ **Regional Action Plan for Amazon Biodiversity**
27 October, Room 210
- ▶ **Sud Expert Plantes Initiative, the Way Ahead**
19 October, Room 210
- ▶ **The Multi-Year Plan of Action for South-South Cooperation on Biodiversity for Development**
22 October, Room 236
- ▶ **Protected Areas in Mesoamerica: A Basis for Enhancing Livelihoods and Addressing Climate Change**
27 October, Room 210
- ▶ **A Regional Biodiversity Strategy for the Andean Countries and its Links to the CBD Objectives**
27 October, Room 231B

www.cbd.int/cop10/side-events/?mtg=cop-10

Biodiversity and UNESCO

The Key Role of Dialogue, Networking and South-South Cooperation

By **Irina Bokova**, Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

IN THE AMAZON TROPICAL RAIN-

forest, one of the most biologically diverse on Earth, universities and research institutions are working together to promote the sustainable and equitable management of biodiversity by building scientific capacity and increasing the negotiation capabilities of a range of different actors.

This initiative is part of the South-South Cooperation programme for Environmentally Sound Socio-Economic Development in the Humid Tropics that focuses on network building, technology transfer and improvement of management know-how in UNESCO's biosphere reserves located in these zones. It has been coordinated since 1992 by UNESCO, the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World and the United Nations University.

In 2009, the Programme expanded its coverage to other humid tropic countries. These countries harbour most of the



world's biodiversity but all too often lack the scientific capacity to effectively manage sustainable development challenges.

As a result, a memorandum of understanding was signed involving actors from Latin America, Africa and Asia: the

Federal University of Pará in Brazil where UNESCO has a Chair in South-South Cooperation for Sustainable Development, the University of Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Indonesia's National Man and the Biosphere Committee. The aim is to strengthen cooperation in science and higher education in order to increase the local capacity for carrying out management, research and training in the humid tropics environment.

South-South cooperation, together with triangular North-South-South collaboration, represents for UNESCO a key mechanism for the promotion of sustainable development and peace. It enables developing countries to pool their experiences and efforts, learn from each other and design and implement joint policies and programmes.

for cooperation which were assigned in three strategic areas: biodiversity and forests; climate change and sustainable development. The EMSA was approved by the heads of state of the region, in the X summit of Dialog, Mechanisms and Concentration of Tuxtla, held in this city in the state of Tabasco, Mexico.

Regarding the biodiversity of the Mesoamerican region, it concentrates its cooperation efforts in the following strategic action lines:

a) Strengthening the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor (MBC) and coordinating among other regional Biological Corridors;

a) A regional system of protected areas and their connectivity;

b) Expert network for integral management of hydrographic basins;

c) A Mesoamerican system of economic and social valuation of ecosystems.

In this sense, Mexico has initiated concrete examples of SSC; such as the project supported by the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor about productive chains of goods and services based on biodiversity. The GEF and the World Bank will grant partial finance, 11.6 million dollars from the beginning of 2011. One of the results of this project is to launch green markets with the neighbor

countries.

As such, there are other initiatives of triangular cooperation with Central American countries. Regarding the solid waste integral management, Mexico and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) helped Guatemala to strengthen its institutional regulations. Also, with the support of the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ), Mexico worked with Guatemala, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic in the creation of their environmental management systems for solid waste.

Regarding climate change, JICA, in collaboration with Mexico, are supporting the formulation of Strategic Plans for Adaptations to Climate Change, providing experiences and methodologies that are being transferred to Central American countries to be used in their National Plans of Action against Climate Change.

In addition to Mesoamerican region efforts, our Ministry also has a great interest to start new South-South cooperation programs with other regions and countries of the world; with particular importance to the Latin American countries, the G5 members, and the mega diverse countries.

As an example, we are engaging with Indonesia through a new MoU to be signed at the next COP 10 to be held in Nagoya, in which, as an honorary

witness, Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, the Executive Secretary of the CBD, will participate.

This MoU includes topics like biodiversity, forests, management of protected natural areas, and sustainable tourism. As well, it recognizes the importance of promoting South-South cooperation as a tool to strengthen sustainable development in the developing countries.

On the same initiative, Mexico foresees the possibility of developing joint initiatives with third countries, or with donors to obtain technical, economic and financial support, and promote triangular or multilateral mechanisms of cooperation. To increase the strength and the scope of South-South cooperation, it is necessary to support it financially and institutionally, emphasizing that South-South cooperation is complementary and not a substitute for North-South cooperation.

We strongly believe that all countries have something to contribute to their peers. Each experience encloses an asset, and their transmission will give light to others. For that matter, South-South cooperation is of huge importance. In this sense, we encourage all the countries to support more associations of this kind and we make a call to the international community to financially and institutionally support South-South cooperation. ❖

The promotion of South-South dialogue and international cooperation through a variety of interdisciplinary networks and centres of excellence is central to UNESCO's intergovernmental scientific programmes. In particular, the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme is strongly committed to fully exploring the great potential of international, regional, sub-regional and ecosystem-specific networking, as well as South-South and North-South-South cooperation programmes, for ensuring environmental sustainability, reducing the rate of loss of biodiversity and related ecosystem services, and achieving sustainable development.

By recommending that environmental degradation can only be resolved through effective collaboration between countries, the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro reinforced South-South and triangular cooperation mechanisms. Since 1992, the MAB Programme has developed a wide range of them, including the establishment of transboundary and twinned biosphere reserves and national, regional and sub-regional networks allowing for exchanges of information and experience between the multiple biosphere reserve stakeholders. Ecosystem-specific networks on mountains and on coastal zones and small islands, and MAB research, capacity-building and

educational projects in marine ecosystems, forests, drylands, urban areas, wetlands and agro-ecosystems, provide additional insights into sustainable development models integrating community livelihoods, conservation of biological diversity and respect for cultural diversity.

Building and sharing knowledge and local capacity is an integral principle of South-South cooperation. This is the purpose of our network of 664 UNESCO Chairs spread across 127 countries. They serve both as "think tanks" and as "bridge builders" between the academic community, research and policy-making, civil society and local communities, helping to strengthen South-South and North-South cooperation, to create poles of excellence and innovation at the regional or sub-regional level and to lend added dynamism to networks and partnerships. Roughly fifty UNESCO Chairs address sustainable development, environmental, biodiversity and other issues of direct interest to multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity.

As a contribution to the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), a number of UNESCO Chairs have established valuable partnerships with the MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

For example, the UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Development and Environmental Education at the University of the Basque Country (Spain) is developing a series of research and teaching projects in the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve, and similar initiatives are being developed at the UNESCO Chair in Biosphere Reserves and Natural and Mixed World Heritage Sites located at the University for International Cooperation in Costa Rica. The UNESCO Chair in Pará for its part is coordinating the Amazonian South-South Cooperation Network, launched in April 2010. Currently composed of ten biospheres reserves in the Amazon, the Network is expected to provide a valuable platform to deal with environmental, socio-economic and cultural issues affecting one of the biologically most diverse, yet extremely fragile regions of the world.

A clear focus on such approaches in the design and implementation of the post-2010 biodiversity agenda will be vital to accelerating the achievement of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, namely the conservation of biodiversity and its sustainable and equitable use, and will significantly contribute to progress towards other internationally agreed development targets, including the Millennium Development Goals. ❖

South-South Cooperation

A Key Strategy for the Protection of Biological Diversity

By Bader Omar Aldafa, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

ARAB COUNTRIES ARE FACING SERIOUS sustainability challenges that affect the achievement of long-term development goals in their economic, social and environmental dimensions. On one hand, urbanization trends, population growth as well as unsustainable production and consumption patterns exacerbate already existing pressures on freshwater, marine and land resources, while also threatening natural habitats and biological diversity. On the other, new products derived from advancements in biotechnology and experiences gained from traditional knowledge continuously enter the international market and require us to reexamine the linkages between trade, environment, health and culture.



The Secretariat of the League of Arab States (LAS), the United Nations Environment Program Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP/ROWA) and ESCWA constitute the Joint Technical Secretariat of JCEDAR advising CAMRE on regional priorities for action. At the inter-regional level, ESCWA cooperates with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the four other United Nations Regional Commission by implementing activities that promote the International Year for Biological Diversity and prepare for the Commission on Sustainable

Development session, which will include biological diversity, biotechnology, forests and mountains among its thematic areas of focus during its next cycle.

The framework of South-South cooperation for addressing biological diversity issues in the Arab region is grounded in the *Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region* adopted by CAMRE

“In view of the challenges facing biological diversity, most Arab countries exerted efforts to meet the development goals related to biodiversity. This is manifested by the formulation of national strategies and related action plans for the conservation of biodiversity and implementation of programs for the establishment of protected areas.” —WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY, 5 JUNE 2010

These challenges cannot be addressed by countries alone and in an isolated manner. They require regional and inter-regional cooperation among member states to develop and implement effective strategies intended to protect biodiversity. Therefore, strengthening South-South cooperation among its member countries is one of the corner stone activities of ESCWA. We support member states in taking actions in a cooperative manner to prevent biological diversity loss and to secure benefits from biological resources as well as associated environmental services. South-South cooperation is specifically promoted through partnerships at the regional level through the Council for Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) and the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR), which consists of ESCWA member states, regional organizations, civil society representatives and other stakeholders.

and launched at the *World Summit on Sustainable Development* (WSSD) in Johannesburg in 2002. The initiative recognizes the threats to biodiversity loss and emphasizes the importance of environmental conservation to achieve sustainable development. It is implemented through partnerships between Arab countries and among organizations within the countries. It calls on the international community “to support the efforts of Arab countries to develop a regional program for the protection of biodiversity, including the establishment of a regional bank for genes and the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on biodiversity in the region.”

In support of these objectives and with the involvement of ESCWA, South-South cooperation on the protection of biological diversity pursues a multi-disciplinary approach. As result, the *Damascus Declaration on responding to the international financial crisis in the ESCWA region* was



adopted on 7 May 2009. The Declaration aims at assisting countries recover from the global economic turbulence that characterized the last few years through South-South cooperation. The Declaration stresses the importance of policies for environmental protection, and encourages national, regional and international funding to assist countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including MDG 7 targets related to forest cover and the rate of biological diversity loss.

Additionally, ESCWA leads the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) and supports its working groups on climate change, food security and the MDGs in view of facilitating coordination and coherence on regional policies and programs in support of member states. Complementing the cooperative framework, the United Nations and the LAS specialized organizations are preparing a vulnerability assessment of the impact of climate change on freshwater resources in the Arab region and its implications for socio-economic development and environmental sustainability. The assessment includes indicators for examining the implications of climate change for natural habitats, animals and plants species caused by droughts, desertification and natural disasters.

Furthermore, ESCWA supports the sustainable development efforts of local communities through the transfer of environmentally-sound technologies that can complement traditional knowledge on the cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plant varieties that are characteristic for the region. Activities include the launching of pilot projects aimed at generating income and employment opportunities for small scale farmers through the cultivation and processing of *zaatar* (*Origanum syriacum*) and *sumac* (*Rhus coriaria*). The project identified Lebanese varieties of the herbs and built local capacity in the propagation of these plant varieties in greenhouses as well as in backyards.

Small producer clusters were strengthened and supported to cultivate these varieties as an alternative to tobacco



monoculture that had come to dominate the agricultural sector in South Lebanon. Farmers were trained in the use of drip irrigation systems, good agricultural practices, inter-cropping schemes and effective post-harvest processing techniques. They became able to generate income from plants that had been traditionally collected haphazardly from the wild in an unsustainable manner and to the detriment of natural habitats. Testing to determine the organic and chemical composition of these plant varieties was also conducted by ESCWA. It is being used now by the Government of Lebanon as a basis to establish national standards

regarding Lebanese *zaatar* varieties. Lessons learned from these pilot projects have been transferred to other ESCWA member countries also interested in protecting local crop varieties and building upon traditional knowledge.

Alongside these pilot initiatives under the auspices of CAMRE and in partnership with the LAS and UNEP/ROWA, ESCWA coordinates a regional program for building the capacity of the Arab countries on trade and environment linkages. Under this umbrella, protection of biological diversity is reinforced through a regional follow-up on multilateral environmental agreements, policy support and technical

assistance on the environmental components of international trade agreements, mainstreaming environmental considerations into national development policies, and through regional discussion forums and expert meetings on biotechnology policies as well as ways to foster environmentally-sound technology transfer in the region in support of a new emerging green economy.

South-South cooperation is an essential element and a key strategy to forge a common understanding and to implement joint approaches for protecting biological diversity and promoting sustainable development in the region. ✦

Small Islands Collaborating on Shared Risk Management Issues

By Karen Bernard and Jacinda Fairholm, UNDP

IN COLLABORATION WITH KEY REGIONAL partners, UNDP has launched this year an unprecedented inter-regional program for South-South cooperation between the Caribbean and the Pacific, focusing on risk management issues of common concern to small islands. The program expected outcome is: strengthened safety and resilience of Pacific and Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) communities to a range of natural hazards by facilitating and supporting a South-South cooperation program targeted at strengthening climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction capacity in SIDS, based on the transfer of appropriate 'southern' expertise and technologies. Activities fall under three focus areas: documentation and dissemination of best practices on integrated climate change adaptation and disaster management specific to the SIDS context; transfer and exchange of related technologies and methodologies; and mainstreaming of disaster risk management and climate change adaptation into national development planning.

Funding for the project budget of \$809,978 USD is provided by UNDP's Special Unit for South-South Cooperation and by the UNDP-Japan Partnership Fund, with in-kind contributions from UNDP Pacific Centre.

This South-South project is coordinated by UNDP Pacific Centre, with extensive support from the regional UNDP Programme Caribbean Risk Management Initiative (CRMI) and UNDP's sub-regional Centre in Trinidad and Tobago. Regional partners -- who are involved in the project's governance structure and will lead the implementation of various activities -- include Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), CARICOM Climate Change Centre (CCCC) and University of the West Indies (UWI) from the Caribbean region. Key partners from the Pacific region include the Pacific Islands Applied Geo-Science Commission (SOPAC), South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and University of the South Pacific (USP). National expertise on specific topics is brought into the project via the respective regional

organizations, as pertinent.

With the greatest concentration of small island states worldwide, both the Pacific and the Caribbean regions face common threats based on the similar geography of small islands, accelerating climate change and the increasing frequency and intensity of related disasters; tropical cyclones and seawater flooding are annual occurrences, with the consequent damages and setbacks for human development. Seismic risk is also a substantial concern in both regions, with an incidence of tsunamis as well as active above ground and underwater volcanoes in several locations. Populations and key infrastructure concentrated heavily in coastal zones are exposed to recurrent flooding and sea level rise induced by climate change. Biodiversity on these islands is under constant threat by this onslaught, which in turn menaces traditional ways of life which are often dependent on the precariously balanced ecosystems which characterize small islands.

At the same time, SIDS countries and local communities have a range of capacities and practices for effective disaster prevention and management, based on traditional practices which stand the test of time and prove remarkably resilient, whereas others involve the use of new technologies suited for developing

countries with SIDS characteristics and limited resources. There is great potential for exchange of ideas, experiences and best practices between SIDS in the Pacific and the Caribbean, in order to find suitable solutions and replicate best practices for addressing the various threats posed by climate change and disasters. The way forward for SIDS countries also entails the harmonization of disaster risk management and climate change science, for a more integrated and effective approach which grasps the critical linkages between these fields of work.

One example of the ingenuity of remote communities in managing these risks was showcased at the regional meeting of disaster risk stakeholders held annually in the Caribbean, the Comprehensive Disaster Management Forum. The Director of Solomon Islands' National Disaster Management Office, Loti Yates, made a presentation to those in attendance on the traditional coping practices employed in some of the 900 islands which comprise this country. In the month before hurricane season starts, local people gather and process staple foods, such as cassava, breadfruit and taro, preserving and preparing these then burying them underground, wrapping them in thick layers of coconut fronds, or tying them under the roof. When hurricanes do strike, these remote communities often cannot be reached by national authorities to deliver any aid for days or weeks, but in the meantime, they will at least not go hungry, due to the food prepared and stored using traditional methods.

A Pacific delegation travelled to Jamaica in July of this year, to learn about the approach to disaster risk management undertaken by the national Office for Disaster and Emergency Management (ODPEM), which is recognized as one of the most effective national disaster management agencies in the region. ODPEM Director Ronald Jackson explained that the overarching goal of Jamaica's disaster management policies and systems is to make Jamaica's population resilient to recurring hazards such as hurricanes, floods and landslides. While he noted that the country has come a long way in the last few decades, there is still much to learn, and that examples from the Pacific can offer insights towards achieving this resiliency.

The Pacific group then visited various points of the Rio Cobre flood early warning system recently set up in Jamaica to cover an extensive flood plain on the outskirts of Kingston. This system operates both manually and automatically, with a simple yet effective mechanism for monitoring and warning the population for recurring floods, and displays similarities to the flood early warning systems



installed in the Navua area of Fiji. Jamaica and Fiji share similar geomorphological characteristics and biodiversity, with mountainous areas, strong rivers and populations living on riverbanks and in flood-prone areas. In 2009, Fiji experienced one of the most severe floods ever in its history, which pointed to the urgent need for effective early warning systems. In the Rio Cobre area, flood waters can also rise rapidly, at times reaching seven meters above the normal river height and trapping residents and motorists.

This Pacific delegation also travelled to Cuba, St. Lucia and Barbados to meet with counterparts there and witness disaster management practices on the ground.

Subsequently a Caribbean group arrived in Fiji to take part in the annual meeting of the Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management. In a related field visit, women of the Naviti Island community, Yasawas Island group, shared with the Caribbean delegation that when the cyclone comes they gather their fishing nets and shelve them high up in their homes, and the men move their boats inland to the mangroves to prevent any damage. Every year one or more of the hundreds of island communities in Fiji are vulnerable to the impact of natural hazards, potentially causing massive damage, as well as economic and social upheaval. The Yasawas group sits on the western most edge of Fiji, and is typically vulnerable to south-west Pacific cyclones. The cyclone season is from November – April in the South Pacific and runs contrary to the Caribbean Atlantic hurricane season.

Remote island communities, such as the Gunu village, draw on traditional knowledge as well as recently developed community disaster plans to cope with the threat of cyclones. Their grandfathers could read the winds and interpret the behaviours of the birds; now radio communications with the mainland helps

them keep alert. The recent training series with Pacific Community-focused Integrated Disaster Risk Reduction Project (PCIDRR) has allowed the community to form disaster committees and write up a plan. As part of this exercise, the community recently ran a tsunami exercise drill; the school children practiced dropping their belongings and moved quickly up the emergency route to a higher point on the hill.

Nicole Williams of the International Federation of the Red Cross Caribbean Regional office commented that "the achievement of the disaster plan is that the community sat down to talk about cyclones and disaster preparation and has identified ways to work together". The Fijians shared that their culture is based on oral tradition. During the conversation between the Yasawas islanders and Caribbean delegation, it emerged that the best way to help incorporate the written plan into the daily life of the village would be to share it verbally at community gatherings or translate it into a song or a story. This is the next step to strengthen community resilience.

Upcoming activities under this South-South program will address the technology transfer component. A regional training in agro-meteorology is planned for late 2010, to be led by world-renowned specialists based at Cuba's National Institute of Meteorology. This training will be provided to Pacific island countries which rely on agriculture as one of their main economic sectors, such as Fiji, Vanuata, Samoa, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu.

Plans are under way, in coordination with SPREP, WMO and the Caribbean Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH) to conduct a training course for climate observers in early 2011, to benefit numerous Pacific countries which have observers posted in distant locations on tiny outer islands. ❖

South-South and Triangular Cooperation on Biodiversity for Development

Lebanon Case Study in Saving a Cedars Forest with Replication to Other Cedars Forests in the Mediterranean Countries

By Lara Samaha, Head of Ecosystems Department, Ministry of Environment of Lebanon

BACKGROUND

CEDAR FORESTS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

cover an area of about 2700 km². This is approximately 3% of forests in the entire Mediterranean sub region of which about 2% are protected. There are four species of native cedars in the world: *Cedrus libani* A. Rich in Lebanon, Syria and Turkey; *Cedrus brevifolia* Henry in Cyprus; *Cedrus atlantica* Manetti in Morocco and Algeria; *Cedrus deodora* Loud in Afghanistan and India. They are distributed as follows: *Cedrus libani* found in Lebanon (2,200 hectares), Syria (400 hectares) and Turkey (100,000 hectares); *Cedrus brevifolia* found in Cyprus (810 hectares); *Cedrus atlantica* found in Morocco (140,000 hectares) and Algeria (27,000 hectares); and *Cedrus deodora* found in the Himalayas (500,000 hectares). These figures do not include the approximately 300,000 hectares of cedars that have been reforested during the last 50 years. Thus, more than half of the cedar forests (natural and reforested) occur in the Mediterranean region.

The cedar forest of Tannourine-Hadath El-Jebbeh is the largest contiguous cedar forest in Lebanon that is left from what used to cover the Lebanese western mountain chain and known under the name of "great cedar forest". Moreover, the cedar forests of Lebanon, which used to be widespread, have dwindled owing to a lack of adequate management, illegal cutting of trees, and over grazing. In recent years, a serious new threat has arisen in the Tannourine forest, namely the infestation by a new insect, *Cephalcia tannourinensis*. The infestation is affecting about 70% of the forest.

The genus *Cephalcia* is very old and has been first described by Panzer in 1805 from Japan and North America. Several *Cephalcia* species are considered severe pests on Norway spruce in central Europe. During its life cycle, *Cephalcia tannourinensis* passes most of its time as prepupae in diapause inside an earth-walled chamber in the mineral layer of the soil and hence is directly affected by soil properties. Because *Cephalcia* is present in central Europe and has caused severe outbreaks similar to what has happened in Lebanon, there is a strong possibility that it could spread to other cedar forests

in the region, if favorable conditions occur and thus it is important to investigate it.

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT-OTHER MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES AND GEF-UNEP:

In order to address the threats of *Cephalcia tannourinensis* to cedar forests in Lebanon, a partnership between the Lebanese Ministry of Environment and GEF-UNEP was established to implement the project on "Integrated Management of Cedar Forests in Lebanon in Cooperation with other Mediterranean Countries". The project combined a local approach of studying the causes of the insect outbreak and developing with a regional approach. The major concern amongst the scientific community is the spread of *Cephalcia tannourinensis* to other forests since this insect pest has started to attack the nearby Cedars of Bcharreh village in Lebanon. Moreover, there was a concern that it would spread and subsequently reach the remaining cedar forests of the Mediterranean region and thus would have a catastrophic effect on these forests. After an extended study of the biology of *Cephalcia* by the national experts in the Tannourine forest and spraying with an insect growth regulator for four consecutive years, the scientists came to the conclusion that in the absence of any intervention against this pest, its population would increase rapidly to an outbreak status again. Since the reliance on suppressing the insect population with spraying alone is not advisable due to its possible hazards to a forest ecosystem, it is imperative that other means of managing the insect population be developed. Therefore, it was important to continue the studies to find out the causes of the insect outbreak and subsequently develop alternate methods of managing the insect infestation without complete reliance on spraying the forest, even though a biopesticide was used.

In addition to Lebanon, the following countries participated in the scientific networking aspects of the project, namely Algeria, Cyprus, Morocco and Turkey. Due to the concern that the insect could spread, it was agreed that the project should have a strong coordinated regional dimension to ensure cross-fertilization of

ideas, exchange and sharing of knowledge with national and regional institutions and networks. The Medium Sized Project assessed cedar forests in the region to ascertain whether any infestation had occurred, or if the conditions of these forests would allow infestation to occur. Moreover, cooperation with INRA-France was established especially for the work on extracting and elucidating the composition of the pheromones since similar work was ongoing at the Chemical Mediators laboratory at INRA-Versailles, France.

The main development objective of the project was the development of an action plan for integrated sustainable management of cedar forests in the region using the Tannourine-Hadath El-Jebbeh cedar forest in Lebanon as a case example and addressing various threats to the forest ecosystem. This was achieved by studying the various factors that caused the *Cephalcia* outbreak in Lebanon and by the assessment of the possible threats of similar outbreaks in cedar forests in the Mediterranean region. Another development objective of the project was the enhancement of the institutional and community knowledge exchange, networking, education and capacity building for the management of cedar forests between Lebanon and the four participating countries in the project (Algeria, Cyprus, Morocco and Turkey).

Numerous positive outcomes have been achieved in this project. Some activities had considerable impact, particularly the research part of the project, such as the activities dealing with assessment of factors that led to *Cephalcia* outbreak and the promotion of new monitoring tools for the control of *Cephalcia* and particularly the *Cephalcia* pheromone extraction and identification. Significant impact was also achieved through the capacity building activities including the training components which were executed successfully.

SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION ON BIODIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT:

The project is a good example of South-South cooperation on biodiversity conservation. Accounts of cooperation at regional level amongst the developing countries involved in the project in addition to Lebanon included basically insect surveys of selected cedars forests in Algeria, Cyprus, Morocco and Turkey to determine the presence or absence of *Cephalcia* in these countries. This activity was carried out successfully with the conclusion that *Cephalcia* is absent in the selected cedars stands surveyed. Exchange of knowledge between the participants has helped in establishing a roster of experts in the problems of cedar insects.

The project which was funded by the GEF, implemented by UNEP, executed by the Lebanese Ministry of Environment in close collaboration with the American University of Beirut (AUB), and in addition to the collaborative work with the National Institute for Agriculture Research (INRA) in France, is an excellent case study of triangular cooperation. Indeed, in this project, we perceive the important role of GEF in promoting triangular cooperation, the role of the United Nations as a catalyst and facilitator of South-South cooperation, the role of developed countries (France) through its centers of excellence and research (INRA) in supporting South-South exchange and cooperation, and the engagement of the private academic institutions (AUB) into South-South cooperation on biodiversity for development, as well as the engagement of NGOs since certain activities of the project were executed by a number of local NGOs and experts.

This collaborative network is a significant beneficial output of the project. The Lebanese Ministry of Environment ensured the effective coordination and cooperation at national and regional levels and the achievement of scientific progress of the project. The GEF-UNEP has played a significant role in this initiative, similarly to their different projects, in encouraging scientific exchange and identifying best practices. The American University of Beirut (AUB), which is a prestigious university in the Middle East, has provided capacity development such as training and technical advice. One of the project activities was to conduct insect surveys in the participating countries; this particular activity



is strictly research and is often conducted by research institutions or universities, and in that aspect AUB has easily cooperated with these institutions. Similarly, the execution of the activity related to developing new monitoring tools (i.e. pheromone extraction and identification) which were also a collaborative work between the National Institute for Agriculture Research (INRA) in France and AUB.

Capacity building was carried out by a number of training workshops and some of them were particularly useful.

The best national and international scientific achievement of the project was the identification of the *Cephalcia tannourinensis* pheromone. A series of scientific publications has been published in different international scientific journals. This breakthrough within the *Cephalcia* group of insects will lead to a better understanding of the insect communication within this group. The use of the pheromone as a monitoring tool will have great impact on the detection of the presence of *Cephalcia* in

cedar forests in the participating countries.

Based on the above, this project promoted effectively South-South cooperation amongst the participating developing countries by supporting exchange of scientific and technical knowledge and expertise on assessment of risk from *Cephalcia* attack of cedar forests, by strengthening collaborative research of the cedar forests in the Mediterranean region for *Cephalcia* and its natural enemies, and by exchange of scientific, technical and technological know-how on cedar forest conservation from insect pest attack, and by coordinating related activities between Lebanon and the other countries involved in the project.

Furthermore, this is possibly the best collaborative work to be conducted at national level for similar projects. The most significant institutional strengthening aspect of this project has been the engagement of the National project stakeholders (MOE) with the Academic Institution (AUB) and NGOs, scientific community, conservation stakeholders and local community groups (Municipalities). This collaborative engagement, which has involved a significant commitment of time, has led to the generation of trust and respect among national stakeholders and has necessitated the development of creative thought, negotiation and mediation skills. The best example has been the change of attitude of the local communities in the project site in Lebanon, who were negative at the beginning but gradually became more positive when it was shown to them that the primary goal of the project was to benefit the local community. ♡

Some Policy Approaches to South-South Cooperation in the Caribbean

By Anita James, Biodiversity/Biosafety Coordinator, Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Fisheries and Forestry of Saint Lucia

SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION SEEKS TO LOOK at how developing countries can assist one another in meeting their respective development goals. In the case of biological resource management, countries of the Caribbean have been engaged in many aspects of assistance to one another over the years. The Convention on Biological Diversity is currently encouraging these and other developing countries to increase and enhance their modalities of collaboration on biodiversity resource management. This article will share how South-South cooperation is engraved or alluded to in many policy documents of intragovernmental agreements in the Caribbean. These policies need to be

implemented fully. Countries with similar social, economic and environmental experiences have much that they can share and help each other with, so that they do not have to reinvent the wheel or repeat past mistakes but rather build on best practices of other similar states. They are increasingly recognizing how they can pool resources to help each other. We will begin by stating the pertinent extract from a decision produced during the seventeenth meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean organized by the United Nations Environment Program –Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNEP-ROLAC). The countries decided:

- ▶ To cooperate at the maximum extent possible in the protection and sustainable use of biological diversity

in the sectoral and intersectoral plans, programmes and policies;

- ▶ To promote the exchange of experiences among countries in the region related to the scope of application of their national conservation plans;
- ▶ To promote synergies among the biological diversity related conventions, respecting their relevant mandates, as a way towards facilitating effective national, regional and global implementation and the accomplishment of their objectives.

On the question of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), this same meeting decided to re-establish the Ministerial Support Group to facilitate deeper



South-South cooperation between Latin American countries and Caribbean SIDS.

This Group also has an Initiative for Latin America and the Caribbean (ILAC) and the priority area of forest cover as its first activity to identify areas of regional cooperation while another activity is to share experiences related to the use of information technologies for decision making.

The decision has also been taken to request the support of the interagency technical committee (ITC) agencies of the intergovernmental meetings of UNEP-ROLAC, so that the initiative being undertaken by Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Haiti to establish a Caribbean Biological Corridor in the insular Caribbean continues to achieve positive results and commend its extension to include the other Caribbean SIDS.

The Caribbean countries, by and large, are also parties to the Caribbean Environment Program (CEP), managed by the UNEP-Regional Coordinating Unit of the Caribbean (UNEP-CAR/RCU), which is spearheaded by the Cartagena Convention for Protection of the Wider Caribbean Sea and has for mission to promote regional cooperation for the protection and development of the marine environment of the Wider Caribbean Region.

At the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat level, the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) is a committee made up of ministers designated by the member states and is responsible for the promotion of trade and economic development of the community. As far as biodiversity conservation is concerned, COTED's objectives are to promote measures for the development of energy and natural resources on a sustainable basis and to promote and develop policies for the protection and preservation of the environment and for sustainable development.

CARICOM is part of a project entitled "Capacity building related to MEA's in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries-the Caribbean Hub Subcomponent", initiated by the ACP and ASEAN in Brussels and is part of an overall European Commission programme for capacity building related to MEA implementation in ACP countries. South-South cooperation will be further strengthened through the exchange of expertise and professional experience among beneficiaries and target groups.

The Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) St. Georges Declaration of Environmental Principles (SGD) that was revised and endorsed by OECS Ministers of the Environment in 2006, declares in its preamble that the countries desire to collaborate in the identification and implementation of actions aimed specifically at the protection of natural resources and effective environmental management, and to establish goals and targets related to such that are appropriate to the context and needs of member states. To meet the commitments to an enhanced quality of life for each of their citizens, each member state further agrees to work individually and jointly to implement shared goals for environmental management.

Under the Implementation Section of the SGD, OECS member states agree to work concertedly together to achieve the regional goals and targets enunciated in the Declaration.

In the commitments to the SGD, the OECS Environmental and Sustainable Development Unit, in collaboration with national agencies and regional and international agencies, shall continue to intensify its efforts to implement the Declaration, and in this regard shall: facilitate cooperation between Governments in adopting and implementing appropriate programmes to give effect to the goals of the Declaration and the National Environmental Management Strategies (NEMS).

In the same commitments, governments agree to collaborate in the development and implementation of the interventions included in the Declaration. This includes reference to Goal 3 of the SGD which states that it should achieve the long-term protection and sustained productivity of the region's natural resource base and the ecosystem services it provides and this incorporates Principle 13 of the SGD which seeks to protect and conserve biological diversity.

A final example showcasing the policy instruments undertaken by agencies of the region to help out with South-South cooperation in biodiversity conservation relates to the Caribbean Invasive Species Working Group (CISWG). This group stemmed from a meeting held in 2003 to discuss invasive species as part of a Caribbean Food Crops Society (CFCS) annual meeting. All Caribbean (English, French, Spanish and Dutch speaking) countries have been invited to nominate a contact person to liaise with CISWG. The purpose of the CISWG is to develop strategies to safeguard the Caribbean against attack by invasive species with special reference to agricultural commodities and products. A document entitled "Caribbean Regional Invasive Species Intervention Strategy" (CRISIS) was developed and presented to the May 2005 COTED meeting. CISWG then became legitimized with CARDI designated chair of the organization. The CRISIS document was then used to produce a project proposal and the Caribbean Invasive Species Surveillance and Information Programme or CISSIP is the result.

From the foregoing examples it can be seen from a Caribbean perspective that many different intergovernmental agencies have enshrined into their policies that countries should assist each other in achieving biodiversity conservation management. It therefore follows that that the proposed multi-year plan of action for South-South cooperation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the post-2010 Strategic Plan and the multi-year program of work of the CBD are in tandem with the policies outlined above. Implementing these programs of work will help the agencies above achieve their goals. It now behooves the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to enter into memoranda of agreement with the OECS, CARICOM, UNEP-ROLAC, UNEP-CAR/RCU, ACP-EU system and similar agencies so that they can incorporate specific elements of the above work programmes related to their mandates, into their implementation activities, from a South-South cooperation perspective. In that way, there will be greater integration of activities, more efficient use of resources and less burden and overlap on the already resource-constrained developing countries. ❖



Borneo: Getting to the Heart of South-South Cooperation on Biological Diversity

By Adam Tomasek, Leader of the Heart of Borneo Initiative, WWF Indonesia

THE ISLAND OF BORNEO, the third largest in the world, with its vast tracts of intact rainforest, is one of the most biodiverse places on the planet. Over the past three decades, logging, agriculture expansion and other intensive resource extraction activities have dramatically reduced the forest cover on the island, but despite this, the largest transboundary rainforest in Southeast Asia remains intact. Known as the Heart of Borneo (HoB), the home to orangutans, pygmy elephants, rhinos, clouded leopards and other amazing creatures, is also the source of 75% of the major rivers in Borneo and home to several ethnic groups of indigenous peoples collectively known as Dayak.

The future of the forest ecosystems and biodiversity in the HoB are dependent on a visionary South-South country initiative. Signed in February 2007, the Heart of Borneo Declaration involving the three Borneo governments of Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei, seeks to protect and promote sustainable use of resources across 22 million hectares. WWF, with country offices in Indonesia and Malaysia and a global program focused on the Heart of Borneo, has been a partner in the initiative since its inception and continues to support the three governments to successfully implement the HoB Declaration. The Heart of Borneo is a real example of meaningful South-South cooperation.

CRUCIAL FACTORS IN ESTABLISHING EFFECTIVE SOUTH-SOUTH INITIATIVES SUCH AS THE HOB.

There are many success factors in achieving something as far reaching and ambitious as the HoB Declaration. Equally the Declaration is only the beginning of the even more challenging task of on-ground implementation.

WWF's experience with the Heart of Borneo has revealed a number of factors that influence the process of achieving a successful South-South Initiative in the area of biodiversity conservation. These are:

- ▶ **WIDESPREAD SUPPORT** — initiatives of this scale require support at the highest political levels (both nationally and regionally), requiring multiple partners, engagement of the private sector and the creation of a focused team over a number of years to coordinate activities.
- ▶ **ADVOCACY** — it is imperative that the member countries "own" the initiative, but the advocacy task in getting these sorts of agreements off the ground is monumental. Regional relations between the participating governments can sometimes be strained due to many unrelated issues.
- ▶ **A SINGLE TIME BOUND GOAL** — Clearly defining a single time bound goal in terms of a 'vision' rather than a series of specific agreements between the three countries was a critical feature. The implementation of the Declaration has been interpreted in the context of global and local realities by member countries as well as partners. For example, WWF's HoB Initiative has been advancing the concept of a 'green economy' for the HoB — a concept rapidly gaining international recognition and support as a comprehensive and holistic approach to conservation and sustainable development across regions. Importantly this approach is viewed to help the member countries obtain the goals agreed in the HoB Declaration.
- ▶ **BUILDING A COALITION OF PARTNERS** — in addition to the commitment of the three HoB countries, a coalition of like-minded local and international partners is important. In the case of the HoB, the Brunei government hosted a workshop in 2005, with WWF acting as secretariat. There were representatives from many diplomatic missions, UNESCO, ASEAN, IUCN, ITTO, WWF, Wildlife Conservation Society, The Nature Conservancy, TRAFFIC, Brunei Nature Society and others. There was active and positive participation from all sectors, and this has continued to evolve over the subsequent years.
- ▶ **USE EXISTING POLITICAL FRAMEWORKS** — Using existing multilateral agreements to help achieve regional consensus was essential. By adopting a stepping stone approach, we were able to help the HoB three governments position the HoB as a regional priority within BIMP-EAGA, ASEAN, APEC as well as the CBD and UNFCCC.
- ▶ **ENCOURAGE INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT SUPPORT** — By the end of 2005, the time was right for a high-level support from the international community. The soft approval from countries at the local/provincial/departmental level had to be translated into commitment with international backing. With support from the WWF, several foreign governments officially encouraged, supported and invested in the governments of Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei to commit to making the Heart of Borneo a successful endeavor.

A GREEN ECONOMY FOR THE HEART OF BORNEO

The three governing countries have adopted five themes for action within their respective tri-national Strategic Plans of Action (SPA): ecotourism development, capacity building, transboundary, protected area and sustainable natural resource management.

WWF has encapsulated these themes for the Heart of Borneo, within the broad concept of a 'green economy' where governments, business and communities value key ecosystem services, stop conversion of natural resources, reduce green house gas emissions and generate equitable livelihoods.

The pursuit of a green economic vision will require commitment from the three governments to put in place the legislation and policy frameworks to drive green growth initiatives. It will also require participation by the private sector to generate the investment and innovation to take advantage of the opportunities that arise. The international investment community and other stakeholders will be key agents to develop the sustainable financing mechanisms, such as REDD and carbon trading arrangements, to encourage the transformation towards a green HoB economy. The Heart of Borneo is recognized as a flagship regional initiative of the Convention, and the HoB three governments have used the Convention to both detail their progress as well as encourage enhanced involvement of other governments. South-South cooperation is a foundation of success for the Heart of Borneo Initiative. ❖