



PRESS RELEASE

20 years after their birth, three sister Rio Conventions reaffirm their collective responsibility for sustainable development

21 June 2012, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil – The heads of the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) reaffirmed their determination to work to generate synergies in national implementation in support of sustainable development.

In a joint statement issued today, the Executive Secretaries of the three Rio Conventions committed to tackle sustainable development challenges by focusing on prioritized cross-cutting themes. These include landscape and ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation, generating and sharing information on climate change impacts and vulnerability when considering biodiversity and land use and mainstreaming gender into activities related to the implementation of the conventions act.

The three top officials of the three Conventions that came of Rio in 1992 emphasized the need for “coordinated, concrete, concerted, simple and attainable solutions” to achieve “a truly sustainable future”. To this end, they called on countries and governments to set sustainable development goals, including achievable targets on land, biodiversity and climate change.

Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary of the CBD said “Twenty years of experience under these three agreements has produced the body of policy that we need to realize sustainable development. We now need to accelerate the implementation of this framework – at all levels, and in so doing, increase coordination so we can realize the important synergies that are needed for development.”

Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary of the UNCCD said “Further commitment by the international community is needed to achieve The Future We Want. Going carbon neutral, becoming land degradation-neutral and halting the loss of biodiversity are intertwined goals. Countries and governments should set sustainable development goals that take into account existing inter-linkages among the three pillars of sustainable development and that recognize the important goals and targets already agreed upon among the Rio Conventions.”

Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC said “Governments are on the right track in terms of designing international policy frameworks. Under the UNFCCC, they have set the goal of a maximum 2 degrees Celsius temperature rise, with a view to considering 1.5 degrees Celsius. They are building the support infrastructure for developing countries and are working towards a new universal climate change agreement, whilst increasing ambition now. There is no doubt that the scope and speed of action urgently needs to be stepped up, and that holds true for all three Conventions.”

The joint statement was first disclosed on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the three Rio Conventions by their respective Executive Secretaries at a breakfast round-table with the current

Presidencies of the respective Conference of the Parties. The Anniversary was celebrated with a full day programme at the Rio Conventions Pavilion (www.riopavilion.org).

The Rio Conventions have played a key role in framing global and national policy responses to the challenges of climate change, loss of biodiversity, desertification and land degradation. Their collaboration is facilitated in the context of the Joint Liaison Group run directly by the Executive Secretaries of the three Conventions.

Notes for editors

About CBD

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 193 Parties, 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. (www.cbd.int)

About the UNCCD

Desertification, along with climate change and the loss of biodiversity were identified as the greatest challenges to sustainable development during the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. Established in 1994, UNCCD is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment, development and the promotion of healthy soils. The Convention's 195 signatory Parties work to alleviate poverty in the drylands, maintain and restore the land's productivity, and mitigate the effects of drought. (www.unccd.int)

About the UNFCCC

With 194 Parties, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has near universal membership and is the parent treaty of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol has been ratified by 191 of the UNFCCC Parties. Under the Protocol, 37 States, consisting of highly industrialized countries and countries undergoing the process of transition to a market economy, have legally binding emission limitation and reduction commitments. The ultimate objective of both treaties is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system. (www.unfccc.int)

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