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UNECE RENEWS ITS COMMITMENT TO BIODIVERSITY

The Nagoya Biodiversity Summit closed on a high note on 29 October 2010. The representatives of the 193 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) agreed on a package of measures resulting in the adoption of:

- a new ten year Strategic Plan to increase both international and national efforts in order to meet the objectives of the CBD
- a resource mobilization strategy that will substantially increase the current levels of official development assistance assigned to biodiversity
- a new international protocol for accessing and sharing the benefits from the use of the planet's genetic resources.

One of the key issues addressed during the summit was the loss of natural habitats. Parties to the convention agreed to at least halve (and when possible, to eliminate) the rate of natural habitat loss, including forests.

UNECE pledged its support to the preservation of biodiversity through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The MoU was signed on 26 October 2010 by Ján Kubiš, UNECE Executive Secretary, and Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the CBD.

This MoU will allow UNECE and the CBD to further strengthen their collaboration through enhanced exchange of information and use of their expertise in support of each other's mandates in areas of mutual interest. In this respect, the MoU recognizes the importance and relevance of the work of the UNECE environmental performance reviews and in timber and forestry. □

For further information, please refer to the MoU at: http://www.unece.org/oes/MOU/mou_toc.htm.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO PROMOTE INNOVATION-DRIVEN START-UPS AND ACADEMIC SPIN-OFFS KIEV – UKRAINE, 9-11 NOVEMBER 2010

Many UNECE countries with emerging market economies have a well-established tradition in academic and applied research. However, the commercialization of the results of research and development (R&D), which is pivotal for the competitiveness of the modern economy, often faces difficulties linked to inadequate business climate, lack of entrepreneurial experience by academics as well as problems in commercializing R&D outputs. Poor linkages between the academia and the business sector and insufficient sources of financing also create obstacles to the establishment of new innovation-based enterprises and spin-off companies.

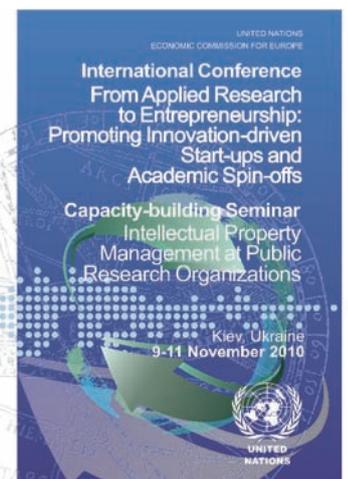
The international experience suggests that effective commercialization of R&D results requires a regulatory and institutional setup which fosters collaboration between the academia and the business sector. In particular, clear legal definition and protection of intellectual property rights, targeted financial support to patenting, consultative services to would-be entrepreneurs and the development of innovation support institutions could contribute to removing the existing bottlenecks at various stages of commercialization.

These and other issues relating to the transformation of intellectual property of academic institutions into

marketable products and services will be discussed at the International Conference "From Applied Research to Entrepreneurship: Promoting Innovation-driven Start-ups and Academic Spin-offs" and a Capacity-building Seminar "Intellectual Property Management at Public Research Organizations", which will take place on 9 to 11 November 2010 in Kiev, Ukraine. The two events are co-organized by UNECE, the Ministry of Education and Science and the National Technical University (Kyiv Polytechnic Institute) of Ukraine.

The International Conference and Capacity-building Seminar seek to facilitate knowledge sharing and a broad exchange of experiences and good practices among policy-makers and practitioners with a view to drawing up of relevant recommendations to government bodies and other stakeholders in charge of innovation and enterprise development. □

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For further information, please visit: http://www.unece.org/ceci/documents/2010/eed/conf_eeed10.html.

Not an official record - For information only

UNECE FOCUSES ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION-MAKING



The first meeting of the UNECE Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making was held on 25-26 October 2010 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The Task Force was established recently under the auspices of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention). The aim of the Task Force is to improve implementation of the Convention's provisions on public participation in environmental decision-making, including through sharing expertise, developing recommendations, strengthening civil society and building capacity for public authorities and other stakeholders. The Task Force will also identify problems in implementing the Public Participation pillar of the Aarhus Convention and work on possible solutions.

At its first meeting, the Task Force focused on the exchange of information and good practices and developed a

proposal for its work plan for the period 2011-2014. Under the chairmanship of Mr. Philip Kearney from Ireland, various challenges and approaches to public participation in the UNECE region were discussed, including the use of innovative forms and tools for participatory decision-making. The Task Force also initiated the development of recommendations on improving implementation of the public participation provisions of the Aarhus Convention. In true participatory spirit, many representatives of non-governmental organizations attended the meeting, resulting in a lively and productive exchange of views and ideas. □

The decisions and outcomes of the meeting are available on the Task Force's webpage at: <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/ppdm.htm>.

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UNECE WORKSHOP ON EFFECTIVE METHANE DRAINAGE AND USE IN COAL MINES BEIJING – CHINA, 20 OCTOBER 2010

The first UNECE Workshop on **Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Use in Coal Mines** was held in Beijing, China on 20 October 2010. Its main focus was on safety and technical issues relating to gas extraction and control in the **u n d e r g r o u n d**

environment. The workshop was supported by the China Coal Information Institute, the State Administration of Coal Mine safety (SACMS), the United State Environment Protection Agency and the Global Methane Initiative.

The advanced Chinese version of the Best Practice Guidance was successfully launched and distributed widely. Mr. Xingzhou Zhen, Deputy Director General, Department of Science and Technology of the State Administration of Coal Mine Safety, emphasized that China (which is the world's largest emitter of mine methane) welcomes the guidance as an important contribution to enhancing understanding and to improving mine safety. He recommended that it should be developed further and adapted to address the specific problems encountered in coal mines in China. In this respect, one idea brought forward at the workshop was the potential creation of a joint working group between the

UNECE Group of Experts on CMM and SACMS, that could assist in developing a Chinese-specific best practice document and encourage the adoption of international safety standards in the country.

The workshop consisted of formal presentations made by UNECE international experts on "Best practice gas control" and "Analysis of the responses to UNECE questionnaires." Ten Chinese experts representing major coalfield areas in northern, central and western Provinces of China actively participated in focused roundtable discussions.

The workshop provided a good opportunity for Chinese coal mine engineers, mining institutions representatives, as well as researchers to learn, debate and exchange best practices on: drilling, outburst prevention, gas drainage and gas utilization issues with the international panel.

Representatives of the UNFCCC Secretariat who are responsible for administering the application of the Clean Development Mechanisms to - amongst others - CMM projects, were present in the audience. This provided a unique opportunity to gain an introduction to gas capture, mining processes and critical safety issues as well as to strengthen cooperation between UNECE and UNFCCC in helping member States finding effective ways of addressing both the challenges related to climate change and the safety in coal mines. □

For further information, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/energy/se/cmm.html>.

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