

NEW PROGRAMME ON TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

More than 2500 delegates from over 150 countries began deliberations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Kuala Lumpur last week, to address several of key themes ranging from mountains to oceans, and from tourism to target-setting. In the middle of these discussions one of the two "priority issues" in the meeting is "technology transfer." Since the mid-1980s, the need for transfer of technology for environmental protection, conservation and sustainable use has been formally recognized in the United Nations, but the current work in the CBD Conference of the Parties (COP) is the first time the issue has been addressed as an overarching priority. In looking to improve the way that countries provide and receive various kinds of hard and soft technology, the COP is clearing the way for a programme of work that can have far-reaching implications in virtually all issues, biomes, and activity areas in which the CBD operates. In addition, the issue is directly relevant to the objectives of equity and sustainable lifestyles, because it reflects a further commitment under the CBD – the requirement that technologies developed from genetic resources should be shared with the countries of origin of those resources. IUCN has been a major participant in initial discussions and preparations for this issue, particularly through its participation in the Norway-UN 2003 Conference on Biological Diversity, which focused on technology transfer, and provided the primary input to the work of the COP.

IUCN Environmental Law Programme