



# Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

## PRESS RELEASE

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International Day for Biological Diversity



**Biodiversity and Climate Change**

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### **GLOBAL COMMUNITY CELEBRATES THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY IN MONTREAL AND AROUND THE WORLD**

*Montreal – 22 May 2007*

Biodiversity loss will accelerate as a result of climate change, but if we act now to conserve and sustainably use the resources of our planet – biodiversity can be our best defense against the impacts of climate change. Enhanced cooperation between the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is crucial for this project.

Mr Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary General of the United Nations, urged member states to move rapidly and with more determination at all levels to urgently achieve the goals of these two landmark instruments for the sake of current and future generations. In his message addressed to the international community the Secretary General emphasized that “the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is an essential element of any strategy to adapt to climate change.”

With this message at its foundation, the global community celebrated the International Day for Biological Diversity under the theme of Biodiversity and Climate Change.

The inter-relationship of biodiversity and climate change was also echoed in comments by the heads of the CBD and the UNFCCC.

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the CBD, said: “Climate change is indeed an energy and a security issue but is also an environmental issue. Biodiversity loss is an environmental issue but it is also an economic, financial, cultural, ethical as well as a security issue.”

“Addressing both requires the mutually supportive implementation of the Rio Conventions for the benefit of life on Earth. We in the Secretariat of the Convention on life on Earth shall spare no effort to achieve such a strategic objective” he said.

The call for continued cooperation was echoed by Yvo de Boer, the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC. “The understanding of the relationship between actions to address climate change and biodiversity loss has increased as the UNFCCC and the CBD have advanced work to meet their respective objectives,” he said.

“The stemming of biodiversity loss and related biodiversity considerations need to be part of climate change adaptation strategies. Collaboration between UNFCCC and CBD is increasing and CBD’s active contribution to further work on the Nairobi Work Programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change is most valuable,” said Mr. de Boer.

Collaboration between the two Conventions was supported by the current and incoming presidents of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD.



The current president and Minister of the Environment for Brazil, Marina Silva, pledged that Brazil would be “fostering a virtuous cycle that, aside from protecting biodiversity, will allow us to increase synergies with other Conventions and to contribute to the protection of natural resources and the long-term management of ecosystems and environmental services.”

This was further supported by the German Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel, the host of the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties, who stated “nature conservation is climate protection and climate protection is nature conservation. We must make the instruments of climate protection useful for nature conservation and vice versa.”

“Cooperation between the two conventions concerned – the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework convention on Climate Change must be improved in order to enhance the synergy effects between the instruments of climate protection and nature conservation” concluded Minister Gabriel.

Other partner organizations joined to deliver messages of support.

Monique Barbut, CEO of the Global Environment Facility, via video message, delivered a message of support to the work of the Convention and spoke of the interrelationship of climate change and biodiversity loss and the need to deal with both in a coordinated way.

Representing the Director-General of UNESCO, the director of the New York Office, Hélène-Marie Gosselin participated in the celebrations and indicated that UNESCO and the CBD would continue to work together in support of the objectives of both organizations.

In his message, Kemal Derviş, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme stated “As we mark this year’s International Day for Biological Diversity, it is clear that much needs to be done to address this major environmental challenge facing the world. Both the CBD and the UNFCCC have a central role in driving these timely and urgent agendas forward to ensure that they are at the heart of global efforts to create a sustainable future for all.”

Peter Bridgewater, the Secretary-General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands said “Wetlands are also critical to mitigating climate change. They have an important and underestimated role in both carbon storage and Greenhouse Gas regulation.” He added that “increased interactions between CBD, UNFCCC and Ramsar Convention can lead only to better outcomes for our newly energized attack on the phenomenon of climate change.

Robert Hepworth, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species emphasized the impacts of climate change on a variety of migratory species including birds and populations of sea turtles and also praised the linkages between Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

The head of IUCN Canada, John Herity, also delivered a message of support.

### **Montreal: All levels of government represented at a high level event.**

In Montreal, Canada, the seat of the Secretariat to the Convention on Biological Diversity, celebrations were held at the Botanical Gardens, with the participation of all three levels of government and international participants.

Eminent Canadian participants included the Minister of the Environment, the Hon. John Baird, the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, the Hon. Michael Fortier, the Minister of

Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks for the province of Quebec, the Hon. Ms. Line Beauchamp, and the Mayor of Montréal, Gérald Tremblay.

International dignitaries joining the celebration include the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Mr. Yvo de Boer and the Executive Secretary of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, Mr. Peter Bridgewater. Unable to attend in person, the Ministers of Environment of Brazil and Germany who serve respectively as President of the last and the coming Conference of the Parties of the Convention, participated through video message as did the CEO of the Global Environment Facility, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species. Messages were also received from the Director General of UNESCO and the Administrator of UNDP.

"Canada's New Government is committed to protecting biodiversity and maintaining the quality of life we all enjoy today, while ensuring a conservation legacy for future generations," said Canada's Minister of the Environment, the Hon. John Baird. "We are working with national and international partners to protect the earth's ecosystems for the benefit of all nations." The Minister also announced a pledge of 4.5 million in support of biodiversity conservation initiatives.

The Mayor of Montreal, Mr. Gerald Tremblay said "In view of increasing urbanization that affects all continents, cities are being called upon to play a major role in the protection and sustainability of biological diversity."

"At the international meeting that took place in Curitiba, in March 2007, on the theme: Cities and biodiversity, the mayors stressed the urgency to act in a collective manner, notably while favoring the exchanges of expertise and of best practices. Montreal has already taken a stand and our metropolis plays a very active role in the fight for preserving biodiversity through actions such as the protection of the natural environment and its tree planting programme." He said.

A delegation of youth ambassadors from around the world presented an accord, which called for young and old to take action for the planet, to take responsibility for its stewardship, and to make a commitment to environmental education for all ages.

In homage to the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro of 1992, a panel of eminent Canadians who participated in the ground breaking event spoke of their visions for the future. Clifford Lincoln, the former minister of the Environment for Quebec, Elizabeth Dowdeswell, the former Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and Len Good, former head of the Global Environment Facility, all delivered a call for the various multilateral environmental agreements to work together and realize synergies.

At the Montreal celebrations, the Botanical Gardens presented a gift from the government of Australia, a rare wollemia pine, a tree that has been brought back from the brink of extinction due to vigorous conservation efforts. The ceremony, presided by Gilles Vincent, the Director of the Botanical Gardens, included the participation of H. E. William Fisher, the High Commissioner of Australia to Canada, Helen Fotopulos, representing the mayor of Montreal, and the presence of the Canadian and Quebec Ministers of the Environment and other dignitaries.

"The presentation of this rare tree as a gift to the Montreal Botanical Gardens highlights the important role of the Museums Nature de Montreal in conserving biodiversity and raising of public awareness – both central aspects of implementation of the Convention," said Ahmed

Djoghlaf. “We are pleased to have the Museums Nature of Montreal as one of our international partners in the consortium of scientific institutions from around the world.”

### **Celebrations were held around the world**

Celebrations for the International Day were held around the world in a greater number of countries than ever before. From Brazil to Vietnam to the United Kingdom parties mobilized for this day.

In Vietnam, in a partnership with GTZ, the German Technical Cooperation Agency, 250 cyclists made their way to Tam Dao National Park to join in cultural, educational and scientific Biodiversity Day celebrations over the weekend. A two-day conference on Biodiversity and Climate Change was held on 22 and 23 May, which highlighted the role of biodiversity in adapting to the effects of climate change.

Celebrations were held in Brasilia, the capital of Brazil, by the current President of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity as well as in Bonn, Germany by the incoming President of the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, which is scheduled for 2008.

At Kew Gardens, celebrations included the participation of the Minister for Biodiversity, the Hon. Barry Gardiner and a recorded message from Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The UK government announced a significant donation to the global Crop Diversity Trust.

For the first time ever, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) also participated extensively in the celebrations for the International Day for Biological Diversity. Activities were held at the headquarters for UNEP in Nairobi with the participation of the Executive Director, Mr. Achim Steiner, and Nobel Peace Prize winner Professor Wangari Maathai. All regional offices of UNEP also celebrated this event.

Achim Steiner, United Nations Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director, said: “2007 will go down as the year of full stops in respect to the climate change debate. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has put a full stop behind the science—climate change is happening; a full stop behind the impacts—they are underway and will impact on every corner of the planet, and a full stop behind the economics—tackling climate change will cost just 0.1 of annual GDP, perhaps less”.

“The other big question has been whether the public is ready, whether it is politically possible to mobilize individuals, communities and nations en masse to counter the rise in greenhouse gases. The Billion Tree Campaign gives us the final full stop on this debate too”, he said.

The United Nations University in Tokyo held a day-long conference on the theme of biodiversity and climate change. At the headquarters of the United Nations in New York, celebrations included an exhibition prepared in collaboration with UNESCO on the impacts of climate change on indigenous communities in the arctic, small islands and mountain ecosystems.

For more information on the celebrations please visit: [www.cbd.int/ibd](http://www.cbd.int/ibd)

**Information for Journalists:****The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**

The Convention on Biological Diversity is one of the most broadly subscribed international environmental treaties in the world. Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, it currently has 190 Parties—189 States and the European Community—who have committed themselves to its three main goals: the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of its components and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. The Secretariat of the Convention is located in Montreal.

For more information, please contact Marie Aminata Khan at +1 514 287 8701; email: [marie.khan@biodiv.org](mailto:marie.khan@biodiv.org)