



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

COMMUNIQUÉ

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Biodiversity and Climate Change

CBD LINNAEUS LECTURE SERIES LAUNCHED TO MARK THE 300th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF THE SWEDISH FATHER OF TAXONOMY

Montreal –24 May 2007

On 23 May, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity marked the 300th anniversary of the birth of the father of modern taxonomy, Carl Linnaeus, by launching a CBD Linnaeus Lecture Series. The first lecture, with the theme *What Linnaeus would have thought of climate change*, was held with the participation of the representatives of the diplomatic community accredited to Montreal as well as United Nations senior officials. Mr. Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Mr. Peter Bridgewater, Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands were two of the guest speakers.

Mr. Frederik Alfer, representing the Swedish Ambassador to Canada, opened the lecture by asking why people across the world still pay tribute to the Swedish naturalist. “We do it,” he said, “because he was one of the most influential scientists in history, crucial to our present-day understanding of how species and our planet relate to one another.”

Noting that Linnaeus developed the binary system of nomenclature for classifying animals and plants, and was also a medical doctor, zoologist and writer, Mr. Alfer said that when reading what Linnaeus wrote in the 1750s, “it becomes apparent that he was very concerned about the human impact of nature and that today he would surely be called an environmentalist”. Mr. Alfer emphasized that the aim of the tricentennial celebrations is to “increase interest in science, particularly among young people, to create and inspire curiosity and innovation in the spirit of Linnaeus”.

Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity said: “To mark the 300th anniversary of the birth of Carl Linnaeus, it is appropriate for the Secretariat to pay tribute to this visionary citizen of our planet for his unique contribution to the cause of biological diversity and, through him, to the Kingdom of Sweden for its unique contribution to the multilateral environmental cooperation component of sustainable development.”

In partnership with the Kingdom of Sweden and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the CBD Linnaeus Lectures will be organized on a regular basis at the margins of major meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The next lecture will be held at the margins of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to be held in Bonn, Germany from 19 to 30 May 2008.

