



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



PRESS RELEASE

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WORLD LEADERS REDOUBLE THEIR COMMITMENT TO FULFIL THE COMMITMENT OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT TO SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCE THE RATE OF LOSS OF BIODIVERSITY BY 2010

Bonn 28 May 2008 – For the first time in the history of multilateral cooperation for the environment, world leaders reiterated their commitment to substantially reduce the loss of biodiversity within two years. Representatives of 191 Parties and more than 100 Ministers met at the ministerial segment of the World Biodiversity Summit in Bonn.

The Bonn Biodiversity Summit was opened by the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Honourable Angela Merkel, with the participation of the Honourable Stephen Harper, the Prime Minister of Canada, the President of Palau, Tommy Esang Remengesau Jr., as well as the President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso. This unique summit was also attended by the President of the sixty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. Srgjan Kerim. A message of Secretary General Mr Ban Ki-moon was delivered to participants in the biodiversity meeting, which is being attended by more than 6,000 participants.

Opening the meeting, German Chancellor Angela Merkel promised that Germany would provide 500 million euros through 2013 to protect forests, and 500 million euros a year after that. Given that forests contribute to 20 per cent of greenhouse-gas emissions, more than transport and travel combined, she said, “We are convinced that this is a very good investment.”

This initiative complemented a decision by Norway to provide 600 million euros a year for the following three years. The German Chancellor also launched the Life Web initiative to provide financial and technical assistance to developing countries that are in a position to establish additional marine and terrestrial protected areas. Germany will provide 40 million euros to this initiative, which will be serviced by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Under the initiative, Indonesia has announced it will declare 20 million hectares of its territory as marine protected areas. When established, this will become the largest marine protected area in the world. This will complement the Micronesia Initiative, presided over by the President of Palau and aimed at achieving by 2010 the goal of a global representative network of marine and terrestrial protected areas.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon provided a message to the meeting, stating that, “The loss of biodiversity is an environmental crisis with profound economic and human dimensions,” he said. “Nature's assets underpin the very lives and livelihoods of more than six billion people.” He cited the damage to mangroves in Myanmar, which exacerbated the damage caused by the recent cyclone.



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The Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Mr. Achim Steiner, said, “Biodiversity is our economic foundation. We have a misdirected economic compass—we have arranged our economies in a way that they destroy their environmental foundations. We are burning money.”

The Prime Minister of Canada the Honourable Stephen Harper stated that the Canadian people were proud to host the only Rio convention located in North America.

Jose Manuel Barroso, the President of the European Commission, applauded the financial contributions of Germany and stated that it reflected the European Union strategy for implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

In his remarks to the ministers and in support of the objectives of the Convention, United Nations General Assembly President Srgjan Kerim called for a meeting of Heads of State and Government to spur action during the 2010 High-Level Segment of the General Assembly.

Ahmed Djoghlaif, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity applauded the leadership of Germany, stating, “For an exceptional biodiversity challenge, an exceptional meeting. For an exceptional meeting, an exceptional host, the Federal Republic of Germany, the people and Government.” He also paid tribute to the triple European Union presidency of Germany, Portugal and Slovenia, remarking that, “The Bonn Biodiversity Summit has been hosted not only by Germany but by the European Community as a whole.”

At this summit, the Executive Secretary gave the first CBD Awards to Chancellor Merkel and German Federal Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel as President of the Conference of the Parties; to Canadian Prime Minister Harper as host of the Secretariat; and the General Assembly President Mr. Srgjan Kerim, for his support to the International Year of Biodiversity.

In October 2010, in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan will host the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which will assess progress made towards achievement of the 2010 biodiversity target. At that meeting, Parties will work together to establish the way to effectively address the unprecedented loss of biodiversity, compounded by climate change.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the Convention on Biological Diversity is the international framework for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of its benefits. With 190 Parties, the CBD has near-universal participation among countries who have committed to preserving life on Earth. The CBD 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. The headquarters of the Secretariat of the Convention is located in Montreal. For additional information, please contact Marie Aminata Khan at +1 514 287 8701; email: marie.khan@cbd.int