



COMMUNIQUÉ

Wildlife Conservation Society partners with Convention on Biological Diversity

Montreal, 6 October 2010 – To mark the first high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to biodiversity, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) hosted a high-level reception on 21 September at the Central Park Zoo, Manhattan, New York. The event served also as a celebration of the International Year on Biodiversity and was attended by Ministers and members of visiting delegations, the conservation community and United Nations officials. The Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda was among the high-level guests.

Following introductory remarks by co-hosts Steven Sanderson, President and CEO of WCS, and Ahmed Djoghlaflaf, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, speakers at the event included Mr. Ryu Matsumoto, the Minister of the Environment of Japan; Ms. Maria Ignacia Benitez, the Minister of Environment of Chile; Edward Norton, the UN Goodwill Ambassador for Biodiversity; and Dr. Eric Chivian, founder and Director of the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School. Guests included Mr. Takuya Okada the Chairman of the AEON Environmental Foundation in Japan and the Japanese singer, MISIA, the Honorary Ambassador for COP 10. A special bell cast by the Mass Extinction Memorial Observatory (MEMO) project directly from the remains of ancient biodiversity in the limestone deposits in Portland, England, was also unveiled. Edward Norton focused his remarks on a strong call to the United States Administration to aggressively pursue the process of ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

To support renewed efforts to safeguard biodiversity, a memorandum of understanding between WCS and the Convention Secretariat was signed at the reception by Dr. Sanderson and Mr. Djoghlaflaf. Including national-level technical support, the new partnership will support implementation of the Strategic Plan and its targets, including support to strengthen capacities to develop national biodiversity targets and monitoring frameworks. It will also include efforts to raise public awareness and education on biodiversity; and support initiatives of indigenous people in actions to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of natural resources. In addition, among other areas of cooperation, the partnership aims to support implementation of the Programmes of Work on Protected Areas and Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity; support implementation of the LifeWeb Initiative; support science and policy efforts to link biodiversity conservation with climate change adaptation and mitigation practices; and support efforts to quantify contributions of biodiversity and ecosystem services to human society and encourage donors to increase financing for the establishment and capitalization of environmental funds.

“We welcome the opportunity to partner with CBD in our quest to safeguard wildlife and wild places around the world,” said Dr. Sanderson. “Effective conservation often requires teamwork among governments, conservation organizations, and other stakeholders.” Speaking of the importance of the partnership, Ahmed Djoghlaflaf said, “With nearly 4,000 staff members in New York and around the world supporting actions in more than 60 countries, managing more than 200 million acres of protected lands around the world, and educating millions of visitors at their five parks in New York City, WCS is a major institution in the fight to safeguard the world’s biodiversity. I would like to express my profound thanks for their commitment to join with us in partnership to support achievement of the 2020 biodiversity targets expected to be set by the international community at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.”



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