

SCBD/OES/OES/AD/fd/72421

7 July 2010

NOTIFICATION**International Year of Biodiversity celebrates six-month milestone**

Dear Madam/Sir,

As the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) reaches its six months milestone, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) would like to use this important opportunity to highlight some of the many achievements. The year's success would not have been possible without the overwhelming support by all governments, organisations and partners who have responded to the call to action.

In recognition of the importance of biodiversity to human well-being, the message of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr Ban Ki-moon, to the international community was issued on 2 January 2010 reminding us why Biodiversity is Life and why Biodiversity is our Life. This was followed by the official launch by the German Presidency of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, at the Museum of Natural History in Berlin. In the presence of over 400 participants, the German Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel urged the world to take the necessary steps to protect the biological diversity of the Earth.

Six months into the International Year of Biodiversity, the global celebrations of Life on Earth has turned into a truly international commemorative event. In fact, the International Year of Biodiversity logo has been translated into a number of different languages, in addition to the six official languages of the United Nations; German, Divehi (Maldivian), Greek, Basque, Farsi, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Maori, Malay, Dutch, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovene, Swedish, Turkish, Urdu and Traditional Chinese. Over 2000 organisations have requested permission to use the IYB logo who in turn have partnered with their counterparts to promote the International Year in their region.

To date, 147 countries have contacted the Secretariat requesting IYB related information; 107 of them have kept us updated about their International Year of Biodiversity celebrations and 87 have submitted their national IYB plans. Details can be found on the website: www.cbd.int/2010/countries.

Furthermore, the International Year of Biodiversity counts 311 official Partners, whom to date have organised a total of 439 IYB activities aimed at raising awareness on the importance of biodiversity www.cbd.int/2010/partners.

The United Nations as a whole has embraced the Year starting with the inaugural event held in Paris, France by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which was followed by a scientific conference on 25-29 January at its headquarters. The ceremony took place with the participation of the Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau and the French Minister of State, Mr Jean-Louis Borloo, as well as the President of the General Conference of UNESCO (www.unesco.org/science/).

To: CBD National Focal Points and International Organizations

To date, a total of 14 United Nations organisations are promoting the Year through their own Programmes of Work and using their designated special UN days to promote the Year. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) alone has organized events in 65 countries.

The IYB is also being promoted by the CBD consortium of botanical gardens based on the work plan agreed to at the meeting of the consortium held at the Paris Museum of Natural History (www.cbd.int/consortium). In addition to the Secretariat's partnership with Airbus, the IYB will also be promoted by airlines such as Air Algérie, Air Canada, KLM and Japan Airlines, through videos and printed materials.

Internet is playing an important role in promoting the International Year of Biodiversity. 36,635 fans actively follow our Facebook page www.facebook.com/iyb2010. The International Year of Biodiversity website www.cbd.int/2010, which contains all the promotional material, videos, fact sheets, logo, messages and all other pertinent information including celebrations around the world accounts for 26 per cent of the total CBD website traffic.

In honour of the International Year of Biodiversity, commemorative stamps have been issued by Belarus, Canada, Hong Kong, Portugal, South Africa, Switzerland, Trinidad & Tobago, United Kingdom, and the United Nations Postal Administration: Geneva and Vienna.

Celebrations would not be complete without mentioning the tremendous efforts undertaken by the future generations of environmental stewards. The Biodiversity Youth Accord has over 2900 signatures from 55 countries and will be presented at the upcoming meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Nagoya, Japan. This Year's *Green Wave* campaign was a huge success with 1088 groups from 64 countries registered to the 2010 campaign. For more details on *The Green Wave*, please see the full report: www.cbd.int/doc/press/2010/pr-2010-06-05-greenwave-en.pdf.

In response to all these great initiatives, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has established an International Year of Biodiversity Museum to showcase the excellent outreach materials prepared for the occasion. The exhibits will be displayed at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Nagoya, Japan, as well as at the sixty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, in September 2011. To date, we have received items from 32 countries and 4 from our United Nations colleagues.

The achievements of the Year so far are indeed impressive; confirmation of this became evident with the decision adopted by the United Nations General Assembly to host, for the first time, on 22 September 2010, a one-day high-level meeting on biodiversity and its contributions to the Millennium Development Goals, featuring Heads of State. This sends a clear signal that the biodiversity crisis can no longer be ignored and we must act now.

As we build on the success of the first six months, please accept from all of us here at the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity our sincere gratitude for your tremendous efforts in promoting the fact that Biodiversity is Life; Biodiversity is our Life.

In keeping with the spirit of the Convention and these global celebrations, I call on all Parties who have not yet reported their IYB activities and plans to please do so to the Secretariat for inclusion in the final IYB report to be presented to the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Please accept, Madam/Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Ahmed Djoghlaoui
Executive Secretary