

## **Annan calls for preservation of world's biodiversity**

22 May - Calling biodiversity "an essential heritage for all humankind," United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan today appealed to governments and the entire international community to preserve the planet's diverse ecology "on which all life depends."

"The preservation of biodiversity is not just a job for governments," Mr. Annan declared in a message marking the International Day for Biological Diversity, which is observed 22 May.

"International and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and each and every individual have a role to play in changing entrenched outlooks and ending destructive patterns of behaviour," he added. "The involvement of local communities is particularly important, since many have already devised innovative approaches in resource management and other areas from which others can learn."

Mr. Annan said a failure to stop the loss of biological resources would greatly complicate if not totally impede efforts to reach by 2015 the Millennium Development Goals set by the UN Millennium Summit of 2000, and he called on governments that had not yet done so to the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Biosafety Protocol.

"These instruments - and the processes they have set in motion - are crucial for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. But ratification is only a start; governments must also ensure that their national policies and, not least, their budgetary allocations, reflect their recognition of biodiversity's importance," he declared.

"Biodiversity is an essential heritage for all humankind," he concluded. "Stopping its loss, and guaranteeing the continued functioning of the earth's ecosystems - both marine and terrestrial - should be a high priority for everyone. On the International Day for Biological Diversity, let us pledge to promote global awareness of the value of biodiversity and do our utmost to generate momentum towards its preservation."

SOURCE: United Nations, New York