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Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

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Biodiversity and Climate Change

**DIRECTOR, CENTRE FOR BIODIVERSITY AND RESTORATION ECOLOGY
SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
VISITS CBD SECRETARIAT**

Montreal – 7 May 2007

Professor Ben Bell, Director, Centre for Biodiversity and Restoration Ecology School of Biological Sciences at Victoria University of Wellington paid a two-day visit to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity on 3-4 May to present the work of the Centre and to meet with the Secretariat's scientific staff to discuss future collaboration between the Convention and the Centre.

Launched in June 2006, the Centre, known in Maori as "*Te Tumu Whakaoho Mauri o te Ao Koiora*", which translates literally to "the post (or pillar) restoring the life force (or essence) of the biological environment (or in a wider sense diversity)", aims as an independent Centre to objectively examine globally important issues relating to species decline and ecosystem disturbances, the effects of such changes on biodiversity and the restorative steps required to counter such changes.

The Centre focuses on applied research on restoration ecology, within the broader context of declining global biodiversity and the need to identify and conserve remaining assemblages of flora and fauna. The Centre involves many of the same disciplines and goals as indicated in the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy, launched in 2000 to take up the challenge to halt the decline of indigenous biodiversity. (Further information may be found at <http://www.biodiversity.govt.nz/>.) Among the biodiversity-focused projects the Centre is working on is the biological impact of climate-change, involving Antarctic research, global herbivore studies, and research on invasive insects and the native herpetofauna—frogs, lizards and tuataras, a reptile unique to New Zealand.

Professor Bell emphasized that the Centre seeks "the further development of biodiversity, biosecurity and ecological restoration research capability at Victoria University, involving collaboration with relevant agencies in New Zealand and internationally". To this end, elements of a letter of intent were discussed and finalized between the Centre and the Secretariat.

Ahmed Djoghlaf, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, stated: "I am pleased to see the Consortium of Universities is expanding beyond Canada. I am honoured by the prospect of collaboration with the Centre for Biodiversity and Restoration Ecology of the prestigious Victoria University of Wellington in support of the scientific and technical component of the mandate of the Secretariat when Parties are redoubling their efforts to enhance the implementation of the objectives of the Convention, which require the active engagements of all stakeholders including the scientific community."

