



CBD

# Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

## PRESS RELEASE

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Biodiversity and Climate Change

For information only

### CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY LAUNCHES ADAPTATION WEBSITE

**Bali, 13 December 2007** – To promote efforts that will allow all forms of life on Earth to cope with climate change, the Convention's Biodiversity Adaptation website was officially launched today by the Executive Secretary, Ahmed Djoghla and the Director General of Germany's Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Jochen Flasbarth during a press briefing on the margins of thirteenth Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UNFCCC in Bali.

Serving as a repository of knowledge, the adaptation website is a contribution from the Convention on Biological Diversity – one of the three Rio Conventions, adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro – to the implementation of an initiative launched at the last UNFCCC Conference of the Parties in Nairobi to address the issues of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change.

Recent assessments indicate that climate change is likely to become a dominant cause of biodiversity loss by the end of the century. According to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, climate change is already having an impact on biodiversity either through shifting habitat, changing life cycles, the development of new physical traits or species die-offs and extinctions.

Adaptation to climate change, a complex issue, often requires significant planning and cross-sector support and adaptation activities help species and ecosystems cope with changing climatic conditions.

The website contributes specifically to the adaptation planning and practices area of work under the Nairobi work programme and forms an important part of enhanced efforts to maximize cooperation between the CBD and the UNFCCC. The website brings together tools and information developed by governments, a variety of organizations and agencies on the integration of biodiversity considerations within adaptation planning.

In launching the site, Ahmed Djoghla, Executive Secretary of the Convention said “Thanks to the financial contribution from the government of Canada, the website, available also in French and Spanish is a major tool to assist in the implementation of the Curitiba decision in integrating adaptation into the CBD work programmes,” and that, “the website therefore has the potential of being a major tool to enhance synergies between biodiversity and climate change.”

Other joint efforts between the three Rio Conventions on climate change include: The Rio Conventions Calendar and the Information Notes on Adaptation and Forests from the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions.

Jochen Flasbarth stated, “The website is yet another step to enhance cooperation between UNFCCC and CBD – climate change and biodiversity, of which we are proud to be a part.”

The website can be accessed at <http://adaptation.cbd.int/>.

### **Background:**

Germany, the host of the ninth CBD Conference of the Parties has made climate change a top agenda item. As we cannot ignore the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and vice versa, Germany showed its commitment to safe safeguarding the planet by ensuring that biodiversity was on the agenda of the G8+5 Summit held in Heiligendamm, Germany in June of this year.

In the Summit Declaration, the G-8 countries committed to increase efforts for the protection and sustainable use of biological diversity to achieve the agreed goal of significantly reducing the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010.

### **Biodiversity and Climate Change Adaptation**

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), eleven of the last twelve years ranked among the warmest years since recording began in 1850. Furthermore, an additional increase of approximately 0.4°C is expected over the next two decades.

Climate change is already having impacts on biodiversity. It is causing many species to shift toward the poles, changing the timing of life events such as hibernation, migration or reproduction and, in some cases, developing new physical traits.

In some cases, the changes forced by climate change threaten the continued health of species or ecosystems. Observed changes include: an increase in the number of female sea turtle hatchlings as a result of higher nest temperatures, reductions in the range and distribution of the King Protea in South Africa, and in North America, rapid population growth of the Pine Beetle at the expense of pine forests -- with tree losses expected to reach 50 per cent by 2008.

## **Biodiversity, Adaptation and Forest – the critical link**

With an estimated 20 per cent of anthropogenic emissions resulting from deforestation, a good deal of attention has been paid to reducing deforestation rates as an effective climate change mitigation strategy.

At the same time, climate change is threatening the continued existence of many of the world's forests. In the Amazon Basin, for example, the frequency of forest fires is expected to increase by 60 per cent if the global average temperature increases by 3 degrees. In Western Europe, temperature changes have favored the Leaf Miner moth, which is invading chestnut forests causing significant die offs.

It is generally accepted that a more diverse forest is better able to resist and recover from disasters. Considering biodiversity when developing forest adaptation programmes, is therefore critical to enhancing resilience, managing risk and ensuring that forests are able to provide mitigation benefits over the medium and long term.

## **Integrating Biodiversity in Adaptation**

There are three main avenues of action to integrate biodiversity into adaptation.

1. Preventative Action: including monitoring ecosystem health and the status of threatened or vulnerable species and alleviating other threats to biodiversity.
2. Corrective Action: including off-site conservation, the establishment or revision of protected areas and the identification of resilient components of biodiversity
3. Technology transfer: including the sharing of lessons learned and the integration of traditional and indigenous knowledge in adaptation programmes.

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**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 and Women.**