

PRESS RELEASE

Secretary-General Designates Edward Norton as United Nations Goodwill Ambassador for Biodiversity

Montreal, 8 July 2010 – Marking the 2010 International Year for Biodiversity, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today designated two-time Academy Award-nominated actor Edward Norton as a United Nations Goodwill Ambassador for Biodiversity.

Recognized for his ability to focus attention on and to mobilize support for conservation and other philanthropic issues, Edward Norton, of the United States of America, joins a team of United Nations celebrity advocates who possess widely recognized talents in the fields of art, academia, literature, sports and entertainment, and help to raise worldwide awareness of the Organization's ideals and activities.

In selecting Edward Norton for this designation, the Secretary-General said, "As a highly successful actor with broad international appeal, Edward Norton has used the spotlight to further causes that have been close to his heart for years: community development and conservation. For example, as a board member of the Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust, he has garnered support to conserve biodiversity and ecosystem integrity within the Maasai lands of East Africa by creating sustainable benefits for the community. He went as far as running the 26.2 miles of the New York marathon, helping to raise over a \$1 million for the cause.

"Edward didn't stop at the finish line in Central Park. With his friends, he recently launched an innovative social networking platform aimed at boosting global participation in charitable work, as well as raising funds for charities. I hope his new *Crowdrise* network will help with his efforts to promote the fair, equitable and sustainable use of biological resources, as well as the preservation of biological diversity."

Mr. Ban stressed that the "planet's species and habitats, and the goods and services they provide, form the basis of human wealth, health and well-being. Yet as a result of our activities, the variety of life on Earth continues to decline at an unprecedented rate."

On the appointment of the new Goodwill Ambassador, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Ahmed Djoghlaif said: "2010 was adopted as the International Year of Biodiversity precisely to reconnect people with nature and bring greater

international attention to bear on the issue of the continued loss of biodiversity. I am extremely grateful to Edward Norton for accepting to help us spread the message that biodiversity is life, biodiversity is our life. In so doing, he will raise awareness on the need for urgent action for the benefit of Life on Earth,” said Mr. Djoghlaf.

“Indeed, Mr. Norton is actively engaged in actions to bring about such change and is well acquainted with the challenges facing biodiversity. In 2009 the International Conservation Caucus Foundation bestowed on him its ‘Good Steward’ award. And our friends at the Center for Health and the Global Environment at the Harvard Medical School bestowed on him their Global Environmental Citizen Award for promoting awareness about the need to protect nature,” added Mr. Djoghlaf.

On 22 September 2010, a high-level meeting on biodiversity with participation of Heads of State and Government will be held in New York in conjunction with the general debate of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. The United Nations conference on biodiversity – the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP10) – takes place in Nagoya, Japan, from 18 to 29 October 2010. These two major United Nations events will shape the world’s response to the global loss of biodiversity that continues to accelerate, exacerbated by climate change. It is expected they will result in adoption at Nagoya of international targets for the state of biodiversity in 2020 and 2050, together with identified means of implementation, monitoring and evaluation that tie together the active engagement of all stakeholders.

United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information Mr. Kiyoko Akasaka will be joined by Mr. Djoghlaf at a media briefing at UN Headquarters in New York at 1 p.m. on Thursday, 8 July 2010 to introduce Mr. Norton as a Goodwill Ambassador.

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Notes for editors

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits from utilization of genetic resources. With 193 Parties, the Convention has near universal participation among countries committed to preserving life on Earth. The Convention 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, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety a supplementary treaty to the Convention seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 157 countries and the European Union are party to the Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal, Canada. www.cbd.int/

2010 International Year of Biodiversity The United Nations declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) to raise awareness about the crucial importance of biodiversity, to communicate the human costs of biodiversity loss, and to engage people, particularly youth, throughout the world in the fight to protect all life on Earth. Initiatives will be organized throughout the year to disseminate information, promote the protection of biodiversity and encourage countries, organizations, and individuals to take direct action to reduce biodiversity loss. The focal point for the year is the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. www.cbd.int/2010/welcome/

The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 10) will take place in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture in Japan from 18 to 29 October 2010. COP 10 will include a high-level ministerial segment which will take place from 27 to 29 October 2010. Prior to its tenth regular meeting, the Conference of the Parties will hold its fifth meeting serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol (COP-MOP 5) at the same venue, from 11 to 15 October 2010.

For more information, visit www.cbd.int/cop10 and www.cbd.int/mop5

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