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PRESS RELEASE

Biodiversity, climate, and desertification regimes strengthened by new parties and funding opportunities

Johannesburg, 30 August 2002 – As delegates in Johannesburg work towards broad agreements on poverty alleviation and sustainable development, three issue-specific treaties that contribute to these goals – the conventions on biological diversity, climate change and desertification – continue to attract vital support for carrying out their mandates.

The biodiversity, climate change and desertification conventions all have their roots in the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. After a decade of institution-building and national and international action, they provide coherent frameworks and practical tools for promoting sustainable development.

The Convention on Biological Diversity has thus far received some \$1.4 billion in funding from the Global Environment Facility and \$2 billion in co-funding for country-driven projects to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity.

Meanwhile, since the start of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the CBD has welcomed two newcomers: Kuwait and Bosnia-Herzegovina – bringing the total number to 185 parties. The CBD's Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety has added six new parties – Austria, Belarus, Bhutan, Denmark, the EC and Mexico – bringing the total to 31. Fifty ratifications are required for entry into force.

The number of ratifications of the Kyoto Protocol of the Climate Change Convention went up drastically during the summit. The total number now stands at 89 ratifications, including developed countries representing 37.1% of the rich world's carbon dioxide emissions, some two thirds of the way to the 55% required for entry into force.

In addition, the Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism, one of the most important new instruments for financing sustainable development since Rio, is fast becoming operational.

The UN Convention to Combat Desertification, which until now has relied on a so-called Global Mechanism for identifying possible sources of funding in support of activities for reversing dryland degradation, is also opening up new and concrete opportunities for financing. The WSSD has called for the GEF to become a financial mechanism of the Convention and it is

expected that the next assembly of the Global Environment Facility to be held in Beijing in October 2002 will agree to open its multi-billion dollar fund to anti-desertification projects.

The Convention to Combat Desertification has welcomed seven new parties this year: Andorra, Somalia, the Slovak Republic, the FYR of Macedonia, Ukraine, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Maldives bringing its membership to 184 parties.

Note to journalists: CBD Executive Secretary Hamdallah Zedan, Press contact: Arthur Nogueira, +27 (0)72 564 6609. UNCCD Executive Secretary Hama Arba Diallo, Press contact: Cheemin Kwon, +27 (0)82 370 0679 and UNFCCC Executive Secretary Joke Waller-Hunter, Press contact: Kevin Grose +27 (0) 858 6682. The three executive secretaries will brief the press today, 30 August at 17h30 in the SCC Press Conference Room.

For more information: www.biodiv.org, unfccc.int, and www.unccd.int.