



**CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL
DIVERSITY**

PRESS RELEASE

For use of the media only;
Not an official document.

**Workshop will discuss biodiversity and natural
disasters: Healthy ecosystems minimize damage resulting
from natural disasters such as tsunamis**

Montreal 4 February 2005 – Healthy ecosystems are more resilient in the face of natural disasters such as hurricanes and tsunamis. Careful attention to their rehabilitation can save both lives and property, says a series of papers to be presented at a **workshop** on 8 February 2005 entitled: **Biodiversity and Natural Disasters**, to be held at the tenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, in Bangkok Thailand.

Speakers at the side event will recommend that governments and communities implement management strategies that will strengthen ecosystem health and resilience. The Convention on Biological Diversity has endorsed a number of such tools including integrated marine and coastal management approaches (IMCAM), Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs) and others.

“Natural disasters such as hurricanes Jeanne and Ivan and the December 2004 tsunami have tremendous impacts on small island and wetland ecosystems, on coral reefs and Mangrove forests,” commented Hamdallah Zedan, Executive Secretary to the Convention on Biological Diversity. “In the case of the tsunami in the Indian Ocean for example, it is likely that the health and resilience of damaged ecosystems has been severely compromised. The loss of living resources will have economic consequences for local residents, in particular, fisherfolk, and tourism operations.”

Mr Zedan said, “it seems that those parts of the coastline where vegetation was closer to its natural state were less affected by the tsunami than areas where vegetation had been removed and the shoreline changed or encroached on. Once the immediate humanitarian needs are accommodated, it is time to restore ecosystems using the tools and guidelines provided by the Convention.”

The workshop will take place at 12:15pm on Tuesday 8 February 2005 at United Nations Conference Centre, in Bangkok, Thailand, as part of the tenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice.

Note to journalists: For more information, please contact David Ainsworth, acting information officer at the Secretariat at +1 514 287-7025 or by email at david.ainsworth@biodiv.org