



PRESS RELEASE

Top Natural History Centers Target the 2010 Biodiversity Target

United Nations and Conservation Agency Heads Also Join Forces to Save Life on Earth

Curitiba, 27 March 2006 - A new alliance of some of the world's top research centres and agencies specializing in biodiversity was today enlisted in the battle to save life on Earth.

The centres, whose financial resources represent some half a billion dollars a year, have signed a unique partnership agreement with the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The agreement is aimed at boosting developing countries' scientific, technical and policy skills in the area of biodiversity through innovative education and training initiatives.

'Capacity building' training will also be offered in the field of biosafety under a legal addition to the Convention called the Cartagena Protocol.

The alliance bring together the CBD and the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History; the National Museum of Natural History of France; the National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development, Saudi Arabia; the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences.

Under the Memorandum of Understanding, signed in the Brazilian city of Curitiba where the CBD is holding its key two yearly meeting, the institutes will use their expertise and skills to help developing countries meet the '2010 target'.

The target, calling for countries to substantiall reduce the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010, was affirmed four years ago at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in South Africa.

Ahmed Djoghlaf, the CBD's Executive Secretary, said: "I am honored and excited by this historic agreement between the Convention and these top notch institutes and bodies working in the field of biodiversity".

"There are many ingredients that are needed to implement, to realize the 2010 target, including building the skills and know how of experts in developing countries so they can fully take part in achieving our mutual goals," he added.

Under a related but separate agreement, also signed today, an alliance of nine United Nations and conservation organizations also agreed to set up a 'heads of agencies task force' to advance the 2010 target.

The agencies involved are the United Nations Development Programme (UNEP); the United Nations Committee on Trade and Development; the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the Ramsar Convention on wetlands and the Convention on Migratory Species.

Other members of the alliance are WWF, IPGRI and IUCN-the World Conservation Union.

Notes to Editors.

The 8th Committee of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity is taking place in Curitiba, Brazil from 20 to 31 March. www.biodiv.org

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