



**CONVENTION ON  
BIOLOGICAL  
DIVERSITY**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Protected area in Congo is a welcome step in protection of  
Biodiversity, achievement of 2010 Biodiversity Target and  
implementation of CBD Programme of work on protected areas.**

*Head of Biodiversity Convention applauds expansion of Ougoue-Lekiti National Park*

*Paris – 19 September 2006.* The announcement by the Republic of Congo of the creation of two new protected areas spanning nearly one million hectares is a demonstration of Congo's commitment to conserve its spectacular biodiversity and pristine ecosystems, said Ahmed Djoghlaif, the head of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), today at an international development cooperation meeting in Paris.

"The creation of two new protected areas as part of Ougoue-Lekiti National Park is a firm step toward achieving the 2010 Biodiversity Target, which includes the establishment of comprehensive, effectively managed and ecologically representative national and regional systems of protected areas around the world" said Mr. Djoghlaif.

"This decision, taken by the current chair of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment is of the greatest political significance" he added.

The announcement and the reaction from the Executive Secretary come as European development agencies are gathered in Paris at the conference: "Biodiversity in European Development Cooperation" to enhance support for biodiversity as part of development assistance.

"In the face of increasing human pressure on the planet's resources, an effective protected area system is the best hope for conserving ecosystems, habitats and species and the ecosystem services they produce" said the Executive Secretary.

"By conserving biodiversity and ensuring sustainable use, protected areas are critical to human welfare, poverty alleviation and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals."

These new protected areas of Congo further ensure the survival of the Great Ape populations of Congo basin.

The Congolese initiative complements earlier initiatives such as the decree by the President of Brazil that 6.4 million hectares of the Amazon rainforest were to be protected and the "Micronesia Challenge", launched by the President of Palau and the Vice-President of Micronesia aimed at placing 30% of marine areas and 20% of forest areas under protection.

The Paris conference, organized by IUCN and attended by 400 participants, was marked by enhanced support for biodiversity conservation as part of overseas development assistance.

Brigitte Gerardin, the French minister of cooperation issued a challenge to the EU members to increase their support to biodiversity from the current 0.7 percent of total EU funding for development projects to 5 percent.

The representative of the European Commission announced the decision to enhance support for the biodiversity programme of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

"Enhancing support to protected areas in Africa is crucial to achieve the 2010 Biodiversity Target and effective implementation of the CBD programme of work on protected areas in Africa" said Mr. Djoghla. The deadline for implementation of the CBD programme of work on protected areas is 2010 for terrestrial and 2012 for marine areas.

### **Information for Journalists:**

The Convention on Biological Diversity is one of the most broadly subscribed international environmental treaties in the world. Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro Brazil in 1992, it currently has 188 Parties—187 States and the European Community— who have committed themselves to its three main goals: the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of its components and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. The Secretariat of the Convention is located in Montreal.

The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, at its seventh meeting in 2004, adopted a programme of work on protected areas to support the establishment and maintenance of comprehensive, effectively managed and ecologically representative national and regional systems of protected areas with ambitious goals and clearly defined time-bound targets.

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