



## CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

## PRESS RELEASE

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### *Convention nears universal coverage as Timor-Leste becomes newest member*

*Montreal – 16 October 2006* - The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste deposited its instrument of accession to the Convention on Biological Diversity on October 10 2006. The Convention will enter into force for Timor-Leste on 8 January 2007, making it the 189<sup>th</sup> Party to the Convention.

"Timor-Leste's accession is of high political importance as it comes at a time when the international community has demonstrated that more than ever, it is determined to face one of the greatest challenges of our times—the unprecedented rate of loss of the biodiversity of our planet, which will have dramatic consequences on the well-being of all people, but in particular the most vulnerable," said Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Having joined the international community as a sovereign State on 27 September 2002, Timor-Leste is endowed with rich natural resources. The country includes rare terrestrial, lake and marine ecosystems, stemming from its unique geological and meteorological conditions. With 75% of the population dependant on subsistence agriculture, the environment is the lifeline of the country.

"The accession of Timor-Leste as a new Party should be welcomed as good news as it augurs well that the Convention on Life on Earth will soon become a universal body," said Ahmed Djoghlaif.

"Indeed no one, not a single citizen nor a single nation, regardless of its size and its location can afford to adopt an observer attitude when it comes to the protection of our life and the future of our children. We all need to be engaged in the battle for life on Earth! I call on the States that have not yet done so to join the Convention on Life on Earth" he said.

Timor-Leste will attend as a full Party at the next Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in Germany in 2008, and will make its voice heard during next year's negotiations on the international regime on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from their use, called for the 110 Heads of State and Government who attended the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development.

**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.

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