



## CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

## PRESS RELEASE

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### ***Head of international Biodiversity Convention applauds Chinese initiative to celebrate 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of establishment of its first protected area***

Montreal –25 October 2006. The organization of a national meeting in Beijing, to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of establishment of its first protected area in 1956, is a manifestation of China's commitment to conserve its amazing biodiversity and vibrant ecosystems, said Ahmed Djoghlaif, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

This national meeting will discuss the draft Chinese law on protected areas, launch a unified symbol of protected areas, summarize lessons learned and experience gained in the past fifty years, and build on them for a further plan of work on protected areas.

"In the face of escalating human pressure on the planet's resources, an effective protected area system is the best hope for conserving ecosystems, habitats and species and the priceless ecosystem services they provide," said Mr. Djoghlaif.

As a mega-biodiverse country, China has made tremendous efforts to protect its biodiversity, while at the same time sustaining rapid economic growth. In addition to a series of regulations and policy measures, China has established 2349 nature reserves protecting 14.8% of total land area of the country. In addition, China has 120 marine reserves, covering all endangered marine life, 17 aquatic wildlife sanctuaries, and over 230 fishery reserves. In recent times, China established training and education center on marine biodiversity located in the southeast coastal city of Xiamen, Fujian Province, and opened mangrove-learning centre in Guangxi Province to promote conservation and raise public awareness of marine biodiversity.

"This is surely a milestone event in the history of nature conservation in China. Its outcome will have a significant and wide-ranging impact on the implementation of the CBD programme of work on protected areas as well as the implementation of the Convention," said Mr. Djoghlaif.

"I am confident that this national meeting will provide a stronger policy, legal, institutional and financial framework to support future work for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in China. I congratulate the Chinese authorities for their commitment and tireless efforts," Mr. Djoghlaif further stated.

### **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. The deadline for implementation of the CBD programme of work on protected areas is 2010 for terrestrial and 2012 for marine areas.

For more information, please contact Marie Aminata Khan at +1 514 287 8701; email: [marie.khan@biodiv.org](mailto:marie.khan@biodiv.org)