



# Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

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Biodiversity and Climate Change

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### PROMOTING SCIENTIFIC INTERLINKAGES BETWEEN CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

**Montreal – 21 March 2007:** Through the generous financial support of the Government of Canada, roundtable discussions between members of the bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SBSTTA), the representatives of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and experts on the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change were held in Montreal on 19-20 March 2007.

The roundtable was convened in acknowledgement of the fact that climate change is real, and the growing negative impact on biodiversity is also real. Indeed, biodiversity loss is one of the consequences of climate change but can also be part of the response to mitigate its impact and adapt to a warmer planet.

In his opening statement, Mr. Gerald Tremblay, the Mayor of Montreal, called on the leaders of the world to demonstrate political courage and will to address the nexus between climate change and biodiversity, identified as the two most important environmental challenges of the twenty-first century.

The Chairman of the IPCC Bureau, Mr. Rajendra K. Pachauri, in a video message stated that the findings of the February IPCC report were very important and profound as the report shows major implications for biodiversity and its wealth of species, and that the upcoming fourth report of the IPCC will be even more important as it will have a broader geographic coverage and will show a better understanding of the climate change system.

The roundtable discussions explored the impacts of climate change on biodiversity, considering examples of:

- Shifting ranges of butterflies in Europe, trees in North America and flowering plants in South Africa;
- Increasing threats on polar bears in the Arctic and coral reefs in the tropics;
- Introduction of pests and the expansion of disease such as mountain pine beetles and West Nile virus;
- The “human face” of the negative impacts of climate change on biodiversity including among islanders and indigenous people.

Discussions revealed a range of views among participants on number of possible areas for further action, including:

- Increasing public awareness on the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change and improved communication of assessment results;



- Shifting focus towards assessments which address specific issues or geographic areas;
- Enhanced application of the ecosystem approach as a nexus for synergies between biodiversity and climate change;
- Scaled-up implementation, at the national and local level, of decisions which have already been adopted linking biodiversity and climate change;
- Enhanced cooperation and collaboration between related processes and policies and improved monitoring and evaluation.

The roundtable also discussed two emerging issues: (1) reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries; and (2) biofuels and the associated impacts on biodiversity, climate change, food security and development.

Participants stressed that there is a strong potential for positive synergies from reducing deforestation for both climate change and biodiversity – this synergy should start at the national level.

Mr. Christian Prip, the Chairman of the SBSTTA, stated that “the roundtable provided a unique opportunity to better understand the impact of the latest findings of the climate change scientific body on biodiversity, and to be better prepared for addressing this issue at the next SBSTTA meeting, to be held in Paris, at the headquarters of UNESCO in July of this year”.

The roundtable was held thanks to the generous contribution of the Government of Canada. In his closing remarks, Mr. Keith Christie, the Director General of Environment, Energy and Sustainable Development Bureau in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, announced the decision of Canada to convene an international workshop focused on the science of climate change and the impacts on biodiversity with emphasis on adaptation options for achieving the 2010 biodiversity target.

Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, concluded: “It is the first time that experts of two leading scientific authorities on climate change and biodiversity have been able to meet to discuss the interface of these two major planetary environmental challenges. As a long journey starts with one step, I sincerely hope that this will be the beginning of a long-term partnership between the experts of the scientific body of the Convention and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.”

### **The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**

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 in 1992, it currently has 190 Parties—189 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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