



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

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Biodiversity and Climate Change

SHARING WITH THE WORLD THE NEW ZEALAND EXPERIENCE IN IMPLEMENTING THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Montreal – 2 February 2007

At the invitation of Rt Hon Winston Peters, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaf, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, paid an official visit to New Zealand from 29 to 31 January 2007.

During his visit, Mr. Djoghlaf visited pilot projects of relevance to the implementation of three objectives of the Convention—the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. These pilot projects are designed to respond to the uniqueness of the ecosystems of New Zealand, a country made up of some 700 islands.

Discussions were held with Hon Jim Anderton, Minister of Agriculture, and Hon Chris Carter, Minister of Conservation, during which it was agreed that the New Zealand's experience in implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity and, in particular, its work programme on island biodiversity would be shared with other small island developing States, particularly those in the Pacific region, through a multi-year strategic partnership. This partnership will include the mobilization of New Zealand's scientific community through the Centre for Biodiversity and Restoration Ecology of the Victoria University of Wellington.

The Convention's programme of work on island biodiversity was adopted at the eighth meeting of its Conference of the Parties (COP 8), held in Curitiba, Brazil, from 20 to 31 March 2006.

Islands and associated economic zones cover a sixth of the world's area, and span most of the Earth's ecosystems. On one hand, islands depend even more significantly than other ecosystems on their biodiversity for livelihood, water, and food. On the other, island ecosystems are at greater risk than many others. Over a third of today's threatened species live on islands, a situation made worse by the high level of endemism of many of those species. Islands are particularly vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change, including sea-level rise and threats to fisheries and coral reefs. Their genetic resources have restricted ranges and mobility, and the interdependence of their ecosystems makes them all the more vulnerable.

The Convention's programme of work on island biodiversity gives special consideration to the particular circumstances of small island developing States (SIDS), in support of the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and chapter 17 of Agenda 21. Since SIDS economies depend critically on the use of coastal and marine ecosystems, threats to island



biodiversity and climate change may cause proportionately higher damages and further reduce their capacity to implement adaptation and mitigation measures.

The programme of work comprises seven focal areas, ranging from the protection of biodiversity to its sustainable use, maintenance of ecosystem services, traditional knowledge, sharing of benefits and provision of adequate resources. Focusing efforts and resources on the conservation and sustainable use of island biodiversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of island genetic resources, can provide rapid progress towards the reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010, and the establishment of systems of protected areas in terrestrial and marine environments

Information for Journalists:

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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