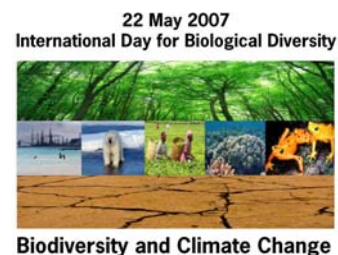


Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

PRESS RELEASE

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ELEVATING CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY TO THE TOP OF THE POLITICAL AGENDA

Montreal – 13 April 2007

Climate change and the loss of biological diversity are the two most important global environmental challenges facing mankind, with far reaching ecological, economic, financial, social, cultural, ethical, and security implications.

In 2004, by awarding the Nobel Peace Prize for the first time to an environmentalist, Professor Wangari Maathai, the Nobel Committee recognized the security component of the environment. On 17 April 2007, the United Nations Security Council will, for the first time in its history, debate climate change, thus recognizing its relevance to the implementation of Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter.

It has been demonstrated that climate change is one of the major driving forces behind the unprecedented loss of biodiversity of our planet. The second volume of the report of the International Panel on Climate Change, on impacts, adaptation and vulnerability to climate change, finalized and released just a few days ago, makes this very clear. Over the last century, species extinction rates rose by a factor of 1,000, paving the way to the greatest wave of mass extinction of animal species in 65 million years. Unless action is taken now, by 2100, two thirds of the Earth's remaining species are likely to be extinct. Climate change thus poses a major security threat to the very foundation of life on Earth.

It is for this reason that the international community will celebrate the International Day for Biodiversity on 22 May 2007 under the theme “biodiversity and climate change”. It is for this reason also that the ministers of the environment of the G8+5 at their historic meeting held in Potsdam, Germany, from 15 to 17 March 2007, “agreed that biodiversity and

climate are intertwined, and more efforts are needed to coherently address biodiversity and climate change issues together”.

For the first time in the history of the G8, their ministers of the environment with their partners from five mega-diverse countries considered and supported a plan – the *Potsdam Initiative – Biological Diversity 2010* – that revolves around ten concrete activities to help achieve by 2010 a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss. The 2010 biodiversity target was agreed by 110 Heads of State and Government at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. At Potsdam, the eight richest countries in terms of finance and technology and the five richest countries in terms of biodiversity stressed that “biodiversity has to be at the top of the political agenda and must be an integral part of global economic policies”.

“I applaud the historical Potsdam Initiative, as well as Germany’s decision to place both climate change and biodiversity among the priorities of the G8. Such a decision offers a unique opportunity to put biodiversity and climate change at the top of the political agenda and pave the way for the emergence of a global alliance for protecting life on earth when the leaders of the world meet in Bonn in May 2008 at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity,” said Dr Ahmed Djoghlaif, the Executive Secretary of the Convention aimed at protecting life on Earth.

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, Canada.

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