



CBD

# Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

## PRESS RELEASE

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Biodiversity and Climate Change

### FRENCH MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND NICOLAS HULOT ADDRESS THE OPENING MEETING OF SBSTTA 12 IN PARIS

*Paris, 2 July 2007:* The twelfth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 12) opened today at UNESCO headquarters, in Paris. The meeting was opened by the Chair of SBSTTA, Mr. Christian Prip. Key speakers at the opening ceremony included: Mr. Jean-Louis Borloo, French Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development and Planning; Mr. Nicolas Hulot, prominent French environmentalist and founder of the Fondation Nicolas Hulot; Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO; Mr. Bakary Kante, of the Division of Environmental Conventions of UNEP and representing Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UNEP; Mr. Christian Prip, Chairman of SBSTTA; and Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention.

In his address Mr. Borloo said that biological diversity was essential for human life, and emphasized that the world was facing a crisis of unprecedented dimensions, as loss of biodiversity would have dramatic consequences. He noted that the value of the scientific advice of SBSTTA was well recognized, and the work of the Body should be reinforced. He also stated that the Convention could count on the full support of the French Government in its efforts to conserve biodiversity and the sustainable use of its biological resources. He recalled that the President of France, Mr. Nicolas Sarkozy had stated that sustainable development would be the basis of all his Government's activities and to that end, has set up the new Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Planning and Development, covering almost all activities that affected the climate, public health and biodiversity.

Mr Nicolas Hulot, made an impassioned plea for the safeguard of nature from human barbarity. Every corner of the Earth was affected by human activity, and the planet was having more and more difficulty in resisting the impact. He described a number of contradictory situations: worldwide interest in biofuels was leading to the disappearance of tropical forests in Indonesia to make way for palm oil production, and, while the consequent disappearance of the orangutan was not of economic importance; its extinction would mean the death of part of the archives of humankind. Education and the raising of public awareness were essential to maintain the community of life. Man's future was in the hands of Nature, and no democratic social or economic system could last in the face of the combination of poverty and the loss of natural resources. Stressing the urgency of the situation, Mr. Hulot called for immediate action, with a combination of economic, social and ecological measures.



Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, said that UNESCO had been a partner of the CBD since its inception. He said that the maintenance of biodiversity required a broad approach that included not only science but also education, culture and communication. One area of collaboration to be explored was safeguarding of the natural and cultural sites under the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. Another area was holistic application of the ecosystem approach, within the UNESCO programme Man and the Biosphere, which had been launched in 1971. He recalled that UNESCO was a co-sponsor of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, and could help to bring the findings of the CBD scientific bodies to the attention of policy makers through its national commissions and scientific programme committees.

Mr. Kante expressed the full support of UNEP to the ongoing efforts of SBSTTA to play its role in the implementation phase of the three objectives of the Convention. He emphasized the link between loss of biodiversity and increased poverty, as well as the contribution of ecosystem services in combating poverty. He highlighted the need to reconcile the biodiversity agenda with development needs. He welcomed Mr. Borloo on behalf of the Executive Director of UNEP, and wished him success in the mission entrusted to him by the President of France, Mr. Nicolas Sarkozy, in establishing an umbrella ministry combining key areas essential for achieving sustainable development. He also expressed the full support of UNEP to ongoing efforts of the Secretariat of the Convention, under the able leadership of Mr. Djoghlaïf in assisting Parties to meet the challenges of the new enhanced phase of implementation of objectives of the Convention.

Mr. Djoghlaïf said that rising temperatures were damaging ecosystems, sometimes irreversibly. According to the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, between 20 to 30 per cent of species known today may disappear as the result of change in climate. This loss of species, particularly pollinators, could affect the food security of millions of people. SBSTTA has a vital role to play in addressing these challenges, and the success of its work depends on strong partnerships with, the scientific bodies of the biodiversity related conventions and other scientific organizations of the United Nations system. In this connection, the Secretariat was committed to reinforcing cooperation with UNESCO, and a draft memorandum of understanding is currently being finalized. Mr. Djoghlaïf urged participants to demonstrate their determination to meet the challenges ahead and pledged the Secretariat's full support for their efforts.

### **Information for journalists**

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

The Convention on Biological Diversity is one of the most broadly subscribed international environmental treaties on 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 from the utilization of genetic resources. The headquarters of the Secretariat of the Convention is located in Montreal. For additional information, please contact Marie Aminata Khan at +1 514 287 8701; e-mail: [marie.khan@cbd.int](mailto:marie.khan@cbd.int).