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BRUNEI DARUSSALAM INITIATES THE PROCEDURE TO BECOME 191ST PARTY TO THE CBD

Montreal – 14 January 2008. At the invitation of the Government of Brunei, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaflaf, paid an official visit on 12 January 2008 to Bandar Seri Begwin in Brunei Darussalam. During his visit, the Executive Secretary met the Minister of Industry and Primary Resources, The Honorable Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Setia Pahlawan Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Ahmad Bin Haji Jumat, and other senior officials to discuss ways and means to enhance the collaboration of Brunei Darussalam and the CBD, in particular in relation to the Heart of Borneo initiative.

The Heart of Borneo initiative was launched by the governments of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Malaysia at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD held in Curitiba Brazil in March 2006. The initiative aims to establish a network of trans-boundary protected areas spanning the borders of the three countries in order to maximize linkages, forest connectivity and sustainable land use practices for effective management and conservation. Covering an area of 240,000 km² of mountainous regions, and lying within both terrestrial and freshwater Global 200 ecoregions prioritized for biodiversity of global significance, the Heart of Borneo is home to tremendous biodiversity, including ten primate species, over 350 bird species, 150 reptile and amphibian species, and 10,000 plant species. The forests harbour some of the most biologically diverse habitats on Earth and sustain rich, rare, endemic and unique biota, making it one of the only two places on Earth where endangered species such as orangutans, Asian elephants, Sumatran rhinoceros and proboscis monkey still co-exist

“The endorsement of the Heart of Borneo initiative is a firm step towards achieving the 2010 biodiversity target, and implementing the CBD programmes of work on protected areas and forest biological diversity”, said Mr. Djoghlaflaf. He invited the Government to present this initiative to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties taking place in May 2008, in Bonn, Germany.

During his visit, the Executive Secretary met the Minister of Industry and Primary Resources, as well as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Vice Minister of Development. He also had a meeting with representatives of stakeholder groups. As a result, Brunei Darussalam agreed to initiate the procedure for becoming the 191st Party to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and agreement was also reached on ways and means to enhance the collaboration between Brunei Darussalam and the Secretariat of the CBD.



“Brunei Darussalam is not only one of the richest countries in biodiversity, it is also a world leader in conservation efforts with over half its land area already protected. I am convinced that its full membership of the CBD family will benefit not only Brunei, but all countries that are Party to the Convention and spur further action to achieve the 2010 Biodiversity Target. I look forward to welcoming Brunei Darussalam as the 191st Party to the Convention at the next meeting of the COP in May 2008 in Bonn”, said the Executive Secretary.

The Minister of Industry and Primary Resources said, “Brunei Darussalam is fully committed to protect its biodiversity for the benefit of present and future generations and looks forward, in its future capacity as a Party to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to the establishment of a strong partnership with the Secretariat to implement the three objectives of the Convention”.