



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



PRESS RELEASE

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BRUNEI DARUSSALAM BECOMES THE 191ST PARTY TO THE CONVENTION

Montreal 1 May –2008. Brunei Darussalam, one of the richest countries in term of biological diversity and a partner to the Heart of Borneo Initiative has decided to join the Convention on Biological Diversity. Brunei Darussalam deposited its instrument of accession on 28 April 2008 and will become the 191st Party to the Convention on 27 July 2008.

Brunei's accession to the Convention on Biological Diversity comes at a time when the international community is committed to redoubling its efforts to face one of the greatest environmental challenges of our times: the unprecedented loss of biodiversity compounded by climate change. A key driver associated with the unprecedented rate of loss of biodiversity of our Planet, climate change also has dramatic consequences on the well being of its peoples and in particular the most vulnerable.

In signing the Heart of Borneo Initiative Declaration on 12 February 2007, along with Indonesia and Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam committed to protecting the Island of Borneo as a life support system for its people. Protected areas constitute an important stock of natural, cultural and social capital, yielding flows of economically valuable goods and services that benefit human populations. Moreover, as unprecedented climate change becomes a reality, protected areas are key to buffering the unpredictable, yet inevitable impacts.

The Declaration calls for a one conservation vision, with a view to promoting people's welfare in "ensuring the effective management of forest resources and conservation of a network of protected areas, productive forests and other sustainable land-uses within an area which the three respective countries will designate as the "Heart of Borneo (HoB)", thereby maintaining Bornean natural heritage for the benefit of present and future generations, with full respect to each country's sovereignty and territorial boundaries, and also without prejudice to the ongoing negotiations on land boundary demarcation."

"Brunei Darussalam's accession as a new Party further emphasizes the fact that not a single responsible citizen in the world nor a single nation of our planet regardless of its size and its location can afford to adopt an observer attitude when it comes to the protection of our life and the future of our children without far reaching consequences. We all need to be engaged!" said Ahmed Djoghla, Executive Secretary of the Convention.

Brunei joins the convention prior to the ninth meeting of the United Nations Conference on Biological Diversity to be held in Bonn, Germany from 19 to 30 May. The conference is expected to attract more than 5,000 participants, including over 100 ministers and a number of heads of State.

"I take this opportunity to call on all the countries that have not yet done so, especially the United States of America, to join the Convention on Life on Earth as soon as possible and preferably before the next meeting to be held in October 2010 in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan," said Ahmed Djoghla.



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The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the Convention on Biological Diversity is the international framework for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of its benefits. With 191 Parties, the CBD has near-universal participation among countries who have committed to preserving life on Earth. The CBD seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. 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; email: marie.khan@cbd.int