



## PRESS RELEASE

### *The Green Wave for Biodiversity*

On 22 May 2008, a ripple was started that's turning into a wave around the world. *The Green Wave* for biodiversity.

*The Green Wave* is a project designed to support the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the world's international treaty that promotes the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from genetic resources.

The project aims to help raise awareness and educate young people – tomorrow's leaders and citizens – on the loss of biodiversity that's taking place across the world and the need to take action to preserve life on Earth.

The "wave" takes place on the International Day for Biodiversity which, this year, brings attention to the problem of invasive alien species brought into a place by careless human activities and one of the biggest threats to local biodiversity worldwide. Through *The Green Wave*, children and youth in schools across the world have been learning about this and planting native trees!

Each year on the 22 May, in participating schools around the world, children and youth plant a tree at 10:00 am local time, creating a "green wave" across time-zones. Participants upload photos and text to *The Green Wave* website to share their stories with others. An interactive map goes live in the evening at 20:10 local time, creating a second, virtual, "green wave".

*The Green Wave* arose from an idea of staff working at the German Agency for Nature Conservation and the Office of Environmental Response and Coordination of the Republic of Palau, the island nation in the Pacific.

It was launched by the German Minister of Environment in Bonn in May 2008 and by over 60 groups of children and youth in 19 countries.

From his base in Bonn, Jochen Flasbarth, Germany's Director-General of Nature Conservation in the Ministry of Environment said, "We're delighted that *The Green Wave* is gaining attention and participation all around the world. What started as a simple and small idea is growing branches and roots across the globe that will help spread awareness of the importance of the Earth's biodiversity and the need for all of us to take action to halt its loss and to cherish and nurture the diversity of life."

Since it started just a year ago, the Convention's Secretariat in Montreal has been promoting the project, and the little wave has grown. There's been growing interest, support and action from all kinds of places.

On 5 June 2009, the aircraft manufacturer, Airbus and the world-renowned National Geographic Society will be launching a worldwide campaign to raise awareness about the plight of the world's biodiversity and encourage participation in *The Green Wave* project in 2010.

In a huge gesture of support, Airbus is funding National Geographic to run a campaign across its global media with an audience of hundreds of millions – including the National Geographic Magazine, National Geographic Kids magazine, their TV channel, and a brand new website. They'll be launching a photo contest for kids.

When Airbus President and CEO, Tom Enders, signed a memorandum of understanding with the CBD Secretariat in July 2008, the aims were to help raise awareness and engage children and youth in the global biodiversity agenda. Through this initiative, Airbus is fulfilling these goals.

In Washington, DC, National Geographic's Executive Vice President for Mission Programs, Terry Garcia said, "We're delighted to be involved. It's all designed to encourage people and all sectors of society to "see the bigger picture" and protect the living planet, its life-support systems and, ultimately, our future".

Meanwhile in countries all around the world, children and youth have become a part of *The Green Wave*.

For example, in **Brazil**, children and youth in the city of Curitiba joined *The Green Wave* in September 2008 on Brazil's Tree Day, when Curitiba launched a city-wide initiative, planting native trees through the entire municipal school network.

On 22 May 2009 they celebrated *The Green Wave* at an event in a city park involving story telling and tree planting by the children from the municipal schools. The city authorities are now translating *The Green Wave* website into Portuguese so that children all across Brazil can be a part of *The Green Wave* in 2010.

In **Japan**, with the backing of the country's Ministry of Environment, many schools joined *The Green Wave*. Associations of potted native tree producers and a house builder provided potted-trees to the participating schools! On 22 May, the Vice Minister for Environment led a *Green Wave* ceremony in Tokyo at the Shinjuku Gyoen National Garden as part of the celebration of the International Day for Biodiversity. The CBD Executive Secretary, Ahmed Djoghlaif, took part in the event and the following day took part in another *Green Wave* ceremony in Ishikawa with the Governor and kindergarten kids.

In Japan's Ishikawa prefecture, schools and kindergartens took part in tree-planting events in the forest parks and the "*Satoyama*" – Japan's traditional countryside landscape between the cities and the deep mountains, nurtured by long-term sustainable use by the local people.

In Japan's Aichi prefecture, a tree-planting ceremony took place over 22 and 23 May at the Expo 2005 Aichi Commemorative Park, with the Governor and Vice Governor of Aichi and elementary school children. In addition, more than 20 schools and other organizations in the Prefecture carried out tree-planting events. Schools have even collected seeds of indigenous trees and started raising seedlings for planting in *The Green Wave* 2010. The Prefectural Government launched a new project to encourage citizens and companies to participate in tree-planting and will be undertaking activities throughout the coming months to promote understanding of biodiversity and involvement in *The Green Wave*. The Ministry of Environment is translating *The Green Wave* website into Japanese to make the global *Green Wave* more accessible to children and youth throughout Japan.

In **Algeria**, the environment ministry has promoted *The Green Wave* across the country with colorful posters and promotional events, and schools got involved in *Green Wave* activities. In provinces across the country, more than 300,000 school-children from nearly 4000 schools took part in a national programme supporting *The Green Wave*. To help stabilize the watersheds and protect against the desert through reforestation, more than 300,000 trees were planted. The trees will contribute to the UNEP-led

Billion Tree Campaign of which *The Green Wave* is a proud supporter. On 22 May, schools took part in celebrations and became a part of the global *Green Wave*.

In the **Philippines**, schools across the country prepared and carried out their *Green Wave* events on 22 May. The regional Centre for Biodiversity in Asia, ACP, located in the Philippines, has supported *The Green Wave* since September 2008, when they held a special event. Promoting tree-planting as a way to save the region's threatened biodiversity, the initiative brought together children, the Delegation of the European Commission, Ambassadors from Asian and European countries, and the College of Forestry and Natural Resources.

In **Singapore** a series of events were held to celebrate the International Day for Biodiversity and 17 schools participated in *The Green Wave*.

The Small Grants Programme (SGP) of the Global Environment Facility recently became a very special partner of *The Green Wave*, working actively to help communities in remote rural areas in developing countries raise awareness and educate children on biodiversity and involve them in the international *Green Wave*. Working in more than 120 developing countries worldwide, the SGP helps community groups, indigenous peoples and national NGOs implement projects to promote conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

In countries including **Belize, Egypt, Tunisia, Eritrea, Mauritius, Chile, Nicaragua, and Trinidad and Tobago**, with SGP support and encouragement, local non-governmental and community organizations have worked with schools to help educate on biodiversity and enable students to be a part of *The Green Wave* on 22 May. In Tunisia alone, with support of 21 past and present SGP grantees, the International Day for Biological Diversity was celebrated by 89 schools planting a locally important tree in their schoolyards.

And these are just some of the response and some of the events carried out!

In Tokyo, addressing a symposium on invasive alien species, His Excellency, Minister Masayoshi Yoshino, the Senior Vice-Minister for the Environment of Japan, told participants "A campaign called *The Green Wave* brings together children worldwide to make a difference by planting trees - creating a green wave around the world. The campaign is coordinated by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Before coming to this venue, Dr. Djoghlaif, CBD Executive Secretary, and I joined *The Green Wave* in Shinjuku Gyoen National Garden where, with students from Hanazono Elementary School in Shinjuku, we planted *Quercus acutissima* (*Kunugi*) and *Quercus serrata* (*Konara*)."

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the CBD said, "The response so far has been tremendous. *The Green Wave* represents a fantastic chain of human solidarity around the epitome of life – trees – between the children of today and the responsible citizens of tomorrow."

From New York, the Global Manager of the SGP, Delfin Ganapin, said, "The Small Grants Programme is delighted to be a part of *The Green Wave*. Its aims coincide with the aims of the SGP to promote conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the sharing of its benefits at community level. We support many projects that work with schools and youth initiatives. Our aim is to help the *Green Wave* become a *tidal* wave of awareness by 2010".

On the launch of *The Green Wave* a year ago, the United Nations' Under Secretary-General for the environment and head of the UN Environment Programme, Achim Steiner, encouraged students to embrace this initiative as an opportunity to be a part of a global movement and to make a difference. One year on, and it is clear students around the world have demonstrated their ability to rise to that challenge.

From a small start, *The Green Wave* is now set to make a huge splash in 2010, the International Year of Biodiversity. We wish all participants a happy *Green Wave* – and happy planning for 2010.

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Notes:

**The Green Wave**

*The Green Wave* is a global biodiversity project that enables young people to make a difference – one school, one tree, one step at a time. *The Green Wave* encourages participants to engage in local action, build friendships with other participants around the world, work in local and international partnerships and learn about global issues affecting biodiversity.

*The Green Wave* is celebrated annually on 22 May – the International Day for Biological Diversity. In participating schools, children and youth plant a tree\* at 10:00 am local time, creating a “green wave” around the world. Participants upload photos and text to *The Green Wave* website to share their tree-planting stories with others. An interactive map goes live in the evening at 20:10 local time, creating a second, virtual, “green wave”.

*The Green Wave* supports the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity to strengthen awareness and education on biodiversity. It will contribute to celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010. And it supports the Billion Tree Campaign led by the United Nations Environment Programme.

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\* In some parts of the world, the seasonal conditions are not suitable to plant a tree on 22 May. In these areas, participants plant in an appropriate season and, instead, water their chosen tree at 10 am on 22 May.

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Through action-oriented learning, *The Green Wave* teaches children and youth the importance of biodiversity for our well-being and that of our planet. *The Green Wave* supports schools around the world to educate tomorrow’s leaders on the crucial tasks of protecting Earth’s biodiversity and halting its loss.

Initiated by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) and the Office of Environmental Response and Coordination (OERC) of the Republic of Palau, *The Green Wave* is coordinated by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity with the support of BfN and the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

<http://greenwave.cbd.int>

**The Convention on Biological Diversity**

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 191 contracting Parties—190 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. For more information, please contact Marie Aminata Khan on +1 514 287 8701 or at [marie.khan@cbd.int](mailto:marie.khan@cbd.int)

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