



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



COMMUNIQUÉ

THE GEF JOINS FORCES WITH THE CONVENTION FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL YEAR ON BIODIVERSITY

Montreal, 25 June 2009 – The Council of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) approved this week a special initiative to support the objectives of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity (IYB). Budgeted at US\$ 895,000, this is the most significant initiative for the IYB agreed to date. The GEF activities on IYB will be undertaken in consultation with the Convention Secretariat taking in to account relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

Activities within the initiative include:

- A special forum on the GEF contribution to biodiversity conservation, sustainable use, and access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing organized at the GEF Assembly in May 2010 in partnership with the Convention Secretariat;
- International events and workshops on topics related to the 2010 biodiversity target and other emerging biodiversity issues;
- Special events on private sector involvement on biodiversity conservation;
- GEF Media Reporting Awards on Biodiversity.

Commenting on the support, Monique Barbut, CEO and Chairperson of the GEF, said, “What we do in 2010 could be the tipping point needed to galvanize public opinion and to spur decision-makers around the globe to take the necessary steps to reduce and halt the loss of biodiversity.”

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity noted, “The GEF Council decision to provide substantial financial support to achieve the objective of IYB is yet another demonstration of the sound partnership which exists between the Convention and its financial mechanism, and I applaud the GEF CEO and the Council for this initiative and call on others to follow this lead.”

The International Year of Biodiversity will begin with a high-level event hosted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris on 21-22 January 2010. The event will include a new exhibition on biodiversity that will travel around the world during the year. Following the event, UNESCO will hold a scientific conference from 25 to 29 January focusing on a number of topics identified by the Conference of the Parties as requiring scientific attention. An event of major significance during the year will be a high-level meeting to be held in conjunction with the sixth-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2010 and focusing on issue of biodiversity for development. In December, Kanazawa Prefecture in Japan will host an event to close the International Year.

The Global Environment Facility, designated to operate the financial mechanism of the Convention, has evolved to be the principal multilateral agency that provides financial support to global biodiversity efforts, and is uniquely positioned to mobilize its funding partners to increase global recognition about biodiversity.

For ideas and technical support on how to actively participate in the International Year of Biodiversity, readers are encouraged to write to IYB2010@cbd.int.

A joint press-release issued by GEF and the CBD Secretariat is available at: http://www.thegef.org/interior_right.aspx?id=26074.



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COP 9 MOP 4 Bonn Germany 2008



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