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PRESS RELEASE

JEAN LEMIRE APPOINTED AMBASSADOR TO THE GREEN WAVE FOR BIODIVERSITY

Montreal, 20 May 2010 – On the eve of the International Day for Biological Diversity, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has announced the appointment of the Canadian biologist, filmmaker and explorer, Mr. Jean Lemire, as Honorary Ambassador for *The Green Wave*.

In 2007, Lemire was appointed Officer of the Order of Canada for his contributions to raising public awareness of key environmental issues. In 2006 he completed a 15-month voyage to the Antarctic on the *Sedna IV*, a unique 51 metre full-rigged yacht with high-precision scientific and filming equipment. The voyage was documented in the film *The Last Continent*. Students in hundreds of schools followed the expedition through satellite and internet links to learn about the vulnerability of marine and polar ecosystems. His next multi-year voyage on *Sedna IV*, planned to begin in the fall of 2010, will focus on biodiversity and involve schools and communities taking part in *The Green Wave*.

The Green Wave for biodiversity aims to raise awareness and support education of children and youth on the importance of biodiversity and involve them in action to preserve life on Earth. As a special celebration each year on the International Day for Biodiversity the project sends a green wave of action around the world when, at 10 a.m. local time, schools and groups plant a tree to celebrate life on Earth. In 2009, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon thanked those contributing to the success of *The Green Wave* noting that there is no better place to start raising awareness and initiate actions for biodiversity, than in schools and families. It is to help carry *The Green Wave* message around the world and across oceans that Jean Lemire has been appointed as Ambassador of the campaign.

On learning of his appointment, Mr. Lemire said, “It is an honour and pleasure for me to accept the appointment as Ambassador for *The Green Wave*. The project is a perfect complement to my personal mission to stimulate reflection on the world in which we live and stimulate action to safeguard it. *The Green Wave* can help give children and youth the will to care for biodiversity and take actions to sustain the living earth”.

“*The Green Wave* initiative demonstrates, year after year, that young people care deeply about conserving our rich biodiversity now and for future generations,” said Jim Prentice, Canada’s



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Environment Minister. “On behalf of Canada, I extend my deepest congratulations to Jean Lemire, a film maker, a biologist, an environmentalist.”

“It is with honour and pride that I congratulate Jean Lemire for his appointment as Ambassador of *The Green Wave*”, said Ms. Line Beauchamp, Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks of Quebec. “When we connect with nature – and Jean Lemire knows how to bring us to do so – we discover its wealth and become its guardian. As Ambassador, Mr. Lemire will transfer his passion to children and youth and enable them to better understand and safeguard biodiversity.”

This year *The Green Wave* is of special importance as it coincides with the celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity as well as the celebration of the International Year of Youth and the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. It also coincides with the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit that will take place in October 2010, and the Summit of Heads of State on Biodiversity that will take place in New York on 22 September 2010.

Commenting on the appointment, Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the CBD said, “Planting the seed of love of nature in the heart and souls of our children is planting the seeds of peace with nature in the heart and soul of the citizens of tomorrow. This is what *The Green Wave* is about and this is what our collaboration with Jean Lemire is about”.

Note to Editors

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 193 Parties, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention 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 Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, a supplementary treaty to the Convention, seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 156 countries and the European Union are party to the Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal.

For more information visit www.cbd.int www.cbd.int/2010

The Green Wave

The Green Wave for biodiversity aims to raise awareness and educate children and youth on the worldwide loss of biodiversity and involve them in action to preserve life on Earth. *The Green Wave* encourages biodiversity-related activities throughout the school year. But each year on the International Day for Biodiversity, it sends a green wave of action around the world. On 22 May 2010, the wave will move from East to West when at 10:00 local time schools and groups plant a tree to celebrate life on Earth. Participants upload stories and photos of their activities that go live on the Web in the evening at 20:10. The Secretariat is the coordinator of the project. For more information visit: <http://greenwave.cbd.int>

The International Year of Biodiversity: www.cbd.int/2010 and www.facebook.com/iyb2010

The International Day of Biodiversity: <http://www.cbd.int/idb/2010/>

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