

PRESS RELEASE

AICHI-NAGOYA, THE HOST REGION OF THE NEXT CONFERENCE OF PARTIES, CELEBRATES THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY

Montreal, 22 January 2010 – At the initiative of the United Nations General Assembly and with a view of engaging all stakeholders for protecting life on Earth, 2010 has been declared as the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB). To mark the International Year of Biodiversity, an opening event was organized by the Aichi-Nagoya Promotion Committee for the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The celebration was attended by some 900 people, including 770 citizens and 130 special invitees, such as Japanese Diet members, Aichi Prefectural assembly members, City of Nagoya assembly members, other local political leaders, and representatives from the local business community.

Senior Vice-Minister of the Environment Issei Tajima attended the event as an honoured guest. In addition to speeches by the organizers and the honoured guests, there was an award ceremony for the painting and photo contest on local nature was held, a keynote speech was delivered by Mr. Clive Williams Nicol, a British-born writer and actor and a long-time resident and citizen of Japan, and a discussion session on “biodiversity and life” was held.

The message from the United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, on the occasion of the IYB was presented. “For this International Year of Biodiversity, I call on every country and each citizen of our planet to join together in a global alliance to protect life on Earth. Biodiversity is Life, Biodiversity is OUR Life.”

Mr. Issei Tajima said, “I attended the official launch of the International Year of Biodiversity organized by German Chancellor Angela Merkel on 11 January in Berlin, where I exchanged ideas with the Federal Minister for the Environment Germany and representatives from relevant United Nations organizations, and asked them for their support towards the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in Aichi-Nagoya. At the ceremony, I also expressed our determination to make the meeting of the Conference of the Parties a huge success.”

He added that, “I would like to take the opportunity of holding the Aichi-Nagoya IYB celebration event to ask all of you for more support in livening up the IYB and enabling us to save this planet and biodiversity for the future generations as much as possible.”

Mr. Masaaki Kanda, Chairman of Aichi-Nagoya COP10 CBD Promotion Committee and Governor of Aichi Prefecture, said, “This year 2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity as well as the year when the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties will be held in Aichi-Nagoya. In other words, a historic year has started.” He added that, “The Aichi-Nagoya COP10 CBD Promotion Committee has been working hard to make this international conference for life on Earth a huge success. I’d like to ask all of you for further support towards realizing the great achievements that are expected to be accomplished there.”

Mr. Masao Yamada, Committee Member of the Committee and Deputy Mayor, City of Nagoya, who attended the event on behalf of Nagoya Mayor Takashi Kawamura, said, “This year the City of Nagoya celebrates the 400th anniversary of its founding and will implement a variety of activities on biodiversity leading up to the meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The principal one is the development of Nagoya’s Biodiversity Strategy, which consists of two main concepts – “Restoration of Neighbouring Nature” and ‘Reformation of Urban Lifestyle’.”

Mr. Kunihiro Okada, Vice-Chairman of the Committee and Chairman of Nagoya Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said, “Since ancient times, the Japanese people have been interested in biodiversity, for example by observing and appreciating the seasonal changes in living organisms. This has been well reflected in *haiku*, a traditional Japanese form of poetry.” He added that, “We would like to take the opportunity of hosting the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to attract the attention of the world to the Japanese affection for biodiversity.”

Mr. Fumio Kawaguchi, Vice-Chairman of the Committee and Chairman of Chubu Economic Federation said, “Our Earth has been living for 4,600 million years, and human beings, as well as the other diverse organisms, have been nurtured by the planet. However, we have to feel a sense of crisis over the entire Earth because some organisms are being faced with the threat of extinction.” He added that “We would like to take the opportunity of holding COP10 in our region to gain an appreciation of the importance of biodiversity and lives of diverse organisms, and implement our activities accordingly.”

The Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Ahmed Djoghlaif, sent his message to the event, stating that, “The launch of this historic event by Aichi-Nagoya is of a high political importance. The people in Aichi-Nagoya will host the biodiversity summit in October under the motto of ‘Living in Harmony with Nature’, and this is what the IYB is all about.”

This ceremony marks the opening of what will be a memorable year for Aichi-Nagoya, where other big events such as Aichi Triennale 2010 (international art festival) and Nagoya 400th Anniversary Festival (celebration of the 400th anniversary of the founding of the city and Nagoya Castle, and its relevant activities) will be held this year, along with the next Biodiversity Summit.

The Aichi-Nagoya COP 10 CBD Promotion Committee has been assisting the Japanese Government in hosting the next Conference of Parties (COP) to be held in October 2010, in Nagoya City, Aichi Prefecture, Japan. The Committee consists of Aichi Prefecture, City of Nagoya, Nagoya Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Chubu Economic Federation.

BACKGROUND

Proclaimed by the United Nations, the goals of the International Year of Biodiversity are to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity, highlighting the fact that it continues to be lost, and to celebrate novel solutions being carried out around the world for its conservation and sustainable use, and the equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources.

The Year 2010 was chosen to coincide with the biodiversity target agreed by world leaders in 2002. During the Year scientists will report on a global trend on biodiversity. The third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, to be published in May, is expected to report that most trends are negative.

On the basis of this scientific information, countries will over the year evaluate what actions will be needed in the next decade and will set the vision for the next 30 years.

As the world prepares to celebrate the International Year, events will be held in every region of the world. India held its launch on 4 January and many others are planned in the weeks to come.

The official global launch was held in Berlin on 11 January, organized by German Chancellor, Angela Merkel.

This opening will be followed by a high-level event and scientific conference organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris from 21 to 29 January.

Countries are already mobilizing to hold activities throughout the year. To date, one third of the Parties to the Convention have already announced plans for activities.

These celebrations and events will lead up to some important policy meetings including a special high-level meeting on biodiversity during the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly, culminating with the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit in October 2010.

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 an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits from utilization of genetic resources. With 193 Parties, the CBD has near-universal participation among countries 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 are located in Montreal.

For additional information, please contact:

David Ainsworth on +1 514 833 0196 or at david.ainsworth@cbd.int

Marie Aminata Khan on +1 514 287 8701 or at marie.khan@cbd.int

Johan Hedlund on + 1 514 287 6670 or at johan.hedlund@cbd.int

IYB website: www.cbd.int/2010

Facebook fan site: www.facebook.com/iyb2010