

Communiqué

PAINTING BY NORWEGIAN ARTIST ØRNULF OPDAHL, THE LATEST DONATION TO THE MUSEUM OF NATURE AND CULTURE

Montreal, 2 February 2010 – Addressing the 500 participants attending the sixth Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity, Erik Solheim, Minister of the Environment and International Development of Norway, stated that:

“I have heard that many countries have provided gifts to the Museum, and now it is Norway’s turn to do the same. I am therefore happy to present you with this gift, a painting by Ørnulf Opdahl, a well known Norwegian artist. The painting shows a Norwegian mountain landscape, and it is a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity and the important work on biodiversity carried out by you and your staff.”

Ørnulf Opdahl, one of Norway’s distinguished landscape painters, uses his artistic talent to convey biological diversity and the mysteries that lie hidden in nature. The deep contrast and the special light of the Norwegian landscape are central elements in his paintings.

In the summer of 2004, Opdahl joined the Norwegian research vessel *G.O. Sars* on its expedition to explore the marine life of the northern Atlantic Ocean above the mid-Atlantic Ridge. He was on the crew list as ship’s artist, a role with a long tradition that has gradually disappeared as photography and other forms of documentation took over.

Aboard the *G.O. Sars*, Opdahl captured his impressions in sketches and watercolours. His “on board” anthology has provided the basis for inspiration for many oil and watercolour paintings and prints.

Thanking the Government of Norway for its generous contribution, Ahmed Djoghlaf, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, said that: “The Museum of Nature and Culture, launched in 2006, has to date received 60 donations. All donations to the Museum are the property of the United Nations and are duly recorded in an official record of gifts from Member States to the Organization.”

He added that: “As Minister Solheim stressed in his opening statement, the cultural, ethical and spiritual values of biodiversity are among the most important reasons why we should be working to halt its loss. This is why the Museum of Nature and Culture has been established. With today’s donation from Norway, we move toward the universality of the Museum and contributions from all 193 Parties to the Convention.”

The collection of exhibits in the Museum of Nature and Culture can be seen at: www.cbd.int/museum