

COMMUNIQUÉ

CBD SECRETARIAT WELCOMES CANADA'S DECISION TO ESTABLISH NORTH AMERICA'S NEWEST NATIONAL PARK

8 February 2010 – Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity today applauded the Government of Canada's initiative to create the sprawling 11,000-square-kilometre Mealy Mountains National Park, situated in Newfoundland and Labrador, the largest protected area in eastern Canada.

“This decision, taken by the host country of the Convention's Secretariat is of the greatest political significance and a befitting launch of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity,” said Mr. Djoghlaif.

The Government of Canada and the government of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on Friday, 5 February 2010, in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland, to establish the new Mealy Mountains National Park. The MOU aims to protect an array of boreal ecosystems and wildlife; undisturbed wilderness areas; landscapes of great cultural significance; and heavily glaciated mountains.

The area, which has long been treasured by aboriginal people, shelters threatened woodland caribou herds, moose, black bear, osprey, bald eagles and a species of special concern—the eastern population of the Harlequin Duck. The site features mountain summits reaching up to 1,000 metres in height, the salmon-filled Eagle River, and beaches described in Viking sagas chronicling explorations along the Atlantic coast of North America.

“As we enter into the International Year of Biodiversity, it is fitting that we are working to establish a national park to protect this spectacular boreal landscape for all time for all Canadians,” said Canada's Environment Minister, Jim Prentice, in announcing the creation of the park.

“This initiative is a demonstration of Canada's commitment to conserve its spectacular biodiversity and pristine ecosystems, and I congratulate the federal and provincial Governments,” said Ahmed Djoghlaif. “The creation of this new protected area is a firm foundation towards achieving the post-2010 biodiversity target, and the effective implementation of the Convention's programmes of work on protected areas and mountain biological diversity, which are scheduled for in-depth review by the Conference of the Parties at its tenth meeting, to be held in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010.”