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PRESS RELEASE

THE GOVERNMENT OF FINLAND ANNOUNCES INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR SUSTAINING BIODIVERSITY IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE LIFE WEB INITIATIVE

Montreal, 16 March 2010 - The Prime Minister of Finland, Matti Vanhanen, announced today in Dar es Salaam that Finland will support Tanzania under the LifeWeb Initiative. This is the result of cooperation between Finland's Ministries of Environment and of Foreign Trade and Development.

The LifeWeb Initiative is a partnership platform to strengthen financing for protected areas to conserve biodiversity, secure livelihoods and address climate change, through implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas.

This support to Tanzania marks the first project that Finland will contribute to as a partner in the LifeWeb Initiative. A press release sent out today by the Finnish government states that Finland will look for further opportunities to support nature conservation projects through the LifeWeb Initiative. Consistent with the Finnish Forest Biodiversity Programme (METSO), LifeWeb facilitates voluntary support for biodiversity priorities.

The project in Tanzania will sustain biodiversity as a means to strengthen local livelihoods, especially those of women, and adapt to climate change in the Mahale Mountains National Park and surrounding villages. Protecting the biodiversity in this area, and the vital ecosystem services it provides to the growing local population, has been identified as a high conservation priority by the Tanzanian Government.

The project is based on the principle that, to achieve economic development and biodiversity conservation in rural landscapes, it is important to address the two simultaneously, and that local community empowerment is crucial to responsible natural resource management decision making. With this in mind, project components include village land management planning, capacity development for sustainable forestry and other land use, conservation friendly business development training, as well as monitoring of results on local livelihoods and biodiversity health.

The total cost of the project is 480,000 Euro, 250,000 of which will be provided by the Government of Finland, with the balance coming from the Tanzanian government through the National Parks authority, as well as the Frankfurt Zoological Society and The Nature Conservancy.

Implementation will be undertaken by local village councils, the Jane Goodall Institute and the above partners.



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The Finnish Minister of Environment Paula Lehtomäki pledged at the 9th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2008 in Bonn that Finland would support the LifeWeb Initiative and the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Paavo Väyrynen has approved associated funding. She declared that “The LifeWeb Initiative will have a crucial impact worldwide. Loosing biological diversity is a threat comparable to climate change and we must fight against it. Biologically diverse forests form a crucial piece of the solution in the battle against climate change and natural disasters. Preserving biological diversity is also a lifeline for local communities.”

The Frankfurt Zoological Society Mahale project leader Kathryn Doody said “This new partnership facilitated by LifeWeb will strengthen community development and conservation activities in a globally important biodiversity hotspot. Balancing the demands of people and nature is an on-going global challenge; in Mahale we look for win-win opportunities that allow for conservation compatible development and opportunities to build the capacity of local communities to manage natural resources. We thank the Government of Finland for their support.”

Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity congratulated Finland and Tanzania for their partnership in the Life Web Initiative. He said, “This project is a strong example of a way of ensuring the multiple benefits that biodiversity provides for securing local livelihoods. Finland has a strong history of international engagement in biodiversity and protected areas, and we look forward to our ongoing collaboration to further address these issues in through the LifeWeb Initiative. Tanzania’s commitment and innovation in protected areas is providing inspiration and example to others both regionally and globally.”

“Protected areas are cornerstones for biodiversity conservation and powerful tools for addressing climate change and providing sustainable economic development. Implementation of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas, reinforced through the LifeWeb Initiative, is one of the brightest hopes we have for the future of our planet and humankind” he said.

Note to Editors

About the Life Web Initiative

The Life Web Initiative was launched in May 2008 at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Bonn, Germany. LifeWeb adds value to donors and recipients by providing a user-friendly clearing house for countries to profile their financial priorities and invite international support; facilitating funding matches, coordinating counterpart financing among donors, as well as recognising donor support and innovation for natural solutions.

The government of Germany has supported projects with more than 70 million Euros within the framework of its International Climate Initiative and bilateral development cooperation. Germany is also increasing its support in the coming years. The government of Spain has committed 5 million Euros to protected areas projects through LifeWeb and a number of other public and private donors are also increasingly considering support to financial priorities profiled on the LifeWeb clearing house.

To date, 45 Expressions of Interest have been registered on the LifeWeb clearing house, totalling US\$137 million. The CBD Secretariat further invites developing countries to submit their funding needs through the Life Web clearing house and invites donors to consider these priorities, as consistent with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

Further information on Life Web, please visit www.cbd.int/lifeweb/ or contact Jason Spensley +1.514.287.8704 or jason.spensley@cbd.int.

About the Convention on Biological Diversity

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 and sustainable use of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits from utilization of genetic resources. With 193 Parties, the Convention has near universal participation among countries committed to preserving life on Earth. 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 Community are party to the Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal. www.cbd.int

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