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PRESS RELEASE

High-level General Assembly event to mark the International Year of Biodiversity

Montreal, 16 April – As a means to mark the International Year of Biodiversity (www.cbd.int/2010), the United Nations General Assembly decided on 15 April 2010 to hold a high-level event on biodiversity on 22 September 2010, the eve of the opening of the general debate of its sixty-fifth session.

The high-level event will provide a unique opportunity to raise awareness on the global biodiversity crisis and the urgent need for stronger action to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in order to achieve the Convention's objectives. The meeting will provide an occasion for world leaders to provide political impetus and support for a sustained global response to the world's biodiversity challenges, and the need to address each of the three objectives of the Convention.

During the high-level event, dialogue will be held on issues of strategic importance to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Roundtable discussions will be held on post-2010 biodiversity targets; the links between climate change and biodiversity; and the importance of biodiversity to poverty alleviation and development and to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The event will serve also to contribute to the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, which will be held in parallel to it.

The 2010 biodiversity target to significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss was adopted by the General Assembly as a target of Millennium Development Goal 7, "to ensure environmental sustainability". The 2010 target was adopted by Parties to the Convention in 2002, and actions to achieve it were incorporated in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. This year, the theme of the United Nations observance of the International Day for Biological Diversity, commemorated annually on 22 May, is *Biodiversity, Development and Poverty Alleviation* (www.cbd.int/idb/).

Speaking at the General Assembly after the adoption of this decision, the Executive Secretary of the Convention, Ahmed Djoghlaf, paid tribute to Member States for undertaking such a historic venture:

"This will be the first time that the General Assembly has organized a high-level event with participation of Heads of State and Government to contribute to the observance of a United



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Nations International Year, serving to raise awareness on biodiversity and galvanize political momentum at the highest political level. This historic event will take place a month before the tenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention (COP-10) that will be held in Nagoya, Japan (www.cbd.int/cop10), and its outcome will be transmitted to the high-level segment of the Conference of the Parties. As one of the three Rio conventions, and as we approach the twentieth anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit, it is only appropriate that following its deliberation on climate change, the General Assembly should take up the issue of biodiversity, particularly since biodiversity is integral to any response to climate change.”

Note to Editors

The 2010 International Year of Biodiversity

For further information, visit www.cbd.int/2010

The International Day for Biological Diversity

For further information, visit www.cbd.int/idb/

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 Community 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 tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-10)

The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-10) will take place in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture in Japan from 18 to 29 October 2010. The fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol (COP-MOP 5) will be held at the same venue, from 11 to 15 October 2010.

For more information visit www.cbd.int/cop10 and www.cbd.int/mop5

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