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Alarming global survey on children's perceptions of nature

18 May 2010 – Daryl Hannah joined Sir Ranulph Fiennes at London Zoo yesterday to launch the results of an Airbus survey exploring children's perceptions of nature. The actress and environmentalist announced the results of the 'Airbus Bio-Index' – a survey of more than 10,000 children and young people aged 5-18 from ten countries worldwide, conducted as part of the aircraft manufacturer's work supportive of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Airbus is backing the CBD *Green Wave*, which at 10:00am on Saturday 22 May will pass through the world's time zones creating a wave of activity from east to west around the planet. *The Green Wave* is designed to promote awareness about the crucial role biodiversity plays in our lives and our futures, and involve young people in action to safeguard life on earth.

The Airbus Bio-Index shows there is work to be done. In many countries, the next generation has a reputation for being glued to the virtual world and the survey highlights the implications this has for the future of the real world. When asked to rank what was most important to them, ten times more children ranked watching TV or playing computer games first compared to those who chose saving the environment (40 percent and 4 percent respectively). And while species extinction rates are estimated to be up to 1,000 times the natural rate, only 9 percent ranked looking after animals as most important; 15 percent did not know what 'endangered species' implied.

Hannah said: "Biodiversity loss is a global crisis and it's of crucial importance that we do all we can to nurture our environment back to health. The Airbus Bio-Index will help inform and empower the future generation of environmental champions to take bold and effective action".

On a positive note, the results show that children still enjoy spending time outdoors with almost a third (30 percent) saying it is their favourite pastime. Sir Ranulph himself knows a thing or two about the great outdoors. And the man, considered by the Guinness Book of World Records to be the greatest living adventurer, hopes *The Green Wave* can help to inspire young people to explore the rich variety of life around them.

One topic which seems to grab the attention of a generation immersed in technology is how the study and imitation of nature's best ideas can help to solve human challenges. Biomimicry – biologically inspired engineering – is one of the reasons Airbus is backing *The Green Wave* campaign. More than 70 percent of those surveyed knew that the aviation industry had been inspired by the natural environment. And if they could themselves copy one skill from nature, 66 percent would choose to fly like a bird. Yet when asked which type of animal or plant they would most like to save, only nine percent said they would most like to save birds, with mammals such as snow leopards coming top with 50 percent followed by reptiles with 23 percent. Only six percent chose plants and less than one percent opted for insects.



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
United Nations Environment Programme
413 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 800, Montreal, QC, H2Y 1N9, Canada
Tel : +1 514 288 2220, Fax : +1 514 288 6588
secretariat@cbd.int www.cbd.int



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Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the CBD, stated that “the survey confirms the alarming disconnect of our children with nature and calls for urgent action to close this growing gap between tomorrows citizens and their natural heritage. This is what *The Green Wave* is all about”.

To participate in *The Green Wave* on 22 May, visit <http://www.greenwave.cbd.int/>. You can also visit *The Green Wave* Facebook page to share photos and stories (search ‘Pages’ for ‘Green Wave’), or download a specially created *Green Wave* Twibbon for use on your Facebook or Twitter profile picture (search <http://www.twibbon.com/> for ‘The Green Wave’).

Notes to Editors:

The Airbus Bio-Index

The survey, sponsored by Airbus on behalf of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, has been conducted by SSI (Survey Sampling International) across ten countries, with a sample of 1,000 5 -18 year olds from each country, totaling 10,000 children. The participating countries were UK, France, Germany, Spain, USA, Japan, China, Mexico, Singapore, Australia.

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 Union 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
