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COMMUNIQUÉ *The Green Wave for Biodiversity in 2010*

Montreal, 5 June 2010. On the International Day for Biodiversity, children and youth in countries all around the world took part in a global wave of action: *The Green Wave*. This year the International Day brought attention to the importance of biodiversity to development and poverty alleviation.

Each year to celebrate the day, children and youth in participating schools plant a tree at 10 a.m. local time, creating a “green wave” of activity across time-zones. Participants post their photos and stories on an interactive map on *The Green Wave* website. The stories go live in the evening at 20:10 local time, creating a second, virtual, “green wave”.

Children and youth were joined by dignitaries, teachers, parents, experts and supporters from government, companies, non-governmental organizations and other organizations. Thousands of students from more than 1000 schools and groups who took part in more than 60 countries have uploaded pictures and stories of their activities to *The Green Wave* website. Here are some of the events that took place in just some of the countries.

In Japan, well over 400 schools, groups and organizations across the country participated in the celebration. *The Green Wave* was encouraged by the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism and the Forestry Agency. In Tokyo, a tree planting and education event on biodiversity was held and attended by 300 children and parents selected from 1200 applicants. In Shikotsuko, Hokkaido, the Environment Ministers of Japan, China and South Korea jointly planted trees in commemoration of *The Green Wave*.

In Brazil, over 68 groups joined the fun. The Boticario Foundation promoted *The Green Wave* to schools, corporations, Boticario franchises, NGOs and the public. The Secretariat of the Environment of Curitiba city organized activities including lectures, an exhibition, biodiversity games and, of course, *The Green Wave* event in which over 100 children participated.

In Singapore, 91 schools took part and planted 195 native tree species chosen from a list of 10 trees recommended by the National Parks Board and provided through the Garden City Fund and by Takashimaya Singapore Limited and Mitsui Chemicals Group.

In Nicaragua, the GEF Small Grants Programme implemented by the United Nations Development Programme coordinated *The Green Wave* campaign. They worked with the ministries of education and environment, private companies and other UN programs, including UNV. More than 100 volunteers supported students at hundreds of schools to plant a tree at each school. Thousands of students took part.



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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The UN Resident Coordinator and Vice-minister of the Environment and Natural Resources held a press conference to announce *The Green Wave*, which turned out to be a resounding success.

In Tunisia, during *The Green Wave* celebrations the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development congratulated the participants of a Biodiversity Treasure Hunt held in April and May. With the support of the GEF Small Grants Programme, over 100 schools throughout the country joined the celebrations by planting olive and laurel trees.

In Iceland, seven groups of children and grownups, one for each of the municipalities that make up the capital area of Iceland, gathered to plant a tree and celebrate the International Day for Biodiversity. In Reykjavik, children from eighteen schools were joined by the former president of Iceland, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, and the Minister for the Environment, who were invited to plant the first trees at the ceremony. Mr. Finnbogadóttir told the children that they should plant three more trees: one for the boys, one for the girls and one for the unborn children of the world.

In the Philippines, events were held across the country. For example, Pinagbuhatan High School, in the City of Pasig, with the help of the school Green Corps volunteers, conducted a symposium on biodiversity, development and poverty alleviation, watched a film screening and held a tree planting activity. The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity invited representatives of the business sector, diplomatic community, and media to attend *The Green Wave* ceremony at Tagaytay Highlands in Cavite Province.

In Congo-Brazzaville, the Association for Environment and Youth Development based in Brazzaville supported schools in planting 100 trees and conducted a survey, asking children and youth questions about biodiversity.

In Malaysia, schools across the country took part in *The Green Wave*. Green Wave 2010 Malaysia was launched by the Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment at an event with about 200 students and teachers. Participants watched a video on biodiversity, planted trees and did other fun activities related to biodiversity.

In Mauritius, events took place across the country including on Ile aux Aigrettes where 20 students from Marcel Cabon Secondary School planted endemic species. Their event was guided by conservationists from Mauritius Wildlife and was supported by Air Mauritius and Airbus.

In Bangladesh, in Dhaka, groups of students led by Design Bangladesh planted northern silky oak, palm tree, rain tree, shishu katha and mehuguni, to help clean the air and provide fruit for a secure future for the teachers and pupils.

In Canada, 66 groups from Newfoundland to Yukon planted various species of trees like pine cherry, spruce, Subalpine Fir and of course maple tree, which produces the emblem of Canada, the maple leaf! In Montreal, in the presence of the city Mayor, the director of Museums Nature, the *Green Wave* ambassador Jean Lemire and representatives of the Quebec Network of alternative public schools (REPAQ), over 4000 children and parents threw 'balls of life' to flourish and color the path between the Insectarium and the *Biodôme*.

In the USA at Hilltop School Orchard in Brattleboro, Vermont, and with the help of New Chapter Organics, The Brattleboro Food Co-op and an orchardist, students and teachers carefully planted, mulched, and watered six trees as part of their new pear orchard.

In Indonesia, KEHATI, the Indonesian Biodiversity Foundation, supported tree-planting in several schools in Jakarta. Almost 1000 students in 30 schools in Jakarta participated in *The Green Wave* event.

In Oman, a number of events were held. In the town of Rustaq, famous for its mango trees, students welcomed parents and officials, watched a play and listened to a lecture about mango trees and visited a centre to learn more about their importance, before planting their tree and writing their stories.

Some organizations supported events in a number of countries – for example the Small Grants Programme of the Global Environment Facility that supported schools in countries including Nicaragua and Tunisia.

The Organization for Industrial, Spiritual and Cultural Advancement, OISCA-International based in Tokyo, promoted *The Green Wave* and organized tree-planting activities in several countries including Bangladesh, Thailand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Cambodia, Japan and Papua New Guinea.

Airbus supported activities in several countries and invited employees around the world to celebrate the wave. In countries including Mauritius, Viet Nam, China, Japan, the United Kingdom, Germany and Spain they brought together or joined existing groups to celebrate *The Green Wave* by providing trees and outreach materials and organizing events like bioblitz.

Environment Online (ENO) is a global virtual school and network for sustainable development and environmental awareness which works with thousands of schools in over 100 countries. ENO Asia has been participating in *The Green Wave* since 2008, engaging with many schools from Malaysia, Indonesia and Philippines.

These are just some of the events carried out to celebrate *The Green Wave* and the International Day for Biodiversity, and just some of the participants. Schools and groups are still posting details of their *Green Wave* events.

Jean Lemire, newly appointed ambassador to *The Green Wave* said, “*The Green Wave* offers opportunity to connect with nature, to love it and care for it. I congratulate the thousands of children, youth, teachers and parents who have responded to this call. Actions taken in partnership around the world provide hope and solutions to reverse the current trends of biodiversity loss. As an ambassador of the campaign, I invite you to start preparing for next year’s wave – in the International Year of Forests!”

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity said, “*The Green Wave* aims to instill in children a love of nature and understanding of the importance of biological diversity to the future of humanity. I am delighted that so many children and young people in such a diversity of countries and cultures have joined together in action and I thank all the many organizations and people who have helped in this.”

Notes to editors:

Reports of *Green Wave* activities carried out on 21 and 22 May 2010 have so far been received from participants in Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Republic of the Congo, Egypt, France, Germany, Ghana, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Northern Mariana Islands, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Thailand, Trinidad & Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States of America, Venezuela, and Viet Nam.

The Green Wave

The Green Wave is a project designed to support the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the world's international treaty that promotes the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from genetic resources. The project aims to help raise awareness and educate young people – tomorrow's leaders and citizens – on the loss of biodiversity that's taking place across the world and the need to take action to preserve life on Earth.

The Green Wave encourages participants to engage in local action, build friendships with other participants around the world, work in local and international partnerships and learn about global issues affecting biodiversity.

The Green Wave is celebrated annually on 22 May – the International Day for Biological Diversity. In participating schools, children and youth plant a tree* at 10 a.m. local time, creating a "green wave" around the world. Participants upload photos and text to *The Green Wave* website to share their tree-planting stories with others. An interactive map goes live in the evening at 20:10 local time, creating a second, virtual, "green wave".

The Green Wave contributes to celebration of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity and supports the Billion Tree Campaign led by the United Nations Environment Programme. Initiated in 2008 by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and the Office of Environmental Response and Coordination of the Republic of Palau, *The Green Wave* is coordinated by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

For more information and to learn about *The Green Wave* participants and events, visit <http://greenwave.cbd.int> and <http://www.facebook.com/greenwave.cbd.int>

* In some parts of the world, seasonal conditions are not suitable to plant on 22 May. In these areas, participants are encouraged to plant in an appropriate season and, instead, water their chosen tree at 10 a.m. on 22 May.

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, 157 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

The 2010 International Year of Biodiversity

The United Nations proclaimed 2010 to be the International Year of Biodiversity, and people all over the world are working to safeguard this irreplaceable natural wealth and reduce biodiversity loss. This is vital for current and future human wellbeing. The International Year of Biodiversity is a unique opportunity to increase understanding of the vital role that biodiversity plays in sustaining life on Earth. Visit www.cbd.int/2010 to find out more. Also visit the facebook page: www.facebook.com/iyb2010

For additional information, please contact: David Ainsworth on +1 514 833 0196 or at david.ainsworth@cbd.int. Or Johan Hedlund on +1 514 287 7760 or at johan.hedlund@cbd.int