

COMMUNIQUÉ

Whatever Happened to Biodiversity?

Conservation community urges United States ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Montreal, 6 October 2010 – On 29 September 2010, Conservation International organized a briefing to United States Congressional staff on key new developments in the fight to protect the Earth's biodiversity and on opportunities for the United States to re-engage internationally based on the leadership tradition of the United States in this arena.

Opening the briefing, the President of Conservation International, Russell Mittermeier, spoke on the state of global biodiversity. William Snape of the American University Washington School of Law and the Center for Biological Diversity, spoke about the arguments and prospects for United States ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Jeff Wise, the Director of the Global Conservation Initiative of the Pew Environment Group and the Alliance for Global Conservation provided a briefing on the pending international biodiversity bills in Congress.

Lyle Glowka, Senior Legal Advisor at the Convention Secretariat spoke about the upcoming meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP10) and the issues that will be top of its agenda. John Fitzgerald, Policy Director of the Society for Conservation Biology spoke on the establishment of an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and what the United States can and should do.

The Congressional Briefing was moderated by Peter Jenkins, Conservation International's Vice President for United States Government Policy, and attracted an audience of some 100 staffers on Capitol Hill. A message was provided to participants by Edward Norton, United Nations Goodwill Ambassador for Biodiversity, urging the United States Administration to aggressively pursue the process of ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Following the event, and noting the immense challenges facing the international community in its efforts to stem the loss of biodiversity, Ahmed Djoghlaif, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity said: "Meeting the unprecedented loss of biodiversity calls for a universal engagement of the members of the international community. It calls for the leadership of the United States of America and its people."
