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PRESS RELEASE

NEW SUPPORT OF OVER €5 MILLION TO SAFEGUARD BIODIVERSITY IN CAUCASUS WILDERNESS AREAS

Montréal, 12 April 2011—The long-term sustainability of nature's bounty in the Caucasus has received a significant boost, thanks to the Government of Germany and three new corporate sponsors, through the Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF). This funding will safeguard some of the highest global levels of biodiversity in a temperate climate zone. It will also contribute to economic development by strengthening the ability of these ecosystems to provide fresh water and other crucial ecosystem services to local communities.

The Government of Germany, through the KfW Development Bank, is investing €5 million in a continuing partnership with the Caucasus Nature Fund and the Governments of Georgia and Armenia. Eva Witt, First Vice-President of KfW—Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia—emphasized the long-term nature of Germany's funding, which can be spent flexibly over 20 years, depending on the needs and the development of other funding sources for Caucasus nature.

Germany's financial support is complemented by funding from three new corporate sponsors: financial institutions HSBC Armenia and ProCredit Bank Georgia, as well as Armenian retailer Nina Hovnanian Couture. This is in addition to funding previously announced from the Bank of Georgia.

This support is consistent with an invitation for support submitted by the Caucasus Nature Fund, with endorsement of the governments of Armenia and Georgia, to the CBD LifeWeb Initiative for *Sustainable Financing and Improved Management Effectiveness for Protected Areas in the South Caucasus*. The CBD 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 programme of work on protected areas under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

This funding is for important on-the-ground work in protected areas in Armenia and Georgia, and the German government funding is open to Azerbaijan as well if the contractual arrangements can be finalized. CNF funding can support staff costs to provide a living wage for rangers, small scale infrastructure development so that tourists have trails to hike and picnic areas to enjoy, as well as equipment for rangers enabling them to oversee their territories with functioning jeeps and binoculars, so that the the region's terrific plants and animals can be saved.

David Morrison, Executive Director of CNF, commented that, "Germany's generous new donation, combined with continued support from our corporate sponsors, will enable us to increase the hectares that are sustainably financed in the region from 100,000 in 2010 to 400,000 in 2013, almost one third of our target of protecting more than 1.25 million hectares in the region, of which at least 800,000 are in Armenia and Georgia alone."

Accordingly, while this funding addresses some of the most critical actions, the total financial need to address the most critical threats to biodiversity in these areas remains substantial. As conveyed in the submission to the CBD LifeWeb clearing-house (see here: <http://www.cbd.int/lifeweb/?eoi=4105>), the involvement of more funding partners is essential to preserve the natural heritage and life-sustaining ecosystem services of other protected areas of the Caucasus.



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COP 10 / MOP 5

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, congratulated the Government of Germany and CNF's new corporate sponsors for their significant investment in global conservation efforts and said, "Protected areas are the cornerstones for biodiversity conservation and powerful tools for achieving multiple benefits by addressing climate change and promoting sustainable economic development. Financing protected areas, including through the CBD LifeWeb Initiative, is one of the brightest hopes we have for the future of our planet and humankind. As for Germany, this support to the Caucasus Nature Fund is a further example of the country's wisdom and action for investing in a sustainable future for people in this region and globally. It is also a significant contribution of the Presidency of COP 9 for the implementation of the new biodiversity strategic plan for 2011-2020."

Notes to Editors

About BMZ and KfW

The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is responsible within the German Government for planning and coordinating German development cooperation activities. BMZ launched its Caucasus Initiative in 2001 to promote cooperation among the three countries of the southern Caucasus – Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The Caucasus Initiative is based on six cornerstones including the establishment of cross-border national parks. For further information, see http://www.bmz.de/de/publikationen/themen/umwelt/155_Naturschutz_Kaukasus_final.pdf

The KfW Development Bank (KfW) is responsible for preparing financial cooperation measures and steering their implementation on behalf of the BMZ. To promote nature conservation in southern Caucasus, KfW is financing national park projects, the Transboundary Joint Secretariat for the Southern Caucasus (TJS) and the Caucasus Nature Fund. BMZ and KfW are implementing their South Caucasus environmental initiatives in part through the TJS (<http://jointsecretariat.org/>), while the Caucasus Nature Fund (www.caucasus-naturefund.org) provides long-term co-financing for operating costs of protected areas.

For more details on KfW, see:

http://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/DE_Home/Laender_Programme_und_Projekte/Europa/Regionales_Engagement/Kaukasusinitiative/Projektbeispiel.jsp

About the Caucasus Nature Fund

For more on the mission and work of the Caucasus Nature Fund, see www.caucasus-naturefund.org.

About the CBD LifeWeb Initiative

The CBD LifeWeb Initiative adds value to recipients and donors by providing a user-friendly clearing-house website for countries to profile their protected area financial priorities and invite international support; facilitates funding matches; helps coordinate counterpart financing among donors; and recognizes donor support and innovation for natural solutions. For more information, please visit www.cbd.int/lifeweb/ or contact Jason Spensley on +1 514 287 8704 or at jason.spensley@cbd.int.

About 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. For more information visit www.cbd.int or contact David Ainsworth on +1 514 287 7025 or at david.ainsworth@cbd.int.
