



**United Nations Decade on Biodiversity**

## COMMUNIQUÉ

### **United Nations Decade on Biodiversity launched in Havana for the countries of the Caribbean**

*Montreal/Havana, 6 July 2011* –On the occasion of the 8th International Convention on Environment and Development, being held in Havana from 4 to 8 July, Cuba launched the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity 2011-2020 in Caribbean countries. The event, which took place on 4 July 2011 with the participation of 950 delegates representing 35 countries, was attended by the Vice-President of Cuba, together with the Cuban Ministers of Environment and Education. The ceremony was also attended by the ministers of environment from Angola, Dominican Republic and Sri Lanka as well as Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The launch of the celebration in Havana also coincided with the celebration of the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification in the region.

In December 2010, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2011-2020 the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity. The aim of the Decade is to support and promote implementation of the objectives of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets and mainstream biodiversity at different levels. The Republic of Korea was the first country to launch the celebration of the Decade, on the occasion of the 2011 International Day for Biological Diversity. India, in its capacity as incoming President of the Hyderabad biodiversity summit to be held in October 2012, hosted the regional launch for Asia and Pacific on 24 May 2011, which was followed by the launch of the Decade in the ASEAN countries, hosted by the President of the Philippines.

Regional launches for the Decade are planned throughout the coming months. The Caribbean launch will be followed on 13 July by the regional launch for Latin America, to be held in Quito, and on 22 July by the regional launch for Africa in Addis Ababa. Later this year, Costa Rica will host the regional launch for Central America. Japan, as the current President of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the country of origin of this initiative will host an international event to launch the Decade in December 2011.

In addressing participants to the 8<sup>th</sup> International Convention, Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, congratulated the six countries attending the meeting who have already signed the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization, and urged them to expedite its ratification. The Protocol will enter into force following the receipt of the fiftieth instrument of ratification.

In his address, Mr. Djoghlaif stated: “I call on the representatives of all countries attending this meeting that have not yet signed the Nagoya Protocol to seize the opportunity of the signing ceremony to be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York in September 2011, in conjunction with the sixty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly, to sign this historic treaty.”

At the regional launch in Havana, Luc Gnacadja, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, stressed the importance of bringing synergy by joining forces to fight against desertification and loss of biodiversity, stating that: “Despite the extensive documentation by scientists and researchers on the important linkage between biodiversity and three fundamental natural



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Biological Diversity**

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resources - water, soil, and forests, this natural-resources trilogy concept has not been well reflected in the political discourse and, as a result, in the policy implementations at all levels. The coincidence of the two Decades is a call to advance such understanding and the synergy agenda in implementing the Rio Conventions. The momentous occasion of today in Havana signifies the strong collaboration between the two secretariats in promoting these Decades.”

Information on the Decade, including the logo, can be found on the official website of the United Nations Decade at: [www.cbd.int/2011-2020](http://www.cbd.int/2011-2020).

Information on the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (UNDDD), can be found at: <http://unddd.unccd.int/> .

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