



## PRESS RELEASE

### **The Society for Ecological Restoration confers its 2011 Special Recognition Award to the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity**

*Montreal 24 August 2011.* The Society for Ecological Restoration has conferred its 2011 Special Recognition Award to the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at the Gala Awards Banquet on 23 August 2011 in Mérida, Yucatán, Mexico, on the margins of the 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Ecological Restoration.

The award recognizes the extraordinary commitment shown by the 193 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2020, *inter alia*, through reducing pressures on biodiversity and restoring ecosystems, by adopting the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, at its tenth meeting held in Nagoya, Japan in 2010, adopted the new Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 containing 20 headline targets. Under Targets 14 and 15, Parties have agreed that by 2020, they would restore ecosystems of particular importance to water security, human health, livelihoods and well-being and enhance ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks, through conservation and restoration. This target includes the restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems.

It is estimated that ecosystems deliver essential services worth between \$21 trillion and up to \$72 trillion a year, comparable to the 2008 World Gross National Income of \$58 trillion. Yet in 2010, nearly two-thirds of the globe's ecosystems were considered degraded as a result of damage and mismanagement and a failure to invest and reinvest in their productivity, health and sustainability. Thus restoration of degraded ecosystems is highly important for realizing the vision of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 "living in harmony with nature", and for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

"The Strategic Plan and Targets 14 and 15 represent a significant advancement in the way in which restoration is integrated into global biodiversity policy and provide a framework for national Governments to combat biodiversity loss and to provide crucial ecosystem services to people" said Professor Steve Whisenant, Chair, and Board of Directors of the Society for Ecological Restoration, when conferring the award.

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, applauding the gesture of the Society for Ecological Restoration, stated, "Well planned, appropriate restoration efforts in many cases form some of the most profitable public investments in improving degraded ecosystems for the benefit of all life on Earth. Further, the employment generated can act as an engine of green economy. Through this coveted recognition, the Society for Ecological Restoration and its members worldwide demonstrate that it stands ready to help national Governments translate Targets 14 and 15 into a reality, and that now is the time to capitalize on this momentum".

## **The Convention on Biological Diversity**

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 is a subsidiary agreement to the Convention. It seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 160 countries plus the European Union have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal, Canada. For more information visit: [www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int).

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**The Society for Ecological Restoration (SER)** is a non-profit organization with members around the world who are actively engaged in ecologically-sensitive repair and management of ecosystems through a broad array of experience, knowledge sets and cultural perspectives. They are scientists, planners, administrators, ecological consultants, first peoples, landscape architects, philosophers, teachers, engineers, natural areas managers, writers, growers, community activists, and volunteers, among others. Founded in 1987, SER boasts members in over 60 countries with 11 chapters serving regions of North America, England, Australia, and is expanding its presence in Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Recognized by public and private enterprises as the source for expertise on restoration science, practice and policy, the Society achieves its objectives through cooperation with partner organizations and international bodies such as the IUCN, CBD, and Ramsar. SER does not itself engage in restoration projects; its mission is: "to promote ecological restoration as a means of sustaining the diversity of life on Earth and reestablishing an ecologically healthy relationship between nature and culture."

For more information visit [www.ser.org](http://www.ser.org) or contact Sasha Alexander at [sasha@ser.org](mailto:sasha@ser.org)

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