



## COMMUNIQUÉ

### UNESCO launch of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity takes place in Paris

*Montreal, 14 November 2011* – The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) joined with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to launch the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity at its headquarters in Paris.

The event took place in conjunction with the thirty-sixth session of the UNESCO General Conference and coincided with the launch of the UNESCO Biodiversity Initiative aimed at contributing to the effective implementation of the Strategic Plan on Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The ceremony was presided over by Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, as well as the Deputy Permanent Delegate of Japan to UNESCO, Minister Mr. Tsutomu Koizumi; Mr Jean-Pierre Thebault, the Ambassador for the Environment of France represented Ms Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, Minister for Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing of France, as well as Ms H  l  ne Mandroux, the Mayor of Montpellier, and Mr. Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Over 80 participants attended the ceremony.

Speaking on behalf of the President of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Bio, Minister Koizumi stated that: “The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties achieved historic results which included the new Strategic Plan for Biodiversity as well as two legally binding protocols. To engage the people of the world in the implementation of the Nagoya results, Japan suggested the celebration of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity and the official launch will take place in Kanazawa city, Japan in December this year.”

Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director-General, said: “Our new Biodiversity Initiative embodies the integrated, multidisciplinary approach that is required for the sustainable, equitable conservation and use of biodiversity. We are guided by the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity crafted in Nagoya in October 2010 and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly.”

Speaking on behalf of Minister Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, Ambassador Thebault reiterated the commitment of France to promoting the biodiversity agenda as evidenced by its recent signature of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing.

The Mayor of Montpellier, Ms H  l  ne Mandroux, stressed the role of cities in promoting the biodiversity agenda and announced the convening in January 2012, in partnership with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, of the meeting of mayors and biodiversity of the Mediterranean region as a contribution to the convening of the second summit on cities and biodiversity to be held in Hyderabad, India, in October 2012, back to back with the high-level segment of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary of the Convention to Combat Desertification, highlighted the importance of mutually supportive activities to celebrate the United Nations Decade on Desertification and the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity. He presented the results of the first-ever high-level event on desertification convened on 20 September by the United Nations General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, said: “Last year, UNESCO was the first international organization to celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity. Today UNESCO is the first international organization to launch the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity and the first international organization to launch a biodiversity initiative aimed at the effective implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.” Mr. Djoghlaif paid tribute to Ms Bokova, UNESCO Director-General, and her team, as well as to the UNESCO member States for their unique contribution in educating and engaging the people of the world in the biodiversity agenda. He added, “I am glad to count UNESCO as a partner in our work.”

To build support and momentum for this urgent task, the United Nations General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session declared the period 2011-2020 to be “the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, with a view to contributing to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity for the period 2011-2020” (resolution 65/161).

The United Nations Decade on Biodiversity will serve to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and promote its overall vision of living in harmony with nature. Its goal is to mainstream biodiversity at different levels. Throughout the United Nations Decade, Governments are encouraged to develop, implement and communicate the results of national strategies for implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity.

Regional launches have been held around the world in 2011. A global event for the Decade will be held in Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan from 17 to 19 December 2011.

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