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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE ON THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENTRY INTO FORCE
OF THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY**

11 September 2008

The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, which entered into force on 11 September 2003, is among the world's key international environmental instruments. It seeks to ensure that modern biotechnology is developed and applied in an environmentally sound manner, thus enabling humankind to derive maximum benefits while minimizing the potential risks to the environment and human health. The Protocol also aims to improve safety in the transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms, which may have adverse effects on biodiversity and human health.

I congratulate the 147 Parties to the Protocol for their achievements over the past five-years, and urge those countries that have not done so to ratify or accede to the Protocol without delay. The Protocol was a major step forward in international efforts towards sustainable development, and will continue to have an important role to play in our efforts to implement Agenda 21, the global programme of action on sustainable development adopted by the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

On this anniversary, let us reaffirm our commitment to the Protocol, and let us strive even harder to devise the additional measures and initiatives that will be needed to ensure its full implementation.