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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE ON THE LAUNCH OF THE AIRBUS-NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
PARTNERSHIP FOR “THE GREEN WAVE”**

June 2009

I thank the many partners that have launched and supported *The Green Wave* for making possible this valuable effort to teach young people about the importance of biodiversity.

Unique ecosystems such as oceans, rainforests, wetlands and deserts, as well as a remarkable variety of plants, animals and microorganisms, contribute immeasurably to our survival and well-being. But biodiversity faces grave and growing risks. Industrial and agricultural production, the expansion of human settlements and the search for natural resources all threaten the ecological foundation of sustainable development.

The 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity, with 191 parties, enjoys nearly universal participation. But while there is much that governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector can do to advance environmental stewardship, individuals also have responsibilities, too. There is no better place to start raising awareness and inspiring action than in schools and families.

I commend Airbus and National Geographic for their support, and I encourage students, parents and teachers to ride *The Green Wave* and spread the word. Even small contributions can make a big difference. Protecting our planet’s biodiversity is crucial if we are to ensure the health of people and planet alike.