



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**



MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY FOR THE WEBSITE OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Welcome to the official website of the International Year of Biodiversity.

The Heads of State and Government attending the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in August/September 2002, agreed to substantially reduce the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010. This commitment was confirmed by the 154 Heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Review Summit.

However, biodiversity continues to be lost at unprecedented rate, thus threatening the capacity of the planet to continue providing its good and services. The current rate of extinction is estimated to be up to 1,000 times higher than the natural rate of extinction. We may be entering a new era of the sixth global mass extinction of species and the first to be generated by human beings. If current loss rates continue, it is expected that an area of 1.3 billion hectares worldwide – about 1.5 times the United States – will completely lose its original biodiversity levels by 2050. This unprecedented loss of biodiversity is being compounded by climate change. More than 30 per cent of all known species may disappear before the end of this century owing to climate change.

The impact and consequences of this unprecedented loss of the ability of our planet to continue providing its goods and services that we human beings take for granted is unknown to the larger audience as well as to policy makers.

It is for this reason that the United Nations General Assembly declared 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity with a view of engaging the people all over the world in the fight to protect life on Earth. The goals of this unique event in the life of the Convention on Biological Diversity is to raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity, to communicate the human costs of its ongoing loss, and to get the people, and in particular youth and children, involved in efforts to conserve and sustainably use our natural heritage and to protect our lives and the lives of our children. As the slogan of the International Year reminds us, “Biodiversity is life. Biodiversity is OUR life.”

The official launch of the International Year of Biodiversity will take place in Berlin in early January under the chairmanship of Dr. Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany, the current President of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. Brazil, the President of the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting, will mark this event in Curitiba, Brazil. It will be followed by a high-level event in Paris at UNESCO, during which a travelling global exhibition on biodiversity will be launched. The Year will be marked during the sixty-fifth session of



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Life in harmony, into the future
いのちの共生を、未来へ
COP 10 / MOP 5

United Nations General Assembly September 2010 at a special meeting to be attended by Heads of State and Government.

The closing ceremony will take place in December in Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture, in Japan and will coincide also with the launch of the 2011 International Year of Forests to be held in partnership with the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

I urge all of you to do your part and to play an active role during the International Year of Biodiversity. Business as usual is no longer an option. Action is urgently required and the time for action is now. The required changes will not come from others; it will have to come from all of us.

I wish you a very successful celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity which with your help can be the beginning of a new era of mankind “living in harmony with nature, into the future”, which is the slogan of the Aichi-Nagoya Biodiversity Summit where action by all the stakeholders will be agreed on to ensure that our children will continue to enjoy life on Earth.

I thank you for your kind attention