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Government of Canada to provide long-term support for Convention on Biological Diversity

Montreal, Quebec, May 21, 2004 – Lucienne Robillard, Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development, and Aileen Carroll, Minister for International Cooperation, announced today that the Government of Canada will provide more than \$11 million over the next 10 years to support the operations of the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat, located in Montreal. The announcement was made on the eve of the International Day for Biological Diversity, May 22.

The Convention supports the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. The Convention celebrates its tenth anniversary this year.

'The establishment of the permanent seat of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Montreal is proof positive of that city's enviable international reputation. It is also a clear indication that Canada is a leader in biological diversity conservation,' stated Minister Robillard. 'In that regard, the Government of Canada's long-term support for the Secretariat dovetails with our desire to foster the international outreach of Montreal and Canada.'

'Healthy ecosystems are crucial to sustainable development, and many of the poorest people in the world depend directly on biodiversity for their livelihoods,' said Minister Carroll. 'Supporting the Convention via the Secretariat is one of the most significant steps we can take here in Canada to help improve people's lives in developing countries and promote development that is both equitable and environmentally sustainable.'

Established in Montreal since 1996, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity each year welcomes hundreds of officials, scientists, industry representatives and non-governmental organization delegates from around the world to meetings and conferences.

'When it comes to global issues, there is no substitute for global cooperation,' stated Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bill Graham. 'As host country to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the first industrialized country to have signed the treaty at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Canada recognizes it has a particular responsibility to support the Convention's vital work.'

'The three objectives of the Convention – the conservation of the diversity of

life, the sustainable use of biological diversity, and the equitable sharing of benefits – are fundamental objectives for any healthy society, and we are proud to host the Secretariat of the Convention in Canada,' said Environment Minister, David Anderson.

Canada's long-term contribution is in line with the Millennium Development Goal on ensuring environmental sustainability. The Convention makes a key contribution to this goal, and provides mechanisms to assist developing countries through capacity building, financial assistance and technology.

For more information on the Convention on Biological Diversity, visit www.biodiv.org.

In addition to today's funding commitment, Canada pays its share of the Convention's annual budget. In 2004, this amounts to more than \$350,000. Funding for this initiative was provided for in the March 2004 federal budget and is therefore built into the existing fiscal framework.

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