

## MALDIVES CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY 2005

Maldives being a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity, has been celebrating Biodiversity day since 2002. The purpose of celebrating this day is to create public awareness about biodiversity and highlight the threats faced by our vulnerable biodiversity and that these threats are mainly caused by human activities. Some of these activities associated with biodiversity day are specially targeted at students who will in the future play a significant role on the conservation and the sustainable use of these valuable biological resources.

The activities carried out to celebrate the day are as follows:

### **1- Workshop on Biodiversity**

Centre for Higher Secondary Education (CHSE), in association with the Environment Research Centre of the Ministry of Environment and Construction held a one-day workshop on biodiversity. This year's workshop focused on areas such as threats to biodiversity and how to prevent it, the benefits we get from biological resources and the importance of using such resources sustainably. A total of 94 students from 11 secondary schools of Male', participated in this workshop.



*Students at the workshop*



*Group Presentation by one of the participating schools*

During the sessions, information on terrestrial and marine biodiversity was provided by the Environment Research Centre and Marine Research Centre. Students of CHSE also presented information on Biodiversity to the participants. The workshop was a great success as the participants felt that they gained important information on the highlighted areas as well as realized the importance of conserving and sustainable utilization of Biodiversity.

## **2- Banner Drawing Competition**

A banner-drawing competition was held regarding this year's theme among the participating schools of the biodiversity workshop. All schools were asked to prepare the banners prior to the workshop. The banners were displayed throughout the workshop, at the venue.



*Some of the banners displayed at the workshop*

The best banner was selected and awarded a shield at the closing ceremony, which was held colourfully on the same day. The closing ceremony was inaugurated by the Rector of Maldives College of Higher Education. The closing ceremony was concluded by a skit performed by the students of CHSE. The play presented the past, present and with a possible future state scenario of unsustainable resource consumption of our biological resources.



*Students of CHSE performing the skit*

### **3 -Official Launch of Environment Research Centre Website**

Environment Research Centre's website was officially launched by Mr. K. D Ahmed Manik, the Deputy Minister of Ministry of Environment and Construction, at the closing ceremony of the Biodiversity Workshop held on the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2005. The website contains;

- The Biosafety Clearing House
- Information on the islands of Maldives
- Ongoing Researches and important work carried out at the ERC
- Latest news on the activities carried out by the ERC
- Information on the protected species of the Maldives



*Officials at the Closing Ceremony of the Workshop*



*Official Launching of the ERC website by the Deputy Minister of Ministry of Environment and Construction*

#### **4 -Activities in the Atoll Schools**

Activities carried out throughout the twenty Atoll's, Atoll and Island Schools of the Maldives, on the day include;

- Poster drawing competitions regarding the theme
- Awareness programmes and information providing sessions on the theme during school assemblies.
- Essay writing competitions
- Distribution of leaflets and posters
- Clean-up of school compounds and different parts of the islands
- Procession by student
- Tree planting programmes

Many schools invited distinguished guests to address school assemblies.

#### **5 -Media Coverage**

The local Television, Radio and the Dailies covered the day's events and broadcast special reports and interviews regarding the day. A special biodiversity report, highlighting our fragile biodiversity and it's interactions in the island ecosystem, was telecast on the national television.

#### **6 - Distribution of *Neem* Trees.**

Neem trees, locally known as " *Hithi gas* " was distributed to all the participating schools of the biodiversity workshop. Each school was given a juvenile *Neem* tree to be planted in their respective schools.



*Juvenile Neem tree*

Neem trees were chosen in particular because of its highly beneficial properties such as removing noxious elements in the atmosphere and environment, thus purifying the air. The tree also serves as a home to many beneficial organisms, bats, birds, honey bees, spiders, etc. Many species of birds and fruit-eating bats live on the sweet flesh of ripe fruits, while certain rodents selectively feed on the kernel, confirming neem's safety to warm-blooded animals. The litter of falling leaves improves soil fertility and the organic content as well as is used in treating cancer and measles, as they contain antibacterial and antiviral properties.

### **7 - Awareness Programmes**

School visits arranged by ERC, were made to Secondary and Primary Schools in Male'. Presentations on various topics under biodiversity were given to students. The lectures and presentations were given by the staff of the Environment Research Centre.

\*\*\*\*\*



ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH CENTRE  
Ministry of Environment and Construction  
Male', Maldives

ދިވެހިރާއްޖޭގެ ޖުމްހޫރިއްޔާ  
މިނިސްޓްރީ އޮފް ޕްލާނިންގ ޕްރޮޓެކްޝަން ޕްރިއަރިޓީ ޕްރޮޓެކްޝަން ޕްރޮޖެކްޓް  
މާލެ ޕްރޮޓެކްޝަން ޕްރޮޖެކްޓް

Ref no: 20-I / MIS / 2005 / 48

05<sup>th</sup> July 2005

Mr. Hamdallah Zedan  
Executive Secretary  
Convention on Biological Diversity

Dear Mr. Zedan,

I am pleased to forward a hard copy of the report on the activities carried out to mark this year's International Day for Biological Diversity in the Maldives.

Best Regards,

Mohamed Ali  
Director, Environmental Research  
Focal Point ,CBD

