

<http://conservationcommons.net/2010-international-year-of-biodiversity-website-launched/>

## 2010 International Year of Biodiversity Website launched

11 November 2010

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With only less than 52 days left before the start of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity (IYB), the website for this unique event in the history of the United Nations was officially launched at a ceremony in Montreal, held with more than 500 participants representing the 193 Parties to the Convention and partner organizations.

The ceremony was presided over by Mr. Jochen Flasbarth, representative of the President of Conference of the Parties to the Convention and was also attended by representatives of the Canadian authorities as well as the representative of Montreal International.

In his message to the international community, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon notes that it is unlikely that the 2010 biodiversity target will be met and calls on all governments and citizens to work together to safeguard life on Earth as “Biodiversity is life, biodiversity is our life.”

The 2010 biodiversity target was adopted by world leaders at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. The target aims “to achieve, by 2010, a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level, as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth.”

To coincide with the target year, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB). The primary objectives of this important year are to effectively communicate to different target audiences the value of biodiversity and to motivate them to conserve, protect and promote sustainable use practices. The IYB is therefore a unique opportunity to increase public understanding of the vital role that biodiversity plays in sustaining life on Earth and to highlight the role that individuals, communities and countries have in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity – the very life that sustains us all.

To contribute to the celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity, the United Nations General Assembly will convene in September 2010 a high-level event with participation of Heads of State and Government exclusively devoted to biodiversity. In his message to the international community, the President of the sixty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. Ali Treki from Libya stated that this event

“offers a unique opportunity to fully engage the world leaders to respond collectively to the magnitude of the biodiversity crisis.” In addition, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will soon announce the designation of an honorary ambassador for the IYB.

The official launch of the International Year of Biodiversity will take place on 11 January in Berlin under the leadership of Dr. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany. At yesterday’s website launch, Mr. Jochen Flasbarth, read a message from Mr. Norbet Röttgen, the German Federal Minister of Environment. Minister Röttgen’s message stressed that “sound and responsible management of the resources provided by our Earth cannot be restricted to policy makers or intergovernmental conventions. It is a task that concerns every one of us. We must all accept joint responsibility. Only the concerted efforts of science, media, private industry, citizens, NGOs and government actors will enable us to take the steps needed to halt the erosion of our natural foundations of life.”

The expected 10,000 participants representing the 193 Parties and partner organizations at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-10) to be held in Aichi Nagoya in Japan in October 2010 will also celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity. In his message issued for the celebration of the International Year, Mr. Sakihito Ozawa, the Minister of the Environment of Japan and incoming President of COP-10 stated: “As the host country of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in October 2010, Japan will use every opportunity to convey the message of the International Year of Biodiversity within and outside of Japan.”

The closing ceremony of the International Year of Biodiversity will take place in Kanazawa, Ishikawa, Japan in December 2010. It will also coincide with the launch, in partnership with the Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests, of the 2011 International Year of Forests, which will be another important year for the Convention given that more than 80% of the biodiversity of the world is located in tropical forests.

The IYB website offers an opportunity for people to learn about biodiversity and to find out more about the International Year of Biodiversity, including the important role biodiversity plays in our lives and what is happening to it, what people are doing around the world to combat biodiversity loss, how people are celebrating the International Year of Biodiversity and some of the resources available for celebrations.

More details on the celebration of the International Year and the international events already scheduled are posted on the website at [www.cbd.int/2010/welcome](http://www.cbd.int/2010/welcome) . With the support of the Energy and Environment Institute of La Francophonie, the website is available in French and is also available in Spanish as a result of financial support from the Government of Spain.