

## Inauguration of Action in China for the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity is held in Beijing on January 26

On January 26, the Inauguration of Action in China for the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity was held in Beijing. At the ceremony, Mr. Zhou Shengxian, Minister of Environmental Protection stressed in his speech that biodiversity lays the foundation for human survival and development and its conservation is a concerted responsibility of the world. “Let’s join our hands to protect our home planet and inject continues vitality to biodiversity.”

As Minister Zhou stated, 2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly under the theme of Biodiversity is Life, Biodiversity is Our Life. The Chinese government attaches great importance to IYB and developed the Plan of Action in China for the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity. In the whole year, a series of activities will be staged to raise public awareness and promote engagement so as to forward global biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

Zhou Shengxian pointed out that China is one of the twelve countries bestowed with the richest biodiversity, of the eight centers of origin for crop plants and of the four centers of origin for cultivated plants. The success of biodiversity conservation in China is therefore significant. In 1993, China joined the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Shortly, the government promulgated China Biodiversity Conservation Action Plan and established China’s Coordinating Group for CBD Implementation which now consists of 24 ministries and agencies. China has actively participated 9 Conferences of Parties and played an important role in convention negotiations, achieving impressing fruits. The government has developed an initial legal and regulation system in this regard and implemented several major ecological projects regarding reforestation, grassland for pasture, lakes for farmland, natural forest conservation, wild animal and plant

protection and the development of natural reserves, etc. Publications include National Program for Nurture and Conservation of Aquatic Creatures and National Program for Conservation and Use of Biological Resources. To date, 85% terrestrial natural ecosystem types, 47% natural wetlands, 20% natural forests, most natural heritages, 65% higher plant community types and most endangered wild animals and plants that are listed as national protected priorities have been effectively protected.

However, as Minister Zhou went on, we cannot deny the pressure and daunting challenges that are in the way of biodiversity conservation in China. It is less likely to reverse the trend of biodiversity reduction in a short while, the habitats of major species are under threat and the loss of genetic resources is pressing. The 2010 International Year of Biodiversity will be an opportunity during which the National Biological Strategy and Action Plan will be revised and promulgated and the balance between socio-economic development and biodiversity conservation will be promoted. The government will enhance the communication and cooperation among the members of the Coordinating Group for CBD Implementation, promote public engagement and international cooperation as an contribution to achieving the three objectives of CBD--- the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

At the ceremony, Minister Zhou Shengxian and Mr. Khalid Malik, Resident Coordinator of the UN System in China, inaugurated the monument of the Action in China for the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity.

The event was moderated by Mr. Li Ganjie, Vice Minister of Environmental Protection. Mr. Wan Bentai, Chief Engineer of MEP, and representatives from the members of China's Coordinating Group for CBD Implementation, governments, international organizations, NGOs and participants of the Working Conference on National Environmental Protection attended the ceremony.



At the ceremony, Mr. Zhou Shengxian, Minister of Environmental Protection, delivered an important speech.



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