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PRESS RELEASE

From commitment to delivery: the European Union announces 1 million euros to enhance capacity-building in developing countries to implement their protected-area commitments

Nagoya, 25 October 2010 – The European Commission announced today its intention to contribute 1 million euros to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to organize regional and subregional capacity building workshops to strengthen implementation of the Convention’s programme of work on protected areas (PoWPA).

The programme of work defines a comprehensive and specific set of time-bound actions for Parties to the Convention and provides a defining framework for protected areas around the globe. Its effective implementation is of paramount importance for the preservation of biodiversity, for enabling climate change adaptation and mitigation, and helping countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its eighth and ninth meetings recognized that developing countries were facing capacity-building constraints in the implementation of the programme of work and invited donor organizations to support capacity-building activities. This contribution of one million euros, intended to support the decisions that will be adopted this week by Governments in Nagoya, is designated for direct support to the implementation of the programme of work on protected areas with a focus on marine protected areas in developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing States, through targeted capacity development. The decision by the European Commission to provide this contribution was taken in June 2010, and the European Commission and the Convention Secretariat hope to sign an agreement on the by the end of the year.

The programme of work on protected areas is arguably the most effectively implemented programme of work of the Convention, in part as a result of the regular capacity-building workshops that were held around the world with the support of partners including the European Union from 2006 to 2009. With this announcement of one million euros specifically designated for the programme of work, the European Union reaffirms its strong commitment to support implementation of the programme through capacity-building for developing countries and showcases its dedication to translate decisions of the Conference of the Parties on protected areas into action on the ground.

“This grant will go a long way towards helping developing countries to implement their commitments under the programme of work on protected areas—the rewards of which promise to enhance human well-being in many ways in terms of, for example, the provision of drinking water, securing livelihoods, and providing protection from extreme weather events,” said Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity. “I extend my sincere gratitude to the European Union for this generous support and I hope that it inspires other donor countries to dig deeper for the good of our planet.”

“Establishment of comprehensive effectively managed protected area networks is a critical strategy not only for conserving biological diversity, but for securing ecosystem goods and services and the Directorate-General for the Environment of the European Commission strives to support implementation of Convention’s programme of work on protected areas,” said the Director-General Mr. Karl Falkenberg.

Notes to Editors

The CBD programme of work on protected areas. In February 2004, the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity made the most comprehensive and specific protected-area commitments ever made by the international community by adopting the programme of work on protected areas (PoWPA). The PoWPA enshrines development of participatory, ecologically representative and effectively managed national and regional systems of protected areas, where necessary stretching across national boundaries. It is a framework for cooperation between Governments, donors, NGOs and local communities, for without such collaboration, programmes cannot be successful and sustainable over the long term. To date, there are many signs of progress and there is much to celebrate. Political will and commitments are clearly being catalyzed. A recent summary of global implementation of the programme of work found that since 2004, nearly 6,000 new protected areas have been established, covering more than 60 million hectares. There are now about 130,000 protected areas, covering nearly 13% of the world's terrestrial surface, and over 6% of territorial marine areas. Many of these are embedded in comprehensive national and regional networks of connected protected areas and corridors

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits from utilization of genetic resources. With 193 Parties, the Convention has near universal participation among countries committed to preserving life on Earth. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal www.cbd.int/.

The European Commission, The Directorate-General for the Environment is one of the more than 40 Directorates-General and services that make up the European Commission. Commonly referred to as DG Environment, the objective of the Directorate-General is to protect, preserve and improve the environment for present and future generations. To achieve this it proposes policies that ensure a high level of environmental protection in the European Union and that preserve the quality of life of EU citizens. The DG makes sure that member States correctly apply EU environmental law. In doing so it investigates complaints made by citizens and non-governmental organizations and can take legal action if it is deemed that EU law has been infringed. In certain cases DG Environment represents the European Union in environmental matters at international meetings such as the Convention on Biodiversity. http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/environment/index_en.htm.

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