



Secretary-General calls for global alliance to protect world's biodiversity



10 November 2009 – As a year-long campaign to safeguard the world's biological diversity gets underway, Secretary-General called on countries and people all over the planet to engage in a global alliance to protect life on Earth.

The General Assembly proclaimed 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity to raise awareness of the unprecedented loss of species – at a rate that some experts estimate to be 1,000 times the natural progression – as a result of human activities.

"A wide variety of environmental goods and services that we take for granted are under threat, with profound and damaging consequences for ecosystems, economies and livelihoods," Mr. Ban stated in a **message** issued yesterday, when initial celebrations – under the slogan "Biodiversity is life, biodiversity is our life" – began.

"In this International Year, we must counter the perception that people are disconnected from our natural environment," he added. "We must increase understanding of the implications of losing biodiversity. In 2010, I call on every country and each citizen of our planet to engage in a global alliance to protect life on Earth."

The Secretary-General also called for generating a greater sense of urgency and establishing clear and concrete targets, stating that the failure to protect biodiversity should be a "wake-up call."

In a separate video message issued yesterday, Mr. Ban said that the consequences of biodiversity loss for economies and people will be "profound," especially for the world's poorest.

In addition, he cited the need for a "new vision," noting that the goal set by world leaders in 2002 to substantially reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010 will not be met.

In September 2010, the Assembly will hold a special high-level meeting to give the international community an opportunity to demonstrate much-needed leadership on the

issue. That will be followed in October by the Biodiversity Summit to be held in Nagoya, Japan, which will adopt a new strategic plan for implementing the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

"2010 is going to be a historical year for the biodiversity family," the Convention's Executive Secretary, Ahmed Djoghlaif, told a news conference in New York last week, as he launched the logo for the Year which shows intertwining representations of flora, fauna and human figures within the figures 2010.

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