



## COMMUNIQUÉ

### IRAQ BECOMES THE 192<sup>ND</sup> PARTY TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

On 28 July 2009, Iraq deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations its instrument of accession to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and will become the 192<sup>nd</sup> Party to the Convention on Biological Diversity, on 26 October 2009.

Iraq's accession comes in a series of significant efforts by the Government to tackle environmental issues of global significance. Since 2003, Iraq has been making major efforts to restore the Iraqi Marshlands around the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers – the largest wetland ecosystem in the Middle East, with major environmental, biological and socio-cultural significance. These Marshlands – with their rich biodiversity and unique cultural heritage – had been almost entirely destroyed through upstream dam construction and drainage operations. In a programme assisted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and with the support of Italy and Japan, Iraq has made significant progress in restoring the Marshlands, their ecological viability and sustainable livelihoods to the Marsh Arabs. Iraq is now working towards making the Marshlands a National Park and gaining its listing as a World Heritage Site.

Welcoming Iraq's accession to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Ahmed Djoghlaf, Executive Secretary of the Convention said: "Iraq's accession to the Convention on Biological Diversity is testimony to their commitment to protect biodiversity in spite of the huge challenges currently facing the Government and its citizens. Their accession takes place at a time when the international community needs to redouble efforts to achieve the 2010 biodiversity target. The commitments made by Iraq serve as an example to the global and universal alliance so urgently required for protecting life on our planet. I greatly look forward to welcoming Iraq as a Party to the Conference of the Parties at its tenth meeting to be held in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010."

The Executive Secretary further expressed the hope that in Nagoya, the Convention will become universal by welcoming the three remaining Governments that have yet to ratify the Convention.

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