



PRESS RELEASE

International Biodiversity Day 2017 celebrated under theme of “Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism”

- *Tourism represents one of the world's fastest growing industries*
- *Many tourist destinations centered around places of natural beauty rich in biodiversity*
- *Theme links with the United Nation's International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.*

22 May 2017 – In today's global celebrations of the International Day for Biological Diversity, under the theme of 'Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism', people are examining the positive but also potentially negative impacts that tourism can have on biodiversity.

Tourism represents one of the world's fastest growing industries. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, the tourism sector grew by 3.9 per cent in 2016.

Many tourist destinations are centered around places of natural beauty and rich natural assets where people can enjoy outdoor activities, or simply relax. This provides millions of jobs, and income for local communities. For example, about 40 million people are drawn every year to the Caribbean's beautiful beaches and marine life, providing \$25 billion of revenue annually –and nearly 50 per cent of the region's total income.

Dr. Cristiana Paşca Palmer, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity said: “As we celebrate the 16th edition of the International Biodiversity Day let us all remember that by celebrating and protecting biodiversity we respect and give consideration to all forms of life that exist on this beautiful planet and that support the very existence of humans.”

Countries are already engaging in activities that support sustainable tourism and biodiversity. Protected areas, such as national parks, are popular tourism destinations. For example, some 1.4 million people visit Australian parks annually to experience their natural landscapes and culture. This contributes \$23 billion to the economy.

Ecotourism is another option that promotes responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment and improves the wellbeing of local people. Ecotourism can provide livelihoods for indigenous peoples and local communities, as they are often the stewards of biodiversity-rich areas.

Dr. Paşca Palmer said: “Many conventional businesses, such as hotels and tourism operators, have taken steps to ensure that they adhere to sustainable tourism principles and best practices in their day to day operations.”



This is important, as countless travellers are now making choices based on whether good practices are followed by operators at their destinations.”

The Secretariat of the Biodiversity Convention works with governments on their tourism policies, with partners as they train protected area managers, as well as developing awareness-raising tools for tourists and tourism professionals. Available at: www.cbd.int/tourism/guidelines.shtml;

Press briefs on ‘Travel Responsibly’ and ‘Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism: The Pillar of Island Economies’: www.cbd.int/idb/2017/briefs/

Global celebrations: www.cbd.int/idb/2017/celebrations/

NOTES TO EDITORS

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 of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 196 Parties so far, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. 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 Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing are supplementary agreements to the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol, which entered into force on 11 September 2003, seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 170 Parties have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies. It entered into force on 12 October 2014 and to date has been ratified by 98 Parties. For more information visit: www.cbd.int. For additional information, please contact: David Ainsworth on +1 514 287 7025 or at david.ainsworth@cbd.int; or Johan Hedlund on +1 514 287 6670 or at johan.hedlund@cbd.int.
