



PRESS RELEASE

UNEP and UN-HABITAT to Launch Publications extending “Local Action for Biodiversity”

Nairobi 19 May 2008: UNEP and UN-HABITAT, in collaboration with ICLEI are both launching two publications with selected case studies from around the world on cities, ecosystems and biodiversity, at the Mayors Conference – a parallel event to the 9th Conference of the Parties of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity - in Bonn Germany on 28 May 2008.

Having occupied 2% of the total land surface of Earth, cities use 75% of the planet’s natural resources. This fact, combined with increasing levels of urbanization and subsequent heavy reliance on ecosystem services has resulted in a multitude of threats including: habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation, over-exploitation of natural resources, invasion of alien species, pollution and climate change.

Conversely, in the words of Dr. Achim Steiner, UNEP’s Executive Director, “there are many shining examples of intelligent management of the planet’s nature-based resources. The time has come to accelerate and replicate them across the globe backed by sufficient finance, creative market mechanisms, and strengthening of efforts to achieve the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, including access to genetic resources and benefit sharing, and a new sense of urgency.”

The two publications titled ‘*Promoting Biodiversity in and around the Lake Victoria basin*’ and ‘*Local Action for Biodiversity, a Series of Local Cases*’ highlights selected case studies from the Lake Victoria basin and around the world and describes how cities are cooperating with national governments and other key partners to utilize and conserve their surroundings. Dr. Anna Tibaijuka, Under Secretary General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN-HABITAT states “these ongoing initiatives demonstrate that local actions aimed at achieving sustainable urban development can effectively contribute to the attainment of Millennium Development Goal 7 on environmental sustainability and conservation of biodiversity.”

The launch, expected to convene Mayors and other key decision makers of leading local governments in urban biodiversity from around the globe, will take place at the “Plaza of Biodiversity” exhibition at 4.30p.m

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