UNDP’s Statement to the 9th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity

29 May 2008, World Conference Centre, Bonn, Germany
Delivered by Ms. Veerle Vandeweerd, Director, Environment & Energy Group, UNDP

Honorable President of the COP, Minister of Environment for Germany, Sigmar Gabriel,
Honorable Executive Director of UNEP, Achim Steiner,
Honorable Executive Secretary of the Biodiversity Convention, Ahmed Djoghlaf,
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations fully recognizes that if biodiversity continues to be lost at the rates that we are now witnessing, our ability to meet the Millennium Development Goals, and, in particular, to eradicate poverty will be seriously jeopardized. This is the first CBD COP being held following the incorporation of the 2010 Biodiversity target into the MDGs and we trust this will galvanize further action by the international development community to support the work program of the CBD. This is particularly important given that biodiversity now faces threats that are unparalleled in recorded history, not only from habitat loss and degradation, unsustainable use of biodiversity and other pressures, but also by climate change, which threatens to further impair ecological functions that are vital to development.

UNDP is committed to further strengthening the capacities of countries to manage their biodiversity in response to their needs and priorities. The Global Environment Facility is a major financier of these efforts, and we are proud to be an Implementing Agency of the GEF as the financial instrument of the CBD.

To support our work on biodiversity and other areas, UNDP has organized its work program in ‘Environment and Sustainable Development’ into four major pillars: (1) mainstreaming environment into development, (2) securing environmental finance, (3) adaptation to climate change, and (4) supporting local environmental capacity and action.

Under our ‘Mainstreaming’ pillar, we are supporting implementation of the CBD Program of Work on Protected Areas by linking protected area management more tightly to the development agenda. Many of our projects involve local communities as co-managers of protected areas, helping to ensure their long term social sustainability. We are committed to scaling up our work in this area, and to improving the financial sustainability of protected area systems. Another major focus of our mainstreaming work is on integrating biodiversity management into key economic sectors, such as agri-business, fisheries, forestry, mining and tourism. We recognize that large, medium and small-scale companies will play a pivotal role in sustaining biodiversity on our planet. As we heard from previous speakers, unless the business community is mobilized, we are unlikely to achieve the 2010 Biodiversity targets. UNDP is committed to expanding its work in this area working in partnership with governments, businesses and local communities and producer groups.

Our work on Environmental Finance focuses on assisting countries to access, combine and sequence financing from different sources to meet their biodiversity management needs. Working with the Global Environment Facility, UNEP, FAO, the World Bank and other partner UN agencies, we are committed to assisting countries to develop payment for ecosystem services schemes, REDD, biodiversity offsets and other market-based mechanisms to help meet the costs of ecosystem management.

Through our ‘Local Capacity’ pillar, we are committed to further building the capacity of local communities and indigenous groups to manage biodiversity and sustain livelihoods through the Equator Initiative and the GEF-financed Small Grants Programme.

Finally we know that healthy ecosystems will be critical if we are to adapt to climate change. We are therefore incorporating climate change adaptation and where possible mitigation into all our biodiversity management efforts, with the objective of maintaining ecosystem resilience and safeguarding ecological services.

Mr. President, we are happy to announce that during this COP we have signed an agreement with the CBD Secretariat to ensure that the development agenda of UNDP and the biodiversity agenda of the CBD are indeed closely linked to advance both the 2010 Biodiversity target and the 2015 Millennium Development Goals.

I thank you.