



# GINCANIÑO

Vol. 1 | Issue 2  
December 2007

A newsletter on youth and biodiversity by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



Winning artwork of Carlos Cruz-Merino (left) and Andréa Figueroa (right.).

## Winners of the IBD Art Competition

This year, the Secretariat launched its first ever art competition for children and youth. As it was a pilot project, the competition was limited to Montreal-area schools, in Canada, home of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The theme of the competition was “Biodiversity and Climate Change”, coinciding with this year’s theme for the celebrations of the International Day for Biological Diversity, 22 May.

Montreal students responded to the challenge with tremendous enthusiasm. Who could have imagined that a plain white sheet of paper could be transformed into a work of art eloquently depicting how the changing climate is affecting the diversity of life on Earth? There is no denying that today’s youth are the future stewards of biodiversity.

The entire staff of the Secretariat was invited to assist in the judging of the art works, and selected three winners per category. At the primary level, the winners were: Andréa Figueroa (1<sup>st</sup>), Karène Dubé-Paré (2<sup>nd</sup>) and Véronique Forget (3<sup>rd</sup>). The secondary level winners were: Carlos Cruz-Merino (1<sup>st</sup>), Sakila Rahman (2<sup>nd</sup>) and Stéphanie Tremblay (3<sup>rd</sup>).

A big thank you to the more than 200 students who submitted artwork. We hope children and youth everywhere will share with us their creative visions of the diversity of life on Earth. Keep visiting our website ([www.cbd.int/youth](http://www.cbd.int/youth)) for updates!

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# Youth Forums Drive Students Towards a Sustainable Future

Across Canada, elementary and secondary students and their teachers are using education as a tool to achieve a sustainable future. They are being supported by *Learning for a Sustainable Future* (LSF), a non-governmental organization (NGO) that aims to promote, through education, the knowledge, skills, perspectives and practices essential to a sustainable future. In Canada, LSF is a key driver the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). The sustainable future envisioned by UNESCO and LSF is a long-term future of the economy, ecology and equity of all communities.

Among LSF's activities are its dynamic youth forums, designed to stimulate youth engagement in activities promoting a sustainable future. Youth forums facilitate the sharing of local sustainability success stories and tools, as well as provide students with a "real world context" for

classroom environmental and sustainability lessons. The forums connect youth with local government, business and community sustainability leaders to support them in the development and implementation of action projects in their school and community.

This year, the youth forums are part of a new EcoLeague program that challenges and motivates elementary students to engage in inspiring and rewarding community and school-based action projects that focus on environmental issues that directly affect them.

On 26 November 2007, participants at the Montreal area youth forum will have the

opportunity to learn about biodiversity and its importance to ensuring a sustainable future. The biodiversity workshop will be jointly run by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and student participants of the Macoun Marsh Project (featured in *Gincaniño* Vol. 1/ Issue 1). Pilot school and community outreach initiatives, such as the LSF youth forum, contribute to the Secretariat's efforts to promote biodiversity education and awareness.

For more information please go to: [www.lsf-lst.ca](http://www.lsf-lst.ca) or [www.ecoleague.ca](http://www.ecoleague.ca).



Canadian students begin a school garden project.  
Photo courtesy of LSF.

## GINCANIÑO

Director of publication: Ahmed Djoghlaif  
Editor: Christine Gibb

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Comments and suggestions for future columns are welcome and should be addressed to the editor.

Secretariat of the  
Convention on Biological Diversity  
413 Rue St. Jacques, Suite 800  
Montréal, Québec, H2Y 1N9 Canada  
Tel. +1 514 288 2220 / Fax: +1 514 288 6588  
[www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int)  
[secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int)

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## Meet the Secretariat Focal Point for Youth

[christine.gibb@cbd.int](mailto:christine.gibb@cbd.int)  
+1 514 288 2220

Christine Gibb joined the Secretariat in September 2007 from the University of Guelph where she studied Capacity Development and Extension and the gendered nature of local knowledge in Ghana.



# Carrying the Spirit of the Youth Declaration

In the first edition of *Gincaniño*, I called upon you, the children and youth, to adopt the spirit of the 2002 Youth Declaration. It is imperative for you, as the leaders of tomorrow, to become engaged in the international biodiversity agenda and to work to protect all life on Earth. You have responded enthusiastically to the challenge, and we at the Secretariat are delighted to support your initiatives.



Costa Rican children celebrate at a village Biodiversity Centre. Photo courtesy of Christine Gibb.

Youth voices and their demand for action on climate change and biodiversity continue to attract international attention from governments, international agencies, businesspeople and citizens alike. All around the world youth organized, ran and participated in many activities for this year's International Day for Biological Diversity (IBD) on 22 May. Nearly 70 countries held activities celebrating biodiversity and raising awareness about the links between biodiversity and climate change. Children and youth were actively involved in many events.

In the week leading up to IBD, ten schools in ten "Convention on Biological Diversity" (CBD) countries were involved in an innovative youth-centred initiative. In a clever adaptation of the 2010 Biodiversity Target, students set for themselves their own 2010 target<sup>1</sup>: 20 trees + 10 schools. Students planted 20 native forest or fruit trees in each of their schoolyards and adjacent areas. The ability to organize, network and work together on such projects is inspirational and the grounds for further collaboration.

In Montreal, the headquarters of the Secretariat of the CBD, the celebrations continued with the tree-planting theme. A day-long conference focused on achieving the 2010 biodiversity target and combating the impacts of climate change. The voice of youth rang loud and clear during the day: the youth declaration on biodiversity was read by students involved in the HabitatNet organization, and elementary

and secondary school student winners of the Art competition were presented with prizes. Youth were also active participants in the evening event - a public conference on climate change and biodiversity featuring Mr. Jean Lemire, a biologist and filmmaker.

It is up to you to continue the momentum started with these youth initiatives. This momentum should be channeled into other areas of biodiversity conservation, such as urban biodiversity.

The draw of cities is irresistible for many

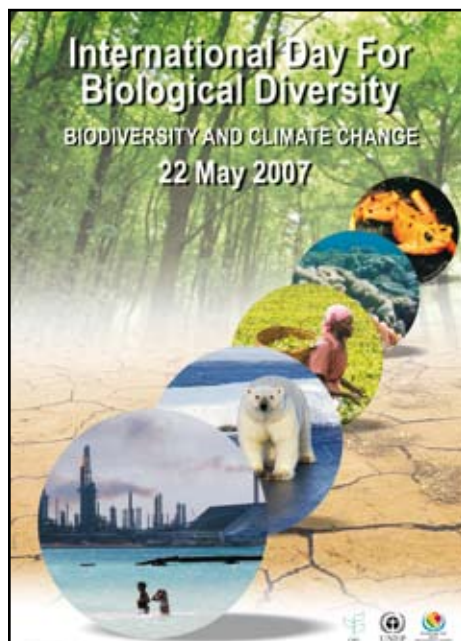
youth. You come for a chance to realize your dreams and to make a difference in this world. Because of the growth of cities and of the importance of cities to youth, it is imperative that you promote urban biodiversity. In fact, the battle for biodiversity will be won or lost in cities.

Schoolchildren and youth in Curitiba courageously committed themselves to protecting urban biodiversity, in a letter presented at the "Cities and Biodiversity: Achieving the 2010 Biodiversity Target" meeting in Curitiba, Brazil, in March 2007. In turn, the youth demanded global leaders do their part to ensure younger generations inherit safe and healthy cities around the world. I, along with the committed staff at the CBD, will work to meet the demand of youth for a safe and healthy planet.

I look forward to witnessing further evidence of your commitment to protecting all life on Earth and to strengthen the relationship between the Secretariat and children and youth. To achieve these goals, an enthusiastic staff member, Ms. Christine Gibb, has been designated as your focal point.

So let us not forget the challenge put to us by the Curitiba children and youth in their letter (page 13): "We are part of the urban biodiversity and, as responsible people, we keep the commitment of taking care of the city ... To live in our city and in any city of the world, it is necessary to be a collaborator in the building of all people's cities. **Do your part ... we are going to do ours.**"

Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif  
Executive Secretary of the CBD



Poster for IBD 2007 celebrations.

<sup>1</sup> The 2010 target is to achieve a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth.

# Biodiversity and Agriculture

Each year, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) selects a theme to showcase a particular dimension of the variety of life on Earth for the International Day for Biological Diversity (IBD), on May 22.

While activities for the 2007 theme, biodiversity and climate change, are still underway, preparations for next year's theme, biodiversity and agriculture, have begun. The theme for IBD 2008 is biodiversity and agriculture. Here's a taste of next year's theme.

Learning how pollinators, such as bees, contribute to biodiversity and agriculture can be fun - especially when wearing a bee suit and running a relay race with bee hive frames.

Photo courtesy of Christine Gibb.



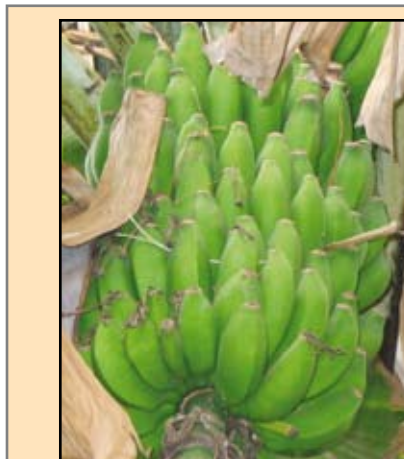
## What is the relationship between biodiversity and agriculture?

Biodiversity and sustainable agriculture complement each other in several ways. In sustainable agriculture, farms can produce food and other goods indefinitely, without irreversibly damaging the ecosystem. Sustainable agriculture has three complementary goals: economic profitability, environmental health, and social and economic equity. Biodiversity benefits agro-ecosystems by:

- Providing an array of plants, animals and fungi for food, clothing, shelter and medicine
- Contributing to the resilience of agro-ecosystems
- Increasing the capacity of agro-ecosystems to recover from environmental stresses (e.g. drought)
- Supporting the ability of agro-ecosystems to evolve under changing conditions (e.g. under climate change)
- Helping to sustain high levels of agricultural productivity
- Reducing external input requirements (e.g. nutrients, water, pest control)
- Performing essential functions, or ecosystem services, such as nutrient cycling, and pest and disease control.

In turn, sustainable farming practices can enhance biodiversity by:

- Contributing to functions such as maintaining water quality, dispersing seeds of wild and endangered plants and providing refuge for species, especially during droughts
- Providing habitat diversity in which pollinators and beneficial predators can survive
- Creating and continually adapting ecological knowledge of biodiversity, its importance and functions.



Biodiversity is the foundation of agricultural production.”

Agricultural biodiversity (also known as agrobiodiversity) is an important subset of biodiversity. In 1999, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) defined it as:

“The variety and variability of animals, plants and micro-organisms that are used directly or indirectly for food and agriculture, including crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries. It comprises the genetic resources (varieties and breeds) and species used for food, fodder, fibre, fuel and pharmaceuticals. It also includes the diversity of non-harvested species that support production (soil micro-organisms, predators, pollinators) and those in the wider environment that support agro-ecosystems as well as the diversity of the agro-ecosystems.”

Over thousands of years, agrobiodiversity practices have resulted from the combination of natural processes, known as ecosystem services, and the careful selection and innovative developments of male and female farmers, herders and fishers. Thus it is human practices based on a variety of knowledge systems, such as local and traditional knowledge, that separate agrobiodiversity from other elements of biodiversity.” In fact, many components of agrobiodiversity would disappear without human interference!

## DID YOU KNOW?

In developing countries, the banana is the fourth most important crop (after rice, wheat and maize). While bananas are mainly cooked and eaten as vegetables, or eaten raw as fruits, they are actually herbs!

Photo courtesy of Christine Gibb.

# Biodiversity and Agriculture

## What are the threats to agrobiodiversity?

**A**lthough agrobiodiversity is vital to ensure food security, protect livelihoods and contribute to healthy and diverse diets, it is under threat. As the global population expands, so too does the demand for food, which often results in agricultural expansion into forests and marginal lands. Currently, almost one third of the world's land area is used for food production, making agriculture the largest single cause of habitat conversion on a global basis, and an important contributor to biodiversity loss.

To meet an increasing demand for a steady supply of uniform food products, many local varieties have been replaced by improved exotic varieties and species, which further erodes genetic agrobiodiversity. Since agriculture began 12,000 years ago, humans have cultivated and collected 7,000 plant species. Today, 90% of our food comes from only 15 plant species and eight animal species! The shift away from locally diverse food production systems threatens their continued existence and, with them, the accompanying local and traditional knowledge, associated cultures and skills of the food producers.



Rice paddies, Bali, Indonesia. Rice first originated in Asia but is now grown all around the world. Photo courtesy of Peter Garnhum/www.flickr.com.



There are more than 250 species of wild potatoes around the world. Photo courtesy of Scott Bauer/USDA Agriculture Research Service.

This Kenyan farmer uses a "zero grazing technique," in which he grows fodder and brings it to his cattle. This technique gives him more control over the productivity of the livestock and allows him to recycle more waste. Photo courtesy of Christine Gibb.



## What are some positive developments in biodiversity and agriculture?

**F**ortunately, not all biodiversity and agriculture news is bad news. Recognizing the importance of biodiversity to agriculture (and vice versa), various international agencies, governments, businesses, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and concerned citizens are working to conserve and strengthen agrobiodiversity.

For example, the FAO is overseeing a global assessment of the status and trends of the world's plant and animal genetic resources. National governments are providing support to sustainable farmers. Supermarkets and producers, representing the private sector, are using labels so that consumers can identify and buy sustainably produced products. NGOs are facilitating farmer-to-farmer sharing of traditional and locally adaptive agricultural techniques. In many urban areas, citizens are converting empty lots into community gardens filled with diverse vegetables, herbs, flowers and fruits.

Clearly, agrobiodiversity is essential to the survival and well-being of human and other life forms on the planet. Yet, there remains much to be done.

For the 2008 International Day for Biological Diversity, be sure to get involved in related activities and initiatives. Send stories, pictures and photos of your groups' initiatives to *Gincaniño*. The most innovative ones will be published in the 2008 issues of *Gincaniño* and on the CBD website.

Ref.: FAO. 1999. Agricultural Biodiversity Multifunctional Character of Agriculture and Land Conference, Background Paper 1, Maastricht, September 1999.

# IBD 2007 Youth Celebrations: 20 Trees + 10 Schools

In May 2007, students from ten schools, located in ten countries, celebrated the International Day for Biological Diversity with a unique tree-planting project. The project drew inspiration from the official 2010 Biodiversity Target and evolved into “20 trees + 10 schools”. Students from schools in Canada, Denmark, Ecuador, Germany, Iran, Kenya, Micronesia, Mongolia, Palau and Russia planted 20 native forest or fruit trees in each of their schoolyards and adjacent areas.

One of the student participants in Palau sent the following letter to the organizers of the youth 20+10 initiative and to the CBD. The letter describes her experience with the project.

Hello, my name is Cyley. I am a former 8th grader of Meyuns Elementary School. I am writing this article on behalf of myself, my classmates and my school.

I would like to thank you for allowing us to take part of your program. It was very educational and enjoyable. It taught us the importance of our environment. It also taught us to work together as a group. This program gave us a chance to communicate with other students from outside of Palau. We learned about different species from other countries through student sharing.

It was very exciting to do activities such as taking pictures, planting trees, choosing the right baby trees, emailing to share what we do, and downloading and uploading the pictures from other countries. We learned a lot from doing these things by ourselves. We chose the plants, we took pictures, we dug the ground and we planted the trees. During the tree planting, we traveled to the big island and that was very exciting.

Yes, it was fun and we learned so much in such a short time. We also have learned about climate warming. We are now taking it seriously so we are campaigning other kids to plant trees and not destroy them. This program has helped us become more interested in our environment. We enjoyed taking part in this program and we hope that we can still be part of it even though we are already in high school.

Once again, on behalf of my school and my fellow classmates, I would like to thank you for the opportunity you gave us to learn with other countries through your program.

Sincerely Yours,  
Cyley Derbai

Graduate of Meyuns Elementary School, Koror, Palau



Tropical forest.  
Photo courtesy of Giant Ginko/www.flickr.com .



Students from Francojeunesse in Ottawa, Canada participate in a tree planting event to celebrate IBD and UNEP's Billion Tree Campaign.

# HabitatNet: A Global Biodiversity Monitoring Project

How humans relate with the natural world has deep cultural foundations. Throughout the history of all civilizations, our relationship with nature has given us art, music, verse, mathematics, and science. Today our global imperative is to understand the implications of our interdependence with nature.

Founded in 1996, HabitatNet's purpose is to give students and teachers an opportunity to conduct research, collect and analyze data while purposefully making a difference with regard to a most important global issue - conserving biological diversity.

The goals of HabitatNet are to enable teachers and students from around the globe: (1) to establish permanent biodiversity monitoring projects at their home sites; (2) use telecommunications, via email and world wide websites, to communicate investigations, findings, and questions regarding biodiversity issues and management, and (3) work collaboratively as a *global community* toward conserving our Earth's biodiversity.

Natural habitats are storehouses of great natural diversity, and some may disappear before science can unravel their mysteries. The ecological structure and functions of habitats ringing the globe are active areas of research for HabitatNet students. Equal in importance to the taxonomic and genetic diversity they contain is how these complex ecosystems change over time and how they respond to catastrophic natural and human-induced disturbance. Students

and schools throughout the world may participate and exchange data as well as pose questions to participating schools.

One of HabitatNet's global projects is to periodically convene youth symposiums. The first symposium was held during a two-

Students attending the "Youth Symposium on Biodiversity" submitted project abstracts regarding the conservation work they are doing at their home sites. All worthy projects were accepted and funding was found for all to attend.



Student participants collect data as part of their ecological studies. Photo courtesy of HabitatNet.

During that two-week period, these high school students overcame language and cultural differences while collaboratively writing a "Youth Accord On Biodiversity Conservation". Conserving global biodiversity was their central theme. All of the students presented the work they are doing at their home sites while developing a network of "kindred spirits" of youthful peers concerned about their collective future and beyond. All participants collaborated on a biodiversity conservation project at the El Eden Ecological Reserve and put their collective voices to print! Their work was submitted to the United Nations and recognized by UNEP at the Montreal, Canada celebration of International Day for Biological Diversity May 22 2007.

week period in January 2005. Seventy-three courageous high school students, representing nine nations from around the world, came together for this first "Youth Symposium on Biodiversity".

This grass-roots project was organized and coordinated by HabitatNet (Souhegan High School - Amherst, NH), El Eden Ecological Reserve (Quintana Roo, Mexico), and Amigos de Sian Ka'an (Quintana Roo, Mexico) and held at the El Eden Ecological Reserve.

Only through global collaboration on biodiversity conservation will our cultural and biological future be ensured.

Dan Bisaccio

HabitatNet Director & Founder

habitatnet@sprise.com

Souhegan High School, Amherst, NH, USA

[www.sprise.com/shs/habitatnet/default.htm](http://www.sprise.com/shs/habitatnet/default.htm)

Each year the CBD creates an informative and fun package to help groups celebrate IBD day. If your school would like to receive the 2008 IBD package, please send a request to [christine.gibb@cbd.int](mailto:christine.gibb@cbd.int) or to Convention on Biological Diversity, c/o Christine Gibb, 413 Rue St Jacques O., Suite 800, Montréal, Québec, H2Y 1N9, Canada. The packages will be posted on the children and youth website by April 2008, and will be mailed out around the same time. Be sure to include the name and mailing address of the school and of the primary contact.

# La Diversité Biologique et les Changement Climatiques Biodiversity and



Les fluctuations climatiques en Amérique du Nord réduisent les populations de planctons, la principale source d'alimentation de la baleine noire de l'Atlantique Nord.

En Europa los bo  
verse amenazo  
cada vez más po  
las plagas y los  
incendios  
volviéndose más  
vulnerables a la  
especies invasor

En Afric  
les pér  
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El aumento de la temperatura está estrechamente relacionado con la enfermedad fúngica que afecta a las ranas en América Latina.





# Climate Change      Cambio Climático y Diversidad Biológica

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Some of the largest remaining areas where tigers occur are the mangrove forests of Asia. The projected rise in sea levels could cause the disappearance of the tiger's habitat, threatening the survival of the species.



que, les pressions qu'exercent  
riodes sèches de plus en plus  
s et les espaces habitables de  
plus petits rendent les  
nts très vulnérables aux  
ments climatiques.



Australia's Great Barrier Reef could lose up to 95% of its living coral by 2050 due to changes in ocean temperature and chemistry.

# Des Étudiants du Collège Édouard-Montpetit à l'UNESCO

Le 2 avril 2007, 23 étudiants de l'option Passeport-Europe édition Environnement du Collège Édouard-Montpetit, situé en banlieue de Montréal, ont été accueillis à l'UNESCO dans le cadre de leur stage en Europe, grâce à la collaboration de la Délégation générale du Québec à Paris. Mme Marion Tucker-Venter, du Bureau d'information publique de cette institution internationale, leur a d'abord présenté un film sur sa mission. Puis, les étudiants ont eu la chance de rencontrer M. Osman Benchikh, spécialiste du programme Sciences de l'ingénieur et de la technologie au Service des sciences naturelles. Enfin, ils ont pu discuter avec l'Ambassadeur du Canada à l'UNESCO, M. Gilbert Laurin.

Les étudiants et leurs deux professeures-accompagnatrices, Johane Deslandes et la signataire de ces lignes, ont eu droit à un intéressant exposé sur les énergies dans le monde vues sous l'angle du développement durable. M. Benchikh a su faire ressortir les disparités marquées en terme d'accès à l'énergie dans le monde, ce qu'il a présenté comme un problème éthique. Ainsi, 80% de la population de l'Afrique subsaharienne n'ayant pas accès à l'électricité, cela



Aechmea.  
Photo courtesy of Franz Dejon.

compromet les possibilités de cette partie du monde de répondre aux besoins en santé et en agriculture, par exemple.

M. Benchikh a insisté sur les choix durables en matière d'énergie que peuvent faire certains pays en développement pour répondre à des besoins criants tout en respectant l'environnement. L'exploitation des énergies

renouvelables pourrait d'ailleurs créer quelque huit millions de nouveaux emplois en Afrique, en Amérique latine et en Chine. Les étudiants de l'option Passeport-Europe édition Environnement, déjà sensibilisés aux choix énergétiques susceptibles de générer moins de gaz à effet de serre et donc de moins contribuer aux changements climatiques, ont beaucoup apprécié cette perspective mondiale sur l'énergie à court et à moyen termes. Ce conférencier a évoqué les défis du stockage et du transport de l'électricité et rappelé que les réserves d'énergie solaire permettent de répondre

localement aux besoins énergétiques. De l'aide internationale est évidemment requise ainsi qu'un regard sur la surconsommation des pays industrialisés.



Avant leur stage en Belgique et en France, les étudiants de l'option Passeport-Europe édition Environnement avaient rencontré à Montréal M. Ahmed Djoghlaïf, Secrétaire exécutif de la Convention pour la diversité biologique.

Il les avait alors nommés « ambassadeurs à vie » de la diversité biologique.

L'option Passeport-Europe existe toujours et étudie d'autres thèmes, en amenant des étudiants de Sciences humaines et d'Arts et lettres dans des pays de l'Union européenne, en retournant bien sûr à l'UNESCO. Et, suite à cette première expérimentation fructueuse, le Collège Édouard-Montpetit offre encore une formation et un stage sur l'environnement, maintenant sous le nom de Défi Environnement pour les étudiants en Sciences de la nature et Sciences humaines. Son premier stage aura lieu au Nunavik en avril 2008 et portera sur les impacts des changements climatiques dans le grand Nord canadien.

Louise Levac  
Professeure de géographie au Collège Édouard-Montpetit, Montréal, Québec, Canada

Chaque année, le CDB crée une collection de ressources informatives and amusantes pour aider des groupes à célébrer la Journée internationale de la diversité biologique. Si votre école veut recevoir ces ressources, s.v.p. envoyez votre demande à christine.gibb@cbd.int ou à la Convention sur la diversité biologique, c/o Christine Gibb, 413 Rue St Jacques O., Suite 800, Montréal, Québec, H2Y 1N9, Canada. Les ressources seront mises sur notre site internet en avril 2008 et seront envoyées en même temps. Assurez-vous d'inclure le nom et l'adresse postale de votre école et du responsable.



Masai women. Photo courtesy of Franz Dejon.

# Tunza Youth for Environmental Justice

The Tunza International Youth Conference is a global youth forum of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). The conference is hosted biannually, with the aim of connecting and empowering youth around issues of the environment. This year, more than 130 young people gathered in Leverkusen, Germany from 26-30 August to attend the 2007 conference, centered on the theme of Technology in Service of the Environment.

Germany's leading role in green innovation well matched the conference's emphasis on renewable energy solutions and stimulated new discussions regarding capacity building and technology transfers. Of course, the role of advanced energy technologies is not consistent throughout the world. Increasingly polarizing inequalities between Global North and Global South exacerbate the unequal distribution of environmental hazards. Difference countries and communities experience vulnerability to threats such as climate change to dramatically different degrees.

During plenary discussions, participants

had the opportunity to present the work of their organizations. Projects demonstrated the divergence of struggles faced in Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, and West Asia. This divergence, and the connected overlap of social and environmental issues became a central topic of discussion. In focus group meetings, the Lobbying and Advocacy group agreed that Environmental Justice is an issue common to everyone, and that youth everywhere can help to advocate for it. Members of the group wrote a pledge, which was presented and endorsed by the whole group. To quote it at length:

“We envision a world wherein environmental benefits and natural resources are equitably distributed, and access to information and participation in decision-making are enjoyed by all. We call for the support of vulnerable communities, including small island states and less developed countries, women, and indigenous groups. We commit ourselves to advocating

Environmental Justice in our work and the work of the Tunza network, and lobbying decision makers, UNEP, and its governing council to protect, empower, and support these groups.”

Throughout the week of the conference, strong, supportive connections were formed among youth with diverse lives, histories and experiences. The formation of these connections was perhaps more important than the exchange of knowledge they facilitated. The word “tunza” come from the East African language Kiswahili, and means “to treat with care and affection”. The conference served as a great reminder to me that we must constantly work to foster healthy, cooperative, inclusive relationships with each other while grappling to build healthy relations with the planet.

Caitlin MacLeod  
Tunza Youth Council



Flamingos in Lake Nakuru, Kenya. Photo courtesy of Franz Dejon.

Cada año, el CDB crea una colección para grupos informativa y divertida para celebrar el Día Internacional de la Diversidad Biológica. Si a tu escuela le gustaría recibir la colección de 2008, por favor envíe tu solicitud a [christine.gibb@cdb.int](mailto:christine.gibb@cdb.int) o al Convenio sobre la Diversidad Biológica, c/o Christine Gibb, 413 Rue St. Jacques O, Suite 800, Montreal Québec, H2Y 1N9, Canadá. Las colecciones se incluirán dentro de nuestra página Internet a partir de abril de 2008, y serán enviadas al mismo tiempo. Asegúrate de incluir el nombre y dirección de tu escuela y de la persona responsable.

# Filipino Students Celebrate Montreal Protocol 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

**P**aolo Miguel (PM) Manzanilla and Lawrence Medina are senior students of the Philippine Science High School, a government-funded scholarship school for students with high aptitude in science and math. PM will take up chemical engineering in the university; Lawrence will opt for civil engineering. Through science and math, they want to be involved in protecting the environment.

PM and Lawrence were in Montreal, Canada on 15 to 20 September 2007 to participate in the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. This is an international agreement among 191 nations to control or ban the production and use of ozone depleting substances. The Montreal Protocol is quite successful, so far, because the ozone layer is seen to be recovering.

The Filipino students' participation in this landmark celebration is a result of their winning the Asia-Pacific Regional Ozone Quiz sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme. It was held in Bangkok, Thailand in August 2007, and had participants from 16 countries. Prior to this, they won the National Ozone Online Quiz in the Philippines. Aside from trophies and medals, PM, Lawrence, and the school they represent, won \$1500

for environmental initiatives. Part of this prize money will be used to fund information campaigns on commonly used consumer products that are hazardous to both the users and the environment. The remainder will be used to rehabilitate the area surrounding a creek that runs through the 7.5-hectare PSHS campus. The creek was selected because it is prone to different types of pollution.

More than the money, trophies and medals, the best prize that PM and Lawrence received for their hard work in the ozone quiz were the real-life experiences they have had in the trips to Bangkok and Canada. Knowing about different cultures through the books is nothing compared to when it is experienced hands-on. The cultural differences of the East and West go beyond the food and the ways people dress, but despite these, East and West are one in protecting and saving the environment. The journeys to Bangkok and Canada were brief, but these are beautiful experiences which PM and Lawrence will treasure forever.

Cynthia V. Andaya,  
Teacher-Coach of PM and Lawrence

**W**hen it comes to biodiversity, cities are both part of the problem and part of the solution. Cities consume a disproportionate amount of natural resources, but they are also places of creativity where people can go to build better lives.

The idea that cities can promote biodiversity was the focus of a conference in Curitiba, Brazil earlier this year. Mayor Carlos Alberto Richa of Curitiba initiated the meeting "Cities and Biodiversity: Achieving the 2010 Biodiversity Target" on 26-28 March 2007. Seventy participants, mayors and other high-level officials from various cities such as Bonn (Germany), Montreal (Canada), Johannesburg (South Africa), Nagoya (Japan) and Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) came together to share their experiences regarding the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity.

During the closing ceremony, 400 children representatives from Curitiba's schools delivered a letter to their Mayor as well as to the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaf. In their touching and inspiring letter, the students expressed eloquently their intention to protect biodiversity, and asked that adults do their part.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Cities occupy 2% of the Earth's surface but their residents use 75% of our planet's natural resources.
- In 2007, for the first time in history, the majority of the world's population will live in cities.
- The black redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*) is a bird found in Britain that breeds *only* on buildings and other city structures.
- New plants are appearing in cities; these plants are adapted to the special ecological conditions in urban habitats (e.g. air pollution, soil contamination).
- For many people, urban biodiversity is the *only* biodiversity that they experience.



Cynthia Andaya, Lawrence Medina, Caitlin MacLeod and PM Manzanilla at the CBD office in Montreal, Canada.

# Cities, Biodiversity and Youth Involvement in Curitiba



Children and youth of Curitiba sitting with delegates at the “Cities and Biodiversity: Achieving the 2010 Biodiversity Target” in Curitiba, Brazil.  
Photo courtesy of Brazil.

## Letter from the Children of Curitiba

*To the Mayor of Curitiba, Beto Richa,*

*To the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Ahmed Djoghlaif,*

*And to all citizens from Curitiba who want to assume with us this commitment letter*

Curitiba, March 23, 2007

We are children, students of Municipal Schools of Curitiba. In this letter we reassure the commitment showed in the first Mini-Conference about Biodiversity, in 2006: more and more we are engaged with the improvement of the quality of life in the environment where we live.

In our schools, Environmental Education happens through actions and projects which make us aware that reserving the environment is necessary and urgent.

We are one of the elements which are part of the Biodiversity and we live in an interdependent relation with nature. When we destroy or pollute, we damage all living beings, including ourselves.

We are part of the Urban Biodiversity and, as responsible people, we keep the commitment of taking care of our city and of proposing measures to decrease consumerism, to decrease the increasing production of garbage, the irrational use of water, the release of pollutant gases in the atmosphere, the cut down of trees, the

traffic of forest animals and others, which may be harmful to our environment.

Recycling, saving, reusing, living well with oneself, with the others and with nature are part of these actions.

In Curitiba, there are green areas and we develop projects which have the goals of improving the citizen' quality of life. However, our city and the other cities of the world keep growing. More and more we need to be conscious and keep searching for solutions for the social-environmental issues.

To live well in our city and in any city of the world, it is necessary to be a collaborator in the building of all people's cities.

**Do your part ... we are going to do ours.**



Students presenting letter to Ahmed Djoghlaif (centre) and Carlos Alberto Richa (right) in Curitiba.  
Photo courtesy of Brazil.

Students from the Municipal Schools of Curitiba.

# The International Year of the Reef 2008

**C**oral reefs support an extraordinary biodiversity and provide spawning, nursery, refuge and feeding areas for a large variety of organisms. Reef structures play also an important role as natural breakwaters, which minimize the wave impacts from storms. Their beauty make them a powerful attraction for tourism, which generates income and employment for millions of people around the world - even in remote areas of developing countries.

Unfortunately, the latest estimates of the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) states that 20% of the coral reefs are considered as effectively lost (which means damaged beyond repair). Another 24% of the remaining reefs are at critical status (high to very high threat of destruction, if we do nothing), and only 50% are currently classified as low risk.

The majority of reef loss or damage is not deliberate. Coral reefs are being degraded by an accumulation of stresses arising from human activities (over-fishing, pollution and coastal development top the list of chronic stressors) and from long-term changes in the oceans and atmosphere.

Reef Initiative (ICRI), a partnership among governments, international organizations (including the CBD), and non-governmental organizations throughout the world, has designated 2008 as the International Year of the Reef (IYOR 2008).



Coral reefs are sometimes called the 'tropical rainforests of the ocean' because of the biodiversity they house.  
Photo courtesy of Celeste Gouldin.

IYOR 2008 will be a worldwide year-long campaign of events and initiatives hosted by governments, individuals, corporations, and schools around the world to raise awareness about the value of coral reefs and threats to their and importance

sustainability, and to motivate people to take action to protect them. All individuals, corporations, schools, governments, and organizations are welcome and actively encouraged to participate in IYOR 2008.

The Year should be used as a special opportunity to raise awareness among children and youth, including those living far away from coral reefs. To do so, you can visit the web site where educational materials such as scientific comic books and cartoon coloring books will be available. The website will also have a list of activities in countries around the world; everyone is encouraged to participate. The website will have a space for you to ask questions, which will be answered by our coral reef experts.

If you want to find out more about supporting the IYOR 2008 initiative visit: [www.iyor.org](http://www.iyor.org) or contact [info@iyor.org](mailto:info@iyor.org).

Francis Staub  
IYOR Coordinator

## WHY SHOULD YOU PROTECT REEFS?

### Healthy coral reef habitats provide:

- **Habitat:** Home to over 1 million diverse aquatic species, including thousands of fish species
- **Income:** Billions of dollars and millions of jobs in over 90 countries around the world
- **Food:** For people living near coral reefs, especially on small islands
- **Protection:** A natural barrier protecting coastal cities, communities and beaches
- **Medicine:** the potential for treatments for many of the world's most prevalent and dangerous illnesses and diseases.

Photo courtesy of Ciaran O'Neill.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PROTECT CORAL REEFS?

- Join IYOR 2008: organize and host events to raise awareness and funds for coral reef conservation or participate in an existing event
- Register your event: you are invited to register your own event at our web site ([www.iyor.org](http://www.iyor.org))
- Learn about the threats to and the value of coral reefs, mangroves and sea grasses
- Encourage conservation and sustainable use of coral reef resources (for ideas, see [www.iyor.org](http://www.iyor.org))

Photo courtesy of Bill Adler.

# Wanted : Participants for the Second International Youth Symposium for Biodiversity

The City of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada will be the proud host of the Second International Youth Symposium for Biodiversity from 5-10 October 2009. The event will bring together youth from all parts of the world who are passionate about biodiversity. It will be a week of sharing ideas and experiences, developing action plans on biodiversity, and visiting local schools, nature areas and cultural points of interest, including the Montreal Botanical Garden and Biosphere.

This initiative has been welcomed by Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Montreal-based Convention on Biological Diversity. He stated that "Young people have a central place as bearers of tomorrow's solutions. Their engagement is essential if we are to reduce the loss of biodiversity and ensure the future of life on Earth."

Student participants in the Ottawa 2009 event are invited to contribute their work to the United Nations 2010 Biodiversity Convention as examples of local efforts to conserve Earth's biodiversity.

Student participants will help the symposium to achieve its goals:

1. To welcome students from around the

world, and to have them experience Canadian biodiversity with a full scale Bio-Blitz (a biological survey of all species found in a specific natural area with local area specialists and scientists).

2. To provide a forum for sharing the work that they are doing at their home regarding local biodiversity efforts.

3. To build an on-going international network of students advocating biodiversity conservation.

4. To develop an action plan to implement the Global Youth Accord for Biodiversity, which was created by students from nine nations during the first Youth Symposium in Mexico in 2005 (see the HabitatNet webpage <http://www.sprise.com/shs/habitatnet/default.htm>).

5. To hear from international leaders involved in biodiversity conservation presenting their work while working with the student participants.

6. To foster international friendships with students committed to global conservation efforts while working on a collaborative project and enjoying field trips celebrating Canadian biodiversity and culture.

If your school or community is involved in

conserving local or global biodiversity, and you want to share it with the world, please consider this opportunity to make a difference. Student teams from around the world, along with a teacher or other adult chaperone are invited to attend the Symposium. Interested students in grades 6 to 12 should submit a proposal highlighting a current biodiversity project that they are engaged in and willing to share with others.

More information is available on the application page: [www.biodiversitymatters.org](http://www.biodiversitymatters.org).



Michael Leveille (left) and Dan Bisaccio, co-organizers of the Youth Symposium.



## Contribute to Gincaniño!

Have you participated in environment and biodiversity-focused youth activities in your country?

If so, tell us about your experiences. We'll share the most innovative ones with other *Gincaniño* readers around the world in our next issue.

To contact the Secretariat, visit [www.cbd.int/youth](http://www.cbd.int/youth) or send an email to [christine.gibb@cbd.int](mailto:christine.gibb@cbd.int).

Burmese children.  
Photo courtesy of Anna Fabro.

# Les Écosystèmes Agricoles et les Changements Climatiques

Trouvez les mots soulignés suivant dans le mot croisé. Utilisez les lettres qui restent pour découvrir le message secret.

Un tiers de la superficie de la planète est utilisée pour la production alimentaire. Il existe des écosystèmes agricoles dans presque toutes les régions du monde, de sorte que les conséquences des changements climatiques seront étendues et variées.

Les scientifiques prévoient plusieurs conséquences:

- ☛ La perte de plusieurs espèces sauvages de plantes et d'animaux;
- ☛ La croissance et la production des végétaux favorisant la propagation certains parasites et certaines maladies;
- ☛ Une exposition accrue aux facteurs de stress associés à la chaleur;
- ☛ Des changements dans la configuration des pluies.

L'agriculture contribue également aux changements climatiques: l'agriculture mondiale est responsable de l'émission de 20 pour cent des émissions anthropiques (causés par les humains). Certaines activités peuvent réduire les émissions de gaz à effet de serre.

Par exemple:

- ☛ Une meilleure gestion des terres agricoles;
- ☛ Une utilisation plus efficace des engrais;
- ☛ La restauration des terres agricoles détériorées;
- ☛ L'amélioration de la culture du riz afin de réduire les émissions de méthane.

Photo courtesy of Christine Gibb.

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Message Secret: \_\_\_\_\_

Photo courtesy of Christine Gibb