



COMMUNIQUÉ

World Association of Zoos and Aquariums mobilized for the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity

Montreal, 14 October 2011 – At its annual conference, and in a unanimous resolution, the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) formally endorsed the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity (UNDB) and decided to develop a framework to guide the participation of zoos and aquariums in the achievement of the Global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity.

Attendees to the 66th annual conference, hosted by the Prague Zoo, discussed the role of zoos and aquariums in achieving the conservation and awareness-raising targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, adopted by 193 Governments in October 2010 at the Nagoya biodiversity summit in Japan.

The World Association of Zoos and Aquariums represents over 300 institutions worldwide, which receive close to 700 million visitors a year. It is also a member of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity.

Ahmed Djoghlaf, Executive Secretary to the Convention on Biological Diversity, said: “The engagement of WAZA members is crucial for achieving the first Aichi biodiversity targets and engaging the people of the world, and in particular the youth and children, in our common battle to safe life on Earth. Indeed, WAZA’s engagement is crucial in our common endeavour, the 2050 biodiversity vision of living life in harmony with nature.”

Jörg Junhold, WAZA President, stated: “I trust WAZA is most aware of its role and responsibility to support Convention on Biological Diversity in the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, which is a major challenge for both organizations. I am very confident that our community of member zoos and aquariums will make significant contributions to the Decade in the fields of raising awareness of their visitors and effective conservation measures for threatened species.”

Gerald Dick, WAZA Executive Director, said: “The 66th Annual Conference of WAZA proved to become a landmark for the organisation in terms of international cooperation for the conservation of species. Global cooperative programmes for the management of threatened species were accepted as well as the development of a supporting global project for the Decade on Biodiversity – WAZA members adopted a resolution of endorsement of this United Nations initiative, it may be remembered as the Prague resolution in the years to come.”

WAZA will elaborate their overall strategy for the decade in advance of their next annual conference. The next marketing conference for the association will look specifically at raising awareness.
