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## IUCN Book Launch

Monique Barbut, CEO and Chairperson  
Global Environment Facility

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Ladies and Gentlemen: it is an honor and pleasure to be at this event today. I congratulate the work of Jeff, Russ and their colleagues: their new book on behalf of IUCN, *The Wealth of Nature*, really stands out among all the publications you will see here at the COP.

As the only financial mechanism that simultaneously supports the UNFCCC, the CBD, and the UNCCD, as well as agreements on ozone and persistent organic pollutants, GEF investments are emerging as the most cost-effective in the generation of multiple global benefits across all convention objectives. This book, which I urge you to take a copy, reinforces the notion that there should not be trade-offs in the protection of the vital Earth systems humans depend on.

Climate change makes the headlines but the loss of biodiversity, which is irreversible, may very well be the hot topic of the next decade as we begin to better understand its economic and environmental implications. We mustn't therefore focus on climate change to the point that we neglect the consequences of our decisions as far as other environmental challenges are concerned.

One key example is forest management and conservation, which is increasingly recognized as strategic in order to tackle climate change mitigation at a sufficient scale. We cannot and should not consider this as simply a “carbon stock” perspective. If we do we will be repeating past mistakes. This brings me to the reason we are gathered here today.

Biodiversity loss is increasing at an unprecedented rate, threatening the very basis of sustainable development.

There is some good news, however. Species can and have recovered with concerted conservation efforts. One of the key factors constraining effective efforts to conserve biodiversity is funding availability. Although considerable efforts are expended worldwide on species conservation, many of those efforts are targeted on just a few charismatic species and rely on public funds and public donations for funding support.

In response to this crisis, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), together with the World Bank, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), have joined forces to establish a groundbreaking new initiative to foster partnerships between the private sector and conservation projects on the ground – centered around the Save Our Species (SOS)

Campaign. The SOS initiative will promote public-private partnerships to raise additional conservation funding by providing the private sector, and other donors, with a mechanism to contribute to, and support, efficient and coordinated conservation action.

Many companies and organizations are already using animals in their logos and marketing strategies. These creatures are a signature part of these companies' logos or brands, be it the butterfly for Microsoft MSN, or the tiger for Exxon, just to name a couple; but there are hundreds more. According to the IUCN Red List, many of the species which are central to the branding and image of countless corporations find themselves in poor status in nature. These will need serious, comprehensive and targeted conservation action to survive. To date most of the funding for species conservation has come from governments, private individuals and NGOs. The SOS campaign provides an exciting opportunity to engage the private sector, encouraging companies to support their species brands and other threatened species.

These financial contributions from the private sector will be invested in the Save Your Species trust fund to complement upstart funding already made

available by the GEF and the World Bank, with IUCN providing technical and scientific support to the overall initiative. Private sector contributions will be targeted both to logo signature animals and to support much-needed conservation for some of the less charismatic and often “forgotten” threatened species on IUCN’s Red List.

This new public-private partnership will bring new partners from the private sector into the conservation community to provide new financing and complement existing conservation efforts.

With the International Year of Biodiversity beginning in less than one month this is truly the time to move from words to action: we invite all interested companies to join this effort to save globally threatened species.