

“ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE; THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE WORLD AT WORK”

UN General Assembly – 11 to 13 February 2008

IUCN Permanent Observer makes statement

IUCN Permanent Observer to the United Nations presented a statement to the UN General Assembly on 13 February 2008 on the issue of climate change. The three-day debate was convened by the President of the Assembly in order to garner support from all parts of society to address climate change. The debate, originally intended to be held for two days, was extended by a full day to accommodate the 115 speakers, including 19 ministers and 7 vice-ministers representing 107 countries.

The dialogue focused on how to involve people from the private sector, business, academic and science in a sustained effort to address climate change. The Assembly debate attracted a significant number of high-profile personalities, including Sir Richard Branson, CEO and founder of the Virgin Group, the actor Daryl Hannah and New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg. While opening the debate, the General Assembly President Dr. Srgjan Kerim emphasized that climate change was not just an environmental issue; it was a sustainable development issue. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated that UN leaders would work diligently to map out an agreement by the end of 2009 to limit global greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to the impact of climate change and provide the money and technology to do so. Concluding the debate, Dr. Kerim announced that he would hold two additional meetings to consider the concerns of vulnerable countries and corporate responsibility and sustainability in more detail.

The statement of the IUCN Permanent Observer received considerable coverage in the press release issued by the United Nations at the conclusion of the meeting.