

SOS –

assessed for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species

The Save our Species (SOS) initiative launched today at the World Bank Group's 2010 Biodiversity Conference on Biological Diversity meetings is a global effort to address biodiversity loss and aims to bring together financial support from governments, conservation expertise and operation from countries

“Species extinction is a global phenomenon that will require the use of global resources to overcome,” says World Bank Group President Robert Zoellick. “Our partners from the private sector are showing a leadership in biodiversity conservation and we hope their efforts will inspire other companies,

“The emergency situation facing biodiversity calls for an emergency response. SOS seeks to do just that: bring the knowledge, expertise and funding together to address the plight of threatened wild animals and plants around the world,” says **Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Director General of IUCN**. “We know that conservation works and that we have the know-how necessary to bring wildlife back from the brink and preserve their habitats. The SOS Fund will provide the much-needed resources to make this happen.”

SOS gives the private sector a unique opportunity to become directly involved in saving the planet’s natural environment, essentially making species the ‘new currency’. Biodiversity conservation will benefit from the financial resources and ingenuity of businesses and corporations. SOS will, in turn, help the private sector meet their goals on sustainable development, satisfying the ever-increasing green needs of shareholders, customers and employees alike.

Funds have already started pouring into SOS, with the world’s leading mobile phone supplier and telecom networks provider Nokia being the first company to join SOS.

“Business has a role in safeguarding the rich variety of life on earth,” says **Kirsi Sormunen, Vice President and Head of Sustainability, Nokia**. “SOS – Save our Species, Save ourselves - is an important message to everyone, and Nokia is proud to be a part of this important initiative. We believe mobile technology can help us all to diminish our ecological footprint and play a key role in engaging people and raising awareness about biodiversity and the ecosystem that supports all life on our planet.”

“Many companies use the expensive services of celebrities to promote their brand. Many have also used nature as a marketing tool at no cost. We’re giving them an opportunity to pay back for all that nature has given them and will continue to give, while making sure that their investment has an impact,” says **Jean-Christophe Vié, Deputy Head of IUCN’s Species Programme and Manager of SOS**. “We are delighted to see the initial enthusiastic response from companies and hope that we are at the start of a major change.”

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Editor’s notes:

For more information on SOS go to www.SOSpecies.org. A brochure is available in English, French, Spanish and Japanese on request.

SOS is aiming to achieve a significant increase above existing investments in species conservation over the next five years. The initial target is \$20 million USD. Thanks to generous pledges from the Save Our Species founding partners and others we are already more than 50% of the way to achieving this goal and intend to match this amount by private sector contributions.

About IUCN

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges.

IUCN works on biodiversity, climate change, energy, human livelihoods and greening the world economy by supporting scientific research, managing field projects all over the world, and bringing governments, NGOs, the UN and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice.

IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental organization, with more than 1,000 government and NGO members and almost 11,000 volunteer experts in some 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world.

www.iucn.org

About the Global Environment Facility

The GEF unites 182 countries in partnership with international institutions, NGOs and the private sector to address global environmental issues while supporting national sustainable development initiatives. Today the GEF is the largest funder of projects to improve the global environment. An independent financial organization, the GEF provides grants for projects related to biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer, and persistent organic pollutants. Since 1991 the GEF has invested \$9 billion in grants and leveraged another \$40 billion in cofinancing for more than 2600 projects in 165 countries.

www.thegef.org

About World Bank

The World Bank's mission is to help developing countries and their people to alleviate poverty. The World Bank also addresses global challenges in ways that advance an inclusive and sustainable globalization – that overcomes poverty, enhances growth with care for the environment, and creates individual opportunity and hope. To date, the World Bank is the largest international funding source for biodiversity in developing countries.

www.worldbank.org