



Media Advisory

For immediate release

On the front line – the EU's overseas entities battle climate change and biodiversity loss

WHAT'S HAPPENING: For the first time, the EU's 28 overseas entities, ranging from islands in the tropics to the polar regions and sections of the Amazon rainforest, will get together to learn lessons and act together on climate change and species loss (Reunion Island, 7-11 July).

WHY IT'S HAPPENING: These regions are on the front line when it comes to the effects of climate change. They also boast some of the richest biodiversity in the world. New Caledonia, for example, has 2,423 endemic species while mainland France has only 353. They need to work together on adapting to the effects of climate change, conserving species and making sure the remaining natural habitats are valued and protected.

KEY ISSUES:

- **Islands:** Overseas Europe has more than 350 tropical, temperate and polar islands. Having developed in isolation they are the most productive playgrounds of evolution. But they are under threat. In the last 400 years, 75 percent of all species extinctions have been on islands.
- **Invasive species:** These remain the single biggest cause of biodiversity loss on islands. Rats introduced when islands were discovered, for example, are a major threat to many indigenous birds.
- **Climate change:** The EU's overseas entities are being first-hit by climate change. Here solutions can be found to counter climate change both in terms of adaptation policies and renewable energies.
- **Oceans :** The marine areas around the EU overseas entities are vast and host some of the most important oceanic species and resources of the planet

WHEN IT'S HAPPENING: 7-11 July 2008, Reunion Island (West Indian Ocean)

EXPECTED RESULTS: The conference will propose a new dimension in EU environmental policy, in order to enhance actions relating to climate change adaptation, sustainable energy, biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management in the EU's Overseas Entities and beyond.

HOW IT'S HAPPENING: The conference is an event of the upcoming French Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and will bring together the EU's 7 Outermost Regions and 21 Overseas Countries and Territories, as well as governments from the European Union and Small Island Developing States, international and regional organizations, research institutes, civil society and the private sector. The conference is organized by IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), the Regional Council of Reunion Island, the French Observatory for the Impacts of Global Warming (ONERC) and the French Ministry of Internal Affairs, Overseas and Territorial Collectivities.

Materials for the Media:

All related press materials for download at www.reunion2008.eu

Media contact

Wiebke Herding, IUCN Communications, m +32 (485) 424 661, wiebke.herding@iucn.org
Brian Thomson, IUCN Communications, m+41 (79) 528 3486, brian.thomson@iucn.org