



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIODIVERSITY
PROTECT BIODIVERSITY IN DRYLANDS

**22 May
2006**



ACHIEVING THE 2010 TARGET!

MESSAGE FROM DR. AHMED DJOHLAF, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, ON THE OCCASION OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS) DAY

Montreal, 8 May 2006

The 100,000 islands of the world represent more than 600 million people, one quarter of the nations of the world, 16 per cent of the planet's known plant species and more than half of the world's tropical marine biodiversity. The richness of these unique ecosystems is under attack. Thirty per cent of the world's coral reefs are severely damaged, and 60 per cent may be lost by 2030. Half of the species lost in the world have been island species. There is an urgent need to address biodiversity loss in these unique ecosystems.

This first-ever SIDS Day should be celebrated as a major contribution to the promotion of sustainable development of small island developing States, and the fostering of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. The Convention on Biological Diversity applauds this initiative, aimed at addressing the specific needs of the small island developing States.

To address the challenges facing these fragile and vulnerable ecosystems, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, at its meeting held in Curitiba, Brazil, in March of this year adopted the first-ever programme of work on island biodiversity. This unique programme will contribute to substantially reduce the loss of island biodiversity by 2010 and contribute to the poverty alleviation agenda of the international community. It will enhance the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, which identified biodiversity as a priority for the sustainable development of islands. It is therefore the first-ever global "to-do" list dedicated solely to the uniqueness and fragility of island biodiversity.

To this end, the programme of work sets out almost 50 island-specific priority actions aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of island biodiversity and will make a significant contribution to the implementation of Mauritius Strategy.

Leaders of small island developing States have decided to take action. At the largest ever ministerial meeting under the Convention, held in Curitiba in March 2006, the President of Palau, the Honourable Tommy E. Remengesau Jr., announced the "Micronesia Challenge", aimed at conserving 30 per cent of near-shore marine resources and 20 per cent of terrestrial resources by 2020. In making this announcement as part of the "Global Island Partnership", the President said: "To address the islands' unique challenges, we need a unique approach and unique response. The Micronesia Challenge is our shared response". This shared response by Micronesia should also be the shared response by the international community.

On the occasion of the first SIDS Day, I pledge, in my capacity as the newly designated Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the commitment of the Convention and its Secretariat to spare no efforts in assisting small island developing States in their efforts to protect their ecological capital for the benefit of present and future generations.



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