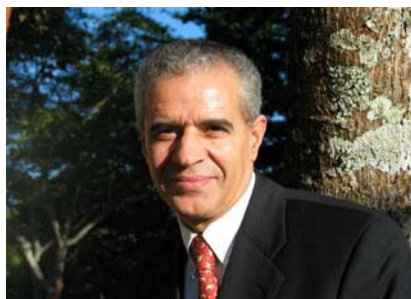




“An investment in biodiversity is also an investment in agriculture and food security”



Message of Ahmed Djoghlaf, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, on the occasion of World Food Day 2006

On behalf of the 188 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, I want to express my congratulations and best wishes to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on this year's celebration of World Food Day. As you celebrate under this year's theme of “Investing in agriculture for food security”, I want to underline that an investment in biodiversity is also an investment in agriculture and food security.

The three objectives of the Convention—conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits from its use—can serve to assist you in your efforts to help the small-scale producers of the world to earn stable livelihoods and to produce the diverse and nutritious diets that the world requires to feed itself.

The inextricable link between the maintenance of biodiversity and the achievement of food security has been repeatedly emphasized by the Parties to the Convention, most recently at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Curitiba, Brazil, in March this year. At that meeting, the Parties adopted a framework for a cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition, with the overall aim of promoting and improving the sustainable use of biodiversity in programmes contributing to food security and human nutrition, as a contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

When rural people perceive that agricultural biodiversity has greater value through positive impacts on both income and health, they are more likely to maintain and protect it. As we promote investment in new food-production systems, new models of cooperation between producers and processors and new global and local markets for agricultural produce, it is important also to promote biodiversity.

Biodiversity contributes directly to food security, nutrition and well-being by providing a variety of plant and animal foods from domesticated and wild sources. Biodiverse agricultural production systems provide income opportunities to the rural poor,

sustain productive agricultural ecosystems, and serve as a safety-net to vulnerable households during times of crisis.

The theme for World Food Day this year recognizes that there is an urgent need to invest in agriculture for food security. Investment in farming systems and technologies that contribute to the sustainable intensification of agriculture will reduce the negative impacts on biodiversity from nutrient and water use, and from land conversion. Such investments can therefore also help to achieve the target of significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010, agreed to by 110 Heads of State at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2002, and reconfirmed by 154 Heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit in New York in 2005.

We need to act together to protect the biodiversity that underpins the ecosystem services essential for food security. . It is for this reason that the Convention on Biological Diversity will celebrate its 2008 International Biodiversity Day under the theme agro-biodiversity. I am very grateful to Mr. Jacques Diouf, the Director General of FAO, for having accepted to join forces for the celebration of this major event. I call upon all citizens of the world to join with FAO and the Convention—invest in biodiversity and you are investing in the future of life on Earth.