



Secretariat of the
Convention on Biological Diversity



STATEMENT BY AHMED DJOGHLAF

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

at the

OPENING SESSION

of the

**EXPERT MEETING ON MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY IN
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you here in Montreal for the first meeting on Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Development Cooperation organized by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

It will be the first time in the history of the Secretariat that more than 25 development cooperation agencies, development banks, United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations involved in development will be gathered in the same room, here at Joke Waller Hunter Conference Room of the Secretariat, to exchange their views on how to better integrate biodiversity into the development agenda.

Let me therefore convey to you on behalf of my colleagues in the Secretariat my deepest gratitude for accepting to be with us this morning and sharing your valuable expertise with a view of assisting the 191 Parties in mainstreaming biodiversity into the development sector.

Today's meeting is the culmination of an effort that started in Paris in September 2006 at the Conference on Biodiversity in European Development Cooperation. As a result, the French Government decided to second to the Secretariat a staff member on biodiversity for development. This was followed in June 2007 by the decision of German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation to second a GTZ staff member to the Secretariat for a period of two years to work on the subject of biodiversity for poverty alleviation.

One year ago at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the parties held in Bonn, the United Nations Development Programme decided to join forces and second another staff member. Let me therefore pay tribute to the Governments of France and Germany and the United Nations Development Programme for their generous and decisive contribution.

Let me also convey to Mr. Eric Belvaux, Mr. Alberto Vega and Ms. Linda Ghanime my gratitude for their contribution as seconded staff members for advancing the implementation of the development agenda of the Convention.

It should be recalled that in its contribution to the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological stated that:

“The most important lesson of the last ten years is that the objectives of the Convention will be impossible to meet until consideration of biodiversity is fully integrated into other sectors. The need to mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources across all sectors of the national economy, the society and the policy-making framework is a complex challenge at the heart of the Convention”.

Indeed, the three objectives of the Convention will remain unfulfilled without the effective implementation of Article 6, on general measures for conservation and sustainable use, including the commitment by Parties to “integrate, as far as possible and as appropriate, the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies”.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment demonstrated that the continuous decrease in biological diversity is endangering the services provided to human kind. Never in the history of humankind has environmental destruction, including the loss of biodiversity, occurred at the rate we have witnessed in the last 50 years.

The UNEP Global Environment Outlook highlighted that:

“As human well-being declines, the options available to people that allow them to regulate their use of natural resources at sustainable levels

declines as well. This in turn increases pressure on ecosystem services and can create a downward spiral of increasing poverty and further degradation of ecosystem services.”

The impact of the continued and unprecedented loss of biodiversity will have far-reaching implications for all segments of society, but it will be the poor that will suffer the most. The value of these natural resources is significantly more for the poor as more than 1.6 billion people depend on forests and forest products for their livelihood, while more than 3 billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity. And yet, more than 13.2 million hectares of forests are lost annually and some predict that fish may disappear from the oceans by middle of this century. Almost 30 million people engaged in small-scale fisheries in the developing world are dependent on coral reefs for their food and livelihoods, but 60 per cent of those reefs could be lost in the next twenty years.

Meeting these unprecedented challenges requires enhanced and concerted efforts at all levels for the effective implementation of the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It calls on the international community to redouble its efforts to achieve the Johannesburg commitments of 110 Heads of State and Government aimed at substantially reducing the loss of biodiversity and adopting an international regime on access to genetic resources and the equitable sharing of the benefits from their utilization. As a result and in response to the recommendation of the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting, held in Kuala Lumpur in February 2004, the Secretary-General has decided to include the 2010 biodiversity target as part of goal 7, on environmental sustainability, of the Millennium Development Goals.

The 4,000 participants attending the Bonn Biodiversity Summit held in May last year adopted a series of measures highlighting the need to better integrate biodiversity considerations in the development cooperation activities and the role donors need to play in this regard. A high-level panel on biodiversity for development and poverty alleviation was convened prior to the high-level segment, held with the participation of Heads of State and Government.

In particular, in its decision IX/8, on the review of implementation of goals 2 and 3 of the Strategic Plan, the Conference of the Parties invited all bilateral and multilateral development cooperation agencies to promote mainstreaming of the environment, including biodiversity, into development cooperation.

Similarly, goal 5 of the strategy for resource mobilization in support of the objectives of the Convention, which was adopted by the Conference of the Parties in its decision IX/11 B, is to: “Mainstream biological diversity and its associated ecosystem services in development cooperation plans and priorities including the linkage between Convention’s work programmes and Millennium Development Goals”.

The strategic objectives agreed by the Parties under this goal include:

- “(i) To integrate considerations on biological diversity and its associated ecosystem services into the priorities, strategies and programs of multilateral and bilateral donor organizations, including sectoral and regional priorities, taking into account the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness;
- (ii) To integrate considerations on biological diversity and its associated ecosystem services in economic and development plans, strategies and budgets of developing country Parties; and

(iii) To integrate effectively the three objectives of the Convention into the United Nations development system, as well as international financial institutions and development banks”.

A revised Strategic Plan of the Convention is expected to be adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to be held in Nagoya, Japan, from 19 to 29 October 2010. It will be preceded on 20 September 2010 by a high-level meeting during the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly with the participation of Heads of State and Government.

The Nagoya Biodiversity Summit will coincide with the International Year of Biodiversity. In addition, on 22 May 2010, the International Day for Biological Diversity will be celebrated under the theme “Biodiversity for development and poverty alleviation” as a contribution to the ten-year review of the Millennium Development Goals by the United Nations General Assembly. The current meeting offers a unique opportunity to forge a vibrant partnership between the Secretariat and your organizations and to agree on a common road-map toward the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit, which I hope will be held with the active participation of the heads of your respective agencies.

I look forward to seeing you next Friday at the closure of your meeting to finalize our joint road map to Nagoya and beyond.

Thank you for your kind attention