



Secretariat of the
Convention on Biological Diversity



STATEMENT BY AHMED DJOGHLAF

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

at the

CLOSING SESSION

of the

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

Montreal, 15 May 2009

Please check against delivery



United Nations
Environment Programme

413 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 800
Montreal, QC H2Y 1N9, Canada

Tel : +1 514 288 2220
Fax : +1 514 288 6588

<http://www.cbd.int>
secretariat@cbd.int

Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me tell you how happy I am and how privileged I feel to be with you when you are about to close your meeting. This has been indeed a fantastic achievement and the culmination of a process which started in Paris in September 2006 at the meeting on “Biodiversity and the European Cooperation agencies”. What was just an idea, a dream at that time, has now thanks to all of you become a reality. I would like therefore to convey to all of you as representatives of your respective agencies that contributed to transforming this dream into reality, my gratitude and say simply but sincerely, “Thank you”.

The past two and a half days have seen very positive and spirited discussions. I am very happy to see that 45 participants including development cooperation agencies, development banks, United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations involved in development are gathered in the same room in the final last hours of this workshop. I am very grateful to the 12 bilateral donor agency and the 11 multilateral donors agencies represented today for their active engagement. I am also grateful to the six resources persons from the South and the three other representatives of international organizations for their valuable inputs. My gratitude goes also to our partners from the civil society of Montreal and, in particular, the representatives of the consortium of scientific institutions established by the Secretariat, for their participation.

Your contributions were very valuable. If we sometimes hear talk of mainstreaming overload or fatigue, it was clear from your presentations that you are working to overcome this by reinstating the important correlation between biodiversity and development objectives.

In this context, practical examples on the ground are a strong reminder of this and it was good to have participants from developing countries highlighting the ground realities. Therefore, your support for creating enabling conditions for increasing the interest in such mainstreaming is valuable. Clearly, from my viewpoint, there seems to be a certain “mainstreaming enthusiasm” in the room!

I appreciated the key recommendations from this group and fully agree that biodiversity as natural capital can be highlighted by the examples from local level by showing the local benefits and by building such evidence through the involvement of local and indigenous communities.

Of special interest to me is the fact that mainstreaming appears to be a question of institutional culture. The broad use of strategic environmental assessment (SEA) in donor processes is a case in point. And this is where your work seems to be leading on common ground and on ways for moving forward.

I recognize that as a group we are in possession of excellent tools for biodiversity mainstreaming in development cooperation. Among those around which a consensus arises is SEA and environmental impact assessment (EIA). As such, biodiversity-inclusive impact assessment appears to be an important approach to focus the use of SEA on biodiversity concerns. SEA appears to be used more and more. That same observation applies for economic evaluation tools which will get further highlighted through the TEEB report.

I believe that you are happy to see SEA being used increasingly at the national level as well. Your agencies are best placed to promote a systematic and coherent use of SEAs across sectors, including with ministries of partners countries.

You are aware that EIA has been formalized as an approach for biodiversity protection and sustainable use by the Conference of the Parties. Here, national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) also have the potential to become good tools for spatial approaches and I believe they have the potential to start viewing biodiversity through the development lens or poverty “lens” instead of the other way around. This should help catalyse your mainstreaming efforts.

An important hindrance appears to be that development practitioners are often limited in time and resources to work effectively with other sectors. Another point constantly highlighted is the lack of indicators to assess the effectiveness of biodiversity-related projects.

That is why the environment and development community need to strengthen each other and I am pleased to see that you plan to continue your interaction building on the momentum of the last two days. Issues tackled are complex; and two-three days are clearly not enough to lay down the various means to integrate biodiversity considerations at the various levels of development work.

Your network, should sustain in time. To follow-up on your needs for future collaboration and exchange of information, the SCBD will be glad to continue supporting you. Through this network we all should be able to stretch the impact of our limited human and financial resources. From the secretariat we would be happy to share the tool-kits that you have developed for mainstreaming biodiversity in to development and identify the gaps where the secretariat can develop the toolkits with your input and collaboration.

We are also working on several documents including a CBD Technical Series titled “Interdependence between Biodiversity and Development” as well as the mainstreaming source-book jointly with UNDP.

Considering that enhancing communication strategies on biodiversity related issues to provide relevant ministerial briefings is extremely important I invite all of you initiate activities for the International Year of Biodiversity and we will be happy to guide you in that process.

We will also be launching a new section of the “Biodiversity for Development” linked with the International Year of Biodiversity on the Secretariat’s website. At an initial stage, I believe this will be the ideal podium to exchange information. The many tools and case studies discussed during the meeting will be placed online over the course of the next weeks. Sharing the tools will allow us to identify possible gaps in knowledge and to work in collaboration to fill these gaps.

I would like in closing to convey to each of you my gratitude for accepting to contribute to the First forum on biodiversity for development and poverty alleviation” to be convened at the level of head of agencies in Nagoya, in October 2010 in conjunction with the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. Next week I will be in Tokyo for the celebration of the International Day for Biological Diversity and will discuss this initiative with the Ministry of the Environment of Japan and look forward on the support of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in that regard. Such a forum offers a unique opportunity to forge a strategic partnership between the Convention and your organisations.

We in Secretariat look very much forward to your active participation and contribution to next year’s celebration on 22 May 2010 of the International Day for Biological Diversity under the theme “Biodiversity for development and poverty alleviation”. We also look forward to your active contribution to the discussion on this issue at the high level meeting during the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 20 September 2010 at the level of Heads of State and Government as a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity.
