



Convention on
Biological Diversity

INTERNATIONAL YEAR
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MESSAGE FROM AHMED DJOGHLAF,
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
on the occasion of
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2011

**“Equal access to education, training and science and technology:
pathway to decent work for women.”**
8 March 2011

Last year, the world celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, an agenda for women's empowerment. The goal is to accelerate the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and to remove all the obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making.

This year, as we mark the Global Centenary of International Women's Day, we focus on the need to ensure equality of access in education and training for women. Through this, the participation of women as full members of the workforce will take humanity to this state of equality.

Through the Gender Action Plan adopted by the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as through other recent decisions of its 193 Parties, the Convention on Biological Diversity is contributing to this way forward.

In the environmental arena, the importance of gender mainstreaming in environmental and poverty-eradication policies has been recognized in a wide range of global agreements and forums. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is strongly committed to recognizing and promoting the integral yet distinct roles that women and men play in conserving, celebrating and sharing biodiversity. In this regard, the Secretariat of the CBD is stimulating and facilitating efforts at national, regional, and global levels to promote gender equality in the implementation of the Convention.

At its tenth meeting, held last October in Nagoya, the Conference of the Parties adopted a new protocol to the Convention—the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization. The preamble to this Nagoya Protocol recognizes “the vital role that women play in access and benefit-sharing and affirm[s] the need for the full participation of women at all levels of policy-making and implementation for biodiversity conservation”. A number of articles in the Nagoya Protocol also make reference to women, particularly in the context of indigenous and local communities. An Intergovernmental



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Committee for the Nagoya Protocol will meet twice in the period 2011-2012 to undertake preparations for the first meeting of the Parties to the Protocol. The work plan for the Intergovernmental Committee includes consideration of capacity-building and guidance to the financial mechanism—two of the articles in the Nagoya Protocol which contain specific references to women.

At the same meeting, the Conference of the Parties, through its decision X/19: (i) emphasized the importance of gender mainstreaming in all programmes of work under the Convention in order to achieve the objectives of the Convention and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The Strategic Plan itself calls for the full participation of women amongst others with regards to implementation, monitoring, review and evaluation, the broadening of political support, capacity building for effective national action and support mechanisms for research, monitoring and assessment.

In addition, many other decisions from the meeting call for the mainstreaming of gender and/or the full participation of women—a total of 25 out of 47 decisions, including its decision on technology transfer and cooperation. Many of these decisions emphasized the need to have the full and active participation of women in training, capacity-development and technology transfer activities.

Efforts have also been made to ensure that women are active in the discussions that lead to these decisions. To that end, the Secretariat has funded over 1,258 women to attend meetings under the Convention, including scientific and technical meetings.

As the world celebrates this year's International Women's Day under the theme "Equal access to education, training and science and technology: pathway to decent work for women," we at the Convention Secretariat are proud to be doing our part in ensuring that this goal will be met and that all citizens of the planet, without exception, can participate in the education and training that will lead to a sustainable future.

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