



# Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



## **MESSAGE FROM DR. AHMED DJOGLAF, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, TO THE 24<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

154 Heads of State and Governments attending the 2005 Review Summit of the United Nations General Assembly reaffirmed their commitment to achieving the 2010 biodiversity target to significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss, first adopted by the 2002 Johannesburg Summit. This commitment was made in recognition of the value of biodiversity and with the understanding that there are many challenges to overcome. The recently released second Global Biodiversity Outlook confirmed the findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment underlining the magnitude of the biodiversity challenge facing mankind: biodiversity continues to be lost at all levels, and the provision of most ecosystem services are in decline. This poses a significant barrier to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Global Biodiversity Outlook has confirmed that climate change is one of the principal drivers of biodiversity loss and that the impacts of climate change on biodiversity are already discernable. Ecosystem health and services are being seriously eroded by global climate changes including extreme weather events. Climate change impacts on coral bleaching and reductions in arctic ice also present clear threats to biodiversity. At the same time, biodiversity is essential for the absorption, in terrestrial and ocean ecosystems, of 60% of the carbon currently emitted into the atmosphere as a result of human activities.

While climate change mitigation activities are necessary, urgent action is also needed to address existing impacts. Biodiversity resources can be used to strengthen adaptation through, for example, land restoration and the development of resistant crops and forage. For this reason, the work this meeting is undergoing to finalize the five-year programme of work on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change is important not only for the climate change convention, but for the other Rio Conventions as well as the other biodiversity-related conventions.

Last year, with the support of Finland, an expert group was established to examine the linkages between biodiversity and adaptation to climate change. The group carried out its work with the involvement of experts from the climate change convention and I would like to express my gratitude for the important contributions made. The report of the expert group is being launched during your meeting in Bonn as CBD Technical Series No. 25. It concludes that national policies, programmes and plans for adaptation should take biodiversity considerations into account and that maintaining biodiversity should be part of all of these activities so as to allow ecosystems to continue providing goods and services; in other words, to enhance their resilience in the face of climate change. I hope that you will be able to draw upon the various findings of the report as you develop and implement the five-year programme of work.

The eight meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), held in March this year in Curitiba, Brazil, with the participation of more than 4000 delegates and 122 Ministers and other heads of delegations, adopted a decision

to promote synergy between climate change and biodiversity objectives. The COP also mandated its secretariat to consider options for actions that are mutually supportive of the objectives of our two Conventions, as well as the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). In this respect the possibility of a multi-year joint programme between the three Rio Conventions on adaptation to climate change may be explored.

Another important issue on your agenda relates to reducing emissions from deforestation. The Curitiba COP welcomed your decisions to consider these issues in detail. It is therefore also important to recognize the opportunity for mutually supportive activities to avoid deforestation in order to achieve the objectives of our two conventions including the 2010 biodiversity targets.

Finally, I am pleased that you will be considering the options for enhanced cooperation between the CBD, the UNFCCC and the UNCCD that were identified by the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio conventions, at its fifth meeting in January 2004. Synergy among the Rio conventions was also addressed at the Curitiba COP and copy of the decision is before you. In December last year, in Montreal, the joint meeting of the scientific subsidiary bodies of our two conventions, at the margins of your Conference of the Parties, was a major step in the right direction. I can assure you that in my capacity as the new Executive Secretary of your sister convention, I shall spare no efforts in promoting the collaboration and synergies of our two mutually supportive processes through implementing the decisions of the Parties of relevance to our respective mandates.

I wish you a very successful meeting.

Ahmed Djoghlaif  
Executive Secretary