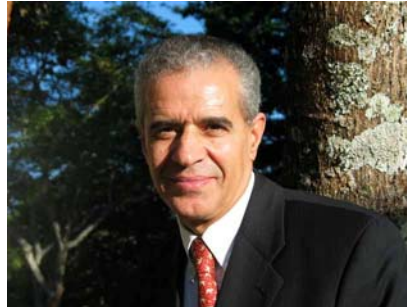




**MESSAGE OF DR. AHMED DJOGLAF,
THE NEW EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY,
TO THE WOMEN OF THE WORLD**



As a major stakeholder in the Convention on Biological Diversity, women have a special relation with nature in general and biodiversity in particular. In the majority of countries, the survival of women, their well-being and empowerment depend on biodiversity. For women in developing countries, in particular in the least developed countries, biodiversity is vital for their survival and the survival of their families. Biodiversity is also part and parcel of their belief system and their cultural and spiritual values. It is for these reasons that the preamble of the Convention on Biological Diversity recognizes “the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity” and affirms “the need for the full participation of women at all levels of policymaking and implementation for biological diversity conservation”.

Strategic Objective K.1 of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action calls on Governments to “encourage, subject to national legislation and consistent with the Convention on Biological Diversity, the effective protection and use of knowledge, innovations and practices of women of indigenous and local communities, including practices relating to traditional medicines, biodiversity and indigenous technologies, and endeavour to ensure that these are respected, maintained, promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge”. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development notes the need to “encourage and enable all stakeholders to contribute to the implementation of the objectives of the Convention and, in particular, recognize the specific role of youth, women and indigenous and local communities in conserving and using biodiversity in a sustainable way”.

Women are the most important links in the maintenance and development of indigenous knowledge systems. The workshop on indigenous women and biodiversity organized in Nairobi prior to the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, held in Nairobi in May 2000 noted that “We live in a world where women’s voices are often marginalized. This is especially true with respect to indigenous women’s knowledge about conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. We advise the Conference of the Parties to ensure the full, active and equal



participation of women, especially from indigenous and local communities, within all elements in its programme of work. Despite the fact that indigenous women play a vital role in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, they have not been fully engaged in the Convention processes.”

Therefore, the 2010 biodiversity target will not be achieved without the active involvement of women. Today at the occasion of the International Women’s Day, I pledge, in my capacity as the new Executive Secretary of your Convention, my full commitment to establishing a vibrant partnership with the women of the world and their national, regional, national and local organizations. To this end, a dedicated staff member within the Secretariat of the Convention, Ms Sofia Gutierrez has been designated as your focal point. I would like to invite your representatives to attend the eight meeting of the Conference of the Parties to be held in Curitiba, Brazil, from 20 to 31 March 2006 to discuss the modalities of our enhanced partnership for the achievement of the 2010 target and the successful implementation of your Convention.

Montreal, 8th March 2006