



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

22 May 2007
International Day for Biological Diversity



Biodiversity and Climate Change

13th GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARIANS' CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Message to Parliamentarians from Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On the occasion of the 13th General Assembly of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentarians' Conference on Environment and Development, I am pleased to offer my full support to the Conference and its important objectives, such as promoting awareness and understanding among Parliamentarians regarding sustainable development issues, promoting cooperation between countries, encouraging the refinement of environmental policies and laws, and discussing as well as producing workable solutions to common environmental problems. This year's main theme, Water Conservation and Sustainable Development, is extremely relevant and I wish you fruitful discussions on the three important themes: water conservation and management practices, water and environmental security, and trans-boundary water issues.

Born at the Rio Summit in 1992, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) entered into force in 1993 and is now ratified by 190 Parties. The CBD provides a framework to assist Parties in the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention, which are the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. In 2002, during the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, the World Leaders adopted the 2010 target which aims to significantly reduce the rate of loss of biodiversity at the global, regional and national scale, as a contribution to the reduction of poverty and to the benefit of all life on Earth. In March 2006, during the eighth Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Curitiba, Brazil, Parties agreed on the necessity to accelerate the efforts towards the achievement of this objective. A new era was born, which translates the objectives of the CBD into reality through an enhanced phase of implementation. This requires the engagement of all stakeholders, including Parliament and Parliamentarians.



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Being at the interface of Government, public policy formulation and the general public, Parliament and Parliamentarians are in a preeminent position to increase the visibility of biodiversity and raise awareness of the consequences of biodiversity loss. As legislators, monitors of government policy and guardians of the public's will and conscience, Parliamentarians can play an important role in promoting the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity, especially through the implementation of Convention at the national level. Parliamentarians can work to ensure that Parties take the necessary legislative, administrative and/or policy actions needed to honor the legal obligations of the Convention. With regard to the 2010 biodiversity target, Parliamentarians can promote establishment of national targets for 2010 and beyond, and ensure that the necessary policies and programmes are in place, and that the required budgetary resources are made available, to achieve these targets.

Biodiversity provides goods and services that are essential to our survival. Moreover, several of its components are at the core of many industries while also providing a range of non-material benefits as a result of spiritual, aesthetic, recreational and cultural value. The CBD acknowledges the importance of inland waters biodiversity as well as marine and coastal biodiversity as they constitute two thematic areas of the Convention. Biodiversity of inland waters is an important source of food, income and livelihood, particularly in rural areas in developing countries. The Convention's inland waters programme promotes the ecosystem approach, including integrated watershed management, as the best way to reconcile competing demands for dwindling supplies of inland waters. The programme of work on marine and coastal biodiversity identifies key operational objectives and priority activities within the five key programme elements, namely: implementation of integrated marine and coastal area management, marine and coastal living resources, marine and coastal protected areas, mariculture and alien species and genotypes.

As oceans cover more than 70% of our planet, and freshwater is absolutely crucial to the survival of humans, I wish to call upon all Parliamentarians to join the global efforts to protect the environment and to support concrete national policy and legislative measures and mobilizing their constituents in conservation and sustainable use activities at the local level. Your participation to the global initiative is essential to ensure its success.

I would like to offer my best wishes to the Conference and reiterate my full support to the active involvement of Parliamentarians in initiatives related to water conservation and sustainable development.

Thank you for your kind attention.