



CBD

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

MESSAGE

from

Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary
On the Occasion of World Water Day, 22 March, 2007

22 May 2007
International Day for Biological Diversity



Biodiversity and Climate Change

Human activities have taken an enormous toll on global freshwater resources. The stresses we have placed upon fresh waters have resulted in them being in the poorest condition of all ecosystems. The second edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook produced by the Secretariat of the Convention confirms that the rate of biodiversity loss in freshwater ecosystems is the fastest of all biomes. Yet, a vital range of goods and services, essential for sustaining and improving human well-being, are provided by freshwater ecosystems. As biodiversity is lost, so are its benefits. Water, development and biodiversity are intrinsically linked. The World Summit on Sustainable Development recognized the Convention on Biological Diversity as a tool for the achievement of sustainable human development targets. Many of the Millennium Development Goals and their targets also rely upon achieving the sustainable use of water. Progress towards the 2010 biodiversity target therefore reflects our resolve and ability to achieve these broader goals.

The focus of this year's World Water Day celebration, "*Coping with Water Scarcity*" is a warning that, not only are human demands on water escalating, but it is clear that the major impacts of climate change will be felt through water. The global biodiversity community is actively engaged in preparing the celebration on 22 May of the International Day for Biological Diversity under the theme "*Biodiversity and climate change*," which will, among other things, highlight the importance of water-biodiversity interactions.

We have choices. Historically, water management practice has regarded nature as the adversary and engineered itself against it—often with catastrophic results. We must begin to plan with nature on our side. Biodiversity must cease to be victim of our mismanagement, and become our ally in managing better.

At the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Curitiba, Brazil, from 20 to 31 March 2006, the countries of the world established a process to improve the delivery of our message on water to the many stakeholders to get them fully involved in the implementation of the Convention, and to report on progress towards common goals.

On this World Water Day, I commit to the Secretary-General's call on the United Nations system and all stakeholders to forge stronger partnerships and take more concerted action, not only this year, but throughout the entire International Decade for Action "Water for Life", 2005-2015.