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# Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

22 May 2007  
International Day for Biological Diversity



Biodiversity and Climate Change

## STATEMENT

by

**DR. AHMED DJOGHLAF**

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY THE CONVENTION ON  
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

at

**THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT**

**OF THE THIRTEENTH SESSION OF**

**THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNITED  
NATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR THE CONVENTION ON  
CLIMATE CHANGE**

*Bali, Indonesia, 12 December 2007*

*Please check against delivery*



United Nations  
Environment Programme

413 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 800  
Montreal, QC H2Y 1N9, Canada

Tel.: +1 514 288 2220  
Fax : +1 514 288 6588

<http://www.cbd.int>  
[secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int)

Mr. President,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since the last session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, two authoritative environmental reports have been released: the fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the fourth edition of the Global Environment Outlook. The verdict is unanimous: climate change and the loss of biodiversity and associated ecosystem services continue to be major global threats to future development.

These threats are a result of human activity, and we must do something to repair the damage. As Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland has said, “The time for diagnosis is over and the time for action is now”.

The facts and figures show why action is needed now:

- As a result of climate change:
  - In sub-Saharan Africa, between 25 and 40 per cent of mammals in national parks will become endangered;
  - In Asia, up to 88 per cent of reefs may be lost over the next 30 years;
  - In the Amazon basin, more than 40 per cent of plant species studied could face extinction;
  - In Indonesia, iconic species such as the orang-utan could suffer as result of the projected increases in forest fires;
  - In Java, sea-level rise may destroy vast tracts of the coastal ecosystem;
  - Again in Indonesia, the chance of a 30-day delay in the onset of monsoon rains is expected to increase by as much as 40 per cent by 2050.

Planners are already mobilizing biodiversity resources in an effort to adapt to the potentially disastrous impacts of climate change on food security, livelihoods and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Or perhaps we need a reminder to sharpen our focus. Professor Salim, former Minister of Environment of Indonesia, once stated:

“The most dramatic is the impact of climate change. When I went to small island developing States, the people told me, ‘we are sinking, please!’ For them, environment is the survival.”

This is valid today not only for fragile ecosystems but for the planet as a whole. Regardless of what we need to incite renewed action, three things are clear:

- To quote United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, “the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is an essential element of any strategy to adapt to climate change”;
- Action is not possible without synergistic action and cooperation between all stakeholders;

- Increased public awareness of climate change and biodiversity issues are key to engendering change.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has reminded us of our commitment during this year's celebration of the International Day for Biodiversity, stating that:

“Through the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the international community is committed to conserving biodiversity and combating climate change. The global response to these challenges needs to move much more rapidly and with more determination at all levels-global, national and local”

Through a landmark decision at their eighth meeting, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity recognized the importance of synergies toward the implementation of the Nairobi work programme, while noting that ecosystem restoration and avoided deforestation can be employed as critical mitigation tools which also provide co-benefits for biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods.

The same message is contained in the declaration before you, adopted by the fifth Trondheim International Conference on Biodiversity, Ecosystems and People.

Biodiversity has a role to play in future actions on climate change. Deforestation, including on forested peatlands, is estimated to account for between 18 and 25 per cent of all carbon emissions. Conserving forest biodiversity, through the implementation of the forest biodiversity programme of work under the Convention on Biological Diversity can therefore significantly contribute to the aims and objectives of the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

I am pleased to announce that Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity recently welcomed the Global Assessment on Peatlands, Biodiversity and Climate Change. This report draws a direct link between biodiversity and climate change for sustainable development in an ecosystem which, while covering only 3 per cent of the global land area, including 22 million hectares in Indonesia, contains twice as much carbon as all of the worlds forests combined.

The assessment was prepared by a multi-disciplinary team of peatland, biodiversity and climate-change specialists. It brought together the best available scientific information on the nature and value of peatlands in relation to biodiversity and climate change, the impact of human activities on peatlands and the potential sustainable management options.

The findings of the assessment call for a number of future considerations of relevance to all three Rio conventions:

- The need for protection of intact peatlands and the restoration of degraded areas;
- The need for improved land-use practices in all peatlands; and
- The need for enhanced awareness of the importance of these unique ecosystems.

Negotiating a successful regime beyond 2012 is a critical next step to ensure that we continue to mobilize expertise and resources towards combating climate change and ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. At the same time, biodiversity resources will have to be mobilized if mitigation and adaptation action beyond 2012 is to be effective.

The Rio conventions were adopted to help countries achieve sustainable development. We have not yet fulfilled our mandate, but we are moving in the right direction. The enhanced phase of implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the successful negotiation of a post-2012 climate change regime will go hand in hand.

Agreeing to actions beyond 2012 is in the best interest of all life on Earth. I therefore congratulate all participants on the progress that has been made so far towards building agreement on the key areas that will be covered by a new climate-change agreement. I am pleased to pledge the support of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to enhance your efforts along the timeline and through the organizational arrangements you will establish through continued and strengthened collaboration between our two conventions.

I thank you for your attention.