



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



**Statement on behalf of the Executive Secretary
Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif
on the occasion of the
International Model Forest Network Global Forum
Hinton, Alberta, Canada, 16 - 21 June 2008**

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to convey my greetings to the distinguished participants of this meeting of the International Model Forest Network Global Forum 2008.

Forests are at the heart of some of the most pressing environmental challenges of our time, and they must be part of the solution. Last month in Bonn, Germany, over 5000 participants gathered for the ninth Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The 191 Parties to the CBD reviewed the Programme of Work on Forest Biodiversity, which was adopted in 2002, and they concluded that efforts for the conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity must be increased considerably, if we are to achieve the 2010 target to substantially reduce the rate of biodiversity loss. In particular, threats to forest biodiversity arising from illegal land conversion, forest fires, habitat fragmentation, and invasive alien species should be more fervently addressed. Sustainable management and the ecosystem approach are cornerstones of these efforts.

The CBD Programme of Work on Forest Biodiversity also stresses the importance of demonstration sites for the promotion of sustainable forest management. The International Model Forest Network (IMFN) provides us with snapshots of the ideal to which sustainable forest management aspires. In this respect, the activities of the IMFN are exemplary for the achievement of the three objectives of the CBD: the conservation of biodiversity, its sustainable use, and the fair and equitable sharing of its benefits.

I hope that we can further enhance the cooperation between the IMFN and the CBD in the run up to the 2010 biodiversity target. In particular, I could envisage two areas for enhanced collaboration between the IMFN and the CBD in the near future:

- Between now and the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) in 2010 in Nagoya, Japan, the CBD Secretariat will focus on regional capacity building activities to support the implementation of the Programme of Work on Forest Biodiversity. The sites of the IMFN would be ideal destinations for field trips in connection with these activities;



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- The IMFN generates a wealth of information about local progress towards the 2010 biodiversity target. I would like to encourage you to collect concrete success stories about the 2010 biodiversity target from the IMFN sites, and submit this information to the CBD Secretariat, for inclusion in our Clearing House Mechanism (CHM), and the upcoming third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-3), as well as for the reporting on the 2010 biodiversity target to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and the CBD Conference of the Parties.

There are undoubtedly other areas of common interest, and I am looking forward to exploring opportunities for collaboration with the IMFN Secretariat and its partners. Indeed, strengthened partnerships and success stories will give us all the more to celebrate during the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010.

I invite the Secretariat and the partners of the International Model Forest Network to work together with the CBD Secretariat to further develop and share the knowledge about the importance of forest biodiversity for human well-being.

In this spirit, I wish your meeting every success.
