

**MESSAGE FROM AHMED DJOGLAF, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, ON THE OCCASION OF
PLANT CONSERVATION DAY 2010**

Every year since it was first celebrated in 2001, Plant Conservation Day has been an important opportunity to raise awareness about the need to preserve the diversity of plant life on Earth. In addition to the small number of crop plants used for basic food and fibres, many thousands of wild plants have great economic and cultural importance, providing food, medicine, fuel, clothing and shelter for vast numbers of people throughout the world. Plants also are central to maintaining ecosystem stability, and play a key role in supporting animal life.

That is why in 2002 the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. Its long-term objective is to stop the ongoing loss of plant diversity. At the same time it strives to incorporate sustainable use and benefit-sharing into plant conservation while contributing to poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

I would like to thank everyone involved in the implementation of this key tool for rallying actors in plant conservation. The Strategy has thus far garnered the support of a wide range of organizations and institutions – governments, intergovernmental organizations, conservation and research organizations (including protected-area management boards, botanic gardens, and gene banks), universities, research institutes, nongovernmental organizations and their networks, and the private sector. I would also like to announce that the Convention is in the process of developing a Global Strategy for Plant Conservation toolkit, which will go a long way toward facilitating the implementation of this important initiative.

Let me also encourage Parties that have not yet nominated their focal points to do so. During this 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, it is important that we give our full support to the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. The broad-scale engagement it has stimulated to date will make it an essential component of the Convention's 2011-2020 strategic plan, to be finalized this October at our tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Nagoya, Japan. It also makes it central to the celebrations of the International Year of Biodiversity, including the 65th session of the United Nations General Assembly this September in New York, which for the first time ever will convene a high-level segment on biodiversity.

No long-term effort to save life on Earth can be successful if it does not have the preservation of plant life at its core.
