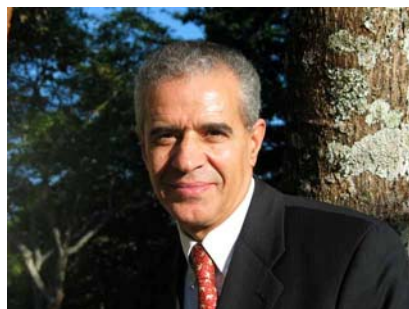


**MESSAGE OF DR. AHMED DJOGLAF,
THE NEW EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY,
TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES OF THE WORLD**



Biodiversity is first and foremost a local issue, for it is through our daily activities that we impact biodiversity. We depend on healthy, diverse ecosystems for essential services, including food, clean water and air, climate regulation and security, and it is at the local level that we, as producers and consumers, can take direct actions to maintain those ecosystems. Local authorities are the guardians of environmental resources and the government representatives closest to the people. As land-use planners, policy-makers, and developers and managers of local infrastructure, you have a critical role to play in promoting sustainable development and its biodiversity component, while as community leaders, you have a responsibility to raise public awareness about the importance of biodiversity.

In adopting Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, 101 Heads of State and Government recognized local authorities as key actors in sustainable development and called for the establishment of Local Agenda 21 campaigns. Since then, thousands of campaigns have been developed, thereby providing local authorities with the opportunity to integrate biodiversity into local planning processes.

At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, 110 Heads of State and Government adopted the target to achieve, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss at all levels. In order to achieve this target, Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity are embarking on a new and exciting phase in the history of the Convention aimed at translating policy into action. The success of this phase depends on the involvement in the implementation of the Convention of all stakeholders at all levels. As community leaders and stewards of natural resources, I call on you to renew your commitment to, and enhance your engagement in, the implementation of the Convention – the Convention for all life on earth. I call on you to work within your communities, with other communities and with other levels of government to protect the interests of the communities you represent – the communities that live with, depend on and impact biodiversity.



As the new Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, I would like to express my full commitment to establishing strong and vibrant partnerships with your representative organizations. To facilitate this, I have designated a Secretariat staff member as the focal point for local authorities. I look forward to meeting with your representative organizations, both at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Curitiba, Brazil, 20-31 March 2006) and beyond, to establish and strengthen partnerships for 2010. Only with local action will we achieve the 2010 target.

Montreal, 20 March 2006