



Achieving the
2010
Biodiversity
Target

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



CBD

Statement by

Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif

**Executive Secretary
Convention on Biological Diversity**

to the

**17th Meeting of the Secretariat of the
Pacific Environment Programme**

**Noumea, New Caledonia
11 to 15 September 2006**



UNEP

United Nations
Environment Programme

413, rue Saint-Jacques Ouest, Suite 800
Montréal, Québec, Canada H2Y 1N9

Tel.: +1.514.288.2220
Fax: +1.514.288.6588

www.biodiv.org
secretariat@biodiv.org

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me immense pleasure to address this 17th Meeting of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme. The stakes are high for the Pacific Region, and you have an important task before you.

The Pacific region and its islands are faced with a responsibility beyond their usual means. You are the guardians of the world's largest ocean and its critical living resources, yet the means at your disposal and the geographical circumstances of the region make it especially challenging to bear this responsibility. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, sixty-five percent of your land area is still forested, but demands on fuel, subsistence agriculture, and timber harvesting are stronger than ever. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment tells us that your islands contain a fifth of the world's marine biodiversity hotspots, and that your coral reefs may well be the world's last guarantee that these ecosystems will survive for the next generation. Your ecosystems are increasingly threatened by invasive alien species that come with trade and that have competitive advantages due to pollution and environmental degradation.

You have already made headlines and demonstrated leadership and innovation in proposing the Micronesia Challenge and the Phoenix Islands Protected Area to the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, or COP-8, held earlier this year in Curitiba, Brazil. A few months later, the US government also took the lead in proclaiming the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument and protecting around 70% of the country's coral reefs. This has, in turn, encouraged other parties to take on similar challenges. With your support, we have more protected areas that are better protected now – but endemic species and ecosystems are still disappearing.

Given the particular situation of islands, biodiversity is even more significant for SPREP members than for continental countries – it means livelihood for indigenous and local communities, health and medicine, absence of conflict, drinkable fresh water and food. Biodiversity means the resources that will allow SPREP members to develop in a sustainable way and to eradicate poverty. It is also one of your major trade issues through fisheries, agriculture, endangered species and the intellectual property obtained from biological resources. Only by protecting biodiversity, and by using it sustainably as a factor of increased resilience, will SPREP members be able to face the unavoidable reality of climate change. We simply cannot accept loss of biodiversity at the current rate.

COP-8 ushered in a new phase of the Convention. The meeting witnessed landmark events in terms of participation – not only in the official, non-governmental and indigenous peoples' segments – but also in the ministerial and heads of States segment, toward charting a course for achieving the 2010 target. With the critical support of SPREP members, we were proud to see the adoption, through decision VIII/1, of the programme of work on island biodiversity, an innovative strategy that will allow island states and states with islands to see their core concerns addressed specifically. To implement this programme of work, it is now the Secretariat's role to:

- support partnerships between parties and inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, development agencies and technical institutions;
- compile and disseminate experiences, case studies and sources of expertise on island biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing;
- build capacity (particularly of our focal points) and organize training initiatives;

- liaise, in particular, with Multilateral Agreements such as the Conventions on Desertification, Climate Change, Wetlands (Ramsar), Migratory Species, Trade in Endangered Species and others.

The adoption of the island programme of work is a significant achievement of which we can all be proud. Now, we must work together to implement it. As part of its mandate to build the capacity of parties, the CBD, with the generous financial support of the Government of the Netherlands, will organize, on November 11-15 in Bangkok, Thailand, a workshop on the application of the ecosystem approach to the planning and management of protected areas in small islands. Your focal points have already received a notification about this event, and we look forward to receiving nominations from SPREP Parties. One of the expected outcomes of this workshop will be a training program that we hope will be replicated in SPREP countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this SPREP meeting is especially important. It takes place at a time when the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity is increasingly focusing on the provision of technical support services to implement the Convention. Reading the ambitious 2007 SPREP work programme, I can see that you will expand the number of experts to meet the challenges, you are reaching out as never before to partners and donors, and you are making sure that your work fits in strategically, optimizing synergies and avoiding duplication of efforts. An ever more efficient Secretariat in Samoa will be a valuable partner for the CBD. The new enhanced phase of the implementation of the Convention calls for strategic partnerships. SPREP and the CBD are natural partners; many of our achievements are due to your support.

It is the fate of islands to be more exposed to changes, to be faced with greater challenges, and to have more limited means to address them. You are proving that from your vulnerability stems creativity, strength and leadership. The CBD will continue to support you and, in turn, to learn from your experience. I wish you a very successful meeting.