



Secretariat of the
Convention on Biological Diversity



Achieving the
2010
Biodiversity
Target

STATEMENT

by

AHMED DJOGHLAF

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

to the

**SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AT ITS SIXTY-FIRST SESSION**

**UNDER AGENDA ITEM 53: SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**

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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

Madame Chairperson
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

We have just heard the statement of the new Executive Secretary of the Convention on Climate Change. I would like to congratulate Mr Yvo de Boer for his appointment and echo his statement on the consequences of climate change on the environment. Indeed Climate change has been identified as the second root cause of the unprecedented rate of loss of the biodiversity of our planet. The second edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-2) released early this year provides ample evidence that human activity is putting a strain on the ability of the planet's ecosystems to support life on Earth. Species extinction is now 30 per cent higher than its natural rate. Every hour of the day, three species disappear. Humanity stands on the eve of the greatest mass extinction of species since the beginning of life on Earth. It is therefore a strategic necessity to achieve the target of substantially reducing the rate of loss of biodiversity, adopted by 110 Heads of State and Government in Johannesburg in 2002. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment demonstrated that this Johannesburg target, which was reconfirmed by 154 Heads of State and Government at the World Review Summit here in this building in September 2005, is indeed achievable, provided that the international community steps up its efforts to conserve, sustainably use and promote the fair and equitable sharing of nature's goods and services.

In Curitiba, the 1,000 participants who attended the largest gathering ever held under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety responded to this call for urgent action. The third meeting of the 130 Parties to the Protocol adopted a historic decision on one of the last outstanding issues arising from the negotiations for the Protocol, namely that of the documentation requirements for the shipment of living modified organisms intended for direct use as food or feed or for processing. This breakthrough was the result of the commitment of the Parties to fully operationalizing the one and only international legal instrument that lays down rules for the safe transboundary transfer of genetically modified organisms. This historic outcome was greatly facilitated by the personal involvement of the President of Brazil, HE Luíz Inácio Lula da Silva. Let me therefore take this opportunity to kindly request the Brazilian delegation to convey our deep gratitude to the President for his personal interest in the negotiations, to Her Excellency Marina Silva the Minister of Environment for her tireless effort, to the Mayor of Curitiba and the Governor of the state of Parana for their outstanding commitment and contribution made to the success of the Curitiba meetings and to the people of Brazil for their generosity and warm hospitality and for their contribution to the new and enhanced phase of implementation of the Convention and its Protocol.

In Curitiba, the 4,000 participants at the eight meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention responded to the call for urgent action. More than 122 Ministers and other heads of delegations attended the first ever inter-active dialogue under the Convention. A network of women ministers was established; youth and children were mobilized to give their support to the Convention; and business leaders met alongside government ministers to demonstrate their willingness to work towards achievement of the 2010 target. For the first time, a ministerial dialogue with the chief

executive officers of private companies was established, and the Conference of the Parties adopted its first ever decision on private sector involvement.

From the decision of the President of Brazil to place 6.4 million hectares of the Amazon rainforest under direct environmental protection, to the launch by the President of Palau of the “Micronesia Challenge”, which aims at placing 30% of the marine areas and 20% of the forest across Micronesia under environmental protection, the 188 Parties to the Convention demonstrated their commitment at the highest level to redouble their efforts to achieve the 2010 biodiversity target. This call for action was echoed by the 10 Heads of Agencies who decided to establish for the first time a task force at the heads-of-agency level for achieving the 2010 biodiversity target. The first meeting of this unique mechanism was held last month under the leadership of IUCN. Eight of the largest and most renowned scientific institutions in the world also made a commitment to mobilize their efforts for achieving the Johannesburg target. The first meeting of this Scientific Consortium was held last month under the leadership of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, the Smithsonian Institute and the Paris Museum of Natural History. They will soon be joined by other similarly prestigious institutions.

The Curitiba meeting also mapped out a timetable for finalizing the negotiations for an international regime on access to genetic resources and the sharing of the benefits arising from their use—another commitment made in Johannesburg and reiterated at the 2005 World Review Summit. In electing two Co-Chairs for the negotiating group, on the basis of a North-South partnership, the 4,000 participants agreed to finalize the negotiation of such an international regime no later than 2010.

In Curitiba, government ministers stressed once again the urgent need to integrate biodiversity into economic sectors and reiterated their call made in Kuala Lumpur in February 2004 for the inclusion of the 2010 biodiversity target as an integral part of the Millennium Development Goals. In his report to this current session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, responded to this call by recommending the inclusion of the 2010 biodiversity target as part of goal seven of the Millennium Development Goals. Biodiversity is at the heart of development processes. Ninety-two per cent of total export earnings in Africa originate from primary commodities provided by nature. The loss of biodiversity will therefore have far-reaching implications for development. Last month, the 400 participants in the Paris Conference on Biodiversity in European Development Cooperation adopted the Message from Paris, which echoed the call made in Curitiba.

Last week, Timor-Leste responded to the call for urgent action by depositing its instrument of ratification of the Convention, thus becoming its 189 Party. I would like to pay tribute to the Government of Timor and call the remaining state that have not yet done so to join the Convention on life on earth as no nation regardless of its GDP can afford to adopt an observer status when it comes to the protection of our life and the life of our children. Let’s work together to make the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties to be held in May 2008 in Bonn, Germany, the first meeting of the Convention with universal membership..

In considering the report of the Curitiba meetings that, for the first time in my capacity as the new Executive Secretary of Convention, I have the honour of formally

introducing, your august assembly, as the supreme body of the United Nations, has a unique opportunity to respond to the call for action so as translate the enhanced phase of implementation of the Convention on life on Earth into reality.

I thank you for your kind attention