



CBD

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



Achieving the
2010
Biodiversity
Target

**MESSAGE FROM AHMED DJOHLAF, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, ON THE OCCASION OF UNIVERSAL
CHILDREN'S DAY
20 November 2006**



As we observe this important day of fraternity and understanding between children, let us not forget that one of the guiding principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child includes survival and development of the child. This includes rights to adequate food, shelter, clean water, formal education, primary health care, leisure and recreation, cultural activities and information about their rights. All these are part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of AIDS and providing universal primary education. Although these Goals are for all humankind, six of the eight goals relate directly to children.

Ensuring environmental sustainability, Goal 7, is critical to improving the lives of children. The second edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook contains ample evidence that human activity is putting such a strain on the Earth's natural functions that the ability of the planet's ecosystems to sustain future generations can no longer be taken for granted. This confirms the finding of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment on the links between poverty eradication and biodiversity. The Assessment, published in 2005, underlines the increasing and alarming loss of biodiversity and documents the fact that healthy and biodiverse ecosystems are the foundation for human well-being. It also calls for concerted action since biodiversity loss is driven by local, regional, and global factors—such as poverty—to which responses are needed at all levels.

While every part of society has a responsibility for maintaining the environmental integrity of the community, children have a particular interest in preserving a healthy environment since they are the ones who will inherit our planet.

“The Mother Earth is the greatest teacher, if we listen, observe and respect her. When we live in harmony with the Mother Earth, she will recycle the things we consume and make them available to our children.” (Native American Philosophy)

