

MESSAGE OF DR. AHMED DJOGLAF
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY



I am glad that Winrock International India and the International Institute for Environment and Development are organizing a workshop on " Biodiversity and Environmental Governance: Safeguarding Ecosystems for Human Well-being".

India, home to more than 89,000 animal and 47,000 plant species and myriads of cultures, traditions and languages, is one of the great megadiverse countries of the world. India plays a significant role in the world's conservation movement and has dedicated itself to conserve the future of life on this planet. However, biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation are continuing in the country as elsewhere.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the first global agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of biological resources, recognizes that the conservation of biological diversity is a common concern of humankind and an integral part of the development process.

The Convention sets out broad commitments by Governments to take action at the national and regional levels. Since entry into force, the Conference of the Parties (COP) has translated some of the provisions of the Convention into a number of tools and programmes of work for more effective and coherent implementation of the Convention. Operational guidance for the ecosystem approach; the guidelines for incorporating biodiversity-related issues into environmental impact assessment legislation and/or process and in strategic environmental assessment; guidelines on integrated marine and coastal area management, among others are, of particular relevance to the present workshop. The ecosystem approach is the primary framework for action under the Convention; it offers a powerful strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. The Convention enjoins Parties to develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. In its eighth meeting in 2006, the COP reiterated the importance of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) for the implementation of the convention.

The COP agreed in 2002 to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at global, regional and national levels. The Heads of State at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg endorsed this target in the same year. However there are a number of major challenges to achieve this target. These challenges *inter alia* include: obstacles to the implementation of NBSAPs, biodiversity governance, mainstreaming biodiversity in development agenda, capacity building, synergistic implementation of multilateral environment and other agreements. The 2010 biodiversity target might present a window of

opportunity to rally different institutions and stakeholders around a joint commitment. I am delighted that the present workshop is addressing some of these challenges.

Mainstreaming biodiversity into national development and economic agendas is of paramount importance. Biodiversity issues need to be integrated into sectoral and development decision-making processes in order to get greater policy coordination. In most countries, poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) do not include biodiversity or conservation issues. There is also a need to establish a clear link between the 2010 target and the Millennium Development Goals. Such a linkage could be established by integrating National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans with PRSPs.

I wish the workshop a great success.