



CBD

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

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Biodiversity and Climate Change

STATEMENT

by

**AHMED DJOGLAF, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL
DIVERSITY**

at the

**MEETING OF THE NETWORK OF WOMEN
MINISTERS OF ENVIRONMENT**

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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The enhanced phase of implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, born in Curitiba in March last year, calls for the active involvement of all stakeholders. It is for this reason that, upon taking up my assignment as the Executive Secretary, I sent a message to all citizens of the world. Mothers of life, women, are important stakeholders in the Convention on life on Earth. It is for this reason that, on the occasion of International Women's Day in March last year, I issued a message to women. Let me read it to you:

“As a major stakeholder in the Convention on Biological Diversity, women have a special relation with nature in general and biodiversity in particular. In the majority of countries, the survival of women, their well-being and empowerment depend on biodiversity. For women in developing countries, in particular in the least developed countries, biodiversity is vital for their survival and the survival of their families. Biodiversity is also part and parcel of their belief system and their cultural and spiritual values. It is for these reasons that the preamble of the Convention on Biological Diversity recognizes ‘the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity’ and affirms ‘the need for the full participation of women at all levels of policymaking and implementation for biological diversity conservation’.

“Women are the most important links in the maintenance and development of indigenous knowledge systems. The workshop on indigenous women and biodiversity organized in Nairobi prior to the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in May 2000 noted that: ‘We live in a world where women's voices are often marginalized. This is especially true with respect to indigenous women's knowledge about conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. We advise the Conference of the Parties to ensure the full, active and equal participation of women, especially from indigenous and local communities, within all elements in its programme of work. Despite the fact that indigenous women play a vital role in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, they have not been fully engaged in the Convention processes.’

“Therefore, the 2010 biodiversity target will not be achieved without the active involvement of women. Today, on the occasion of International Women's Day, I pledge, in my capacity as the new Executive Secretary of

your Convention, my full commitment to establishing a vibrant partnership with the women of the world and their national, regional, national and local organizations'. To this end, a dedicated staff member within the Secretariat of the Convention, Ms Isabel Julian, has been designated as your focal point.”

However, 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 in New York 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, in March last year, under the leadership of Rt. Hon. Rejoice Mabudafhasi, 22 women ministers, attending the high-level segment of the eight meeting of the Conference of the Parties, responded to this call for urgent action by establishing a network of women ministers of environment . I would like to pay tribute to you, Honourable Minister, for this initiative and for inviting me to this special side event.

This initiative provides a unique opportunity for the women of the world to make their voices heard on issues related to the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity. Indeed, the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention will remain unfulfilled if the concerns of women, who represent more than half the world's population, are not taken into account. To encourage the full participation of women in the implementation phase of the Convention, the Secretariat has appointed a focal point and a newsletter is being prepared. We in the Secretariat would like to assure you that we shall spare no efforts to assist your network in implementing its mandate. To this end I would like to offer a dedicated page to women ministers in the CBD flagship publication *Gincana*. Copies of the second issue of this magazine launched in Curitiba have been distributed to you. I thank you for your kind attention.