



CBD

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

MESSAGE

from

Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary
on the occasion of
World Meteorological Day - 23 March 2007

22 May 2007
International Day for Biological Diversity



Biodiversity and Climate Change

The third report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) confirms that man-made emissions of greenhouse gases are responsible for fewer cold days, hotter nights, heat waves, floods, heavy rains, devastating droughts, and an increase in hurricane and tropical storm strength. The upcoming report of the Panel's Working Group II is expected to be even more significant, as it will give us a better understanding of the climate-change system – specifically adaptation and vulnerability.

The recent Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, conducted by over 1,395 experts from 95 countries also sounds another alarm: the pressures exerted by human activity on ecosystems and the degradation of the services they provide has reached a point that can no longer be ignored as these pressures will no longer be able to support future generations.

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity recognizes the importance of polar meteorology as it has potential impacts on biodiversity all over the world. Any advancement in the science of polar meteorology can only have positive repercussions on the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Polar species have developed very specialized adaptations to the harsh meteorological conditions found at the poles; thus they are extremely vulnerable to dramatic changes in these conditions. Recent studies reveal that the average weight of female polar bears has dropped significantly since 1980, and that the progressively earlier break-up of Arctic sea ice is the cause. Reduced sea ice is also believed to have caused a 50% decline in Emperor penguin populations in Terre Adélie in the Antarctic.

On 19–20 March 2007, with the generous contribution of the Government of Canada, members of the Bureau of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), representatives of the WMO co-sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and experts on biodiversity and climate change met for a roundtable discussion on the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change. This first-ever collaboration between the SBSTTA and the IPCC was convened in acknowledgement of the fact that climate change is happening and that it is impacting on and is impacted by biodiversity. The goal of this roundtable was to enhance information and build additional knowledge of the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change.

On 22 May 2007, the Convention will celebrate the International Day for Biological Diversity with the theme “Biodiversity and climate change”. This complements the designation of 2007 as the WMO co-sponsored International Polar Year and coincides with the UNEP World Environment Day theme of climate change. Hence, any endeavour to increase understanding of polar meteorology and climate change is highly encouraged and supported by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. I sincerely hope that this initiative will generate additional information and enhance public awareness on this topic of great importance.

As I wish you a successful World Meteorological Day celebrating polar meteorology, it is my hope, that by designating biodiversity and climate as this year's theme for the International Day for Biological Diversity, it will serve as a means of raising the profile of the potentially disastrous impact that the changing climate has on the diversity of life on Earth and we ask that you join us in the celebrations on 22 May.

Montreal, 23 March 2007



United Nations
Environment Programme

413 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 800
Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2Y 1N9

Tel.: +1.514.288.2220
Fax: +1.514.288.6588

www.biodiv.org
secretariat@biodiv.org